

# Bestiality: A Cruelty Towards Animal

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## Abstract

Bestiality is a kind of sexual deviance in which an individual is involved with an animal for the gratification of his/her sexual desires. It can be considered as a severe form of cruelty towards animals. Few societies in the world perceived bestiality as a cure for the sexually transmitted disease. However, such conduct is a punishable offense in the Indian legal system under Section- 377 IPC. For many years, animal cruelty has been a concern of both legal and mental health care professionals. The psychological culture in the 1960s acknowledged childhood animal cruelty as a possible risk factor for violent conduct against human beings. The present study aims to provide and explore the issue of human-animal sexual interactions and their consequences in society. For this purpose, doctrinal research design has been applied and relevant research articles, news reports, and blogs were collected from free online resources and analyzed. This research discusses the various sexual deviations and the types of animals involved, accompanied by a comprehensive account of the results from the few more recent studies. The study explains the possible motives for sex with animals. Besides, how these motives can influence the psychological forensic assessment of offenders who have sex with animals.

**Keywords:** Bestiality, Sexual Deviance, Animal Cruelty, Human-Animal Sexual Interaction, Punishable offense, Psychological Forensic Assessment

## Introduction

Bestiality is a type of sexual offense in which animals are used as a means to fulfill sexual desire without any sort of emotional bonding<sup>(1)</sup>. It is also known as Animal Sexual Abuse (ASA) and includes the sexual molestation of animals, by fondling their genitalia, vaginal, anal, or oral penetration or oral-genital contacts (from person to animal and vice versa); penetration with an object; and injuring or killing an animal for sexual gratification<sup>(17)</sup>.

The use of animals for the gratification of human sexual desires is very old and may be prevalent since the existence of human civilization. The Ancient Egyptian people engaged in bestiality from cows to dogs to even crocodiles. The man's wife who brought a stallion to be sacrificed was supposed to try sexual practices with the dead animal in an ancient Indian fertility rite<sup>(2)</sup>. The offspring of the latter alliance was the half-human, half-bull creature, the Minotaur, half-man creature, half-goat creature. Ancient Greek art has also portrayed direct sexual intercourse with animals<sup>(3)</sup>.

Human contact with animals has been also reported in Greek artist's play performances on stage<sup>(4)</sup>. Brothels were named in ancient Rome according to the names of the animals, which they offered for sexual gratification. Animals had also been specifically conditioned for the games to interact sexually with women. Nonetheless, Bestiality was invariably connected with black magic and witchcraft practices. However, these practices were illegal and carried high punishments<sup>(5)</sup>.

The Talmud and the Old Testament reject sexual intercourse with animals and recommend the death penalty for such offenses. The Bible has and still has a great influence on bestiality opinions. According to<sup>(6)</sup>, the old legal code of the Hittites prohibited sexual partnerships, and penalties were imposed and classified according to the species involved<sup>(18)</sup>. Witchcraft trials in the Middle Ages were often linked to the death sentence for bestiality.

There is no question that the sexual interaction of humans and animals can be seen as one of the last

taboos in today's culture. The amount of literature that relates to bestiality is greater than maybe expected, even though it can often be hard to locate. Only a few more recent zoophilia studies have collected data on the range of behaviors, motivation, development, and personality involved from voluntary, group samples. Animals much remain uncertain about sexual activity or attraction<sup>(4)</sup>. Dr. John Macdonald was the first American psychiatrist who described the possible connection between animal cruelty and human violence<sup>(7)</sup>. A person who has committed bestiality as a child is most likely to commit interpersonal adult crimes<sup>(1)</sup>.

There are very few studies related to the prevalence rate of bestiality. However, a study on American soil reported approximately 8% of males engaged in sexual contact with an animal and that 40% - 50% of farm-raised boys were engaged in sexual interaction with animals<sup>(19)</sup>. In another follow-up study, the same author has reported 1.5% of adolescent girls and 3.6% of adult females had an experience of sexual encounter with an animal. A survey study of 982 males residing in 24 cities, reported 4.9% had an experience of at least one-time sexual contact with animals<sup>(8)</sup>.

### Legal Considerations

The creation of "sexual abuse of an object" laws focused on interpersonal laws on sexual harassment. This would be more helpful to ask for the psychological examination of the victims, because it may provide a greater wealth of knowledge about animal offenders. The animal abusers' requirement for registration and group notification legislation appears overly onerous because we suggest people who commit attacks against other human beings are not disciplined in this manner. Before such a drastic legislative change, the author highlights the need for further research on individuals engaging in sex with animals. The guidelines present the crucial issue of how to use legislation to tackle habits that are believed to be related to interpersonal abuse, where the data is not sufficient to properly direct legislative efforts<sup>(9)</sup>.

Bestiality law varies greatly from country to country. Many nations ban it, while others subsume it under "crimes against nature" or "Sodomy" sentences

in the United States vary from fines to indeterminate life sentences. Several US states are considering developing or re-introducing strict laws on bestiality. Germany agreed, in 1969, that bestiality would no longer be considered a criminal act. This decision was partly influenced by the view that morals should not form the basis of the penal law. One argument was that sexual acts with animals constitute a human humiliation that disgraces all humanity. In earlier days, one reason for holding bestiality criminalized was that it is a humiliating act that humiliates all humanity. Sexual acts are not necessarily considered to be exploitation of animals, except when severe or permanent harm, distress, or disability is inflicted on the animal. Sadistic acts, placement of larger objects, or similar actions cause discomfort or harm to the animal and should be prose-coded about animal care legislation. Great Britain's Home Office suggested changes to British sex legislation including recommendations for raising the bestiality penalty. Bestiality is against human and animal dignity and there is a linkage between animal abuse and other forms of a sexual offense, such as child abuse. The committee considered bestiality to be a criminal act in itself and proposed a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment<sup>(4)</sup>. For a variety of reasons that the anti-cruelty and bestiality statutes are remaining imperfect<sup>(20)</sup>. Apex court of India has decriminalized Sec-377 IPC but has retained bestiality as a crime<sup>(7)</sup>.

### Bestiality and its Association with Violence

Research suggests that those groups of people with a paraphilic interest in animals (zoophilia) are likely to have a high paraphilic crossover rate. A history of bestiality has been the single biggest indicator for involvement in potential child sexual exploitation in a study of 44,202 adult people<sup>(21)</sup>. While such crossover does not necessarily result in sexual offense, deviant sexual interest is a known risk factor for sexual offense and sexual re-offense. The link between animal cruelty and violence is well-founded, but the association between childhood bestiality and adult violence is little understood. The research was carried out on people seeking identification of paraphilic disorders. There is limited current evidence focusing on bestiality in childhood and later risk of violence. In a study of 261 inmates living

in three southern correctional facilities, inmates who reported previous sexual acts with animals were more likely to be convicted of a personal crime such as rape, sexual assault, robbery, or assault<sup>(19)</sup>. Some authors have criticized the limited knowledge base, describing how most studies focus without appropriate control groups on forensic samples, use pen-paper response design, and are cross-sectional and correlational. Studies concluded that more attention needs to be given to the sexual component of animal cruelty since there is definite support for the link between Bestiality as a form of animal cruelty and subsequent interpersonal violence<sup>(9)</sup>. Therefore, based on such factors, it is hard to draw definitive conclusions about the connection between bestiality and the potential risk of abuse. There seems to be a connection between bestiality and acts of violence.

Animal sexual strategies may not necessarily include force or aggression but may include sensitivity or understanding of animal behavior. A survey of sexually abusive juvenile offenders reported 37% animal sexual exploitation<sup>(22)</sup>, and the highest prevalence rate of 33.3% among sex offenders who had violated (non-incestuous) female children were found to have engaged in bestiality between the other classes of 12.5% to 24%. The monitoring group and the adult-abusing male sex offenders reported the lowest prevalence rate in the general population for animal encounters<sup>(23)</sup>.

Some scholars took the view that bestiality per se is coercive because it is difficult to obtain consent from animals as with children. However, if there are no apparent injuries, the animal can be forced to inflict cruelty. Some animals, such as dogs, also seem too often to enjoy the attention provided by sexual contact with a human. On the other hand, fish and fowl or other small animals are recipients of unwillingness and suffering. Among these extremes, the responses of cows or horses appeared similar to boredom and indifference, or maybe even "calculated detachment," and for different reasons, these animals are often violated, such as medical procedures such as artificial reproductions. Overall, it was addressed and debated bestiality as a social activity and proposed a description of all forms of sexual activities with animals as sexual harassment between species<sup>(10)</sup>

Animal torture has been found a common practice for sadistic and sex-murderers. In a study of 36 sexual assassins, 23% showed an interest in bestiality and 10% of child sexual offenders have had animal sexual encounters. Some of them contained both cruelty and necrophilic tendencies<sup>(6)</sup>. Animal abuse may serve as a rehearsal for human abuse or murder<sup>(4)</sup>.

### **Type of Animals Sexually Abused**

The literature records a broad variety of sexual activities as well as animals engaged in sexual interaction with humans. Practices vary from grooming and dog chewing to human anal or vaginal penetration by male animals. Currently, dogs seem to be favored for sexual activity, not just females of large breeds but also male animals. In pornographic films, it is recorded that male equines penetrate men and women anally. Fish penetration into the vagina seems to be favored, and snakes are often found in the genitals. Only partial penile penetration is possible in larger animals, and severe injuries can occur. It's also mentioned the custom of having cats lick the human genitalia or consuming food from the penis or vagina.

Many uncommon species have been described in the literature, such as deer, tapirs, antelopes, and camels, but sexual interaction with more uncommon species has not always been recorded. Dolphins are another unusual species that human beings sexually approach. Dolphins are very sexually active and may not only be willing to respond to human sexual advances but may even sexually approach humans.

The sexual use of birds/fowl and rabbits had been documented in case studies. In some instances, the men cut the bird's throat (geese, chickens), choked the animal, or broke his neck during sexual activity. Additional abusive activities are done with small animals, such as hamsters or mice, which are put in humans' anus or vagina where animal movements cause discomfort and the animal eventually dies of suffocation. The most common form of animal involved in sexual activity with humans today is probably the dog because it is easy to hold<sup>(11)</sup>.

## Methodology

The present study focuses to review and analyze, research articles, and newspaper reports published on Bestiality. An online information search was conducted through sites such as online newspapers, blogs, and articles, etc. Data, as well as information, were collected from different sources like Newsday, Shodhganga, Researchgate, etc. Each combined data were analyzed and discussed qualitatively.

## Case Reports

### CASE -1

An 18, year-old single, illiterate male of low socioeconomic status took an alleged history of bestiality to the emergency room for medical review. The accused had six siblings, and he was third among them. The family lived in an unhygienic area and ran dairy farms. He had been having sexual intercourse with two calves, and one calf died during the act.

HumanDNA was detected from the anal and vaginal swabs of calves in a forensic science laboratory which confirmed the allegation of sexual assault. The accused had not shown any feeling of guilt or remorse associated with the death of a calf and was admitted to the heterosexual practice.

The significant life events during his childhood and adolescence contained witnessing domestic violence (father and brother beating their wives), the death of his mother when he was 13 years old, and started consuming alcohol at the age of 16 years. He was sexually abused (sodomy) by adult males multiple times between the ages of 10-11 years. Psychological evaluation reports reveal feelings of physical inadequacy, rejection, internalized hostility, low self-esteem, lack of insight, and unjustifiable optimism. He also possessed very poor self-discipline and has difficulty establishing emotional and sexual intimacy.<sup>(1)</sup>

### CASE-2

A prisoner was committed forensically as dangerous after completing his jail term for sexually assaulting his girlfriend's daughter. He claimed that his parents were divorced and that he was physically abused by his

father, which sometimes caused him to run away from home. Due to drug use, he dropped out of high school and worked odd jobs during his late adolescence. He suggested that he vaginally penetrated a goat once while working briefly on a farm, but that he did not like the encounter and he did not participate in more sexual acts with animals. He was imprisoned or hospitalized most of his adult life.

His juvenile and adult criminal history reveals multiple acts of violence including human assault and animal killing. He was committed forensically due to dangerousness following a prison term for sexually assaulting his girlfriend's daughter. He has had several medical diagnoses including autism, antisocial personality disorder, pedophile disorder, and other listed paraphilic conditions. Because of a history of aggressive and violent thought processes, hallucinations, and actions toward women, his other identified paraphilic condition was diagnosed as well as testing positive for rape stimuli on previous penile plethysmography tests. He does not take part in the prosecution of sexual offenders<sup>(12)</sup>

### CASE-3

A 33-year-old, man raped a cow and tortured till to death. This frightening incident took place in a district of Kerala. The report stated that accused had taken the two-year-old cow out of its stable and committed a sexual offense. The cow died of strangulation due to the rope from which it was tied to a tree. The owner found the missing calf's dead body in the neighborhood and a police complaint was lodged. A medical examination report revealed sexual assault with the calf. The accused was charged with bestiality (unnatural sexual offense) the evidence acquired for the arrest was found on the suspect's clothes. He had been earlier arrested and charged in the case of bestiality<sup>(13)</sup>.

### CASE-4

A, 48 years old, male, hails from a rural background in Kerala and was living in another district for the last 18 years away from his family. He was a carpenter by profession and was arrested with the charge of having had unnatural sex with a dog. The act was video recorded and was spread on social media across the country. The Human Society International/ India (HSI)

offered a reward of 1 lakh for information leading to the identification and arrest of the accused. The video taken by the eyewitness helped to identify and arrest the offender<sup>(14)</sup>.

A similar case was reported<sup>(15)</sup> in Mumbai where a 19-year-old was arrested for allegedly having unnatural sex with a stray dog. In both cases, the accused had a problematic childhood.

### **Results and Discussion**

In most of the alleged bestiality cases, lack of evidence helps the perpetrators to escape from the punishment. Based on these reported cases it is very clear that these offenders had been victimized during their childhood. They also have been engaged in an illicit sexual relationship and had a history of watching people engaged in penile-vaginal intercourse (sexual voyeurism) many times. They also have frequent visits to an internet cafe to watch pornographic movies and pictures.

There is a varying degree of understanding in society concerning bestiality. Many viewed it in a rather stigmatized way while others regarded it as a tool for curing sexually transmitted disease. It is a sexually deviant behavior found highest among rural males with low educational background and working in farms where animals stay. Individuals who typically have a low level of education, poor social control, and less social commitment, are more likely to engage in sexually deviant behaviors. Alcohol may have been a contributing factor in such incidents which caused a lack of understanding of the consequences of the act.

Sexual abuse in childhood may consider a major psychological factor in the development of bestiality. If a child is victimized at a pre-pubertal stage leads to internalized aggressive behavior. Later such individuals start trying to gratify sexual desires by pseudo-relationships (e.g., voyeurism) or alliances based on disproportionate control. Throughout life, adolescents or less dominant people can be at an increased risk of sexual assault or interpersonal assault. The results of these cases also revealed the absence of any current psychiatric condition or underlying psychopathology, although it is clear that these individuals possessed

antisocial personality disorders.

### **Conclusion**

As an indicator of potential human violence in the 1960s, the medical profession started to examine deliberate animal cruelty. Studies carried out since that period show that animal cruelty in childhood directly predicts potential interpersonal abuse. Most studies rely primarily on inmate samples that may not accurately reflect the animal abuser samples. Some scholars do not find bestiality as a priori abusive act, and current literature indicates that for a variety of different reasons, individuals engaging in sex with animals do so.

There can be significant variations in treatment, punishment, or consequences due to social beliefs, depending on the country and its values and laws. Bestiality is still not well known and is triggering a lot of emotional responses rather than empirical research. More needs to be learned about this sexual attraction. Information is lacking on the prevalence of bestiality in various parts of the world. The Internet is sure to be useful for future research in this area. Further work is required to improve our understanding of who is having sex with animals, why people are having sex with animals, and how sex with animals affects the risk evaluation for potential interpersonal offenses.

As discussed in this case series, individuals may engage in bestiality for a variety of reasons not confined to a paraphilic disorder. The cases are also evidence of the breadth of sexual acts in sexual offenders with a history of bestiality, varying frequency of sexual acts, and other concurrent offending behaviors. Future work will further elucidate the motives of individuals to participate in bestiality and help forensic evaluators understand better the role of this sexual activity in performing risk assessments.

Awareness and effective psycho-education of community youth living in and around rural agricultural areas will help to minimize the number of these offenses in the community by concentrating on bestiality and other associated health issues<sup>(1)</sup>.

A prospective cohort study would be the ideal study to assess the relationship between animal cruelty and

future interpersonal offending, authors say.

**Ethical Clearance:** I, Mr. Mahesh Tripathi, Assistant Professor of Forensic Clinical Psychology, School of Forensic Science & Risk Management, Rashtriya Raksha University, Gandhinagar, undertake and ensure that all the other authors in the manuscript have agreed for authorship, read and approved the manuscript and given consent for submission and subsequent publication of the manuscript in this journal. Data is collected from online platforms and case studies are obtained from different news articles and other published papers and all resources are fully credited. No direct human intervention happened in this research work. Therefore, no ethical approval was obtained.

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