

## **Balancing Act: The Impact of Community Feeders on Free-Ranging Dog Populations**

**Funded by:** The Association for the Study of Animal Behaviour, UK

**Institution:** IISER Kolkata

**Project supervisors:** Prof. Anindita Bhadra and Dr. Rubina Mondal, Dog Lab

### **Project background:**

This study aims to investigate the influence of communal feeders on free-ranging dog population, social dynamics and behaviours in India, using a mixed-method approach. In India, community feeders who provide food and care for urban animals, particularly free-ranging dogs (FRDs), also known as street dogs, are gaining attention as both heroes and villains depending on public perception. They form groups to feed, medicate, and foster animals, often collaborating with activists, shelters, and veterinarians. FRDs, comprising a significant portion of the world's dog population, exhibit diverse social behaviours shaped by their dependence on human interactions for survival. Despite their importance, few studies have directly explored the impact of feeders on community animals, focusing instead on perceptions and extrapolated effects. However, research indicates the necessity of feeders for animal health and population control. By documenting the direct effects of feeding on FRDs, this project seeks to deepen understanding of the complex relationship between humans and urban animals in the Global South, shedding light on a crucial but understudied aspect of animal welfare.

**Position:** Field Assistant

**Number of positions:** 5

**Field Location:** Kolkata to Kalyani, West Bengal

**Duration:** 6-10 months

**Salary:** Rs. 10,000 per month.

The candidate needs to arrange for their accommodation.

We will cover all fieldwork-related expenses (including food and travel).

**Essential qualifications:**

- B.Sc. or M.Sc. in Zoology or allied subjects with a keen interest in street dogs and animal behavior.
- **Must be willing to commit for at least 6 months** towards the study. We are **not** looking for short-term interns.
- Must be able to converse in Bengali, English and/or Hindi.
- Be comfortable working during the night.
- Must be comfortable around street dogs.
- Should be willing to be vaccinated against rabies (provided by the lab)

While candidates from all across India are eligible to apply, preference will be given to local candidates to reduce the burden on the candidates' living expenses.

**Desirable qualifications:**

- Previous experience in animal behavior study.
- Two-wheeler or four-wheeler license

**Age limit:** Not more than 32 years on the last date of application. Age relaxation will be as per GOI rules.

Candidates will be interviewed before selection. Recruited candidates will receive an experience letter, credit, and authorship in all publications resulting from the project (based on performance).

**How to Apply:**

**Upload your CV along with your details by 20th August 2024 here:**

<https://forms.gle/durSpkozEUG5EFkj8>

**Shortlisted candidates will be called for an interview by the end of August 2024 at IISER Kolkata, Mohanpur 741246, West Bengal.**