राष्ट्रदुत

**#PRACTICAL** 

# HIGH Heels For Men

Why Heels were originally worn by Men: A Historical Perspective





oday, high heels are often seen as a symbol of feminine fashion, elegant, stylish

tical and social reasons that reveal much about history, power, and style.

he story of heels begins in ancient Persia

around the 10th century. where mounted warriors used high-heeled shoes to help secure their feet in stirrups while riding horses. These heels improved grip and balance, giving cavalry soldiers greater control and

#### **Heels as a Status Symbol**

y the time heels arrived in Europe, they evolved beyond their practical function. High heels became a powerful status symbol, signaling wealth, nobility, and military prowess. The higher the heel, the greater the wear-

er's social standing. Kings, nobles, and military leaders wore heels to

H eels remained a part of men's fashion for centuries but began to shift dur ing the 18th century. As clothing styles changed, heels became more delicate and associated with female attire. By the 19th century, heels had largely disappeared from men's wardrobes and became

more firmly linked to women's fashion.

were not always designed for

women. In fact, heels were ini-

tially worn by men, with their

origins deeply rooted in prac-

effectiveness in battle. As

Persian influence spread

westward, the use of heels

traveled along with it.

European men, particularly

nobles and aristocrats.

adopted heels in the 16th and

17th centuries to emulate the

practical and prestigious

styles of Persian horsemen.

distinguish themselves

from commoners. For exam-

ple, King Louis XIV of

France was famous for his

red-heeled shoes, which

became a hallmark of

sonal preference even led to

laws regulating who could

wear certain heels, reinforc-

ing social hierarchy.

French aristocracy. His per-

The transformation was also influenced by changing societal roles and gender norms. While heels once symbolized power and dominance for men, they gradually morphed into a tool for enhancing femininity and elegance.

#### Why Did Heels Fall Out of Fashion for Men?

everal factors contributed to the decline of heels in men's fashion. • **Practicality:** Industrialization and modernization called for

more practical, comfortable footwear for men, especially as soldiers and workers needed mobility and safety. • Changing Aesthetics: The rise of new masculine ideals

the ornate styles of previous centuries. • Gender Norms: Social conventions increasingly linked heels with femininity, leading to their association predominantly with women's fashion.

favoured simpler, more functional dress, moving away from

#### The Modern Resurgence

nterestingly, heels for men L are making a comeback in some circles today, especially in avant-garde fashion and performance arts, challenging traditional gender norms and celebrating style beyond conventional categories. High heels were once the

domain of men, warriors, kings, and aristocrats who used them for practicality and status. Over time, heels transitioned to become a distinctly feminine fashion item, shaped by cultural shifts and evolving ideas about gender and power.



# 'Cess' for Stray Dog Menace?

As much as it sounds easy, there are major logistic problems that have been given scant attention. Delhi is supposed to have a seven to eight lakhs stray dog population. To effectively enforce the Supreme Court resolution, approximately 1,100 stray dogs need to be caught daily and all have to be sterilised within a 24 hour period. The emphasis is on the female! This would mean an approximate two year cycle of Animal Birth Control. If this is implemented, the dog population would come within control. The survivors then would require shelter, attention and nourishment for at least three days. Please remember that at the present moment, WHO reports 5,726 deaths annually from Dog Bites in India. Newspaper reports claim as many 45 children dying from dog attacks every day.





Dr. Goutam Sen CTVS Surgeon

he stray dog problem is a major conundrum. As much as we love dogs as pets, we are averse to caring for the stray ones. Where is the difference? Pets are considered loving and faithful while the strays are just the reverse,

ferocious and aggressive. Addressing the stray dog issue requires a multi-faceted approach, balancing the welfare of both animals and humans. The perception that stray dogs are inherently ferocious and aggressive, while pets are not, often stems from a lack of understanding of canine behaviour and the different environments these dogs live in. However, the core of the problem lies in irresponsible pet ownership, inadequate waste management and the failure of local authorities to implement and enforce effective Animal Birth

Control (ABC) programmes. The distinction between a pet and a stray dog is primarily one of environment and social milieu. A pet dog receives food, shelter and medical care, just as much as

human child. It is therefore har monised to live with humans. A stray dog, however, must fend for itself. It lives in a state of constant struggle for survival, shelter, scavenging for food and navigating threats from other animals and humans. This constant struggle, not an innate nature, is what can make stray dogs appear aggressive or warv of humans.

The idea that we are treating dogs like humans is a valid point of contention. The core argument for not allowing strays to roam free is not about treating them like humans, but rather recognising their status as animals that can pose a risk to public health and safety. The risk of dog bites, the spread of diseases like rabies and the potential for traffic accidents (chasing of motorcycles/cycles and even early morning runners) are all legitimate

The Supreme Court of India has weighed in on the issue advocating for a sterilisation and vaccination program (ABC) as the primary method of stray dog management. The court's stance is based on the idea that culling or mass killing of dogs is not only inhumane but also ineffective. When dogs are removed effect.' New dogs from neighbouring areas or litters quickly move in to fill the vacant territory, leading to a perpetual cycle of culling and repopulation. Sterilisation and vaccination, on the other hand, are



### **#DOGS**



designed to stabilise the stray dog population over time and reduce the spread of diseases. As much as it sounds easy, there are major logistic problems that have been given scant attention. Delhi is supposed to have a seven to eight lakhs stray dog population. To effectively enforce the Supreme Court resolution, approximately 1,100 stray dogs need to be caught daily and all have to be sterilised within a 24 hour period. The emphasis is on the female! This would mean an approximate two vear cycle of Animal Birth Control. If this is implemented, the dog population would come within control. The survivors then would require shelter, attention and nourishment for at least three days. Please remember that at the present moment, WHO reports 5,726 deaths annually from Dog Bites in India. Newspaper reports claim as many 45 children dying from dog

attacks every day. This approach aligns with a global movement towards humane animal management. Organisations like the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) have long advocated for vaccination and sterilisation as the most effective and ethical way to control rabies and manage stray dog populations. The legal framework in India, specifically, the Prevention of



which includes the mass killing of

animals. The Supreme Court is correct in its emphasis on humane treatment and long-term effectiveness. However, a successful solution requires more than just judicial pronouncements. It needs a collaborative effort from the government, non-profit organisations and the public. The root of responsible pet ownership is not in the abandonment of pets. Strict laws and public awareness campaigns are needed to promote responsible pet ownership, including mandatory micro-chipping, sterilisation of pets and severe penalties for abandonment or unnecessary breeding.

Effective Animal Birth Control (ABC) programmes must be implemented systematically across cities and towns. This involves regular

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sterilisation and vaccination drives and the establishment of dedicated shelters and medical facilities for dogs which are literally non-existent at the moment

Stray dogs are often attracted to human settlements by accessible garbage. Improved waste manage ment and sanitation will reduce the food sources for strays, naturally reducing their population and dependence on human areas. This is now evident in 'Smart Cities' in India. Instead of demonising strays. some communities have found success in caring for them. This can include designated feeding spots volunteer-led monitoring and reporting of sick or injured dogs to authorities. The major question of who bears the cost is critical. The current model often relies on an erratic mix of government funding non-profit contributions and individual donations. This is unsustainable and sporadic. It leads to a patchy and inefficient system.

The idea of a small 'dog cess' (At the moment, we have cess on education and oil! Many more are hidden in our electricity, municipal and water bills.) on taxes is a viable and potentially effective solution. A small, earmarked amount could provide a consistent revenue stream for animal welfare programmes. This funding could be used for establishing and operating animal shelters and veterinary clinics. Funding ABC programmes on a large scale

and hiring/training animal control officers is the call of the day. Think of the number of people saved from dog bites! (Imagine also at the same time, individual medical cost and work hours lost.) This would shift the financial burden from a few dedicated individuals and organisations to a collective responsibility. It would also create a sense of ownership among citizens, as they would be directly contributing to the solu-

NOW IS THE TIME FOR STRAY DOG LOVERS AND HATERS TO JOIN HANDS AND PUT THE MONEY WHERE THEIR MOUTH

The problem of stray dogs is not

a simple choice between culling and letting dogs roam free. The best way to resolve the problem is to implement a comprehensive, humane and sustainable strategy. The Supreme Court is correct in advocating not only ethical but also scientifically proven to be the most effective in the long run. The cost of such a programme is significant, but it is a necessary investment in public health, safety and animal welfare. A dedicated 'dog cess' or similar funding mechanism would provide the financial stability required to implement these programmes effec tively and continuously, ensuring that the burden is shared by all who benefit from a safer and more humane society.



lem of human-wildlife conflict in urban environments. The core of this issue lies in the fact that human expansion and development often encroaches on animal habitats, forcing different species to adapt to living in close proximity to people. The 'issue' doesn't end; it requires a tailored management approach for each species.

celebration of connection, learning, and the power of voices that inform, inspire, and spark meaningful conversations globally.

The management of different species, like monkeys, cows, foxes and rats, varies significantly due to their different behaviours, ecological roles and their relationship with

In India, cows have a unique and protected status. Their management is driven by a combination of religious reverence and public safety concerns. Solutions often involve moving them to shelters or 'gaushalas' (cow shelters) and discouraging their presence on roads to prevent traffic accidents. The goal is to relocate and care for them, not to eradi-

Monkeys are intelligent and highly adaptable. They often become a nuisance by raiding homes and crops. Management strategies focus on deterrence and prevention, such as using monkey repellents, securing food sources and in some cases, sterilisation programmes. Their intelligence and social structures (religious connotations) make them particularly challenging to manage

Rats are often seen as pests due to their role in spreading disease and damaging property. Their management typically involves sanitation, traps and poison. The goal is often population control or elimination in uman spaces, as they offer little benefit and pose significant health risks. While the Pied Piper of Hamelin story offers a compelling, albeit fictional, solution for a rat infestation, modern urban wildlife managemen relies on a more nuanced, multi faceted strategy that prioritises coex-

istence over eradication. In reality, a 'one-and-done' approach like magical pipes or mass culling is ineffective and often leads to worse outcomes. For instance, eliminating a population of rats or dogs can lead to a 'vacuum effect' where the remaining animals reproduce at a faster rate or new animals migrate in, negating the initial

The key to resolving humanwildlife conflict is long-term management and coexistence, not temporary fixes. This requires a shift in perspective from viewing these animals as a problem to be solved, to a part of the urban ecosystem that needs to be managed responsibly. This involves changing human behaviour and attitudes, which has always been the crux of the issue. Securing garbage, not feeding animals and responsible pet ownership are crucial.

The issue of animals in human proximity is not a single problem but a series of distinct challenges that require species-specific, humane and sustainable solutions, built on the principles of coexis-

It is time when we humans learn that our existence is a priority but not at the cost of all so called 'Strays.' Each member of the animal system has a role to play!



## #INNOVATIONS

# A Forgotten River Tradition

#### Inflated Bullock Skins as Boats in Colonial India

inflated skin was buoyant

and flexible, making it sur-

prisingly effective at navigat-

ing the rugged river terrain

of north India. People would

either sit on the skins or tie

multiple skins together with

wooden frames to create a

required no timber, nails

or engines, just locally

Adaptable: In areas

where rivers were season-

al and water levels unpre-

dictable, these inflatable

crafts could be quickly

deployed and easily

available animal hides.

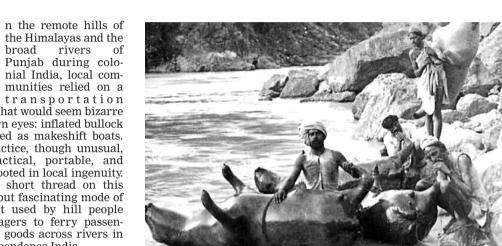
raft-like platform.

for hill regions.

Economical:

packed away.

the Himalayas and the broad rivers of Puniab during colonial India, local communities relied on a transportation method that would seem bizarre to modern eyes: inflated bullock skins used as makeshift boats. This practice, though unusual, was practical, portable, and deeply rooted in local ingenuity. Here's a short thread on this strange but fascinating mode of transport used by hill people and villagers to ferry passengers and goods across rivers in pre-independence India.



#### 1. The Basics: What Were Bullock-Skin Boats?

hese 'boats' were made from the flayed and dried hides of bullocks (or buffaloes). After being stitched and sealed to prevent leakage, the hides were inflated with air, often using mouth or bellows, and tied off, forming a floating air sac. The

2. Why Use Bullock Skins?

n the Himalayan and ■ Punjab regions, river crossings were a daily necessity, especially for villagers, traders, and labourers who had no access to permanent bridges or ferryboats.

Lightweight Portable: Bullock-skin boats were easily carried over long distances by foot, making them ideal

trained boatman, would inflate the skin and tie it shut at the neck and legs. The passenger would straddle or sit on the inflated hide, often hold-

ing onto a rope.

4. Historical Mentions ritish officers, travelers,

**D** and geographers during the 19th and early 20th centuries documented this curious method in travelogues and administrative reports. In the Punjab Gazetteers and travel writings, inflated bullock-skin boats are described as a common sight near fast-flowing rivers, espe-

• A person, usually a • The boatman would then the skin, using his body and a paddle to steer.

Sometimes, two inflated hides were tied together to carry larger loads like grain sacks or small livestock.

cially during monsoon sea-

sons when temporary cross-

ings were washed away. The

British were at times bewil-

dered by the sight, but they

recognized its effectiveness

In fact, some colonial troops

adopted similar inflatable

skin pontoons for military

river crossings, inspired by

these indigenous methods.

# Disappearance

6. Decline and

ern engineering.

5. A Precursor to

**Modern Rafting?** 

behind the bullock-skin boat

able rafts and packrafts, used in

remote expeditions around the

world. Both rely on air-filled,

flexible materials for buoyancy

demonstrating how traditional

practices often anticipate mod

isn't far from modern-day inflat

W ith the advent of steel bridges, concrete roads, and motorized ferries in the mid-20th century, this unusual form of transport began to fade. Environmental changes, urban expansion, and changing livestock practices also reduced the availability of bullock hides for such use. Today. the practice survives only in oral history and a few ethno-

#### A Story of Innovation

graphic accounts.

he use of inflated bullock skins as river transport in colonial India is more than a quirky historical footnote, it's a testament to human adaptability and resourcefulness in the face of geographic challenges. In an era before industrial conven ience, communities used what they had, hides, air, and muscle, to build a transport system perfectly suited to their environment. In retelling these stories, we reconnect with a world where

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

#### THE WALL

THE PERSON, BE IT GENTLEMAN OR LADY, WHO HAS NOT PLEASURE IN A GOOD NOVEL, MUST INTOLERABLY STUPID -JANE AUSTEN

#### **BABY BLUES**

I was just messing with you WANDA, I DON'T REALLY WANT TO BECOME A CONSTRUCTION WORKER.



