



The Jallikattu Movement, Tamil Nadu, India

A Case Study of Grassroots Activism and People's Politics

Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies

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The Jallikattu Movement, Tamil Nadu, India

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Himakiran Anugula, Independent Activist with support from

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Foreword

The Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies (RGICS) works on five themes:

1. Constitutional Values and Democratic Institutions
2. Growth with Employment
3. Governance and Development
4. Environment, Natural Resources and Sustainability
5. India's Place in the World.

Under Constitutional Values and Democratic Institutions, there are three sub-themes:

- a. Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity – rights and responsibilities
- b. Affirmative Action for Disadvantaged Groups
- c. Academia, Media and Civil Society as building blocks of democracy

In terms of outputs, the following are envisaged under each theme:

- Policy Observatory - A continuous watch of events, policy pronouncements and developments on each topic, with a quarterly summary of highlights to be published under Policy Watch.
- Policy Repertory - Occasional Papers, commissioned by outsiders, and Working Papers as well as Research Reports by staff Fellows.
- Policy Laboratory - action research projects, to the extent possible; else participant observation in "happenings"

This case study Jallikattu movement is a product of the Policy Observatory of RGICS in Tamil Nadu. It falls under the theme Constitutional Values and Democratic Institutions, and the sub-theme - Civil Society as building blocks of democracy. This case study on the Jallikattu movement tries to understand how such an issue could acquire such mass popularity, as it did during the pro-Jallikattu protests in 2017. We are grateful to Himakiran Anugula, an Independent Activist from Tamil Nadu, who left an IT career to work on natural farming and later also got involved in the Jallikattu movement. He was supported in field work and interviews by Dr S. Nirmala, Fellow, RGICS based in Madurai. Yuvraj Kalia, Fellow, RGICS and Vijay Mahajan, Director, RGICS also participated in some of the field visits and interviews.

The RGICS Policy Observatory in Tamil Nadu has so far carried out a number of studies including a case study on participatory planning and monitoring of Panchayats, at the Kambur Panchayat in Madurai district. A second study has been carried out on utilising the network of women's self-help groups established for savings and credit and their Federations, in the Salem district, for undertaking community empathy *Sadbhavana" activities. A study of institutional factors for building a Samarth Zilla (a district which is capable of providing livelihoods and a reasonable quality of life to its inhabitants) in the Dharmapuri district has also been completed. More studies are being planned. We hope you enjoy reading this case study. We look forward to your feedback.

Vijay Mahajan, Director, Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies, New Delhi

The Jallikattu Movement, Tamil Nadu, India

Himakiran, Independent Activist with support from

Dr S. Nirmala, Fellow, Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies

This is the story of an unprecedented mobilisation of people rooted in traditions whilst navigating a modern world and demanding their rightful place in policy making and governance.



"The word jallikattu literally means tying of ornaments. On a day fixed and advertised by beat of drums at the adjacent weekly markets, a number of cattle, to the horns of which cloths and handkerchiefs have been tied, are loosed one after the other, in quick succession, from a large pen or other enclosure, amid a furious tom-tomming and loud shouts from the crowd of assembled spectators. The animals have first to run the gauntlet down a long lane formed of country carts, and then gallop off wildly in every direction.

The game consists in endeavouring to capture the cloths tied to their horns. To do this requires fleetness of foot and considerable pluck, and those who are successful are the heroes of the hour. Cuts and bruises are the reward of those who are less skilful, and now and again some of the excited cattle charge into the on-lookers, and send a few of them flying. The sport has been prohibited on more than one occasion.

Gazetteer of the Madura district.

<https://archive.org/details/madurafrancis01madr>

1. Jallikattu – In Recent Times and In the Past

1.1 The 2017 Jallikattu Protests

During the third week of January 2017, the world witnessed an unprecedented event. People poured into the iconic Marina Beach in Chennai to demand that the State and Union Governments amend a law. The law in question, which was the legal premise on which a sport played in the distant rural landscape of Southern Tamil Nadu was banned by the Supreme Court of India in 2014. This was the ground zero for the protests which were happening around the State of Tamil Nadu backed by support from the Tamil diaspora in over 80 countries.

There was not a single leader or group which was responsible for organising the protests at this scale. The protests were marked with peaceful sloganeering, holding placards that questioned everything from local corruption, the corporate Multinational Corporate (MNC) driven World Trade Organization (WTO) agenda, to demanding respect for the cultural, linguistic, subaltern identities of the people. Movie stars who are usually a top draw in the Tamil Nadu were asked to stay away as they had not supported the demand to overturn the ban for years. Politicians were asked to stay away or join the protests as participants only without any party insignia. Police weren't allowed inside the protest area, which was cordoned off, yet ambulances could make their way through without any trouble. For 5 days this was where the world's eyes were. From national media to international media, they made their presence felt documenting the various viewpoints of the people who clearly registered their dissatisfaction with the neglect of the South and India being seen only from a Delhi perspective.

This unique democratic protest elicits some important questions. Where did it all begin? Why did people especially in the most urbanised state, assemble for an issue which was completely rural and quite distant from their daily realities? How did they make specific demands of amending a law, banning foreign funded animal welfare organisations? While living and working in a globalised economy, why did they come and stand their ground for native breeds and farming?

To understand this, we will look at:

1. the Jallikattu sport from historical, social, economic perspectives,
2. the campaign against the sport from an animal welfare perspective,
3. the legal battles that played out for 12 years starting in Madurai and ending in Delhi,
4. the campaign to repeal the ban; the various strategies used to do so,
5. the information campaign, using online, offline tools,
6. the role played by the State, the Union, the Courts, and the Media.

We will also look at the protests in specific detail highlighting key events between January 16 and January 22, 2017. Finally, we will look at the impact of the movement on Jallikattu, the rural landscape, the urban landscape, the nativity movement, and the animal welfare groups, to the empowerment youth feel to make them get into governance at the Panchayat level.

1.2 History of Jallikattu

Jallikattu is an ancient sport. The seals of the Indus Valley Civilization depict this sport proves that this sport was in vogue 5000 years ago. Standard texts on Indus civilization provide this information. Ancient Tamil poetry, known as Sangam literature (2nd BCE – 2nd CE), has many detailed references to this sport. It was called *Eru Thazhuvuthal* (hugging the bull). See *Kalithokai*, Sangam Literature. In an ancient Tamil text called *Tirukkural* (around 0 CE), education is considered as wealth and the word used for wealth is



Figure 1: Indus Valley seal depicting Eru Thazhuvuthal

Madu, meaning cattle. So, cattle have a socio-cultural connotation, which denotes lives and livestock having co-existed and cultures having coined usages around them.

From the book – ‘Temples of Kṛṣṇa in South India: History, Art, and Traditions in Tamilnāḍu’, T. Padmaja says “A verse in *Kalithogai* says that an Ay girl would not marry a man who was afraid to face a bull fight. The bulls would be let loose, and whichever young cowherd could successfully bring the beast under control in an open contest, was deemed the proper life partner for the girl.” (Padmaja, 2002)

In an ancient Tamil text called *Tirukkural*, education is wealth and the word used for wealth is *Madu*, meaning cattle. So, it has a socio-cultural connotation which denotes lives and livestock having co-existed and cultures having coined usages around them. Besides that, from www.ramanuja.org, one can look at

Naalayiram Divyaprabandham verse 3203, Ettam Thiruvaimozhi 4.8.4

“நிறையினாற் குறைவில்லாநெடும்பணைத்தோள்மடப்பின்னை,
பொறையினால் முலையணைவான் பொருவிடை ஏழ் அடர்த்துகந்த,
கறையினார் துவருடுக்கைகடையாவின் கழிகோல்கை,
சறையினார் கவராததளிர்நிறத்தால் குறைவிலமே.”

"niRaiyinaal kuRaivillaa* nedumbaNaiththOL madappinnai, * poRaiyinaal mulaiyaNaivaan* poruvidai_Ezh adarththugandha, * kaRaiyinaar thuvarudukkai* kadaiyaavin kazhikOlkai, * saRaiyinaar kavaraadha* thaLirnNiRaththaal kuRaivilamE." (Iyengar, 2002)

"The Lord wears a pearl necklace, and robes dyed red. He carries a milk pail and a gracing staff. He deftly subdued seven fierce bulls for the joy of embracing the breasts of comely Nappinnai with bamboo slim arms. If He does not desire my pink cheeks, we don't lose anything."

“Talking of Sri Krishna, His association with bulls is quite close. As vIrya shulkam for marrying Sri Nappinnai, Sri Krishna is reputed to have conquered not one but seven ferocious bulls. Taming of bulls thus seems to be an ancient sport, as common in the Orient as in the West.

Several Azhwars have also recorded this feat of Sri Krishna (of taming seven wild bulls). Says Sri BhootattAzhwAr- *“Eruttiruttha nal Ayar Eru”* Recounting KaNNA’s exploit with the untameable bulls, the Azwar calls Sri Krishna Himself a bull- *“Eru”*, certifying to His virility, bravery and strength. Unsatisfied with this brief reference to this masterful act, the Azhar mentions this in the next pasuram also - *“Eru Ezhum vendru adarttha endai”*. Not to be left behind, Sri PeyAzwar too records this thus - *“PinnaikkAi mutral muri Etrin mun nindru moimbu ozhitthAi”*. It is customary for those engaged in taming bulls not to confront them, but to try approaching them sideways or from behind, strategically. It is a testimony to Sri Krishna’s bravery that He approached the bulls squarely from the front - *“mun nindru moimbu ozhittAi”*- and made mincemeat of them.

Listing some of the Lord’s acts of bravery, Sri Nammazhwar recalls His encounter with the seven bulls- *“KOVai vAyAL poruttu Etrin eruttam irutthAi”* While as Sri Rama, he demonstrated



Figure 2: A hero stone near Salem in Tamil Nadu depicting the sport from 400 years ago

His virility by lifting ther Shiva Dhanus for gaining Sri Sita’s hand, the later act of taming the *bulls was done again for another girl, Sri Nappinnai.”*

In ‘Castes & Tribes of Southern India: Vol 5’, Edgar Thurston writes (Thurston, 1909) – “For the following account of the jellikattu or bull-baiting, which is practiced by the Maravans, I am indebted to a note by Mr. J. H. Nelson. [31] “This,” he writes, “is a game worthy of a bold and free people, and it is to be regretted that

certain Collectors (District Magistrates) should have discouraged it under the idea that it was somewhat dangerous. The jallikattu is conducted in the following manner. On a certain day in the year, large crowds of people, chiefly males, assemble together in the morning in some extensive open space, the dry bed of a river perhaps, or of a tank (pond), and many of them

may be seen leading ploughing bullocks, of which the sleek bodies and rather wicked eyes afford clear evidence of the extra diet they have received for some days in anticipation of the great event. The owners of these animals soon begin to brag of their strength and speed, and to challenge all and any to catch and hold them; and in a short time one of the best beasts is selected to open the day's proceedings. A new cloth is made fast round his horns, to be the prize of his captor, and he is then led out into the midst of the arena by his owner, and there left to himself surrounded by a throng of shouting and excited strangers.

Unaccustomed to this sort of treatment, and excited by the gestures of those who have undertaken to catch him, the bullock usually lowers his head at once, and charges wildly into the midst of the crowd, who nimbly run off on either side to make way for him. His speed being much greater than that of the men, he soon overtakes one of his enemies and makes at him to toss him savagely. Upon this the man drops on the sand like a stone, and the bullock, instead of goring him, leaps over his body, and rushes after another. The second man drops in his turn, and is passed like the first; and, after repeating this operation several times, the beast either succeeds in breaking the ring, and galloping off to his village, charging every person he meets on the way, or is at last caught and held by the most vigorous of his pursuers.

Strange as it may seem, the bullocks never by any chance toss or gore anyone who throws himself down on their approach; and the only danger arises from their accidentally reaching unseen and unheard someone who remains standing. After the first two or three animals have been let loose one after the other, two or three, or even half a dozen are let loose at a time, and the scene quickly becomes most exciting. The crowd sways violently to and fro in various directions in frantic efforts to escape being knocked over; the air is filled with shouts, screams, and laughter; and the bullocks thunder over the plain as fiercely as if blood and slaughter were their sole occupation.

In this way perhaps two or three hundred animals are run in the course of a day, and, when all go home towards evening, a few cuts and bruises, borne with the utmost cheerfulness, are the only results of an amusement which requires great courage and agility on the part of the competitors for the prizes--that is for the cloths and other things tied to the bullocks' horns--and not a little on the part of the mere bystanders. The only time I saw this sport (from a place of safety) I was highly delighted with the entertainment, and no accident occurred to mar my pleasure. One man indeed was slightly wounded in the buttock, but he was quite able to walk, and seemed to be as happy as his friends."

A further account of the jallikat or jellicut is given in the Gazetteer of the Madura district. "The word jallikattu literally means tying of ornaments. On a day fixed and advertised by beat of drums at the adjacent weekly markets, a number of cattle, to the horns of which cloths and handkerchiefs have been tied, are loosed one after the other, in quick succession, from a large pen or other enclosure, amid a furious tom-tomming and loud shouts from the crowd of assembled spectators. The animals have first to run the gauntlet down a long lane formed of country carts, and then gallop off wildly in every direction. The game consists in endeavouring to capture the cloths tied to their horns. To do this requires fleetness of foot and considerable pluck, and those who are successful are the heroes of the hour. Cuts and bruises are the reward

of those who are less skilful, and now and again some of the excited cattle charge into the on-lookers, and send a few of them flying. The sport has been prohibited on more than one occasion.

But, seeing that no one need run any risks unless he chooses, existing official opinion inclines to the view that it is a pity to discourage a manly amusement which is not more dangerous than football, steeple-chasing, or fox-hunting. The keenness of the more virile sections of the community, especially the Kallans (q.v.), in this game is extraordinary, and, in many villages, cattle are bred and reared specially for it. The best jallikats are to be seen in the Kallan country in Tirumangalam, and next come those in Melur and Madura taluks."

These are concrete evidences to prove that this has been part of the long Heritage of our country. One strong characteristic of life in India is the persistence of certain social institutions, the origins of which are lost in pre-history. Though the profile of these practices change, they retain their essential features. Jallikattu is one such precious heritage that has been preserved over millennia.

2. The Social and Economic Aspects of Jallikattu

2.1 Jallikattu as a Social Festival

Jallikattu is held widely in the southern districts of Madurai, Sivagangai, Pudukkottai, Tiruchy, Dindigul and in some places in Ariyalur, Thanjavur, Salem and Theni districts. The events are always tied to the annual village temple festivals or church festivals. Various communities are involved in the sport, although originally it was the heritage of the cattle keeping *Konar* community. Even now, the herds are maintained by people from the same community and individual owners buy male calves from them to raise as stud bulls.



Karthikeya

Sivasenapathy of Senapathy Kangayam Cattle Research Foundation (SKCRF) opines, that “the caste-based segregation might exist in smaller hamlets but the main villages where the events are held, it is not the case. There is competition to catch the bulls owned by people

from other communities but there is no basis for not allowing participation in the event. In places like Alanganallur, Palamedu, the events are called by the organisations and the panchayat committees. It is very much like the government conducting the events, with the local Superintendent of Police (SP), District Collector being present. There is absolutely no caste there. You cannot even talk of it. Events are held in Coimbatore and no one can say who belongs to which community.”

In many villages, there are rituals where members from Dalit communities are required to perform them, before the village festival can be held. Ownership of cattle amongst Dalit communities has also increased post Jallikattu protests and the ban being lifted. Elango Kallanai, a natural farmer and social activist says, “People asked us questions on economics of the sport, women issue, community, in Tamil Nadu every issue is seen from the caste-based angle.

Every issue is seen in a generic way. In the Jallikattu issue, the advantage I had was, that I am from the Jallikattu zone and I know the community matrices, and how they coexist. This portrayal of Tamil Nadu as a feudal land breaks down when we speak with data. The average land holding here is 2.5 acres. It is a survival type life rather than an imagined feudal setup. When we say this with data, there is no response from the opposing parties.”

Women play an important role in raising of the bulls. Feeding the bulls, serving them water are considered mainly as the responsibilities of women. Training them and taking them to the events are considered responsibilities of the men. There are many women who bring the bulls themselves to the events and recently, there are teenaged girls bringing them too. This very year, the best bull award at several events was given to a bull named *Raavanan*, owned and trained by a woman sub-inspector of police, Anuradha of Nemmelipatti, Pudukottai district. She is also Commonwealth weightlifting gold medallist.

This view of villages as being feudal, casteist, regressive especially to women is a very urban, elitist thought process. Land reforms, education, empowerment at the grassroots levels, delivery of services has led to a unique environment where people negotiate urban and the rural very well.

2.2 Economics of the Sport and Livestock Rearing

The cattle are reared by herding communities where cattle owned by different people are kept together. There is no fodder-based feeding and only grazing in fallow fields and lake beds called the *Kanmais*. Male calves which are deemed good for Jallikattu are identified and purchased by farmers who raise them as stud bulls. People will also offer male calves and bulls to the village deities. These bulls are considered sacred and can graze anywhere. They are never tied. People consider it a blessing if the temple bull grazes in their fields. The bulls are also free to mate with any cow in the village. In effect, there is a zero-cost model for breeding. Every few years, cattle or older bulls are sold to other villages in order to avoid inbreeding.

Stud bulls, which are used for Jallikattu are fed with nutritious food, trained and exercised regularly. Farmers spend a substantial portion of their incomes for these bulls. When compared to that, the prizes that the bulls might win are not reward enough. There is a sense of pride which makes them compete. The progeny of prize-winning bulls is in demand and are sold at good rates.

The events attract great crowds and even people who have migrated to other towns, cities and countries make sure they come back for Pongal and the village festivals. There is a lot of economic activities where local forest and food produce is in great demand. The atmosphere



is of a typical village shandy (market). The impact on farming is very high as most of the Jallikattu areas are rain fed and farmers use *Eru* (manure) to rejuvenate the soil. They may or may not have cross breeds for dairying needs but prefer native cattle as the cost benefit ratio for the native cattle is much better. The main source of income for the herders is processed manure which is sold to estates and buyers in Kerala. They don't even

sell milk as a principle and will offer free buttermilk to anyone who visits them.

3. Animal Activists vs. Jallikattu - the Legal Battle: 2004-2018

2004 - The South Indian Humanitarian League and Blue Cross of India petitioned the Petitions' Committee of the TN state legislature to ban Jallikattu and other sports using bulls. In 2004, hearing a petition seeking permission for conducting Rekla Race, Justice FM Ibrahim Kalifulla permitted the "sport" with a rider that the organisers should cause no injury to the bulls. The petitioner had to approach the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court, as the Ramanathapuram Police had refused permission earlier.

In 2006, another petitioner approached the Madurai Bench for the same reason; another petition in the same court was filed by the father of a man who was killed during Jallikattu the previous year. Taking note of the purview of the PCA (Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960) in its entirety, Justice R Banumathi issued an order banning all types of "sports" namely Jallikattu, Rekla Race, and other such "sports" causing cruelty to animals. When the petitioner seeking permission appealed against the single judge's order, a division bench comprising Justices Elipe Dharma Rao and PPS Janarthana Raja heard the appeal on 9 March 2007 and set aside the single judge's order. The bench allowed Jallikattu with conditions which applied to 'Performing Animals' under the PCA Act.

The State Government was made a respondent and the division bench stipulated monitoring of Jallikattu by the local magistrate, district collector, veterinary officers, AWBI (Animal

Welfare Board of India) volunteers and police; the High Court placed bulls on the list of 'Performing Animals' on its own. As the organisers and State Government were desperate to conduct the "sport" they readily agreed to the classification of bulls as performing animals and to comply with the conditions posed by the High Court. It bears mention that the Tamil Nadu Regulation of Jallikattu Act (2009), which impacts upon the PCA Act (1960) which is a Central act, has not received Presidential assent yet.

The AWBI, a statutory body, disagreed with the classification of bull as 'performing animal' and took the case to the Supreme Court seeking an immediate stay on the order of the division bench and demanding a complete ban on Jallikattu. Thereafter, on July 27, 2007 the Supreme Court in an interim order stayed the order of the division bench of the Madras High Court.

However, on January 11, 2008 the Supreme Court pronounced its final order by banning Jallikattu but permitting Rekla race. The bench comprising Justices RV Raveendran and AK Patnaik permitted Rekla because the AWBI had, by lapse, sought banning of only Jallikattu. When the State Government filed a Revision Petition on 13 January 2008, the same bench heard it and delivered an interim order allowing Jallikattu to be held as part of Pongal celebrations, with some conditions. The AWBI promptly filed another Special Leave Petition seeking restoration of the earlier order dated 11 January 2008.

Even as the case was dragging in the apex court, the State Government tabled the Tamil Nadu Jallikattu Regulation Bill in the Assembly; it was unanimously passed as Tamil Nadu Jallikattu Regulation Act 2009. But the government failed to obtain Presidential assent. Thereafter, the same bench of the Supreme Court gave interim orders in 2010 and 2011 allowing Jallikattu with conditions and directing the authorities to 'monitor' the 'sport'.

Meanwhile, Minister of State for Environment and Forests (MoEF), Jairam Ramesh, in July 2011, included Bulls on the list of animals which may not be deemed to be Performing Animals and may therefore not be allowed to be trained, exhibited or used in sport. The ministry added that Bulls meant cows, progeny of cows, bulls, buffalo and oxen including castrated and not castrated ones.

Armed with the notification of MoEF, AWBI and animal welfare activist Radha Rajan filed separate petitions in the Madurai Bench of the Madras High court seeking a ban on Jallikattu. On 12 January 2012 the Bench comprising Justices Chitra Venkataraman and R Karuppaiah heard the matter, but the government advocates managed to secure another day for the government to be heard again. As the State's ruling party was also partner at the Center, the Union Government's Advocate General somehow failed to defend the notification of the MOE&F. The State Government also succeeded in allowing the 'sport' to be conducted, as usual with 'conditions' (that were never followed) and 'monitoring' (that was never done with the seriousness it required).

Continuing its relentless efforts, the AWBI monitored and observed the conduct of Jallikattu in 2012 and 2013 and prepared solid documentation with photographs and videographs and submitted its report to the Supreme Court (supporters argue that such cruelties stopped after 2008). The AWBI meticulously detailed the entire process of Jallikattu, the cruelties to which the bulls are subjected and how Jallikattu was violative of various sections of the PCA Act. A

petition was filed by PETA against the Tamil Nadu Jallikattu Regulation Act 2009.

The organisers of Jallikattu, confident of political support from the State Government and thinking that the TNJR (Tamil Nadu Jallikattu Regulation) Act would make it easy for them in the Supreme Court, failed to make a convincing case for conducting Jallikattu; they did not present any documentation or proof that there was no cruelty to the animals and proof that they were conducting Jallikattu safely.

The Supreme Court analysed the issue threadbare taking the PCA Act into consideration in its entirety. It found the TNJR Act repugnant to the PCA Act and noted that the TNJR Act had not received Presidential Assent under Article 254 of the Constitution of India. Accordingly, it banned Jallikattu, Rekla Race and other such “sports” and struck down the TNJR Act 2009 as null and void.

On January 7th, 2016, the Union Govt. issued a notification to allow bulls to be used in Jallikattu and cart races. The State of Tamil Nadu was in a celebratory mood and preparations for the events began. However, the Attorney General of the Union Govt. opined that the ordinance would be in violation of the Supreme Court order banning the sport. People saw this as a betrayal by the Union Govt. Animal welfare organisations went to the court and the matter was listed on an urgent basis. On the 12th of January 2016, a barrage of lawyers representing the animal welfare organisations attended the hearing. About 6 senior counsels, 42 AORs and 70 junior advocates were present. The Court stayed the notification and this along with the fact that such a strong contingent of senior lawyers appeared against the sport was not seen in a good light. Questions were raised on how these organisations which are all NGOs were able to bring such eminent lawyers who charge a few lacs for a single hearing. Although the organisations claimed all the lawyers appeared pro-bono, this wasn't accepted and was seen as a conspiracy.

In December 2016, while hearing review petitions in the case, the Supreme Court made some observations which did not go well with the people. For example, it opined that Jallikattu was not a religious event. While the reality is every event is tied to a village temple or church festival. In another statement that aroused anger across the state, it opined the sport could be played in video games. Such statements made people lose their faith in the judiciary. Post the amendment to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act in January 2017, there were petitions filed by PETA and other organisations against the amendment. As of 2020, the case is still pending in the court and has been referred to a constitution bench.

3.1 The Role of Animal Welfare Activists and the Media

Animal Liberation/Vegan argument against Livestock: Milk is a by-product of cattle. Traditionally in South India, dung & urine from cattle were valued more than milk. Even now many places in rural TN will ask if you need "paal" tea, as in tea with milk. That's because usual tea is black tea. Having said that, this notion of milk of cows is only for calves is wrong. That's something that applies only to wild animals. Humans domesticated those 7000-8000 years ago and have done selective breeding according to their needs. People who were vegetarian & needed animal protein bred cattle into milch breeds like Kankrej, Gir, and Tharparkar in Gujarat/Rajasthan region. People in the South who were almost completely meat eating and

still are, didn't need additional animal protein and bred cattle for work/transport. These cattle are draught animals like Hallikar and Kangayam. Domesticated animals cannot survive on their own. They are not the same as wild animals. Without human dependency, they will die out.

Vegetable Protein is not affordable for the masses and animal protein is the best bet for them. Livestock is also insurance against calamities in personal economic situation. If we don't consume, we lose, and the livestock go extinct. It is a mutually beneficial relationship that is being attacked on all fronts by people without who do not connect to nature. Native Breeds give enough milk for the small & marginal farmer's family while also providing them the transport, dung/urine for manure and organic farming.

The targeting of anything traditional and/or rural is mainly driven by people from the cities who have a disconnect with rural India and all that it entails. Policies are made by the same people. Just like how we destroyed the lakes of Chennai and suffered the consequences of ignoring the traditional knowledge of the villagers in building & maintaining the lakes, we are allowing these people to get away with rampant destruction of our livestock, farming, water bodies. How are they influenced? If we look at media reports over the last decade or so, every headline screams about the injuries in a Jallikattu event. In a year there are 10,000 instances of a bull leaving the Vaadi Vaasal (gate) during Jallikattu. The cumulative participation will be of 10,000 players. Out of which hardly 50-100 get injured in a year, and deaths are much lesser. Instead of highlighting the participation or the best bulls and players, focus of the urban editors and reporters has always been on sensationalizing news and grabbing eyeballs. Fed with this constant diet over a decade, it's no surprise that so many urbanites were against the sport.

The second group is the Dairy and Beef export lobby which wants all native breeds to be eradicated. Events like Jallikattu throw a spanner in their plans of creating commercial dairy farms with imported breeds just like in the West.

How does the Beef Export lobby benefit from ban on Jallikattu and other events? Farmers bring their cattle to be sold in weekly/monthly & annual shandies. Brokers will take the cattle from the farmers and hold them to be displayed to prospective buyers. Buyers fall into 3-4 categories.

- 1) One is the Jallikattu enthusiast who will buy the bulls and male calves mostly.
- 2) Buyers of oxen for farming/transport.
- 3) Buyers of cows for breeding and household usage.
- 4) Beef Traders who are mostly, if not all, agents of export companies & slaughterhouses based in Kerala. They buy all cattle as they are only interested in meat.

When a ban was in place, the simple supply-demand equation got skewed. There were no takers in the first category, which means the bulls will only sought by the 4th category i.e. beef traders. With no demand from Jallikattu enthusiasts, the prices of such prized bulls fell to rock bottom rates and were lapped up by the beef traders. The accusations of animal activists that farmers sent them to slaughter cannot be further removed from the truth. By killing the market for bulls to be used in Jallikattu, the animal rights activists were directly

responsible for sending bulls to slaughter. There is a huge demand for Bos Indicus variety beef in the Gulf, Malaysia & Western countries. It is considered an exotic & healthy meat just like the country chicken. Local consumption of beef is different as only older unproductive cattle are sold to slaughter.

None of the animal welfare organisations have ever shown the same energy to demand an end to horse racing, pet ownership, etc. The commercial scale at which these activities takes place cannot be compared to a decentralised native breed ecosystem. The pet industry in India was valued at 5000 crores in 2013. American company Mars controlled 70% market share in India. Many other global players have entered this market. The recent entry of companies with expertise in sex selected semen, IVF (In-vitro Fertilization)

4. The Campaign and How It Coalesced Into Protests

4.1 Campaign in Favour of Jallikattu

While the issue was being fought in the court by animal welfare organisations, the State of Tamil Nadu and Jallikattu organising groups like Tamil Nadu Jallikattu Peravai headed by P. Rajasekaran of Madurai and Veera Vilayattu Meetpu Kazhagam led by Rajesh of Tiruchy, the issue was still remote to most people. During 2009-2011, several campaigns against the sport started taking place in the online and offline spaces including a token protests demanding a ban on the sport by animal welfare groups like Peta in Chennai.

In January 2013, Karthikeya Sivasenapathy, Sundar Ganesan and Himakiran Anugula, trustees of the Senaapathy Kangayam Cattle Research Foundation decided to do a counter protest demanding the continuance of the sport at the very same location, Marina Beach. They were joined by a few others who had seen the request for support in social media. They also engaged with PETA online on their Facebook page questioning their stand and the basis of the same. The line of argument was companion animals are different from livestock and as farmers who rear cattle, Peta and its supporters need to hear this side of the story. This was met with a lot of abuse and ridicule which is typical of the elitist view of anything rural.





During the next one year, awareness campaigns were done online explaining

- the scientific rationale of in-situ conserving native breeds,
- the legal requirements under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity 1992 and the National Biodiversity Act 2002,
- the role biocultural sports like Jallikattu, Rekla, Kambala, Bail Gada play in identification and conservation of pedigree stud bulls and cattle,
- the importance of native breeds in farming especially natural farming.

In February of 2014, it was decided to bring the various stakeholders together to educate them on the need to change the narrative from a cultural, traditional one to a scientific one. A meeting was held in Madurai with attendance from all the local groups and supporters from various parts of Tamil Nadu including Balakumar Somu, an animal welfare activist turned Jallikattu supporter.

The sport was banned in May 2014. In June 2014, a popular talk/debate show “Neeya Naana” conducted a debate with animal welfare activists on the side and common people from various backgrounds on the other side. Many of the campaigners were invited to present their views.

Real stakeholders who farm, who raise cattle spoke about the sport, farming and how they take utmost care of the bulls, spending most of their incomes for their upkeep. They challenged the superficial notions about cattle and the sport the opponents had. This was the start of the tide turning. The public opinion about the sport and the ban which so far had been influenced by animal welfare activists, began to change after this show.

For the next 18 months, the campaign built up momentum by repeated awareness raising posts on social media, visiting colleges and citizens groups like Rotary chapters. They spoke on the importance of conserving native breeds, meeting political parties and influencers and

seeking support for the campaign. All these efforts were not fruitful as for most political parties this was a local issue pertaining to Madurai region and were not considered that important. They would offer token support during Pongal time only.

On the ground, the Jallikattu groups were organising meetings in various towns of Southern Tamil Nadu to highlight the issue and seek support from the common public. Rekla groups were doing the same in Western Tamil Nadu where the ban affected the traditional cart races called Rekla.

The events had not been held in 2015 and by the end of the year, it was decided to do aggressive campaigns online with a lot of visual media, memes exposing the hypocrisy of the animal welfare organisations.







Balakumar Somu
4 hrs · 🌐

[02/01 06:09] Balakumar Somu: Good morning friends, Please help our farmers by sending Twitter messages to @narendramodi and @PrakashJavdekar to #SaveJallikattu 🙏🙏🙏🙏🙏

[02/01 06:09] Balakumar Somu: Friends, We have come to know that the Central government feels that Jallikattu, Baigada are facing a lot of opposition on the Social media. So, we request all of you, dear friends and supporters, to message Mr. Prakash Javadekarji and Mr. Narendra Modiji on TWITTER immediately. Please use #SaveJallikattu and send as many messages as possible to support Jallikattu /Baigada to @narendramodi @PrakashJavdekar.

Copy the line below and send this message on TWITTER

@narendramodi @PrakashJavdekar Jallikattu is Hindu religious tradition. Bulls r stud bulls #SaveJallikattu #SaveNativeCattle #BanPETA

Support for the sport was increasing and celebrities started speaking out. Kamal Hassan inaugurated a photo exhibition by Kerala based photographer J. Suresh on November 28, 2015 and spoke in favour of removing the ban.

Veera Vilayattu
Photo Exhibition by J SURESH

You are cordially invited to the opening ceremony on Monday
November 2, 2015 at 3.45 pm at Lalit Kala Akademi, Grems Road, Chennai.

Inauguration by
Ulakanayagan Padmabushan
Dr. Kamal Haasan

The exhibition will remain open till November 8, 2015
Daily 10.00 am - 7.00 pm





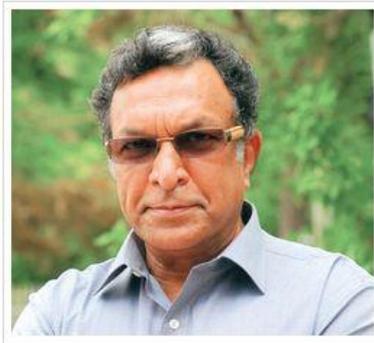
The head of the Nadigar Sangam (Actors Federation) and a well-respected artist, Nasser said there was no question of banning Jallikattu.

■ 'No Question of Banning Jallikattu'

By Express Features | Published: 28th December 2015 04:27 AM | Last Updated: 28th December 2015 04:27 AM

Email 0

Veteran actor Nasser, who is also the president of the Nadigar Sangam, has said that there can be no question of banning the traditional sport of jallikattu.



At a press conference recently called by the officer bearers of the Nadigar Sangam, mediapersons posed questions on a number of issues. One of them was about the controversy triggered by Amy Jackson's tweet on jallikattu. She had recently tweeted "#NoJallikattu: Actors, cricketers sign @PetalIndia's plea against bullfights. Please show your support too!"

Responding to the question, Nasser, who defended Amy Jackson saying that she was unaware of the significance of the event, said, "There is no question of banning the sport. What we must be looking at is how to conduct this sport so that neither man nor beast faces any harm."

This was the situation in Tamil Nadu when the notification of the Union Government came out on January 7, 2016. On January 10th, 2016, an episode of Neeya Naana where the supporters and opponents of Jallikattu debated the issue was telecast. The supporters were stakeholders, players, campaigners and articulated their case very well. They responded to all questions on the issue with information and logical reasoning. The opponents couldn't back their case much as their lack of exposure to the landscape, rural life was quite evident.



This episode can be considered an important milestone, and this was watched by Tamils the world over and specific memes and videos from the episode went viral. Tamil internet is known for its creativity and this was demonstrated by the supporters.

During 2016, the campaign to overturn the ban coalesced into a formal one led by the Biodiversity Conservation Council of India (BiCCI), a trust formed in March 2016, specifically for the purpose of the campaign. It was led by various ground level campaigners namely, Karthikeya Sivasenapathy, Elango Kallanai, Balakumar Somu, Himakiran Anugula, Sundar Ganesan, Varadharajan Pandian, Saravana Kumar and Seeman Thangaraj who had been working on the issue over the past few years. Advocate Srinivas Ratnasami was roped in for legal expertise.

The legal aspects, the campaigns were reviewed, and it was decided that the campaign would work with specific demands, namely

- Amending the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act by removing Bulls from the purview of the Performing Animals List.
- Banning PETA for its role in getting the sport banned and its suspected intentions of destroying native cattle.

The strategies were to

- Create audio visual material to bring awareness
- Research the funding of animal welfare organisations in India, especially the foreign tie-ups they had and scrutinising their finances.
- Preparing a draft of the amendment and presenting it to the public, political parties and asking them to support the same.

While all this was happening, all the main campaigners kept writing in support online and their posts were becoming viral and more and more people became campaigners themselves.

The campaign was joined by several youngsters working in IT/MNC companies in Chennai, Bengaluru and worldwide. One of the main influencers of the movement, who wrote extensively online and spoke in debate shows, Elango Kallanai says, “We faced many a question from various quarters, but we always engaged and answered each of them. The only answer we didn’t know, was how to win this battle in the courts. But we were convinced about winning the public’s opinion. They might not know the courts, but they are connected.”

The role played by music composer and artist Hiphop Tamizha was crucial in taking the message to millions across the world. He approached the team in January 2016 and wanted to shoot a musical documentary in support. He was hosted by BiCCI trustee Saravana Kumar in Madurai and shot the music video at his farm with his bulls. The documentary team also travelled to Kangayam to interview Karthikeya Sivasenapathy. Their team was in touch with the campaigners throughout and when the video was released in June 2016, it became viral with millions watching it with a few hours. It clocked several million within 1-2 days and delivered a very important message to the people. The campaigners were highlighted by this video and the role of BiCCI became crucial at this stage.



In July 2016, BiCCI held a press meet at the Chennai Press Club with a packed house. It



released the draft of the amendment it had prepared, accused the animal welfare organisations of collaborating with vested interests overseas to destroy native cattle. It also called on the Govt of India and the Govt of Tamil Nadu to take immediate steps to amend the act.



BiCCI team after the press meet.

MADURAI
THE HINDU • WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2016

Biodiversity council seeks changes to animal cruelty Act

(Maximum temperature in cities)

TOUCHY ISSUE: The Centre has been urged to remove bulls from the list of animals that could be used as performing animals. — FILE PHOTO

WEATHER WATCH
Forecast for Wednesday: Hot places over sub-Himalayan W places over Assam, Meghalaya

Place	Max	Min
Agartala	28.4	25.4
Ahmedabad	30.6	26.0
Alahabad	33.0	24.8
Alzawl	25.2	17.1
Bengaluru	28.4	20.0
Bhopal	30.3	24.1
Bhubaneswar	34.0	25.0
Chandigarh	35.0	26.2
Chennai	33.1	25.6
Coimbatore	31.0	22.0
Delhi	32.1	21.1
Gangtok	21.7	16.7
Goa	27.5	23.8
Guwahati	29.8	26.4

CHENNAI: The Biodiversity Conservation Council of India (BiCCI) has sought comprehensive amendments to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, to enable the lawful use of certain Indian native cattle breeds in traditional, cultural or religious sports, and events like the 'jallikattu'.

The council has also written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi with a draft of proposed amendments sought by them to the Act. Releasing the letter to the media on Tuesday, members of the Trust of BiCCI said 'jallikattu' had a recorded history of over 4,000 years. Expressing the hope that people in Tamil Nadu would be able to celebrate Pongal that in 2017 with 'jallikattu', the letter written by Karthikeya Sivasenapathy, managing trustee, BiCCI, requested the Indian government to remove bulls from the list of animals that could not be used as performing animals. He also sought a special law or amendment to the existing PCA Act to ensure that 'jallikattu', 'baigada', 'manjuvirattu', 'rekla' and such races can be conducted in the future.

Pointing out that the Union government proposed to amend the Act only by introducing a new sub-clause (III) to Sec. 22, they said this alone was not sufficient to achieve the desired results. "The Supreme Court has categorically held that 'jallikattu' is violative of Sec. 3 and Sec. 11 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. Therefore, amendments to Sec. 11 are necessary to change the basis of the law, which led the Supreme Court to pass its earlier orders, in order to enable revive and conduct 'jallikattu', according to the draft.

Rameswaram fishermen strike from July 22

RAILWAY RECRUITMENT CCM Annexe Building, Railway RECRUITMENT AGAINST FOR THE

around 230 LAKH TONNES of salt is produced per annum. Tamil Nadu contributes 11 PER CENT, i.e. 26 lakhs tonnes of the total salt production of India.

TNSC supplying fortified salt to the states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka for distribution through public distribution system at cheap subsidized rates.

'TERM JALLIKATTU AS BIO-CULTURAL SPORT'

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, JULY 19

WHAT DOES AMENDMENT BILL SAY?

Blaming animal welfare board of India (AWBI) for its intolerance against jallikattu and other cultural sports, members of Biodiversity Conservation Council of India on Tuesday urged the Union government to introduce a non-obstante clause in Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, to avoid legal hassles.

Stating that the practice of jallikattu is necessary to preserve the bull breeds, chairman of biodiversity conservation council of India, Srinivas Ratnasami said, "Farmer community and livestock keeper has no representation in AWBI, leading to a disconnect and contempt to rural life pattern. Their interests and ethics are not considered."

"Bulls that won jallikattu are considered the best males for breeding. The sport which preserves the local breeds can be amended by inserting a clause referring it as bio-cultural sports," suggested the members.

"Any law or notification prohibiting bulls in jallikattu will not be valid after the making it a non-obstante clause," explained

The draft Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Amendment Bill), 2016 proposes to allow conduct of jallikattu and bullock cart races in several states provided that they are organized with prior permission from the district authorities.

The draft bill says any animal notified in the gazette, in exercise of the powers conferred under sub section (II) of section 22 of the Act shall continue to be exhibited or trained as a performing animal, at events, in a manner prescribed the religion of any community, or practiced traditionally under the customs or as part of culture in any part of the country.

"These events may, inter alia, include Jallikattu in Tamil Nadu and bullock cart races in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Punjab, Haryana, Kerala, Gujarat etc. Provided that events so organized shall be held with prior approval of the district authority concerned and shall be duly monitored by the state SPCA and state Animal Welfare Board (as representatives of animal welfare board) ensuring that no unnecessary pain and suffering is inflicted or caused, in a manner, whatsoever during the course of events so organised," the draft bill says.

Srinivas Ratnasami, Managing trustee of biodiversity conservation council of India, Karthikeya Sivasenapathy said that Jallikattu is a prominent way to preserve cattle species. "Since generations, our family has been pre-

Leader of DMK Stalin on Tuesday said the state government moved the Court on the election of Pullar el across Palar by DMK announces. He also said the state government not get an order for a check dam works.

Stalin said "against the order of the Court, const new dam is court. Raising of a check dam to 20 feet to 20 feet. Addressing a meeting in Pradesh, Stalin said, "tension works between Mad and Mysore. As per the order of the court, we will cross the Tamil Nadu. Stalin said in Tamil Nadu, the state government and it is for Vellore

Deluri temple to require

The following activities were done by the campaigners as well as supporters across Chennai, Tamil Nadu and several countries across the world.

- Participating in marathons with messaging supporting the sport.
- A signature campaign to collect 1 lakh signatures in Sivagangai, Madurai and Chennai.
- Twitter campaigns in October and December 2016 with the hashtags #SaveJallikattu, appearing at the top of rankings for India level trends for several hours.
- Protest rallies in over 80 countries held by the Tamil & Indian diaspora. The coordination of the same was done by supporters of the BiCCI team living abroad. There was a constant flow of information to highlight these rallies amongst locals here.





A rally held on January 8, 2017 at the Marina in Chennai had over 20000 people participating. This got widespread live coverage and inspired many to voice out for the sport.

Thus, the campaign for over 4 years had created the grounds for protests to break out in January 2017. The key elements of the campaign were:

- Creating awareness with information that broke down the legal, political, scientific, economic aspects of the ban.
- Exposing the funding in animal welfare and how it is controlled by people and groups who are not stakeholders.
- Working with political parties by presenting the demands and seeking resolutions within the ambit of the law.
- Switching between online and offline campaigns with ease and using each other to magnify the impact.
- Laying emphasis on the federal nature of the Union of India and the rights of the State as per the Constitution.

4.2 The Protests: January 16-January 22, 2017

Pongal was supposed to be the day the Jallikattu events start with the first event being held at Avaniapuram, followed by Palamedu on *Mattu (Cow) Pongal* and Alanganallur on *Kaanum Pongal*. When the courts didn't act on the review petitions and the status quo remained, the main campaigners decided to hold a protest rally on the 16th of January at Alanganallur. Police permission was sought for the 10:00 am to 05:00 pm rally. This was widely publicised on social media. There was a minor protest held at Palamedu on the 15th and police resorting to lathi charges.

The protest at Alanganallur was organised by Karthikeya Sivasenapathy, P. Rajasekaran and Hiphop Tamizha. The rally turned out to be an immense success as more than a lac people descended on Alanganallur. After speeches by the various organisers, a peace march was held in the streets of Alanganallur.



Meanwhile some of the protestors were requesting the police to allow them to release at least 5 bulls to honour the tradition. Tensions prevailed and mild lathi charging was done by the police. The rally ended at 5pm and the main organisers had left the village. But many of the supporters who had come in from various parts of the state and some from overseas too, refused to leave and held a sit in. The supporters were fed by the women of Alanganallur and remained there through the night. The next morning, which was January 17th, police moved in to remove the protestors from the site and took them to a wedding hall nearby. The women of Alanganallur were angered by this and held a rally demanding the police release the students and protestors immediately.



People staging road roko to release the Jallikattu protestors and to conduct Jallikattu at Alanganallur. (Express News Service | KK Sundar)

With live coverage on all Tamil channels and social media, visuals of the sit in and sloganeering reverberated across the world and Tamil diaspora was glued in. Meanwhile another protest was held at Alagumalai near Tirupur. The scenes shown on the news channels and shared widely on social media and WhatsApp went viral. A group of students and supporters went to the Marina beach on the 17th of January to protest the ban. People started coming to the Marina in support. There was cooperation from the administration and police, allowing supporters to reach the Marina and voice their support. Protests continued into the night. Protests were simultaneously happening in Madurai, Salem, Coimbatore and all cities and towns of Tamil Nadu. There were protestors in villages lining up on the highways. You couldn't cross a single place in Tamil Nadu without seeing some group protesting. IT offices allowed their staff to join the protests and people took turns in joining the protests while their colleagues backed them at the offices.



A train being stopped on the Vaigai river bridge in Madurai.



A protest held in a North American city.

NOT JUST LIMITED TO **TAMILNADU**



JALLIKATTU PROTEST HAS NOW BECOME A WORLDWIDE MOVEMENT



A young couple with their baby at the protest site.

The unique feature of these protests was the participation of women and children. It turned into a celebration of what being a Tamil is all about.



The law and order personnel switched off the lights. What happens here in Marina, Chennai? There are 1000s of women inside that dark tide of people. 100s of children out there. Not even a single hand searches for their body parts in dark. Instead, those hands are raised high in sky and holding the mobile flashlight to spread as much as light they can. Women and children are more safer inside that circle than they shall ever feel in any other part of this world. That is 3000 years of civilisation talking. That is millennia of noble manhood talking. That is #தமிழன் & #தமிழ்ச்சி talking. That is our #தமிழ் talking. Not with his/her mouth but with their hearts and the path of solidarity that they can show this world to teach them what the strength of unity looks like. Every single soul out there with their flashlights on looks like ten Suns shining together.

தமிழா..

வீர நெஞ்சம் திமிர்ந்தாயடா!

தலை நிமிர்ந்து நின்றாயடா!

11 minutes ago · Edited · Unlike · 40 ·



A pregnant lady in support of the sport.

The caption reads, even a Tamil embryo will fight for Tamil.

People raised slogans against the stifling of Tamil rights, identity, culture, traditions, devastation of the water bodies and landscape by large corporates like Coca Cola, Pepsi backed by the Govts. State autonomy and equality for languages were part of the demands too.

On January 19th, some of the protestors had asked the police who were negotiating with them to call the team behind the movement and talk to them. Karthikeya Sivasenapathy, Himakiran and Sundar Ganesan decided to come to Chennai and address the protestors.



Karthikeya Sivasenapathy addressing the protestors, with Himakiran Anugula and Sundar Ganesan.

The main demands of amending the PCA, banning PETA were reiterated and the protestors thanked for their support. Meanwhile the Union Home ministry contacted the team and asked them to come to Delhi for negotiations to find a solution for this unprecedented uprising.





BiCCI team and volunteers who had worked on the campaign for over a year - just before Karthikeya Sivasenapathy, Sundar Ganesan and Himakiran Anugula left for Delhi on the night of January 19th, 2017.

On January 20th 2017, the team along with P. Rajasekaran of the Jallikattu Peravai were accompanied by Union Minister Pon.Radhakrishnan and Tamil Nadu State BJP President, Mrs.Tamilisai Soundararajan along with some of the representatives of the protestors to the Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Anil Madhav Dave's home to discuss the issue.



After initial discussions, the minister asked the BiCCI team for a final solution. The team presented the draft of the amendment they had prepared and released 6 months ago in Chennai. The minister instructed his secretary to make arrangements for the amendment to be drafted.

The team later was taken to the ministry and work on the draft was done. An amendment draft was readied and sent to the Tamil Nadu Government, which after approval, sent it back to Delhi. It had to be approved by various ministries including Culture, Law, Home. These steps were done in a very rapid fashion considering the situation in Tamil Nadu. There was a press meet held at the ministry explaining the steps taken. The BiCCI declined to be a part of that press meet and decided to hold one on its own the next morning.

The team then went to Jantar Mantar where Tamil students had been protesting for a few days and addressed them.



A press meet was held by the BiCCI team on 21st of January 2017 at the Press Club of India. Various questions on the importance of conserving native cattle, biocultural

sports to the role of corporate NGOs to the need to have stakeholder consultations before deciding on such issues were addressed.

The team left for Chennai later that afternoon and headed to Marina to address the protestors and inform them that the movement has been successful with Tamil Nadu



Government amending the PCA and the Union cabinet giving approval. However, the protestors refused to leave till the actual events took place. It was decided that the information would be spread on social media and a press meet will be held the next day in Chennai with all the main campaigners over the years.



P. Rajasekaran, Karthikeya Sivasenapathy, Ambalatharasu, Hiphop Tamizha and Rajesh addressing the press on the night of January 22nd, 2017.

The protests ended on the 23rd of January 2017 with the Tamil Nadu assembly tabling the bill and passing into unanimously thereby allowing Jallikattu and Rekla to be held.

5. Impact of the Jallikattu Movement on Tamil society

5.1 Impact of Changed Regulations on Jallikattu

The venues where large crowds congregate have severe regulations and implementation of the same. Registration of the players, the bulls are all done after thorough checking. But due to the high demand for participation, it is acting as a burden on the village committees who are caught between the government, the district administration, police and the bull owners, players and visitors.

People welcome the regulations but insist the government provide more support to implement the same. The costs of implementing the regulations along with the costs of organising the events need to be looked at. Incidents of injuries to players, visitors and bulls are lesser in terms of the number of events held, the number of players, bulls and visitors coming to the venues. Events held in the main centres are incident free mostly, but events held in the minor centres need better implementation of the regulations and for this, the government needs to allocate budgets.

5.2 On the Animal Welfare Movement

Antony Rubin, an independent animal welfare activist with more than 20 years of experience, says, "before the movement, there was a positive view on animal welfare activism, people believed they could turn to them in case they found an injured animal and that they did good work in the field. But after the movement, animal welfare people became like villains. Even actors and celebrities who were very vocal in their support, became silent and conscious.

Because it was a culture, language emotion which was targeted, this became the crux. It is always a problem when language and culture are touched in Tamil Nadu. “

“People who supported us earlier went against us, accusing us of having some motives. There was a lot of generalisation. One rogue NGO is not the same as everyone. PETA has its own agenda but portraying all of us as agents of PETA is something that is really bad. However over time, people who targeted us and abused us, still reach out to us for help in dealing with injured animals I see an increased interest in native cattle and even my friends have replaced cross breeds with native cattle. But I see a greater danger in the new initiatives of the governments in bringing sex selected semen with artificial insemination which will endanger the native cattle.”

5.3 Revival of Interest in the Traditional Ways

Karthikeya Sivasenapathy says, “after the movement, there is a huge revival of traditional food, which are being branded and sold in a big way; there is a huge interest in native livestock, people wanting to consume only country chicken, raising them, preferring mutton. There is a palpable concern over the environment, wanting to save water bodies, avoid using plastic, plant trees, grown vegetables at homes.

There is an increasing interest in literature, what is said in the Sangam literature; nativity is seen with renewed interest. Local businesses are thriving. Simple thoughts like preferring tender coconut water over Pepsi.”

5.4 New Businesses in the Local Economy

There have been several businesses launched across the state to promote sustainable production systems of food and eco-friendly products. From A2 milk to herbal products to natural soaps, youngsters are quitting corporate careers and taking the plunge into business. The key elements are the business must be environmentally friendly, support local producers/farmers/artisans and have a low carbon footprint.

Uzhavar Bumi, a milk aggregator which works with self-help groups to source milk and delivers it in Chennai with a promise of no antibiotics, hormones or adulterants.

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Startup Magazine March - 2019 -special3 issue Vendor UzhavarBumi

UzhavarBumi: Delivering Farm-fresh products with ample convenience

of customer satisfaction it has been able to achieve. It is not in a position to have any of its customers disappointed by the service. When it comes to milk and milk-based products, everyone is reminded about the dire necessity of these in a human being's life. Dairy acts as much of the energy that flows through our body and UzhavarBumi is acting to make the process right. Its motto revolves around providing fresh and healthy milk, milk products and cold pressed oils along with the best service possible. Vetrivel says, "As our slogan says, 'We serve what you deserve,' which is the primary objective of our organization, serving them without any disappointments and dissatisfaction stands as our secondary objective."

'UzhavarBumi's revenue has grown from 15,000 sales per month to 25,000,000 sales per month and this was achieved within a span of 10 months'

An Edge over Others
The founder thinks that creating awareness among people is a major challenge. Apart from Social Media

ought to serve the milk to our customers within 12 hours of extraction. All the processes from the verification of quantity to the levels of testing to the logistics until it reaches the end consumer, happens inside this 12-hour window", states Vetrivel. He adds, "Our team is tirelessly striving towards this goal round the clock, 7 days a week, 365 days a year"

What's Next?
UzhavarBumi's revenue has grown from 15,000 sales per month to 25,000,000 sales per month and this was achieved within a span of 10 months. It has also started procuring milk from around 400 farmers and the milk is being delivered to over 2000 houses every morning. The organization is positioned as one of the fastest growing agro based food supplier. Also, UzhavarBumi markets and deals in milk, milk-based products & cold-pressed edible oils.

UzhavarBumi is one of India's first companies in the sector to facilitate refrigerated transportation of products and carry out quality tests in laboratories with qualified experts, making it the most reliable

Vetrivel Palani, Founder & CEO

1970 was the year when Verghese Kurian, the Father of White Revolution lead Operation Flood, world's biggest dairy development program. It transformed India from a milk deficient nation into the world's

How Archana Stalin's myHarvest is getting school children to learn farming will surprise you

myHarvest is a start-up that helps people grow their own food and reconnect with nature, especially school children who need the right approach to organic food

Blessy Mathew Prasad
Edex Live

Vembu Farms
A Community Farm managed by myHarvest Farms

myHarvest also delivers a gift box which contains saplings with customised packaging according to the occasion

With the rising number of diseases owing to food and lifestyle,

MyHarvest teaches school kids farming and works with farmers to produce vegetables and delivers it to consumers with a subscription model.

There are innumerable such initiatives across Tamil Nadu. The important aspect is it is not restricted to urban areas only. The movement has resonated widely, and nativity and environmental sustainability are the only mantras.

6. Jallikattu and Grassroots Activism and People's Politics

The Jallikattu movement has energised many activists who were working on various issues as now more youngsters are listening to them. Many youngsters have taken up local issues at the village level. The Grama Sabha movement has been a great beneficiary of this. Nandakumar of Thannatchi, led a 30-day campaign visiting 60 Panchayats around Tamil Nadu between July 15 and August 14, 2017 to spread awareness on Grama Sabhas.

People's Will: Grama Sabhas reject hydrocarbon, Kudankulam projects

Except for M Padugai in Nagapattinam, other villages could not pass resolutions against hydrocarbon project. At Kameshwaram, the scenes were dramatic.



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Farmers participating at a grama sabha meeting at Manapadal Veedu in Tirunelveli district on Friday | V KARTHIK ALAGU



Rekha Ramu, a software engineer turned organic farmer/retailer who recently contested and won as President of Pandeswaram Panchayat, conducting the Grama Sabha meeting on January 26th, 2020.

We have seen more and more villages conducting the grama sabhas properly and people participating with interest. Resolutions to ban alcohol shops to stop sand mining and in fact against NEET have been passed. The movement over the past 2-3 years led to youngsters from apolitical backgrounds contesting the much-delayed local body elections in December 2019 and more than 10 winning as Presidents (Sarpanch) of their Panchayats.

For a similar case study on grassroots activism, see the case study on the Kambur Gram Panchayat in Madurai district in Tamil Nadu, see

<http://www.rgics.org/wp-content/uploads/Kambur%20Panchayat%20Case%20Study%20Oct%2019.pdf>

and watch a 20 minute video film on it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Du7OIFy-v4&t=8s>

7. Bibliography

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