



## Supreme Court Upholds Laws Allowing Jallikattu

**For Prelims:** [Jallikattu](#), [SC](#), [Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960](#), [Pongal](#)

**For Mains:** Argument in Favour and Against Practicing Jallikattu.

### Why in News?

Recently, the [Supreme Court \(SC\)](#) has upheld amendments made by **Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra** to the [Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960](#), to allow the traditional bull-taming sports of Jallikattu, [Kambala](#) (Karnataka) and bullock-cart racing.

- The case involves a challenge to the **Tamil Nadu amendment allowing jallikattu**, based on the argument that it goes against the central law prohibiting cruelty to animals.

### What is the Court's Judgement?

- The SC held that the **state amendments ([Prevention of Cruelty to Animals \(Tamil Nadu Amendment\) Act of 2017](#) and [Prevention of Cruelty to Animals \(Conduct of Jallikattu\) Rules of 2017](#)) did not violate the Constitution** and the Supreme Court's 2014 ruling banning Jallikattu.
  - The court said the Amendment Act **“substantially reduced pain and cruelty” to the participating animals.**
  - The judgment holds that the 2017 Amendment Act and Rules on Jallikattu are in time with Entry 17 (prevention of cruelty to animals) of the Concurrent List, Article 51A(g) (compassion to loving creatures) of the Constitution.
    - The Supreme Court banned Jallikattu through a judgment in May 2014 in the **Animal Welfare Board of India vs A. Nagaraja case** on the grounds of cruelty to animals.
  - The court said the **Act was also not “relatable” to Article 48 of the Constitution which deals with the duty of the State** to “organise agriculture and animal husbandry”.
- It also stated that any **violation of the law in the name of cultural tradition would be punishable.**
- The court decided that determining Jallikattu's cultural heritage status is **best left to the State's legislative assembly** and not a court of law.

### What is Jallikattu?

- **About:**
  - Jallikattu is a traditional sport that is popular in Tamil Nadu.
  - The sport involves **releasing a wild bull into a crowd of people**, and the participants attempt to grab the bull's hump and ride it for as long as possible or attempt to bring it under control.
  - It is celebrated in the month of January, during the [Tamil harvest festival, Pongal](#).

- Arguments in Favour of Practice:
  - Jallikattu is considered **both a religious and cultural event** in Tamil Nadu, celebrated by people regardless of their caste or creed.
  - The State government argues that **instead of completely banning this centuries-old practice, it can be regulated and reformed** as society progresses.
  - They believe that prohibiting jallikattu would be **seen as an attack on the culture and sentiments** of the community.
  - The government asserts that jallikattu plays a **role in conserving a valuable indigenous breed of livestock** and that the event itself does not go against principles of compassion and humanity.
  - They emphasize that the significance of **jallikattu is being taught in high school curricula to ensure its preservation** for future generations.
- Arguments in Opposition:
  - It is argued that all living beings, including animals, possess inherent liberty, as **recognized by the Constitution**.
  - Jallikattu has resulted in deaths and injuries to **both humans and bulls in various districts** of the State.
  - It has been observed that tamers **often act aggressively towards the bulls**, causing them extreme cruelty.
  - Critics compared jallikattu to practices like **sati and dowry, which were once considered part of culture but were abolished** through legislation.

**Note: Kambala** is a traditional **buffalo race** in paddy fields filled with slush and mud which generally takes place in **coastal Karnataka** (Udupi and Dakshina Kannada) from **November to March**.

### What is the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960?

- The legislative intent of the Act is to **“prevent the infliction of unnecessary pain or suffering on animals”**.
- The **Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI)** was established in 1962 under Section 4 of the Act.
- This Act **provides for punishment for causing unnecessary cruelty and suffering to animals**. The Act defines animals and different forms of animals.
- **Discusses different forms of cruelty, exceptions, and killing of a suffering animal** in case any cruelty has been committed against it, so as to relieve it from further suffering.
- Provides the **guidelines relating to experimentation on animals** for scientific purposes.
- The Act enshrines the provisions relating to the **exhibition of the performing animals**, and offences committed against the performing animals.
- This Act provides for the **limitation period of 3 months** beyond which no prosecution shall lie for any offences under this Act.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

### Prelims

#### Q. Consider the following statements: (2014)

1. Animal Welfare Board of India is established under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
2. National Tiger Conservation Authority is a statutory body.
3. National Ganga River Basin Authority is chaired by the Prime Minister.

#### Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 2 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (b)**

**Mains**

**Q. What are the challenges to our cultural practices in the name of Secularism? (2019)**

**Source: TH**

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