



Wake up to the Logic behind Bull Taming

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Abstract

*Bull taming sport is not only a leisure sport for Tamils, but a tradition that establishes the identity of hard working, self-sufficient and powerful Tamils. It symbolizes a cordial Man-Animal relationship, reads the op-ed, "For the owner, the bull was a member of the family. Native breeds used in bull taming ensured biodiversity and acted a geographical indicators." Jallikattu helps in identifying superior bull breeds for mating and gene preservation. Those bulls that win the sport are selected for mating, while the other remaining bulls are used for farming activities. The valiant bulls promote native breeding of cows which is a staple source of A2 Milk. The bulls are used for ploughing, transportation, farmyard manure, organic treatments like Panchagavya, Jeevamritham that are used as natural pesticides to keep the crops free from disease and enrich the yield and the soil. Jallikattu is not just a simple display of bravery during Pongal, as many seem to think. It is a deep-rooted issue connected with the need to preserve the native breeds of cattle in Tamil Nadu. It is important for all to understand the fundamental aspects of preservation of indigenous breeds of cattle and the larger implications the issue has on the cattle wealth of the country and more particularly Tamilnadu. These are the justifications for the initiative of Jpl. This will certainly remain a conducive platform to sustain our culture blended with science to be valiant, powerful, and productive society to the country and the world as well. The JPL is aimed to be promoted with a commendable objective to *Encourage sports and cultural activities more specifically relating to bull taming *Encourage the Jallikattu bulls used as studs for increasing quality breeding *Encourage our nature bull of cattle saved from extinction *Encourage Jallikattu sport to infuse courage and strength in the minds of the youth *Encourage the private sponsors to promote/undertake bull sports *Encourage the sponsors to undertake schemes to be introduced in the field of cultural activity, education, and social welfare *Encourage competitions, work-shops, seminars, conferences to achieve the above objectives *Create and maintain the necessary infrastructure *Achieve National Level Sports Approval *Conduct District/State/National Level Bull Sports regularly *Create District Level Medical Amenities with Emergency Hospital service for the bulls *Recognize bull farmers & fighters at District and State Level *Encourage more JPL voluntary members at District and State Level.*

Keywords: Jallikattu, Vadi Majuvirattu, Veli Virattu, Vadam Manjuvirattu.

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Introduction

Jallikattu is widely known as a bull-embracing sport, it is actually an ancient cattle show and a stage for the village youth to demonstrate their valour. It is conducted in the third day of a four-day-long harvest festival called Pongal. The third day is dedicated to cattle reared by farmers with all love.

Tamil Nadu is the only destination listed among the must-see places of 2016 in the rankings recently released by *The New York Times*. According to the Union Tourism Ministry report of 2014, Tamil Nadu drew 4.66 million foreign tourists in 2014 and ranked first among all states. The Pongal festival season is a big attraction for tourists and it is an opportunity to demonstrate not just the heritage structures but also the lifestyle and the

richness of our festivals.

What is Jallikattu?

Bull is a key partner in the process of farming. Bulls get more importance over cows for bulls help farmers to plough their field, pull their cart loaded with goods, and inseminate cows, in turn resulting in production of milk, offspring and preserving indigenous species.

1. Temple bulls, usually considered the head of all cattle in a village, are readied for the sport. Temple bulls from different villages are brought to a common arena where the Jallikattu happens.
2. The bulls are then freed into a ground, one by one. Participants are to embrace the bull's hump, and try to tame it by bringing the raging bull to a stop, possibly by riding for as long as possible holding its hump.

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3. *The bulls that could be tamed are considered weaker, and are used for domestic purposes by the farmers and the untameable ones -- considered the strongest and most virile -- are used for breeding the cows in many villages.*

Facets of Jallikattu

Vadi Manju Virattu Vadi manjuvirattu: This is the most common category of Jallikattu. The bull is released from a closed space (vadi vasal) and the contestants attempt to wrap their arms or hands around the hump of the bull and hold on to it to win the award. Only one person is allowed to attempt at a time. This variant is most common in the districts of Madurai, Theni, Thanjavur, and Salem.

Vēli virattu: In this variant the approach is slightly different as the bull is directly released into open ground. The rules are the same as that of *vadi manjuvirattu*. This is a popular variant in the districts of Sivagangai and Madurai.

Vadam manjuvirattu: In this variant, the bull is tied with a 15 m (49 ft) rope (*vatam* means "circle" in Tamil). There are no other physical restrictions for the bull and hence it can move freely anywhere. The maximum time period given is 30 minutes. A team of seven to nine members can attempt to untie the gift token that is tied on the bull's horn.

The cattle are considered to be a key factor in the process of farming. Jallikattu bulls from villages are brought to a common arena where they are freed with hampers tied on its horn. The participants try to tame it by embracing its hump without any harm to both. Untamable bulls – considered the strongest and most virile – are used for breeding the cows. The native cattle are both an input as well as insurance to the livestock keepers. In India, the hotbed for human civilization's rapid growth across various fields, cattle hold special significance and the Bull holds top respect. Basic incomes of farmers who remain the backbones of all successful civilizations have long been bolstered by the trade of cattle and cattle products.

Jallikattu helps native breeding of cows, leading to save the indigenous cattle, 'bulls and cows' from extinction. Bulls from healthy genetic strains have played important roles in ensuring the same. To ensure the cattle multiply with the same vigour over longer periods and to ensure the virility of the gene pool stays intact, our forefathers took various steps to ensure that the best breeds or genes went forward. This sort of intervention was required to replace the loss of natural selection which would have happened by way of passage of only the genes of the really healthy top notch animals due to rigorous election processes for mating rights in the natural world.

The various rutting rituals ensure exemplary muscular health and overall physical fitness. Animals which eventually win the fights that erupt for mating rights during the rutting season are the ones which get to pass on their genes to the next generation. It must be

noted that several animals are heavily injured or may even die during the hardcore gory fights that break out during this natural process. This can be seen even today with wild cattle worldwide and other species of wild animals.

This along with the need to prepare a generation of young men for the hard toils of ancient life including the fierce battlefields of yore amalgamated the selection of Bull and Man alike. Young men who could tame the hardy bull were encouraged by the chance to stake claim for the best brides (The women had the last say in choosing their suitor in ancient India) and the Bulls that could not be tamed were chosen to be used for development of the next line of cattle as Studs. It was a win-win situation and went on for thousands of years until it was disrupted by colonisation by foreigners who knew the importance of breaking up our ancient practices in order to bring forth the collapse of the Indian System of living.

Internationally, the breeders' community is extremely strong as an outcome of multibillion dollar businesses due to high demand for meat and impressive rates globally. But the lack of rearing capabilities in the developed nations due to lack of manpower / pasture / climatic conditions is pushing them to ensure India turns into a mass production house for beef and have succeeded in their attempts too, since as of today India is the Largest Exporter of Beef in the world. This in turn will increase the demand for meat specific cattle to be given preference among the millions of farmers who grow cattle too for additional income and as source of manure.

Protecting the breed through Jallikattu

Now once this vicious cycle is started Indian breeds will fall into the least wanted category and the resulting demand for imported bloodlines will act as a double edged sword cutting down the indigenous gene pool and resulting in huge forex overload. The very fact that India is now IMPORTING embryos / germplasm / frozen semen of Our very own indigenous cattle from Brazil is a very clear example that we are on the verge of losing all our indigenous cattle ,if not already.

An exemplary example of the strength of our native breeds is the fact that the Worlds most "in-demand" breeds the American Brahman Bull is the outcome of interbreeding the Kankrej, The Ongole and the Gir bloodlines from India among others in BosIndicus (Indian Cattle in plain English). It's ironic that the bull reared for beef should be named Brahman for obvious reasons.

Scientific Insights on Jallikattu

Over the past few decades the production of milk might have surged in our country but the yield per cow has gone down drastically. This increases the need for cross breeding with foreign breeds to improve yields which starts of the cycle of demand for better cattle holding area as these hybrids are not hardy require

special care(in some cases air conditioned dwellings) and special veterinarian drugs to sustain health and boost produce. This is just the opposite of what is required for our hardy and high yielding desi varieties. While we import breeds to increase yield of so called desi strains it would be shocking for some to know that Indian Pure Breeds which have been reared successfully in brazil for decades now are being imported back into india in a desperate move to save our bloodlines. What is even more shocking is that while our national average for milk yield per cow is at around a meagre 2.3Kgs the Pure Indian breeds in brazil are yielding as high as 60 Kgs of Milk.

This not so milky story does not end here, latest research shows that these foreign breeds are loaded with the A1 allele gene which spews out Milk which is laced with The milk production estimate from indigenous/ non-descript cows in All India was 29484.53 thousand metric tons during 2014-15. The total cow milk production in All India was 66423.45 thousand metric tons during 2014-15. Thus, the percentage share of milk production estimate from indigenous/ non-descript cows in total cow milk production estimate was 44.39 % during 2014-15.

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Bulls Trained for Jallikattu

Jallikattu has been a one-to-one sport, a bull and a man inside the ring at a time. Recently, however, the way the sport has been conducted changed. What we see now is a one raging bull freed into an arena with many men, each person trying to embrace the hump of the bull and tame. Since the bulls are not as wild and ferocious, people tend to provoke it. This action has brought a new trend in bull sports after long perception. This has bound into law that confirms protection to both the bulls and the tamer.

(1) Examination of Bulls

The bulls shall be compulsorily subjected to veterinary examination by the qualified veterinarians of Animal Husbandry Department. The participating bulls shall be examined for general health by clinical examination. Bulls showing symptoms of fatigue, dehydration, restlessness, etc. shall be identified and not permitted to participate further in the event.

- I. The bulls shall also be specifically examined for possible alcohol abuse and any animal which is subjected to such abuse shall not be permitted to participate in the event.

- II. The bulls shall be taken to the entry point from where their nose ropes shall be undone by the owners and the bull is let inside the arena.
- III. The bull examination area shall be provided with roofing (shamiana / thatched roof) so as to protect the bulls from rain or sunlight.

(2) Bull-run area

The area after the bull embrace area upto the Bull collection yard is the Bull Run area. A strong double barricade should separate the galleries from the arena. The spectator gallery shall be constructed from atleast 15 metres beyond the point where the bulls are released so as to minimise the noise from the spectators at the time of the bull release.

After the run of 15 metres, when the bulls enter the bull run area, the participants are not to be allowed to touch the bulls. The Bull Run area should cover a minimum of 100 metres length to facilitate the bulls to the exit without any anxiety into the collection yard. The entire activity starting from entry of the bulls into the arena upto the bull collection yard shall be completed in 60 to 120 seconds.

(3) Setting up of Gallery

The organizers shall fix up the gallery for the spectators to sit and watch the event and the gallery shall be made with strong structures duly certified by the Public Works Department officials.

Double barricading of the arena at the minimum of eight feet height so that bulls will not jump the double barricading and cause injuries to the spectators.

Number of spectators in the gallery shall not exceed the limit prescribed by the Public Works Department.

Popular Jallikattu Attractions

1. Alanganallur
2. Avaniapuram
3. Thiruvapur near Pudukottai
1. 4.Kondaalampatti Thammampatti in Salem, Tamilnadu
4. Palemedu near Madurai
5. Sravayal near Karaikudi
2. 7.Kanduppatti near Ponamaravathy, Pudukkotai
3. 8. Pallavarayanpatty near Cumbum.

Conclusion

An in-depth analysis of the present international effort to cut short the availability of pure Indian breeds to the Indian farmer and cattle rearer is a must to go forward and protect our cattle for future generations. This must include efforts to protect the age old practices of Jallikattu, Manjuvirattu, Bullock cart races and other Bull taming events which ensure the cattle rearers get revenue in return for protecting the bloodlines and ensuring a healthy genepool. Any short-sighted bans in the name of animal rights would be a death knell for the future of Indian breeds.

India has been the cradle of modern civilisations and her age old practices are time tested. There must necessary changes in the constitution to ensure traditions with scientific reasoning are withheld and not curtailed in the name of modern thinking and cultural growth. A firm platform must be paved to seek a National Level Sport reputation in a similar way as our traditional sport Kabaddi and Silambam made its way into the national sport fold and protect our timeless traditional science from extinction. Let us take decisions to save Jallikattu, save Indian Cattle Breeds and save our farmers.

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