

INVESTIGATION REPORT ON MUMBAI'S VICTORIA HORSES

The latest, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India investigation of Mumbai's Victoria stables in which they are kept was carried out between 12 and 28 September 2012 to reiterate the unhygienic conditions in which the horses are housed, their pathetic treatment when they are worked and the cruelty inherent in keeping them on Mumbai's roads. The investigation was also carried out to reiterate the traffic hazard the horse carriages create in Mumbai and the threat to human health the filthy stables pose.

The investigation was carried out by direct observation at the following study areas – stables/sheds, joyride routes, roads and beaches in Mumbai. As part of the investigations, both videographic and photographic evidences were gathered. The investigation was carried out in nine stables/sheds in Mumbai and 42 individual horses were observed.

The investigation was carried out in the following places:

SHEDS inspected:

1. Shed in the bylane of Free Press Journal Marg, Nariman Point
2. Shed at PD Mello Road, near the dargah located between St. George Hospital and CST
3. Shed in Qureshi Nagar at Wadala Market junction
4. Shed by the park in Kane Nagar, Antop Hill
5. Shed by the cement factories near Motilal Nagar, Kopri Agar, Antop Hill
6. Shed on Eksar Village main road, ahead of the Eksar Fish Market, Borivali West
7. Shed behind Kanchpada No. 1, Ramchandra Lane Extn., Malad West
8. Shed beside the garbage dump opposite St. Roque Shrine, Kolaveri village, Kalina
9. Shed behind Our Lady of Egypt Church, Kalina

JOYRIDE ROUTES inspected:

1. Nariman Point
2. Gateway of India
3. Colaba Causeway
4. Cooperage Garden, opposite Mantralaya
5. Around Almeida Park, Bandra

BEACHES inspected:

1. Dadar Chowpatty
2. Versova beach

The findings of the investigation are broadly divided into these categories:

1. Findings in **stables/sheds**

2. Findings on **roads** and **beaches** including popular joyride routes where horse carriages ply
3. Physical condition of the horses
4. Psychological condition of the horses
5. Rules flouted
6. Traffic hazard and rules

FINDINGS IN STABLES/SHEDS:

- A. **Garbage:** The total number of stables in Mumbai is 10. The investigations covered all of the stables minus that used for horse racing. All of the remaining stables/sheds are unlicensed and therefore illegal. They are also unfit for horses or humans. The two sheds in Qureshi Nagar at Wadala Market have public lavatories on either side. The horses are forced to live with the constant nauseating stench emanating from the lavatories. The shed located on the Eksar Village main road houses the horses next to an open drainage sewer. Other horses in the vicinity are tied near garbage dumps. The shed opposite the St Roque Shrine in Kalina is located atop a garbage dump which is also the locality's human defecating site. The shed located in at Free Press Journal Marg is surrounded by garbage. The open site in Motilal Nagar in Antop Hill where horses are kept is located in the midst of an open dump yard and cement factories. The tethered horses are forced to live amongst pigs, mosquitoes and flies that breed in the stagnated drainage water, rotting garbage and human excreta. The fine cement powder that blows over from the factories creates the risk of serious respiratory problems in the horses living in this open shed without boundary walls. The garbage and fecal matter amongst which the horses are housed put the horses at risk of contracting life threatening diseases like tetanus, glanders etc.



Figure 1: A horse tied to a wooden pole atop a garbage site at the shed opposite St Roque Shrine in Kalina (18 September 2012)



Figure 2: Slimy garbage surrounds the horses in the Motilal Nagar shed in Antop Hill. (17 September 2012)

- B. **Poor space, light and ventilation:** The dearth of space in all the aforementioned sheds is unacceptable. The sheds have barely enough space to fit the number horses crammed in them, with no room for the horses to move or turn around. The Kane Nagar shed is a room with almost no ventilation and a complete absence of natural light, barring the narrow entrance. The so-called shed located behind the Our Lady of Egypt Church in Kalina is a stuffy room in a building located in a cramped colony. The ventilation is pitiable. The room located in the labyrinth of walkways in Kanchpada No. 1, Ramchandra Lane Extension in Malad West where horses are kept is cramped, with no light and poor ventilation. Each day, three full grown horses jostle for space in the dark room here, the sight of which looks no different from prisoners held captive in a tiny cell. The state in PD Mello Road's shed located near the Fire Station is similar as the horses live in rooms inside a dilapidated house in utter darkness that have very poor ventilation. In the shed in Qureshi Nagar in Wadala Market, gigantic sheets of plastic cover hide the shed from the sight of passers-by. Tethered by their rear legs and necks, the horses struggle for their share of measly space in these rooms-turned-sheds, staring at the filthy walls in front of them. Photographic evidence authenticates the shocking practice of forcing horses to live in suffocating conditions in dark, cramped rooms. The lack of ventilation could result in respiratory problems for the horses.



Figure 3: A horse tethered in the dark, unventilated Wadala Market shed, covered with plastic sheets. (13 September 2012)



Figure 4: Horses tied up in a dark room in the PD Mello Road shed. (14 September 2012)



Figure 5: Horses jostle for space in the Wadala Market shed. (13 September 2012)

C.

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ilth and lack of drainage: Cleanliness and proper drainage was absent in almost all sheds that were inspected. Investigations reveal that horses in the PD Mello Road shed, Qureshi Nagar (in Wadala) shed and Motilal Nagar (in Antop Hill) shed, live in piles of their own faeces. In most places horses are kept are in rooms in *chawls*, slums or shanties and there is absence of basic drainage which causes the faeces and urine to accumulate.



The undisposed excreta serve as breeding grounds for flies, germs and disease.

D. **Poor feed:** Apart from the uninhabitable surroundings, many horses are provided with rotten vegetables and dried foliage as fodder. Most sheds/stables lacked a hygienic mechanism to store and offer fodder to the horses. Horses in the Qureshi Nagar shed were fed on maize leaves that were strewn on the floor mixed with dung. Horses need a balanced, nutritious diet. Photographic evidence highlights malnourishment in horses that are made to work on Mumbai's streets every day. Some sheds had insufficient fodder for horses and the hungry animals were observed tossing the fodder buckets in helplessness.

Figure 6: Owing to the absence of a drainage system, a horse is forced to live amid dung and urine in the PD Mello Road shed. Notice the short, tight rope with which he is tied. (14 September 2012)



Figure 7: Horses feed on vegetable waste strewn on wet sand near garbage at Dadar Chowpatty. (28 September 2012)



Figure 8: Horses feed on vegetable waste strewn on the urine-covered floor in the Qureshi Nagar shed. (13 September 2013)

- E. **No water:** There is a dearth of drinking water for the horses in the stables. Most sheds like the ones in Malad West, PD Mello Road, St Roque Shrine in Kalina and Qureshi Nagar in Wadala Market were devoid of drinking water for the horses. Refusing horses of a need as basic as clean drinking water is inhumane and unacceptable. Other horses were provided with dirty water. There is no facility to provide any of the horses water while they work.



Figure 9: A horse feeds on the road and is deprived of drinking water on Marine Drive. (12 September 2012)

- F. **Inhumane tying:** The horses were found tied tightly by short ropes that made reaching out for food a struggle. Horses, such as the ones found tied in Qureshi Nagar, ended up having to lift their rear legs that were tied, to reach out to the fodder.



Figure 10: A horse whose hind legs are tied together in the PD Mello Road shed (14 September 2012)

FINDINGS ON ROADS, JOYRIDE ROUTES AND BEACHES

- A. **Overworking:** Horses are worked all day and forced to work beyond the 9 hour limit. Victorias ply well past midnight on Marine Drive on weekends and public holidays, and are also overworked by being forced to pull victorias with more than 4 passengers onboard.



Figure 11: A horse works past midnight on Marine Drive. (12 September 2012)

- B. **Cruel equipment:** Most saddle parts used are of low quality and build which cause the horses pain and severe discomfort when they pull heavy carts and passengers. Most mouth pieces or bit are rusted. Many carriage drivers also use sharp spiked bits in head collars that pierce the horses' gums, causing them to bleed. The shed in Wadala Market had head collars with spiked bits and pointed, rusted whipping sticks.



Figure 12: A clear shot of a spiked bit, the use of which is prohibited in a horse's head collar, on a horse on Marine Drive (12 September 2012)

- C. **Weapons:** Carriage-drawn horses are subjected to merciless whipping with the use of cruel tools. The horses are whipped repeatedly to force the horses to trot fast amidst high vehicular traffic zones or if the horses slow down owing to exhaustion.

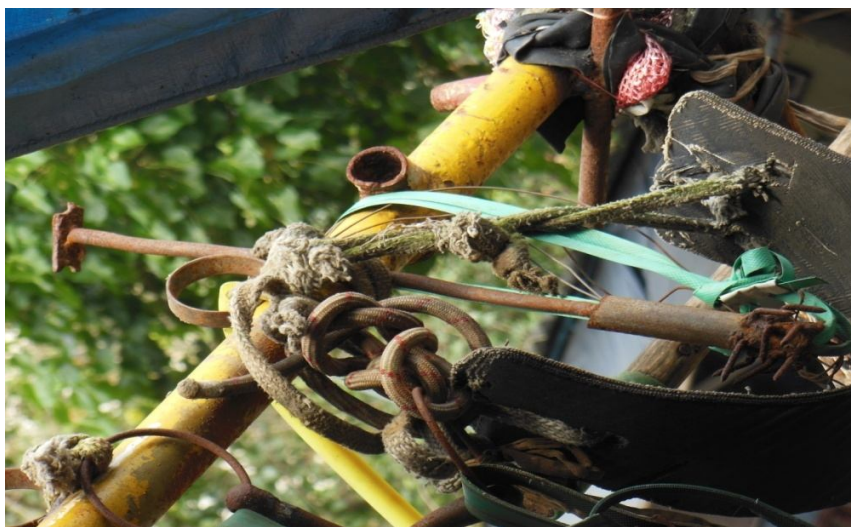


Figure 13: A rusted, spiked stick used for whipping horses, found at the Qureshi Nagar shed (13 September 2012)

- D. Heavy loads:** The horses are forced to lug heavy carriages. Even smaller horses like the ones that are used to offer joyrides in Dadar Chowpatty, are made to pull huge carts with heavy wooden logs wearing down their necks. When horses of different sizes are put together, the burden of the weight and wood becomes worse. The horses are forced to bear the weight of heavy wood work even when they are standing idle.



Figure 14: Burdened by heavy logs, horses of different sizes droop under excessive weight at Dadar Chowpatty. (14 September 2012)

- E. Over-crowding:** Many more adults than the permissible limit are stuffed onto the Victorias to maximize profit on each joyride trip. The rule is abused everyday and the situation worsens on weekends when families and friends throng the joyrides.
- F. Sickness:** Sick, lame horses are made to ply on the roads. Horses suffering from osteoarthritis (painful inflammation of joints) and tenosynovitis (painful inflammation of tendons and ligaments) are made to ply on the streets instead of being given medical attention and rest.

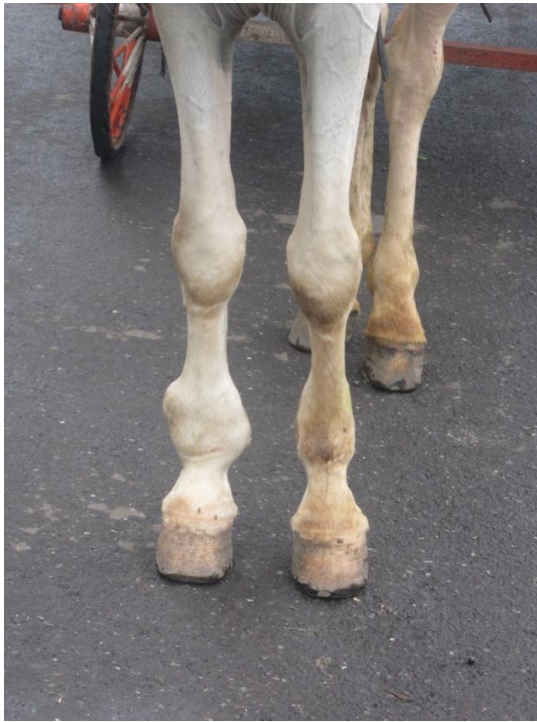


Figure 15: Osteoarthritis in horses can be identified by swollen legs. The condition cannot be reversed by veterinary treatment and care, including surgery.

- G. **Whipping:** Horses are mercilessly whipped by drivers to force the horses to trot faster on high-traffic stretches like Colaba Causeway. Some drivers attempt to cover the wounds inflicted from repeated whipping by applying lime mortar to camouflage the wounds.



Figure 16: Horses in the PD Mello Road shed have whipping wounds on their backs. (14 September 2012)

- H. Irresponsible driving:** Horse carriage drivers often occupy the high speed vehicular zone, i.e. right hand side of the road, causing inconvenience to vehicular traffic that in turn blare horns that scare the horses. Frightened horses are known to suddenly bolt and run.
- I. No water:** Horses were not given water between rides and there is no facility to provide them with water. Insufficient drinking water causes horses to collapse.
- J. Poor health:** Many horses were seen resting one or two legs too frequently while pointing the toe on ground, which is an indication of pain.



Figure 17: A horse resting a hind foot. Notice the deep cut on the other hind knee. (12 September 2012)



Figure 18: A horse resting and pointing on one hind leg, spotted at Dadar Chowpatty (14 September 2012)

- K. **Improper Storage of Feed:** Feed in many sheds was found strewn on the ground or stored in plastic buckets and BMC tar push-carts. This photo is from Wadala Market, PD Mello Road, St. Roque Shrine in Kalina. Horses on Dadar Chowpatty had to eat the feed thrown on wet sand near garbage.



Figure 19: This photo from Wadala Market shed shows vegetable waste mixed with horses' dung, highlighting the improper way fodder is stored. (13 September 2012)

PHYSICAL CONDITION OF HORSES:

- A. **Swollen joints (Osteoarthritis):** The single most common physical aberration found in horses used to haul carriages in Mumbai were swollen joints. Due to overexertion and improper farriery, horses develop osteoarthritis which can be identified by swollen joints. This condition is permanent and cannot be reversed if not treated in its early stages. Horses suffering from the same are under severe pain due to the exertion, and many horses with swollen joints were seen plying on the roads.



Figure 20: Swollen joints are common among carriage-drawing horses who ply on joyride routes, such as this one, spotted on Marine Drive. (12 September 2012)



Figure 21: The extent of swelling is high in overworked horses such as this one, who was spotted pulling a Victoria.

- B. **Inflammation of ligaments:** Another medical condition rampant in the horses used to haul carriages was tenosynovitis, the inflammation of tendons and ligaments. Horses suffering from the same were being made to work as opposed to rest and be treated.
- C. **Lameness:** The latest investigation also found that lame horses were forced to work on the streets.
- D. **Whipping:** Repeated brutal whipping by drivers cause horses immense pain and injuries. The investigation revealed that a number of horses plying on the streets were subject to merciless whipping that caused horses to bleed.
- E. **Saddle and other poor equipment injuries:** Photographs taken at Colaba Causeway, Marine Drive and inside the PD Mello Road stable show open wounds on the horses' backs. Several horses also had brushing wounds on their legs and/or saddle wounds on their body.

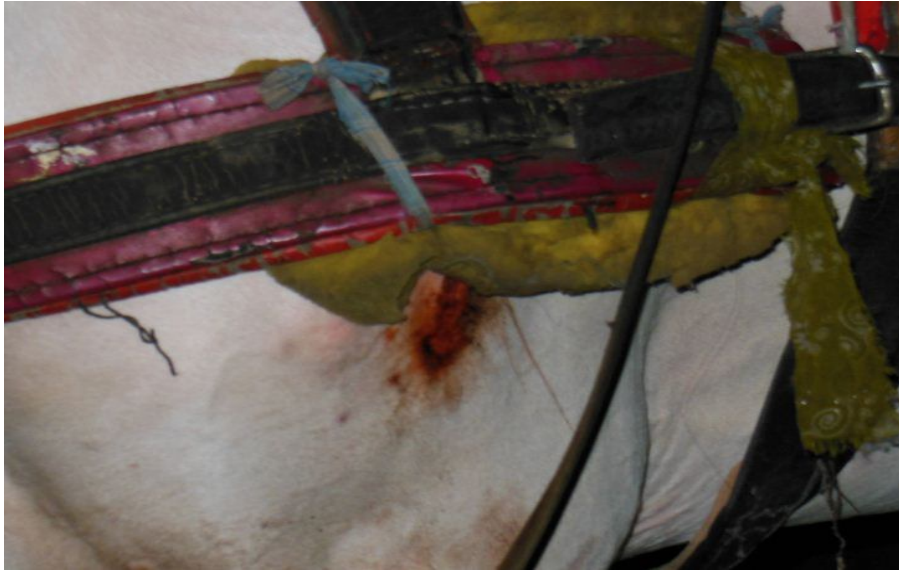


Figure 22: A part of a wound on a horse plying on Marine Drive is visible beneath the breast band. (12 September 2012)

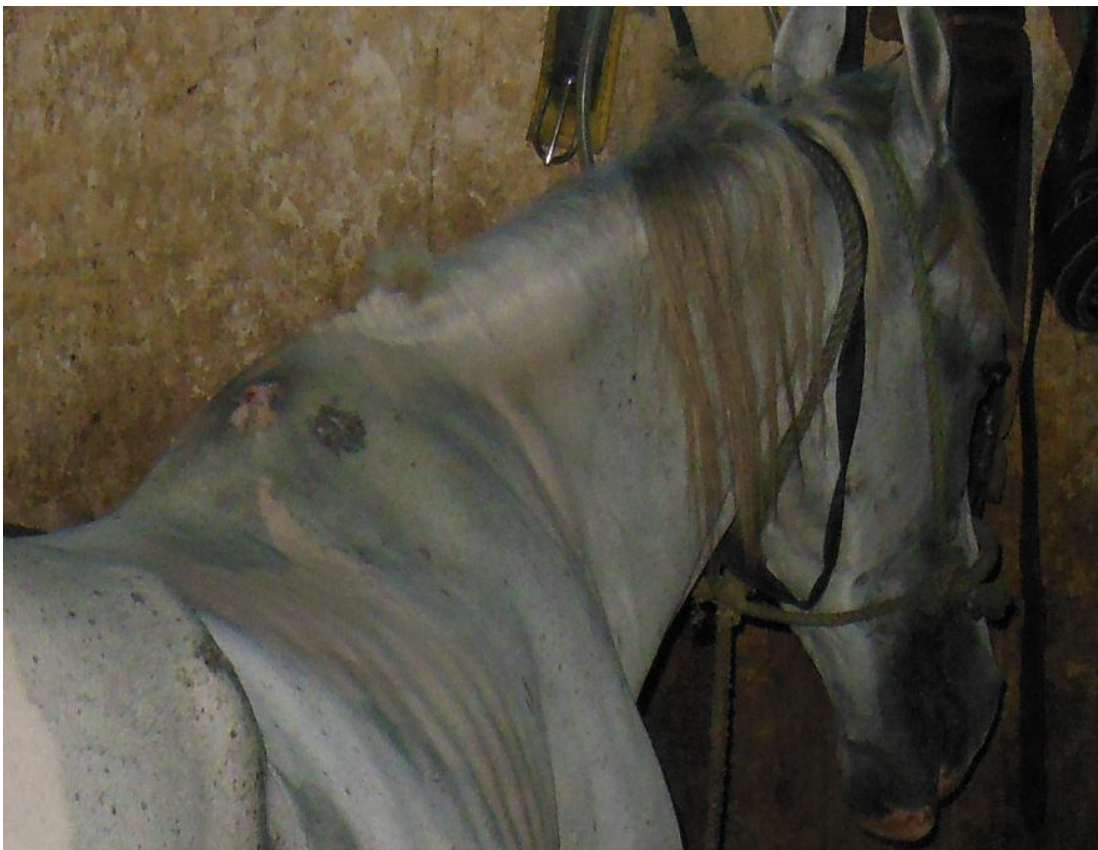


Figure 23: A horse with a wound on the back, spotted in the PD Mello Road shed (14 September 2012)

PSCHYLOGICAL CONDITION OF THE HORSES:

- A. Depression:** Many horses observed in the investigations were found to be in a state of depression which is indicative of poor mental health. Many horses, during rest were spotted with their heads dropping below the wither level, closed eyes, not showing interest in their surroundings and not even attending to it's self needs such as driving away the flies that bother them. This behaviour signifies severe depression among horses. Numerous horses plying at Nariman Point, Gateway of India and Dadar Chowpatty were severely depressed.



Figure 24: The drooping frame of this horse is a sign of depression. (12 September 2012)

FLOUTING OF NORMS:

The investigations at the aforementioned locations show that rules and norms are blatantly flouted by horse carriage drivers, handlers and owners. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, The Prevention of Cruelty to Draught and Pack Animals Rules, 1965, The Mumbai Municipal Corporation Act, 1888, The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Licensing of Farriers) Rules, 1965, The Bombay Public Conveyances Act, 1920 and The Public Passenger Vehicles Act, 1981 are flouted with utter disregard.

- a. Causing unnecessary suffering and pain by inflicting wounds by repeatedly whipping horses and over-working them is a direct violation of Section 11 (1) a of the PCA Act, 1960 that states that “if a person beats, kicks, over-rides, over-drives, over-loads, tortures or otherwise treats any animal so as to subject it to unnecessary pain or suffering or causes, or being the owner permits, any animal to be so treated”.
- b. Forcing horses who are sick, lame, wounded or sore to work and pull heavy carriages flouts Section 11 (1) b of the PCA Act, 1960 that states “if a person employs in any work or labour or for any purpose any animal which, by reason of its age or any disease) infirmity, wound, sore or other cause, is unfit to be so employed or, being the owner, permits any such unfit animal to be employed”, it is cruelty to animals.



Figure 25: A horse with a painful untreated wound is forced to pull a Victoria carriage at Colaba Causeway. (19 September 2012)

- c. Hungry, mal-nourished horses that are underfed, fed rotten fodder, not given sufficient, clean drinking water, both in the sheds or on roads during work, is a gross violation of the Section 11 (n) of the PCA Act 1960 that says “being the owner of (any animal) fails to provide such animal with sufficient food, drink or shelter”, is cruelty.



Figure 26: A malnourished horse, whose hip bones are visible, is forced to work amid traffic. (18 September 2012)

- d. Horse carriages that transport more than the permissible number of passengers.
- e. Tethered to short, tight ropes for hours together (when the animals are not working) in rooms (sheds) so small that the horses jostle for space, amounts to cruelty according Section 1 (f) and 1 (e) of the PCA Act, 1960 that says it is cruelty to animals “if a person keeps for an unreasonable time any animal chained or tethered upon an unreasonably short or unreasonably heavy chain or cord” and “keeps or confines any animal in any cage or other receptacle which does not measure sufficiently in height, length and breadth to permit the animal a reasonable opportunity for movement.” respectively.



Figure 27: Horses such as this one in the PD Mello Road shed are tied so tightly that it restricts their normal movements. (14 September 2012)

- f. Use of spiked bits and whipping sticks, which are prohibited, is still rampant. Section 8 of The Prevention of Cruelty to Draught and Pack Animals Rules, 1965, says, “No person shall, for the purpose of driving or riding an animal or causing it to draw any vehicle or for otherwise controlling it, use any spiked stick or bit, harness or yoke with spikes, knobs or projections or any other sharp tackle or equipment which causes or is likely to cause bruises, swellings, abrasions or severe pain to the animal.”



Figure 28: A collar head with spiked bits outside the Wadala Market shed (13 September 2012)

- g. None of the sheds that were inspected adhered to any norm of cleaning, flushing and disposing dung, urine, dirt and other noxious matter. Housing horses in rooms in crowded chawls and colonies without a drainage system flouts Section 349 (k) of the Mumbai Municipal Corporation Act, 1888, that says, “Huts or sheds, or ranges or blocks of huts or sheds, whether the same are to be used as dwellings or stables or for any other purpose, shall be built, if the Commissioner thinks fit so to require,—

- (i) so that they may stand in regular lines, with a free passage or way in front of and between every two lines of such width as the Commissioner thinks proper for ventilation and for facilitating scavenging, and
- (ii) with such and so many privies, latrines or urinals and such means of drainage as the Commissioner deems necessary.”



Figure29: Lack of free passage or way in front of or between two lines for ventilation and to facilitate scavenging as well as lack of drainage at the PD Mello Road shed (14 September 2012)

- h. All the sheds/stables observed do not have the mandatory license to house horses under Section 394 of the MMC Act.
- i. As per The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Licensing of Farriers) Rules, 1965, no person without a farriering license can carry out the business of shoeing animals. There is not a single licensed farrier in Mumbai yet city horses are farriered without the 14 tools listed in The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Licensing of Farriers) Rules, 1965.
- j. The Traffic Department of Maharashtra’s norms for horses are blatantly flouted. As per Section 45 of the Public Vehicle Act, 1981, “the back seat of the horse cart and the front part of the driver’s seat should be dark blue with yellow crossed lines.” Almost no victorias were found following the aforementioned guideline. Due to non-compliance, some of the carts pose serious risk of accidents due to low visibility at nights.

- k. Section 46 and 47 of the Public Vehicle Act, 1981 specifies, “The seats in the horse cart should be covered with plastic of new skin colour or black or grey colour” and “the roof of the horse cart should be of skin, and not more than three pieces from this one piece should be on the roof, while the remaining two on the sides are to be attached. The curtain on the back side window of the roof should be of skin and attached. Also attaching any canvas pieces to the roof will not be permitted” respectively, are not adhered to.
- l. As per Section 51 of the Public Vehicle Act, “On the left and right side of the horse cart there should be one light, and on the back side of these lights there should be red glass of the size specified by the Dy. Police Commissioner of Transportation.” Barring one Victoria plying at the Gateway of India that had the lights, no horse cart/carriage parked outside the sheds, on the beach or plying on the roads/joyride routes adhered to the Rule.
- m. Another rule that was blatantly flouted was Section 48 of the Public Vehicle Act that says, “The harness of the horse cart should be strong and proper.” Horses across the city were spotted with low quality, ill-fitted harness with rusted joints that cause wounds on the animals. Refer to video I in the CD.



Figure 30: Rusted head buckles and worn-out saddle parts of low quality found at the Motilal Nagar shed pose the threat of snapping at any instant and endanger the lives of passengers, drivers and commuters. (17 September 2012)

- n. According to Section 13 (2) of The Bombay Public Conveyances Act, 1920,
“Every driver who has received such badge shall wear the same on a conspicuous part of his dress at all times when pursuing his occupation as driver”. No driver on Colaba Causeway, Five Gardens, Marine Drive was observed wearing badge.

Conclusion:

The only way to stop the abuse and suffering of horses used to pull carriages through the streets of Mumbai and avoid the traffic hazards that they cause is to enact an all-out city-wide ban on Victorias.