

Karnataka and the Cow Slaughter bill

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Recent passing of the anti-cow slaughter bills by various states attracts the question of logic behind such bans. Beef is considered the cheap source of protein for a large population in India. Moreover farmers are inclined towards rearing those animals that can be easily disposed of once their useful life is over. If one needs to really protect the cow, the basic ecological culture that sustains the bovine economy should not be banned.

In news: Karnataka widens the ambit of Cow Slaughter bill.

Placing it in syllabus: Society

Dimensions

1. Highlights of the Bill
2. Constitutional Provisions which allow for such bills
3. Are these bills relevant?

Content:

Highlights of the Bill:

- The word '**beef**' is defined as the flesh of cattle in any form, the word '**cattle**' is defined as "cow, calf of a cow and bull, bullock, and he or she buffalo below the age of thirteen years".
- Hence it is a comprehensive anti-bovine slaughter Bill.
- The Bill terms shelters established for the protection and preservation of cattle registered with the Department of Animal Husbandry and Fisheries as '**gaushalas**'.
- **Police officers ranked sub-inspector and above** or a competent authority will have the **power to search**

premises and seize cattle and materials used or intended to use to commit the offence.

- Such seizures, if any, will then be reported before the Sub-Divisional Magistrate without unreasonable delay.
- Terming cow slaughter as a **cognizable offence**, violators can attract three to seven years of imprisonment.
- For the first time, any person who slaughters or offers for slaughter even buffaloes can be accused of committing a cognizable offence and jailed for not less than three and extending to seven years.
- While a **penalty between Rs 50,000 and Rs 5 lakh can be levied for the first offence**, second and subsequent offences can attract penalties ranging between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 10 lakh.

Other states with such laws:

- Prior to Karnataka, **Maharashtra** had enacted the most rigorous anti-slaughter legislation. The Maharashtra Animal Preservation (Amendment) Act of 2015 made slaughter of bulls and bullocks a crime, punishable with a jail term of up to five years.
- Similar laws are in place in **Gujarat** and Uttar Pradesh as well.
- **Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh** have also made buffalo slaughter illegal.

Constitutional Provisions which allows for such bill:

Article 48 of the Constitution of India is one of the Directive Principles which **directs the state to make efforts for banning the beef consumption, animal slaughtering, smuggling, and their trading with neighboring borders.**

- All the states administered by the Government of India shall take measures for preserving and improving the breed.

- The state administration shall make necessary arrangements in organizing agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines.
- The state shall endeavour to prohibit slaughtering and smuggling of Cattle, Calves and other Milch and draught cattle.
- The state shall take necessary actions to ban trade of cattles in Livestock market for purposes of slaughter.
- The **state governments shall be primarily responsible** for prevention, detection, registration and investigation of crime intendeding cow slaughter.
- The states shall prevent slaughtering of animals except in a recognized and licensed slaughter house.
- States shall prohibit slaughtering of pregnant animals or have an offspring less than three months old.

Are these bills relevant?

In India, cattle have always been relished and their meat is a critical and cheap source of nutrition for various communities – including Adivasis, Dalits, Christians, Muslims. The anti-cow slaughter rules are viewed as **not only an attack on the right to life, livelihood and diverse food cultures but an assault on the entire agrarian economy.**

In meat production systems, it is the female which is reared carefully in large numbers to reproduce future generations, and the male that goes to slaughter. It is only the sick, old, infertile and non-lactating female that is sold for slaughter.

The whole of the North-East, Kerala and West Bengal have no restrictions on cattle slaughter, and the 2019 livestock Census saw **West Bengal overtake UP as India's No.1 cattle state** and the former state permits slaughter of all animals.

While India's population of fine indigenous cattle breeds keeps decreasing year by year, the population of imported breeds like Brazil's Ongole, Kankrej and Gir breeds have kept

increasing. Between 2003 and 2012, **the annual growth of young female bovines declined from 1.51% to 0.94% in indigenous cattle and from 8.08% to 5.05% in crossbred cattle.**

White revolution policy interventions to enhance milk production have actively advocated and financed replacement of indigenous cattle with high yielding breeds. As fewer cows are reared in today's India, cattle have been displaced from their productive role in agricultural livelihoods.

By the time the animal is seven-eight years old its milk yields fall and the returns don't justify the costs of feeding and maintenance. Hence **no farmer can afford to wait for 13 years as the small amount that the farmer may receive is more than offset by the cost of feeding during the animal's unproductive years.**

But India's buffalo population has grown by 21% since 1997 as buffaloes anchor milk and beef production in India. **India is the 2nd largest exporter of buffalo beef** in the world. Buffaloes survive well on limited, coarse, less nutritious crop residues, whilst cattle need more green fodder and green grass.

In Brazil, beef-based cattle production systems are the driving force behind its flourishing indigenous Indian cattle breed populations.

Hence it is evident in itself that given all other conducive input factors for the animal to be reared, **allowing the slaughter of an animal actually drives its numbers up.**

Mould your thought:

1. Highlight the salient features of the anti-Cow slaughter Bill of Karnataka. How do such bills impact the farmers as well as the agrarian economy?

Approach to the answer:

- Write the features of the bill
- Write the trend of cattle and buffalo population in India
- Write the criticisms of such bills by highlighting their impacts
- Conclusion