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Tethering your dog? Think again

While some feel that tethering a dog has no repercussions, the ignorance can cause severe damage to the psychological state of the pet and prevents it from moving freely



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Express News Service

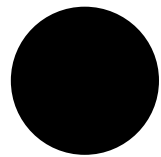
BENGALURU: Imagine a child confined to a small room all the time. The child wakes up each day full of natural curiosity and energy. She can hear others laughing and interacting just on the other side of the door. She only sees her loved ones once a day when they fill her bowl with food. Soon they are gone and she is left alone again. With no ability to articulate what she is feeling, she assumes that she is so bad as to be so rejected. She is never given the opportunity to learn what is expected of her. No one takes the time to teach her acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

She gets no exercise and turns inward, depressed and lonely. To occupy her time, she crawls in circles; she sucks her thumbs raw. And when someone finally does come into her room, she is now afraid. She doesn't know how to behave or interact. Now replace the word "child" with "dog". Dogs, like children, are social beings. They have a deeply ingrained need for contact with either human beings or other dogs, need to run, explore, and play. When a dog is tethered or chained outside, it does not receive the socialisation it needs to maintain its mental health. Just like young children, dogs are curious and trusting creatures who can easily be transformed into cowering,

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aggressive, and unstable pets when they are neglected. Unfortunately, there are many pet parents who think tethering a dog is completely fine and feeding them twice a day is a job well done. They have no idea how their ignorance or wilful neglect causes immense psychological and physical harm to the poor voiceless pet. We still rescue every other day a scary number of such pets from such abusive and negligent families. It is heart-breaking to see how extremely traumatised and scared such meek creatures have become with severe distrust and aggression towards humans as a result of such inhumane treatment.

Tethering, besides being cruel also denies dogs proper exercise. Tethered dogs are apt to developing serious behaviour problems because their existence is ruled by

the length of the tether. Although it may seem as if the dog has plenty of room to move about, dogs still get tangled up in their chains and it often causes neck and back injuries, and it is even possible for a dog to hang himself if the chain gets caught on something up high. Dogs that spend their lives tethered have been known to grind their teeth down to stumps. Many will compulsively lick an area of their body until it turns into a bleeding sore, known as a granuloma. Tethered dogs frequently become withdrawn and depressed. Compulsive barking, chewing and digging, going around in circles due to sheer boredom may also occur.

Dogs are naturally social beings who thrive on interaction with human beings and other animals. An otherwise friendly and docile dog, when kept continuously chained, becomes neurotic, unhappy, anxious and often aggressive. Dogs need human interaction and stimulation, to be part of a family. Being left out on a chain while the rest of your family is together indoors is simply cruel. If that is your idea of having a pet, please don't get one. The author is a former corporate executive actively involved rescues, rehabilitation and re-homing of dogs.

THE iMPACT OF CHAINING A DOG?

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