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Reconceptualizing Animal Welfare in Pakistan: Lessons from the United Kingdom's Legal Framework

Abad Ahmad Khan¹

Muhammad Bilal²

¹ PhD Scholar, University Gillani Law College, BZU Multan. Email ID: abadahmadkhan84@gmail.com

² Associate Professor, University Gillani Law College, BZU Multan. Email ID: mbilal@bzu.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

Animal welfare has become a major legal and ethical issue across the globe, which represents a change in the understanding of non-human animals. Animals in some countries like the United Kingdom are no longer perceived only as property or economic resources, as they are increasingly being treated as sentient beings that can feel pain and pleasure, and experience fear and psychological distress. This transformation has been influenced by the advances in the animal cognition science, moral philosophy, and the increasing social expectations of compassion and sustainability. These insights have been used in jurisdictions like the United Kingdom to conduct thorough legal reforms that focus on suffering prevention, positive welfare obligations and state responsibility. Conversely, the animal welfare system in Pakistan is still based on the laws of the colonial period especially the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1890. The Act is historically important, but it is anthropocentric in approach, since it gives priority to human interests and economic utility as opposed to animal wellbeing.



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Corresponding Author's Email: mbilal@bzu.edu.pk



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Introduction

Animal welfare is one of the most burning ethical and legal issues of the contemporary world, which questions the classical beliefs concerning the relations between people and non-human animals. Fundamentally, animal welfare is based on the principle that animals possess the ability to feel pain, pleasure, fear, stress, and emotional suffering as they are sentient beings. This understanding has far-reaching consequences on legal systems and social policies because it necessitates communities to re-evaluate the actions that cause pain to animals in areas of food production, research, entertainment, transport, and companionship. The history of the animal welfare law is thus an expression of a larger ethical transformation, namely, the shift between an anthropocentric vision of the world and a more pluralistic ethical paradigm that recognizes the inherent worth of animal life (Radford & Broom, 2001). Traditionally, legal systems considered animals as virtually property, and were regarded as useful to humans in a purely economic sense. This approach was based on the classical philosophical tradition and the common law tradition that justified human superiority through the use of the concept of rationality and refused the status to animals of a human moral or legal status. The inhumane treatment of animals in this paradigm was not criticised based on its cruelty to animals but on the basis of its infringement on the popular morality or its threat to economic interests or because it was an unfavourable reflection of human personalities. The original animal protection legislation was therefore limited and reactive and it sought to discourage the extreme or unwarranted brutality contrary to the imminent promotion of the wellbeing of animals.

The trend towards breaking out of this narrow conception was encouraged by the growth of moral philosophy and science. Utilitarian philosophers, most prominently Jeremy Bentham, challenged the moral irrelevance of animals by stating that not the ability to reason but the capacity to suffer should be benchmark for the moral consideration. This understanding formed the basis of the modern animal welfare discourse that focuses on the reduction of suffering and improvement of life (Bentham, 1879). At the same time, developments in ethology, neuroscience and veterinary science have shown that numerous animals have complex cognitive skills, emotional reactions and social actions. These findings have radically challenged the animal inferiority assumptions and greatly reinforced the arguments of legal protection (Francione, 1995).

These developments in ethics and science have been progressively enacted into law in the Western jurisdictions, especially the United Kingdom. Animal welfare in the UK has been a leader and begun with the early nineteenth century anti-cruelty legislation and developing to law such as the Animal Welfare Act 2006. This contemporary model recognizes fully the status of animals as sentient beings and

establishes the obligation of care on those who keep them and the object of the law extends further than cruelty prevention to proactive welfare protection. A social agreement that the suffering of animals is a social problem can also be explained with the aid of regulatory norms, enforcement tools, and judicial interpretation (Mellor & Uldahl, 2025).

To the contrary, the animal welfare regime remains largely connected with the colonial legacy in Pakistan. Animal protection still relies largely on the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act of 1890 which was enacted under the British rule. The Act is simply narrow in scope and philosophy despite its progress at its time. It fails to recognize sentience in animals and does not offer positive welfare standards. Animal welfare has therefore been a marginal issue at least secondary to the economic and administrative interests (Broom, 1991). This contrast demonstrates a deeper dissimilarity in legal philosophy. Even though modern governments are slowly acknowledging the rights of animals to be sentient beings with legal right to interests, the systems in Pakistan continue to be premised on property-based approach. By putting the experience of Pakistan into a comparative context, particularly the UK, it is evident that there is an urgency of reform, in the light of contemporary ethical and scientific understanding. A reconsideration of animal welfare statutes therefore provides Pakistan a chance to harmonize with the world and redefine more humane and accountable image of justice (Teale & Awan, 2020).

The UK Model of Animal Welfare: From Property to Sentience

The animal welfare model in the UK is a radical legal and philosophical shift from treating the animal as a property to seeing them as living beings, which should be legally afforded the protection of welfare and ethical responsibility. Historically, English common law, as described by Blackstone, viewed animals as chattels, whose main worth was to benefit people. This property-based conception legitimized massive exploitation and inhumane treatment, as long as it did not violate the proprietary interest of human beings. The moral validity of this practice started to decline in the nineteenth century as more and more people started to care about animal suffering and the impact of utilitarianism, especially when Jeremy Bentham claimed their ability to suffer and experience pain and pleasure, but not their ability to reason (Gacek & Jochelson, 2020).

This shift in philosophy was first given legal expression in Martin Act 1822, the first animal protection law in the world, which made cruelty to some domesticated animals a criminal offense. It was limited in scope and still based on a property framework, but it was a decisive departure of absolute human dominion. Further laws including Cruelty to Animals Act 1835 extended the areas of protection by

illegalization blood sports as a result of an increasing awareness that animal suffering was a subject of legal concern by the public. These early laws laid the basis of a welfare-based rather than a rights-based personhood in which there was the focus on humane treatment without the annihilation of the property status of animals (Woods, 2012). Animal welfare in the UK institutionalized through Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) in 1824 and it was later patented as Royal Society to Prevention of Cruelty to Animal. This organization played a significant role in enforcement, public awareness and advocacy that animal welfare is part of societal awareness and law. It was further consolidated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by the Protection of Animals Act 1911 which brought together the earlier acts, but remained reactive, only responding to cruelty that was already inflicted (Otter, O'Sullivan, & Ross, 2012).

During the post-war years, a conceptual revolution occurred which was the result of the scientific discovery in the field of ethology and veterinary science. The Brambell Report (1965) that formally acknowledged the existence of pain, stress, and suffering in animals was the watershed moment. It stated the core values that were to develop into the Five Freedoms that reformulated animal welfare as a concern of satisfying animals with their physical, psychological and behavioural requirements. It was a distinct contrast to thin anti-cruelty standards with a proactive welfare model based on sentience (McCulloch, 2012). The climax of this evolution is the Animal Welfare Act 2006, which is the heart of the contemporary European animal welfare regime in the UK. In contrast to the previous legislation, the Act places a positive duty of care on the animal owners and keepers who must make sure the welfare needs of animals are addressed, such as proper nutrition, appropriate environment, protection in health, and the freedom to show normal behaviour. Most importantly, the Act empowers an early intervention so that authorities can intervene prior to sufferings and thus the understanding of the animal sentience can be operationalized under the law. The Act has also added greater penalties and disqualification orders along with general regulatory system that is applicable to companion animals, farm animals and animals that are used in research and entertainment (Cardon, Bailey, & Bennett, 2012).

The status of sentience in the UK was further enforced in the constitutional and supranational levels by the EU Lisbon Treaty (2009), which has expressly identified animals as sentient beings to ensure that all opportunities are observed by policymakers to safeguard the interests of animals. Since Brexit, this principle was subsequently reaffirmed domestically by Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022 which has been formally enshrined in UK law; and is the first statute to provide a means of reviewing government policy regarding its effect on animal welfare. This move symbolically and legally breaks the last traces of a strictly property-defined notion of animals, though it has not been fully legalized that animals should be fully treated as persons (Rowan A. N., 2022). The UK model demonstrates a gradual but consistent

development of property to sentience, which will not occur by direct donation of animal rights but by the development of welfare legislation, institutional application, and subsequent increases in the level of ethical norms. It shows how the law can bear response to scientific knowledge and the moral advancement and make animal welfare a part of the modern, humane legal system instead of a marginal issue.

Colonial Legacy and the Pakistani Legal Framework

In Pakistan, the legal system of animal rights remains heavily dominated by its colonial past and the more recent provincial processes have introduced change in a fragmented and uneven manner. The lasting impact of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1890, which was established during the British colonial rule, has shaped the conceptual and structural basis of animal protection in the country. Although this act was initially meant to govern apparent inhumanity and safeguard animals as tools of the economy, it continues to serve as the main animal welfare act in the federal and provincial level (Ilyas & Qazilbash, 2021). Its continuation into the post-colonial period indicates a more general continuity of colonial legal reason, in which animals are not so much seen as sentient beings that possess intrinsic moral worth as they are as property.

The colonial system that was a part of the 1890 Act is characterized by narrow, cruelty-focused character. It penalizes certain abuses, but does not enforce any positive responsibility of care on either animal owners or the state. The ideas of modern animal welfare like psychological well-being, the freedom of distress, the possibility to manifest natural behaviour are completely missing. Punishments are very low and obsolete, which support symbolic obedience and not deterrence. This is a reactive regulatory model, which is preserved intact at independence, and has remained restrictive to the development of animal rights jurisprudence in Pakistan (Rowan A. N., 2006). One of the significant structural shifts was the 18th Constitutional Amendment (2010) that devolved the control of legislative powers regarding animal welfare to the provinces. Even though devolution opened up opportunities in terms of localized reform, it also further increased fragmentation. The provinces started to enact their own laws, which led to the creation of inconsistent norms, the discrepancy in the understanding of cruelty and welfare, and the different instruments of enforcement. Provincial legislation has not supplanted the colonial law with a single, sentience-grounded system, but has mostly supplemented it or slightly varied the basis of the Act of 1890, still preserving its underlying assumptions (Anjum, Barkat, & Jatoi, 2025).

The rationale behind establishment of Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to *Animals* (SPCA) in Punjab is to protect animals from abuse, neglect, and cruelty. The primary purpose is to advance animal welfare through rescuing, rehabilitating, and rehoming animals, enforcing animal protection laws, providing medical care, and promoting humane education. The situation is even worse in other provinces.

Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan are still largely dependent on the 1890 Act with some few amendments or draft bills which are never properly enforced (Zamirr, Umrani, & Sajawal, 2022). The wildlife protection legislations of these provinces emphasize much on conservation and biodiversity management as opposed to the well-being of individual animals, which is an anthropocentric and utilitarian heritage. Consequently, animals not belonging to the category of protected wildlife, especially working animals, stray animals, and even animals used in agriculture, end up being legally marginalized.

This provincial difference has led to an uneven legal environment whereby the standard of protection granted to an animal is not only different on the basis of geographical places but also lacking in comparable legal principle. Lack of harmonization weakens enforcement mechanism and generates regulatory confusion as well as accountability. It also underlines a more profound conceptual issue because provincial reforms still act in a colonial paradigm where human interests, economic usefulness, and preservation of social order are valued above the dignity and sentience of animals. To some extent, judicial intervention has filled this gap. The judiciary has increasingly applied the constitutional principles to the issue of animal welfare especially Article 9 of the Constitution on right to life and dignity. An iconic case is the Kaavan case (2020) which acknowledged animals as the sentient beings, suffering species and provided the state with a moral obligation to protect them. Even though such judgments are indicative of a transformative judicial approach, they are case-specific and do not possess the systemic force of a comprehensive legislative reform (*Islamabad Wildlife Management Board v Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad* PLD 2021 Isl 6., 2021).

The continuation of colonial legal frameworks has also side lined the native ethical and religious standpoints. Islamic teachings focus on compassion, mercy and treating animals humane, which are not found in the statutory law to a large extent. The incorporation of these normative values into provincial legislation has not been meaningful, which again illustrates how colonial legal transplantation has disposed of the local moral properties without providing a consistent and coherent welfare-based substitute. Primarily, the provincial animal welfare regime in Pakistan exemplifies a paradox of post-colonial reform devolution has facilitated creativity as well as established inconsistency. It is still dominated by the colonial tradition of property-based control, and provincial developments are still fragmented, under-implemented, and conceptually constrained (Tahir, Azam, & Jabbar, 2024). In the absence of a unified national system that is based on animal sentience and active welfare requirements, there is a danger of provincial fragmentation that may continue to create gaps in the law and moral deficiency.

Courts as Catalysts of Compassion

Judicial activism has been evolved as a decisive move in animal welfare in Pakistan where legislative reform has not been done in a comprehensive manner. In a legal framework that is still largely parallel to colonial laws like the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1890, the judiciary has started playing a more proactive role in interpretation of constitutional principles to address gaps in the law. The study emphasizes that superior courts of Pakistan have started to appreciate animals as living creatures and not as property, as a result of which a new jurisprudence of animal welfare is emerging based on the principles of dignity, compassion, constitutive morality (Mughal, 2020).

The key aspect of this court interpreted broadly the Article 9 of the Constitution that ensures the right to life to the non-human beings. In rare circumstances, courts have increasingly understood the meaning of life as being about quality, dignity, and well-being and applied it to other beings as well (Constitution of Pakistan, Article 9). This interpretation approach has helped judges to take into consideration the issue of animal welfare even though there is no clear constitutional or statutory acknowledgment that animals are sentient beings. Connecting animal suffering with larger ethical and environment issues, courts have used the intervention as a means of the state's duty to promote humane governance. The Kaavan case is the most significant judicial activism case related to imprisoned Asian elephant captive in the Marghazar Zoo, Islamabad. The court proceeded to make an unprecedented examination of the issue of animal welfare and directly identified animals as sentient beings with naturally occurring behavioural and psychological requirements. Relying on international law, comparative law and science of animal cognition, the court stated that the further imprisonment of Kaavan was cruel and against constitutional principles of dignity and life. The ruling instructed the transfer of the elephant to a sanctuary, which became a landmark in the history of the animal welfare law of Pakistan (Saeed, 2021).

Notably, the Kaavan ruling brought about animal welfare as a constitutional issue as opposed to a discretion policy. The court underlined that state keeps animals as a trust and it has a moral and legal duty to take care of their well-being. This argument indicates a shift toward a property-based approach towards colonialism and is more reminiscent of contemporary welfare-founded and sentience-founded approaches witnessed in places like the UK. Even though the decision did not establish any binding animal rights, it exerted persuasive principles that the interests of animals must be taken into account by the law regardless of whether they belong to human possession (Koresh, 2020). Besides Kaavan, the study observes that there is a developing trend of judicial sensitivity on the issue of animal welfare in cases that may be related to zoos, wildlife, and environmental conservation. Judicial courts have been much more critical of negligence in administration, absence of regulatory control, and poor standards in captive facilities. The indirect reinforcement of animal welfare by environmental jurisprudence case law in particular relating to the biodiversity loss and the destruction of animal habitats has been through the ecological health-animal

well-being relationship. This indicates a new holistic approach in which animal welfare is placed in the wider constitutional context of environmental justice.

Judicial activism has also revealed institutional and implementation shortcomings of current animal welfare laws. Courts have repeatedly noted obsolete punishments, indeterminate statutory provisions and the lack of special enforcement agencies to be significant obstacles to efficient protection. The judiciary has tried to address legislative inertia by giving directives to the provincial governments and administrative authorities. Nonetheless, the thesis indicates that the intervention of the judiciary is still episodic and responsive to the litigation on the basis of public interest and not a systematic change (Sunstein & Nussbaum, 2005). The other significant issue of judicial reasoning that can be defined in the file is the combination of the moral and religious values. The socio-religious background of animal protection in Pakistan has been ethically advanced wherein courts have used the Islamic tenet of compassion and mercy to animals. This will help in bridging the existing discrepancies between the foreign colonial regulations and the native normative models which will help to increase the legitimacy of the animal welfare standards in the society.

Despite these developments, the paper cautions against overreliance in the court. Even though judicial activism is progressive, it does not preclude the necessity of a more comprehensive legislation relying on the sentience of animals, positive duties of care, and uniform enforcement mechanisms. The absence of binding precedence between the provinces and the inability to enforce judicial decisions tend to undermine the long-term usefulness of judicial rulings. Judicial activism in Pakistan is a growing awareness of animal rights that is confronted with colonial traditions of law (Pallotta, 2020). By using constitutional interpretation, comparative reasoning, and moral participation, courts have started to express a more human form of vision of the law where animal suffering is recognized and accountability of concerned authorities is enforced. Such inclusive jurisprudence forms the basis of the future legislative reform and the ultimate inclusion of animal welfare as a fundamental part of legal and constitutional order in Pakistan.

Gaps in Animal Welfare Legislation in Pakistan

The animal welfare laws in Pakistan, especially as represented by the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act of 1890, have significant gaps that undermine the success of protection and human treatment of animals. One of the legislative weaknesses is that there are no inclusive laws that have a wide range of concerns related to animal species and animal welfare. The current legal framework focuses more on domesticated animals but does not offer special protection to different species, such as the wildlife and stray animals. Although the current laws related to animals recognize the possibility that animals are

capable of experiencing pain and pleasure, it fails to specify that animals are sentient, which is highly essential in the improvement of animal welfare standards (Shamshad, Tansif Ur Rehman , & Amin Saudagar , 2025). The provisions on animal fighting in the legislation are particularly questionable, as they provide exceptions in cases where the suffering of the animals will be permitted as improbable, which consequently contributes to the deterioration of the key principles of animal rights.

Besides, there are weak and ineffective enforcement mechanisms of animal welfare laws in Pakistan. There is also a significant lack of trained personnel to enforce these laws. Limited resources become hurdle in preventing proper enforcement of the contemporary laws in Pakistan. In the absence of well-trained personnel and relevant resources, implementation of the current animal welfare laws becomes an uphill task, which translates to a high level of breaches (Hussain, Sial, & Usman , 2021). Indeed, there has been a report of high-rate slaughtering of stray dogs in inhumane ways projecting major loopholes in the practical implementation of the laws that are supposed to safeguard animals. Existence of legal mechanisms without stringent control does not necessarily mean that the law is followed by the concerned departments, authorities and the owners of animals which ultimately means that the cruelty may continue to thrive. Moreover, the OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health) has set principles and recommendations concerning animal welfare, which have been conspicuously missing in Pakistani laws including Five Freedoms of animals. These freedoms highlight the necessity of having animals live without hunger, suffering, pain, fear and freedom to express normal behaviour which are important to the well-being and humane treatment of animals (Ibrar, Manzoor, Qayyum, & Khadam, 2025).

Cultural attitudes and public awareness can also contribute largely to the issues that surround animal welfare legislation in Pakistan. People do not have a certain understanding of animal rights, and this fact worsens the issues of enforcement and adherence to the available laws. Several citizens are still ignorant of what the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act provides and which are their duties as animal welfare activists. Such lack of knowledge adds to the culture of ignoring or making animal suffering a natural event which hinders the development of a more human-centred society. Moreover, cultural beliefs and attitudes to animals affect the opinion on the rights and welfare of animals (Khan, Rizwan, Wang, Munir, & Hua, 2025). Animals are perceived more as a property or resources rather than beings that should be considered as living creatures which require ethical consideration. This cultural context makes it difficult to reform the animal welfare laws and increase the awareness of the population about the necessity of humane treatment. Specifically with respect to legislation, although the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act offers some basis in regard to the issue of animal cruelty, it is overall old-fashioned and falls short of current scientific knowledge regarding the treatment of animals. Another important area which is not provided in the laws is the ethical handling of animals in the research environment. At present,

no definitive legislation exists that governs the ethical treatment of animals involved in scientific research, which may lead to the presence of cruelty and pain in such cases that cannot be addressed. This is a notable concern especially as more animal research and testing in different fields continue to increase with the welfare of such animals needing to be preserved by strict regulations (Sarwar, 2025).

Finally, the weaknesses of animal welfare laws in Pakistan are based on the convergence of legislative gaps, enforcement issues, and sociocultural issues. These issues should be addressed in a comprehensive manner that involves the amendment of current laws to establish wholesome protection of all animal species, improved enforcement mechanisms by training and provision of necessary resources and development of public awareness programs to ensure that the citizens are educated on the rights and welfare of animals.³¹ In addition, the adoption of international standards like the Five Freedoms into the local laws of Pakistan would go a long way in enhancing the status of animal welfare in Pakistan to the global best practices and help animals receive the respect and dignity that they deserve (Yasin & Ahmad, 2023). The effort to amend the legal system to address these loopholes is not only legislatively important but is a moral obligation that is important as it shows how the society is concerned with caring, acting in a responsible manner, and acknowledging animals as living beings.

Learning from the UK: A Comprehensive Reform Path for Pakistan

The long-standing weaknesses of the animal welfare regime in Pakistan show the immediate necessity of the consistent and proactive reform agenda based on the comparative experience in the United Kingdom. Although there are occasional judicial activism and provincial efforts, the legal system of Pakistan is still restrained by colonial law, the lack of a proper system of enforcement and the lack of a clear moral and legal acknowledgments of treating animals as sentient beings. Reform that is meaningful must not be in the form of piecemeal amendments but a complete redirection of legal philosophy, institutional structure, enforcement strategies and attitudes of the society towards animals (Sabah, 2025). The most critical aspect of reform is the need to bring about a total change in legislation. The ongoing use of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1890 is also a structural barrier because the law is based on an out-dated model of cruelty prevention instead of a welfare-centred model. By substituting this law with an updated Animal Welfare Act, similar to the Animal Welfare Act of 2006 in the United Kingdom, the animal sentience would become the normative basis of legal protection explicitly recognized in Pakistan. Adding the Five Freedoms, i.e. freedom from hunger, discomfort, pain, injury, disease, fear, and distress, would give a clear and comprehensive way of evaluating wellbeing of animals in farming, transport, research, captivity and companionate (Favre, 2010).

One of the most significant points of reform is the extension of the definition of animal. The limited

definition by the 1890 Act excludes wildlife, laboratory animals and zoo animals which are captively bred. On the contrary, the UK broadens the definition of animals to include vertebrates and has the capacity to expand the interpretation to include sentient invertebrates (Garner, 2024). Pakistan ought to embrace a broad definition that encompasses all living animals except human beings based on their sentient abilities hence provide a wide legal coverage. Covert cruelty is also an issue that should be addressed, yet it is legally invisible in Pakistan. The current legislation is concerned with the apparent forms of violence, but it does not pay much attention to psychological pain, deprivation of basic needs, or poor living conditions. Similar to the UK practice, Pakistani law should acknowledge both bodily and emotional harm, establish objective standards to determine suffering and eliminate open-ended qualifiers like the term unnecessary cruelty which allow some form of abuse to be tolerated in law. The clear definition of cruelty would suit the domestic legislation to the international standards and OIE principles ((OIE), 2019).

Institutional mechanisms should also support legislative reforms. Pakistan does not have a centralized body that focuses on animal welfare. It is critical to have an independent Animal Welfare Authority that is similar to the DEFRA in the UK. This type of authority must have powers to develop a policy, make inspections, appoint trained inspectors, terminate licenses, and liaison with international bodies. It must also monitor animal shelters, rehabilitation facilities, veterinary facilities, and education programs to the people (Mike, 2001). In order to make it sustainable, a National Animal Welfare Fund would be established, which would be financed by government allocations fines, and donations, and would be managed in a transparent manner by the Authority. In addition to this, the reform of penalties and mechanisms of their enforcement is urgently needed (Mansoori, 2024). The present fines and brief jail sentences in the 1890 Act are meaningless and irrelevant. It would be much more effective to align penalties along with the UK model, which is to introduce incarceration up to a year or more, unlimited fines, disqualification orders, seizure and rehoming of animals, offender registers and community service. There should be regular audits and inspection of animals as well as licensing of breeding, trading, transportation, and exhibition of animals, high standards of welfare and mandatory education to the owners of licenses.

Another pillar of great concern is judicial reform. Although Pakistani courts have taken a progressive stance in regard to protection of animal welfare, these gains would be institutionalized by setting up animal welfare courts or benches. The adjudication would be provided by judges with animal welfare law and veterinary science and environmental ethics training (Dawn, 2025). Keeping databases on convicted criminals and distributing such information to the government and the civil society would also ensure that repeat offenses are avoided. In addition to law and institution, constitutional and

normative change is suggested. Based on the idea of the constitutionally recognized animal sentience in other countries, Pakistan ought to reform its constitution to compel legislators to harmonize the laws with sentience-based principles and global principles. This would be interpretively and symbolically strengthened by giving the 1890 Act a new name signifying a welfare-oriented intention, e.g. the Pakistani Animal Rights and Welfare Act.

Lastly, education, religious activity and provincial collaboration are essential. The inclusion of animal welfare into legal education, cultivating awareness among the population based on culturally and religiously relevant stories and cooperation with international animal welfare organizations would increase legitimacy, experience, and international orientation. Ensuring global best practices by reforming euthanasia standards and requiring humane procedures and professional training would even more bring Pakistan in line with global standards. These steps taken together constitute a comprehensive reform agenda that will help Pakistan to overcome the colonial tradition of its law to embrace a more humane, sentience-based, and responsible system of animal welfare, and reinstatement of the law to adapt to the widening moral horizons (Zafar, 2022).

Conclusion

The history of animal welfare law in Pakistan shows that there is a long-standing conflict between colonial law, the new ethical consciousness, and institutional constraints. The legal framework is based more or less on the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1890, and it has been static and is focused on the prevention of extreme cruelty and not on overall animal welfare. This colonial legacy has constrained the responsiveness of the law to the realities of the contemporary world, such as scientific understanding of animal sentience, changing human-animal relationships and the development of international standards. This means that animal welfare is still on the periphery of the law and governance systems in Pakistan. Judicial activism has partly helped to fill this gap. The case concerning Kaavan elephant has been a significant change in the norms of animal rights awareness by recognizing the animals as sentient beings and focusing on the role of the state in ensuring that they are not subjected to suffering. Wider judicial involvement of environmental and welfare values is yet another indication of the growing ethical awareness in constitutional interpretation. Even though such interventions can give moral guidance and symbolic movement, they are still reactive, case based. It is impossible to substitute extensive laws, regular enforcement, or effective institutions in courts.

The provincial developments following 18th Constitutional Amendment bring out both opportunity and fragmentation. The animal welfare laws like the Punjab Animal Welfare Act 2018 have proven that reform is possible, but there are no national standard provisions, and this has led to different

protection levels of entities. Animal welfare is therefore geographically and politically dependent but not based on regular legal principle. The experience of the United Kingdom in relation to the idea of animal sentience shows that the identification of animal sentience, the proactive welfare responsibilities, and the use of more effective institutional enforcement can reform the law and social attitudes. In the case of Pakistan, significant advances can only be made by shifting to rights-conscious, welfare-based model beyond colonial minimalism. Overall legislative reform, backed by effective institutions, court capacity, popular education and international orientation is vital. Animal welfare protection is not always an ethical act, but rather the sign of legal maturity and good governance.

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