

# THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF BEEF BAN

Editor

Binu Mathew



PEOPLES LITERATURE PUBLICATION  
2017

First published in 2017 by  
PEOPLES LITERATURE PUBLICATION  
<http://peoplespublication.com>  
[connect@peoplespublication.com](mailto:connect@peoplespublication.com)

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Price: INR 625/-  
ISBN 13: 978-81-932525-8-1

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

A pall of gloom has descended upon India. An all pervasive fear grips the nation. When the state puts its nose into your food plates you know that fascism is here. When vigilante squads roam the streets lynching people you know that fascism is here.

Robert O Paxton in his classic book “The Anatomy of Fascism” writes “I propose to examine fascism in a cycle of five stages: (1) the creation of movements; (2) their rooting in the political system; (3) their seizure of power; (4) the exercise of power; (5) and, finally, the long duration, during which the fascist regime chooses either radicalization or entropy.” It seems to me that India is at the fifth stage – the radicalization of Hindutva, which is the Indian version of fascism.

This radicalization of Hindutva is taking place at different levels. Through engineered riots or low level skirmishes that divide society vertically to massive social engineering programmes like the ‘beef ban’. Beef ban gives blanket license to Gau Rakshaks to lynch people. It is also not just an incursion into our food rights but also will affect the livelihood of millions of already stressed farmers. This beef ban will wreck the cattle sector and also will break the backbone of the farmers, driving them to suicide.

This book contains articles that Countercurrents.org published on the topic of beef, the oldest of which is Dr Ambedkar’s seminal essay “Did Hindus Never Eat Beef?” which we republished on 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2003, to the lynching of 16 year old Junaid in a train on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017.

When fascism knocks on our door we have only two choices. 1. To succumb to our fate and surrender meekly. 2. To fight back with all our means. It’s time India took a decision. To surrender or fight back is the question. Surrender is not an option and it is also against human nature. Our reflexive action is to fight back. We’ve to go back to the basic nature of the Republic and fight to win back the Idea of India that the founders of this nation imagined. Let’s stand up for the idea of India we learnt to love as children and we want to pass on to our children. Let’s do it by holding the Constitution of India in one hand and the tricolour in the other hand. If we rise up as one, this emerging fascism will, as Robert O Paxton said, dissipate into entropy. I hope that this book will help in our fight for the idea of India we all stand for.

Binu Mathew  
Editor  
Countercurrents.org  
29 June, 2016

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# INDIA WILL NOT BECOME 'COWISTAN', 'KALIBAN' WILL NOT RULE US

Binu Mathew \*

When I was in school we used to say a pledge in the morning assembly. It began this way, "India is my country. All Indians are my brothers and sisters...." This was the India we dreamed of when we were children. But, is this the India we are living now?

Distressing news is coming from all around India. From Kashmir to Kanyakumari we hear the wails of our brothers and sisters. I hear the cries of Farooq Ahmad Dar who was tied in front of an army jeep as a human shield. I hear the cries from Mandasur where farmers were shot down like mad dogs. Farmers from Tamil Nadu went so far as to Delhi to have an audience with the Prime Minister. They ate rats, drank their own urine, still our Prime Minister didn't have time to hear their woes.

The blood of Akhlaq in Dadri is crying for justice and so are the dozens of victims who were killed by the 'Gau Rakshaks' (Cow Vigilante) around the country. Who will protect the dignity of our brothers in Una? Who will protect the dignity of our sisters in Bastar? Where is Najeeb?

While we cry for justice and dignity, Gau Rakshaks are roaming the streets with Trishuls and lathis ready to lynch anyone on mere suspicion. Yes, an air of suspicion has entered the body politics of our country. We have lost mutual trust.

To make things worse, 150 right wing Hindu outfits met in Goa with an aim to convert India into a Hindu Rashtra by 2023. One Sadhvi Saraswati went so far as to state that she will "request" the Central government to hang people who eat beef. She also urged Hindus to stock arms at home to "save our women from love jihad".

Is this the country we pledged to stand up for? Have we forgotten what we learnt as children that all Indians are our brothers and sisters"? What has happened to our country to make a Sadhvi to state from the pulpit to stock up arms? Why is the country full of Gau Rakshaks searching for potential cattle

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traders or beef eaters to lynch them, instead of asking them if they had anything to eat today? Where is our country headed?

The de facto 'beef ban' has given these Gau Rakshaks the license to lynch anyone. Is Cow the most important priority in India? The 2016 Global Hunger Index states that 38.7 percent of Indian children under five years are stunted due to lack of food. That means that 1 in 3 of our children have stunted growth. Dear Gau Rakshaks before you lynch their parents, try to give them a day's nutritious food.

Cow has become a political animal. The cow is the central plank of Hindutva politics. It unleashes the lynch mobs who create an atmosphere of fear across the nation. Cow divides communities. If the manoeuvres of those who divide India succeed, we are heading for a 'Cowistan'. In my mother tongue, Malayalam, Cowistan can be translated as 'Kalistan'. 'Kali' means cow. The Gau Rakshaks can be called 'Kaliban'. We are heading into a 'Cowistan' where 'Kaliban' rule.

No, this is not the India we dreamed of as children. This is not the India we want to pass on to our children. As adults let's take another pledge today, "India is my country. All Indians are my brothers and sisters." With our beloved tricolour in one hand and the Constitution of India in the other, we will fight with all our might any effort to make India into a Cowistan, ruled by 'Kalibans'.

# WHICH INTERESTS WILL BENEFIT FROM THE BEEF BAN?

Manali Chakrabarti \*

No one could accuse the present Government of a lack of a sense of drama. The last few months, in particular, have witnessed one spectacular move after another – so completely unexpected that they have caught even the Government’s diehard supporters gasping. And each manoeuvre has led to a trail of shrill debates, speculations, analyses, protests, jubilation as to the ‘real’ reason behind the unanticipated move.

The latest in this series is the notification by the Union government, announced barely three days before the start of the holy month of Ramzan, banning the slaughter of bovine animals, including cows, buffaloes, camels, calves, oxen, etc. This has led to a spate of reactions from all over the country, especially from states where substantial sections of the population consume beef or buffalo meat. The outrage in the social media has spilt into various kinds of protests, some of which have turned violent, and are making regular headlines in the mainstream media too. In all this din several extremely important decisions of the Government are getting away virtually uncontested, even unnoticed – such as the selling out of major public sector units (PSUs) in various industries.<sup>1</sup>

Amid all this noise, let us try to make sense of this decision of the Government. We will start with understanding the legality of the notification and its immediate implication for the trade in cattle. Then we would analyse the impact of the notification on various sectors of the economy and the people engaged in them. And finally, we would try to explore the possible reason(s) for the notification by the ruling party, which by all accounts would not only further rip the already damaged secular fabric of the country, but also severely harm the economic life of the people. Or, in other words, we would attempt to figure out who stands to gain from the notification. Appendix 1 gives an overview of the impact of the notification on related industries.

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\* Manali Chakrabarti is an Independent Researcher. This article was originally published in RUPE blog

<sup>1</sup><http://www.financialexpress.com/market/major-divestment-line-up-bhel-oil-india-cil-nbcc-9-rail-psus-to-help-fetch-rs-72500-cr-next-fy/578289/>

## The legality of the notification

In an unprecedented move, on 23rd May 2017 the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change brought in a notification titled ‘Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Regulation of Livestock Markets) Rules, 2017’, under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. This notification effectively bans buying and selling of cattle for slaughter. Before we go into the implications and effect of this notification on various sections of the population, let us try to appreciate the extraordinary legal manoeuvre this represents.

Given the diversity of our country, constitutionally, laws on cow or animal slaughter are exclusively under states’ jurisdiction and come under the Department of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry. The idea being that the state governments are in the best position to decide on this issue in accordance with the local climate, food habits, fodder availability, customs, etc. And cow slaughter is already regulated and/or prohibited by various state level legislations in our country, reflecting the historicity and specific requirements of the local population. It needs to be noted that the specific Directive Principle (Article 48 of the Constitution) is based only on economic considerations and does not recognise prohibition and regulation of slaughter due to any religious sentiments<sup>2</sup>. Thus, constitutionally, the Central Government does not have the power to introduce a bill in the Parliament prohibiting cow slaughter all over India. Hence the Government had to resort to indirect means, invoking the Prevention of Cruelty Act, 1960 which is part of the Concurrent List, i.e., it comes under both the Centre and the state government.

Even so, the Prevention of Cruelty Act explicitly states that killing of animals for food is not an offence unless it is done causing “unnecessary pain and suffering”. Further, killing of animals permitted by other legislations cannot be made into an offence under this Act.<sup>3</sup> Thus the Government is in violation of the Constitution even in using the tactic of invoking an unrelated Act to ban cattle slaughter on the plea of its overriding concern for the ‘welfare of animals’. The concern is selective: none is shown towards the numerous other animals we consume – goat, sheep, rabbits, fowl, fish, etc. The Government has been at pains to point out that the notification is not for a ‘beef ban’ but merely in order

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<sup>2</sup> Though the subject of cow slaughter has been fraught with controversy right from the framing of the Constitution. <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/cow-slaughter-and-the-constitution/article18683942.ece>

<sup>3</sup> <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/a-constitutional-misadventure-cow-slaughter-gau-rakshak-beef-ban-4679912/>

to regulate the cattle market. However, as several reports have pointed out, this technicality is irrelevant, and this, in fact, amounts to a virtual ban on beef consumption. Something much deeper seems to be going on, and we need to explore further.

What is the implication of the notification?

In a 23-page notification, the Government of India has made trade in cattle, which includes cows, buffaloes, calves, heifers, bulls, bullocks and camels, practically impossible. Technically the notification states that these animals cannot be traded in the ‘animal market’ for slaughter, and this would be ensured by an elaborate bureaucracy. Typically cattle are traded in the local fairs, and weekly markets and most slaughterhouses also source their animals from these places. But the loose definition of animal market in the notification ensures that almost any place could come under its ambit. Hence this virtually means that bovine animals cannot be sold or bought for slaughter anymore.

The notification lays down elaborate paperwork even for purchases other than for the purpose of slaughter. The notification also mandates the creation of two new committees, in addition to the already existing State Animal Welfare Board mandated by the 1960 Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act – one for regulation of the animal market (District Animal Market Monitoring Committee)<sup>4</sup>, and one for its management (Animal Market Committee).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Members would be the district collector or magistrate, chief veterinary officer, jurisdictional divisional forest office, two representatives from animal welfare organizations, and a representative of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA). It would, among other things, ensure that an animal market has adequate shade, lighting, toilets, non-slippery flooring, and sand pits for rolling of equines, before any new animal markets are registered.

<sup>5</sup> Members include the chairman of the local authority, the chief municipal officer, a tahasildar member, the jurisdictional policy inspector, a veterinary officer, a representative of the SPCA, and two representatives from animal welfare organization, and would be responsible for the “upkeep of a market or for the provision of fixed facilities there and for ensuring the welfare of the animals being traded”.

Briefly, the following documentation and verification would have to be done for every transaction:

- Seller/Authorised Agent

Submit a written and signed declaration stating the name and address of the owner of the cattle with a photo identification proof, details of the identification of the cattle<sup>6</sup>, stating the cattle has not been brought to the market for slaughter.

- Purchaser

Provide documentary proof (relevant revenue document) that (s) he is an ‘agriculturist.’

Give a written declaration that he/she shall not sell the animal for a period of six months from the date of purchase, shall not sell the cattle outside the state and shall abide by the rules relating to transport, etc.

- Animal Market Committee
- Obtain the expenses incurred for each animal, as approved by the District Animal Market Monitoring Committee, so as to provide the basic facilities for animals and people
- Retain the declaration of the seller
- Verify that purchaser is an ‘agriculturist’
- Keep a record of the name and address of the purchaser with identity proof
- Keep the declaration of the purchaser

Further, after a sale (and before the removal of the animal) the proof of sale has to be made out in five copies – one each for the purchaser and the seller, a third copy to tehsil office of the residence of purchaser, a fourth copy to the Chief Veterinary Officer in the district of purchaser and the last copy to be kept intact in the record by the Animal Market Committee. All these documents have to be maintained by the Animal Market Committee for a period of six months and would have to be produced on demand to an Inspector.

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<sup>6</sup> The Central government submitted a report to the Supreme Court underlining the need of Aadhaar card to protect cows from being smuggled. It said: “Each cow and its progeny across India should get a Unique Identification Number for tracking.”<http://www.businesstoday.in/current/economy-politics/every-cow-progeny-should-get-unique-identification-number-centre-tells-sc/story/250659.html>

Every head of cattle traded would have to follow the above mentioned procedure— the elaborate paperwork, copies in quintuplets, identity proof and documents, all. In a country with over a third of the rural population officially illiterate and barely 5.4 percent<sup>7</sup> having education up to higher secondary this seems like a cruel joke. And of course one can safely guess the proliferation of extortion and exploitation for the millions of cattle holders which is likely to ensue given that the process is so suited to find loopholes in. Perhaps it will provide ‘employment’ to the millions of ‘educated’ unemployed youth entering the job market every year – for a payment they might do the paperwork!

There has been a lot of discussion in the press on the implication of the notification for the religious sentiments and secular values of our country, let us try to understand at some length the economic implications of this recent Government move.

### The economic implications of the notification

The cattle economy is a complex economy and several significant industries are intricately connected with it. India’s cattle population, estimated at over 300 million, is the largest in the world, accounting for a third of the global bovine population. In India, cattle are primarily raised for milk production and consumption, both by individuals as well as the dairy sector. The other important utility of cattle is for manure, fuel and as draught animals. In the 1970s around half of the power requirements of the farm sector (for ploughing, pressing oil, transport, etc.) were sourced from draught animals. But over the years their importance has declined and at present, they account for merely 5 percent of the requirement with tractors providing around 50 percent of the motive force. Thus at present cattle are raised only for milk and manure (though chemical fertilisers now constitute over two-thirds of the total fertiliser consumption).

With the cost of the feed itself at Rs 125-150 per day per head of cattle (apart from other costs such as housing and medicine), it is uneconomical to maintain unproductive animals. This implies that the excess animals including male calves, bulls, bullocks, male buffaloes and non-productive or dry female buffaloes and cows need to be removed from the cycle. Hence even to maintain the dairy sector, animals need to seamlessly flow into the meat market, and any restrictions on this natural flow would lead to stray cattle and loss of financial input to the cattle owner. According to the 19th Livestock Census, 2012, there

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<sup>7</sup><http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/socio-economic-and-caste-census-2011-shows-growing-illiteracy-in-rural-india/article7383859.ece>

are over 5.2 million stray cattle<sup>8</sup> in the country, and most of them are cows and bulls because cow slaughter is banned in around 18 states. This also contributes to the hazardous cattle smuggling across state borders.

Markets for beef and leather and leather products are in essence a by-product of the dairy sector, complementing it by absorbing the non-productive cattle, and hence are crucial for the economic viability of the sector. It needs to be noted that these industries are not in the farm sector, hence putting a clause that only an 'agriculturist' can acquire cattle completely disregards these markets. As Sagari Ramdas points out:

The economic value of an animal, despite it not being purchased by another farmer, exists because of all post-farm downstream economic values of the cattle economy after slaughter: cattle beef as a critical part of food cultures and a cheap source of protein, cattle skin the basis of India's thriving leather industry ...and its offal used widely in the pharmaceutical and manufacturing industries.<sup>9</sup>

### Impact on beef market – domestic and export

The impact of the notification would be first felt by the beef market of the country. India ranks fifth in the world in meat production, with an annual production of around 6.5 million tonnes, and bovine meat contributes around two-thirds of this.<sup>10</sup>

### Exports of beef

The media has been agog regarding the implication of the ban on beef exports of the country. India and Brazil are the biggest beef exporters in the world, each accounting for a fifth of total exports. It is interesting that the export of beef (or rather buffalo meat, also referred to as carabeef), which had been increasing over the years, has gone up steeply precisely in the years the present Government has been in power. At present, with annual exports of Rs 26,682 crores, it has surpassed Basmati Rice as the number one agricultural export of the country.<sup>11</sup> Given the stringent hygiene and sanitary requirements for international market, exports of beef and beef products are tightly controlled by

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<sup>8</sup> <http://dahd.nic.in/sites/default/files/Livestock5.pdf#page=16&zoom=auto,-274,307>

<sup>9</sup> <http://thewire.in/121728/beef-ban-cattle-market/>

<sup>10</sup> [http://apeda.gov.in/apedawebsite/six\\_head\\_product/animal.htm](http://apeda.gov.in/apedawebsite/six_head_product/animal.htm)

<sup>11</sup> <http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/where-indian-buffalo-meat-exports-go-4609512/>



Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) within the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. According to the APEDA India has 66 approved units which operate both as abattoirs and meat processing facilities, and 34 units solely for meat processing.<sup>12</sup> All the exports are routed through these units. This lucrative market is definitely going to be adversely affected by the notification.

### Domestic market for beef

What is less talked about, however, is the effect the notification would have on domestic consumption. The blanket ban on cattle trade for slaughter through animal markets would virtually cripple the estimated Rs 1 lakh crore (Rs 1 trillion) domestic meat and allied industries market. It would disproportionately hurt the Muslim and the Dalit communities more, who own the thousands of roadside meat shops and slaughterhouses. It is not only those who sell and trade beef who are going to get negatively affected by the ban, but also all those who consume beef (carabeef and cow beef). The total domestic consumption of beef and carabeef is around 2.4 million tonnes, and because of its affordability, it is the second most consumed animal protein next to chicken.<sup>13</sup> This is a very important component of nutrition for the poorest of our country given the exorbitant prices of foodgrain and pulses. And yet the per capita consumption of beef/carabeef in India is very low, both because of the difficulty in obtaining it, due to religious sentiments and Government prohibition, as well as because of the lack of adequate infrastructural facilities to store and process the meat. In other words, this market has a tremendous potential for growth and could have provided cheap and accessible nutrition to the vast numbers of malnourished, but, given the ban, it is likely to be seriously affected.

There are 3,600 registered slaughterhouses in the country, but there are many more slaughterhouses functioning 'illegally'. The APEDA estimates that there are over 30,000 such slaughterhouses all over the country.<sup>14</sup> By any reasonable guess, these would be all small entrepreneurs, mostly from the Muslim or Dalit community, and many of them would be ruined because of this notification. The state likely to be most affected is the most populous state of the country and with some of the worst human development indicators – Uttar Pradesh.

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<sup>12</sup>

[https://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Livestock%20and%20Products%20Annual\\_New%20Delhi\\_India\\_8-31-2016.pdf](https://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Livestock%20and%20Products%20Annual_New%20Delhi_India_8-31-2016.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> [apeda.gov.in/apedawebsite/MEAT\\_MANUAL/Chap2/Chap2.pdf](http://apeda.gov.in/apedawebsite/MEAT_MANUAL/Chap2/Chap2.pdf)

U.P.alone accounts for over a fifth of the national meat production (21percent), and just short of half of the total meat exports (43percent) of the country.<sup>15</sup> There are no reliable data on the number of people employed in the slaughterhouses of the country, including U.P. (and that is true for all data involving the most underprivileged of the society in spite of the huge fanfare about big data and digital economy). Yet it can be safely said that tens of thousands of people would be rendered unemployed in U.P. itself because of this ban. Incidentally, U.P. also has the dubious distinction of having the second highest rate of open unemployment (58 in 1000), much higher than the national average of 37 in 1000. But, more importantly, the open unemployment rate among youth is even higher – every sixth person in the age group of 18 to 29 in the state is unemployed, compared to the national average of every tenth person.<sup>16</sup> The situation would only get worse with this notification.

### Impact on leather and leather products

The most important downstream industry for slaughtered (dead) non-productive cattle is leather and leather products. According to Government data, the Indian leather sector is worth about \$18 billion (Rs 1.17 lakh crore), of which exports account for around \$6 billion and the domestic market is \$12 billion.<sup>17</sup> This is a particularly labour-intensive sector and reportedly provides direct employment to around 3 million people.<sup>18</sup> Significantly, around 55 percent of the workforce is below 35 years of age, which indicates that there is a continuous flow of skills across generations and also that it is able to absorb the constant stream of new entrants in the job market. This is significant, because over 12 million young people join the burgeoning job market every year, and so far the present Government's record has been abysmal. Employment generation in the eight sectors tracked by the Labour Bureau's quarterly survey has fallen precipitously from 9.5 lakhs a year in 2010 and 2011 to less than 2 lakhs a year under the Modi government.<sup>19</sup> This in spite of tall promises made during

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<sup>15</sup>Agricultural Statistics At A Glance 2015 quoted from [http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/up-meat-shop-ban-could-cripple-prime-revenue-kill-millions-of-jobs-117032900113\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/up-meat-shop-ban-could-cripple-prime-revenue-kill-millions-of-jobs-117032900113_1.html)

<sup>16</sup>[http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/up-meat-shop-ban-could-cripple-prime-revenue-kill-millions-of-jobs-117032900113\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/up-meat-shop-ban-could-cripple-prime-revenue-kill-millions-of-jobs-117032900113_1.html)

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.makeinindia.com/sector/leather>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.makeinindia.com/sector/leather>

<sup>19</sup> <https://thewire.in/136618/whatever-happened-to-modis-development/>

electoral campaign<sup>20</sup> and the recent data jugglery (of including new sectors in the name of ‘re-examining the methodology’<sup>21</sup>). This does not even cover 2 percent of the fresh entrants into the labour market, let alone the existing army of unemployed.

According to experts, Rs one crore investment in the leather and leather products sector can create 250 jobs.<sup>22</sup> And that is probably because over 80 percent of the manufacturing and processing in leather is done by Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). And these units, working with very thin margins and against intense competition to meet uncertain international and domestic demand, would be hit the hardest with the notification under discussion.

Interestingly, leather and leather products are one of the thrust sectors under the much touted ‘Make in India’ initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.<sup>23</sup> In fact, the Centre has recently announced a Rs 4,000 crore incentive package to boost further employment in the sector.<sup>24</sup> This is ironic, given that the same Government’s notification on the slaughter of animals is akin to a death knell for the existing units and the workers in the sector. According to a recent article in Reuters, Nayar Jamal, general secretary of Kanpur’s Small Tanners’ Association, estimates that in already in Kanpur’s leather and related industries alone, 400,000 people have been rendered temporarily jobless.<sup>25</sup>

But it is not only the downstream economies which are going to be hurt by the notification; in fact, the primary industry – that of milk and milk products — is likely to be seriously affected by it.

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<sup>20</sup><http://www.firstpost.com/india/modi-promises-one-crore-jobs-if-bjp-comes-to-power-1243037.html>

<sup>21</sup> <https://thewire.in/137092/denial-jobless-growth-unemployment-modi-bjp/>

<sup>22</sup><http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/rs-4000-crore-incentive-package-for-leather-sector-likely-in-july/articleshow/58895949.cms>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.makeinindia.com/sector/leather>

<sup>24</sup><http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/rs-4000-crore-incentive-package-for-leather-sector-likely-in-july/articleshow/58895949.cms>

<sup>25</sup>[http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/injecting-fear-cattle-slaughter-ban-ripples-through-the-leather-industry-117061500197\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/injecting-fear-cattle-slaughter-ban-ripples-through-the-leather-industry-117061500197_1.html)

## Impact on dairy industry –milk and milk products

India is the largest milk producer in the world, with milk production doubling in just 15 years to around 160 million tonnes (2015-16).<sup>26</sup> The per capita availability of milk has increased from 176 gms/ day in 1991<sup>27</sup> to 337 gms/day in 2016.<sup>28</sup> This is in sharp contrast to the trend in food grain availability over the last 25 years. According to National Sample Survey Organisation consumer surveys, between 1993-94 and 2011-12, the per capita annual household consumption of cereals has declined from 155 kg to about 129 kg, though production has been growing over the last four decades. But what is probably a matter of grave concern is that the availability of pulses has been declining consistently in spite of imports. Per capita production of pulses at 15 kgs (in 2012-13) per annum, is, in fact, lower than that available in 1965-70 which was 18.5 Kgs – it was the lowest in 2002-03 when it hit 10.5 kgs per capita per annum.<sup>29</sup>

This has serious implications for the availability of nutrition for the people of our country. The latest End of Childhood Report<sup>30</sup> yet again puts India at the top of the list, with the most number of children in the world under the age of five who are moderately or severely stunted due to malnutrition. At a staggering 48 million children, our ‘Shining India’ accounts for a third of total 156 million stunted<sup>31</sup> children in the world. According to IndiaSpend analysis based on data from National Family Health Survey 2015-16 (NFHS-4), only 1 in 10 children in the age group 6 months to 22 months gets an adequate diet.<sup>32</sup> To make matters worse around a third of Indian girls in the age group 15 to 19 years are

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.nddb.org/information/stats/milkprodindia>

<sup>27</sup> <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=136849>

<sup>28</sup> <http://nddb.coop/information/stats/percapitavail>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/Feeling-the-pulses-pinch/article14474630.ece>

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.in/2017/06/06/india-is-the-world-leader-in-stunted-children-save-the-childre\\_a\\_22128144/](http://www.huffingtonpost.in/2017/06/06/india-is-the-world-leader-in-stunted-children-save-the-childre_a_22128144/)

<sup>31</sup> The report said that “stunting” is a condition that “prevents children from developing to their full potential, both mentally and physically” when a child does not get enough food and nutrients. It is caused because of chronic malnutrition in first 1,000 days of a child’s life.

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.indiaspend.com/cover-story/only-1-in-10-indian-children-aged-6-23-months-gets-adequate-diet-41066>

also stunted. But even more importantly 1 out of every 5 girls in the age group of 15 to 19 years are married and are forced to have children at that very young age. A stunted child-mother without adequate access to nutrition giving birth to a stunted baby who also does not have enough nourishment – the cycle continues.

The enormity of the situation can be gauged by the fact that merely to restore the pulse intake level from 41.9 grams per capita per day presently to the level preceding the Green Revolution (69 grams per capita per day in 1961) would require the availability to increase by 65 percent!<sup>33</sup> This is where the significance of supplementing the diet with animal protein like poultry, mutton, pork, beef, fish, milk and milk products really comes in. And in a country with a sizeable proportion of vegetarians, milk and milk products are a very significant protein source in the diet, accounting for about the same share of proteins all-India as pulses. Moreover, animal proteins are relatively higher-quality proteins, much better utilised by the body than the proteins in cereals or even pulses.

Out of the total milk produced in the country approximately 40 percent is retained by the producer for personal consumption and the rest (referred to as surplus milk) is sold in the market. Of the surplus milk that is available for sale, about 30 percent is bought by the organised sector, consisting of co-operatives such as Amul, Mother Dairy ( a wholly-owned subsidiary of NDDB) and Nandini (Karnataka Cooperative Milk Producers Federation (KMF), as well as private sector players such as Nestle and Danone. The rest – over 70 percent of the surplus milk — is absorbed by the unorganised sector, primarily the local door to door milk suppliers, doodhwalas (milkmen). According to an estimate, the Indian milk economy is worth around Rs 5 lakh crore and has been growing at a compound annual growth rate of 15-16 percent, making it one of the fastest growing sectors of our economy. The organised milk economy, which consists of liquid milk (55 percent) and milk products, is worth Rs 80,000 crore; some milk products like cheese and flavoured milk are growing at an even faster rate.<sup>34</sup>

Unlike other large milk producing countries, in India milk is primarily produced in small dairy farms. According to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation, India has over 75 million dairy farms with the vast majority of

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<sup>33</sup><http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/Feeling-the-pulses-pinch/article14474630.ece>

<sup>34</sup><http://www.businesstoday.in/magazine/cover-story/indian-dairy-market-is-on-a-tear-due-to-new-players/story/232545.html>

them having fewer than 10 cows/buffaloes each.<sup>35</sup>A unique feature of the Indian dairy sector is the high share of the consumer rupee flowing into the hands of the primary milk producers, thanks to the extensive network of dairy cooperatives.<sup>36]</sup>

The National Dairy Development Board provides a rough picture of the economics of a small dairy farm (for both a 10-cattle head farm and a 20-cattle head farm) to help those who intend to enter the business. A brief summary of a 10-head cattle farm is given in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Combined Profit and Loss Account of a Typical Dairy of 10 Cows over 7 Years**

<b>Heads</b>	<b>Amount (in Rupees)</b>
<b>Total Fixed Costs:</b> (Depreciation of Assets and Interests)	22,10,317/-
<b>Total Food Cost:</b> Green Fodder. Dry fodder. Concentrate, mineral mixture	40,20,472/-
<b>Other Variable Costs:</b> Labour, insurance, veterinary and breeding, electricity, and water, transportation of milk, minor repair of building and equipment, interest on working capital	8,93,397/-
<b>Total Cost</b>	71,24,186/-
Income from sale of Milk	75,93,320/-
Income from Sale of animals	5,48,000/-
Income from sale of dung/manure	1,39,110/-
<b>Total Income</b>	82,80,430/-
<b>Net Profit</b>	<b>11,56,244/-</b>

(Source: <http://www.dairyknowledge.in/content/10-crossbred-cow-farm>)

As is evident from Table 1 above, according to NDDB's calculations a 10-cattle head farm with an investment of around Rs 71 lakh can earn a net profit of approx Rs 11.6 lakh over seven years – i.e. about 16 percent on investment. But significantly about half of the profit is earned by sale of the animal – Rs 5.5 lakh. In other words, dairy cows are deemed to go dry or unproductive in seven years and if anybody buys them it would be presumably for beef and leather. But if the dairy farmer is not allowed to sell his cattle then his profit would

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i1522e/i1522e02.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/trade-talks-that-could-milk-india-dry/article8988820.ece>

reduce to around Rs 6 lakh over seven years which is just over 8 percent. Even that is only part of the story. He cannot sell the cattle and yet he<sup>37</sup> would have to feed his cattle (in spite of their being unproductive). The life span of a cow/buffalo is over 25 years. This would entail a further expenditure of around Rs 80 lakhs (assuming two more seven year cycles) for food alone, with almost no income (barring what would be earned by selling manure and whatever little milk the cattle would produce). Thus in this scenario, the dairy farm becomes economically unviable.

This brings us to the crucial conclusion that the notification leading to a virtual beef ban, ostensibly to 'save the cow/buffalo', would, in fact, do exactly the opposite. If the milk market becomes economically 'unviable' then 'cows' become unviable too. And this is not mere speculation but is corroborated by facts, as argued by Ramdas with regard to the indigenous cow population.

Whilst India's population of fine indigenous cattle breeds keeps decreasing year by year, Brazil's cattle populations of Ongole, Kankrej and Gir breeds – imported from the Indian sub-continent nearly 200 years ago – keep increasing. We have laws to 'protect' cows, ban cow slaughter and ban the consumption of beef... In Brazil, on the other hand, beef-based cattle production systems are the driving force behind its flourishing indigenous Indian cattle breed populations.<sup>38]</sup>

Apparently, pure Indian cattle breeds (Indicine) or Indian cattle breed crossed, comprise 80percent of Brazil's total cattle population of 214 million. By contrast, successive livestock censuses in India have shown that indigenous stock has been decreasing over the years. Between 1997 and 2012, India's indigenous cattle population declined by over 15 percent from 178 million to 51 million, which is less than the figure at the time of independence in 1947 (155 million), when all cattle were indigenous breeds.<sup>39</sup>

Cattle rearing is not an isolated activity but is intricately related to the entire agrarian economy as pointed out by Ramdas:

The cynical fetishisation of cows by Hindutva politicians is not only profoundly anti-farmer but, paradoxically, also anti-cow. What these bigots fail to realise is that the cow will survive only if there are pro-active measures to support

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<sup>37</sup> Using the politically correct 'she' would be grossly incorrect

<sup>38</sup><https://thewire.in/13849/why-the-ban-on-cow-slaughter-is-not-just-anti-farmer-but-anti-cow-as-well/>

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

multiple-produce based cattle production systems, where animals have economic roles. The system must produce a combination of milk, beef, draught work, manure and hide, as has been the case in the rain-fed food farming agriculture systems of the sub-continent over the centuries.<sup>40</sup>

Policy measures and notions of development which do not take into account this essential aspect of the agrarian economy cause harm rather than good, and the brunt is felt by the most vulnerable sections of the population. A closer examination of the livestock and crop economy is imperative to gauge the total impact of the notification.

### Impact on livestock economy, crop production and land holding

Seventy years after independence the majority of the population (over half of the working population)<sup>41</sup> are still dependent on agriculture and allied activities for their livelihood. This in spite of the fact that the ‘relevance’<sup>42</sup> of crop agriculture to the GDP has been steadily declining over the years, and is now pegged at just over 10 percent of GDP, as seen in Table 2.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.ihdindia.org/ILERpdf/Highlights%20of%20the%20Report.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> While many may find this unsettling, the hard reality is that agriculture has become virtually irrelevant to the overall GDP growth in India” Arvind Panagariya. <http://www.columbia.edu/~ap2231/ET/et97-July%2030%203007.htm>



Table 2: Gross Value Added<sup>43</sup> by Agriculture and Allied Activities

(in Rs '000 crores)					
Item Description	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	15.02 (18.53 %)*	16.81 (18.26 %)	19.33 (18.65 %)	20.68 (18.03 %)	21.73 (17.45 %)
Crops	9.82 (12.11%)	10.91 (11.85 %)	12.49 (12.04%)	12.78 (11.16 %)	13.07 (10.50 %)
Livestock	3.27 (4.03%)	3.75 (4.07 %)	4.31 (4.16%)	5.09 (04.44 %)	5.65 (4.54 %)
Forestry and Logging	1.24 (1.53 %)	1.35 (1.47 %)	1.54 (1.49 %)	1.65 (1.40%)	1.75 (1.41 %)
Fishing and Aquaculture	0.68 (.84 %)	0.80 (0.87 %)	0.98 (0.95 %)	1.16 (1.01 %)	1.26 (1.01 %)
TOTAL GVA at basic prices	81.07	92.05	103.66	114.70	124.52

\*figures in brackets denote the % contribution of the activity to the total GVA for the year

(Source: <http://www.mospi.gov.in/publication/national-accounts-statistics-2017>)

Actually, the majority of the people are stuck in the agrarian economy because they simply do not have any other occupational choice. According to the 70th round of the National Sample Survey (NSS), approximately 156 million households live in rural India, which is about 9 million households more than what was reported in 2003. And yet the total agricultural area owned has been declining over the years – at present it is around 92.37 million hectares 13 percent less than what it was in 2003 (107.23 million hectares) and 23 percent less than what it was in 1971-72 (119.64 MHA)<sup>44</sup> Consequently the average area owned per household has also declined drastically from 1.53 hectares in 1971-72 to just 0.59 hectares in 2013. As is evident from Table 3 around 83 percent rural households have less than 1 hectare land (in fact 7.4 percent households are actually landless even by the very narrow definition used by the NSS, i.e., those with less than .002 hectares) and they account for less than 30 percent of the total land owned. In contrast, the top 7 percent of the rural household own about half (46.7 percent) the total land available. In a situation where income from agriculture is declining and uncertain – given the unpredictability of monsoon, vagaries of markets, rising prices of inputs and fluctuating prices of the produce, it takes immense courage and fortitude to continue with it, even if

<sup>43</sup> According to Wikipedia (accessed on June 18th, 2017) Gross value added (GVA) is the measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy.  $GVA = GDP + subsidies - (direct, sales) taxes$ . [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gross\\_value\\_added](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gross_value_added)

<sup>44</sup> NSS 70th Round 'Household Ownership and Operational holding 2013', pp 23-24

one had access to a large viable plot of land. But as is evident from Table 3 the majority of Indian farmer households (75.4 percent) are marginal (whose land holding ranges from 0.002 to 1 hectare per household). Or in other words over 118 million households in rural India have merely 0.23 hectares on an average per household – a plot of land which would not even cover the food requirements of the household, let alone other essential expenses.

Table 3: Livestock Holding by Rural Households across Different Sizes of Operational Landholding

Category of Operational Holding	% of total rural HH	% of total land holding	% of total bovine owned	% of total ovine owned	% of total pig owned	% of poultry owned
Landless(<=0.002 hectares)	7.42	0.01	0.03	0.02	0	0.03
Marginal (.002 -1.000 ha)	75.40	29.75	57.67	63.87	62.92	66.06
Small (1.000-2.000 ha)	10.00	23.53	20.45	14.91	25.6	21.66
Small Medium (2.000-4.000)	5.00	22.07	13.38	8.36	9.88	9.76
Medium (4.000-10.000 ha)	1.93	18.83	7.02	11.93	1.43	2.40
Large (>10.000 hectares)	0.24	5.81	1.46	0.92	0.10	0.09
Total (in numbers)	156.44 million HH	92.37 million ha	204.5 million	99.0 million	5.8 million	254.7 million

So how do these households survive on agriculture? Well, they do not. That is, these households were running a deficit. The NSS 2013 shows that at least one member of over 3/4th of the households in the marginal landholding category had to stay away from the village to seek employment. Compared to that, only about 2 percent of the households with land over 4 hectares needed to go outside the village to seek employment.<sup>45</sup> But, given the employment scenario, even this is obviously inadequate to meet the expenses of the households.

Therein lies the importance of livestock holding as a supplementary source of income for the most vulnerable section of the population. And since there has been a consistent growth in the livestock economy, it does not seem to be merely a temporary coping mechanism. In fact, Richard Mahapatra of Down to Earth argues that over the last decade and a half, India's small and marginal farmers have made a conscious shift to livestock rearing to adapt to uncertain monsoon and dwindling income from regular crops.<sup>46</sup> This is corroborated by

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p 16-18

<sup>46</sup><http://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/how-india-is-killing-the-country-s-largest-economy-of-the-poor-57964>

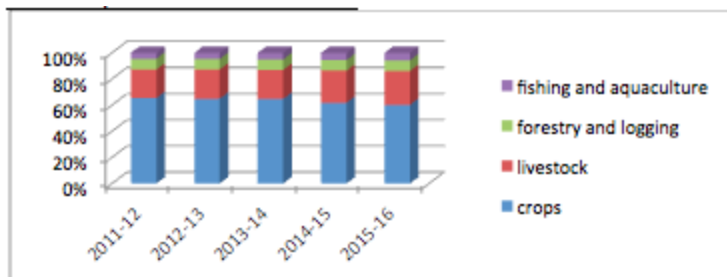
ground level data – as seen in Table 3, approximately 2/3rd of the livestock population in rural India (including bovine, ovine, pig and poultry) are owned by marginal households and if small farm households (owning between 1 to 2 hectares of land) are included, the figure goes up to almost 90 percent of the total livestock population.

At Rs 5.7 lakh crore the livestock economy is substantial – it accounts for over 4.5 percent of the total Gross Value Added (GVA) of the country. By comparison, the income from crops, the main engine of the agrarian economy, is Rs 13 lakh crore, or just over double that of the livestock economy. But this still does not capture the growing significance of the livestock sector. A constant price comparison over the last five years (2011-12 to 2015-16) shows that the crop economy has been stagnant, in fact, it has declined marginally – in 2011-12 it was Rs 9.85 lakh crores and in 2015-16 it was Rs 9.75 lakh crores. By contrast, the livestock economy has grown by almost 30 percent in real terms in the five years from 2011-12 to 2015-16.<sup>47</sup> It could be argued that 2015-16 was the second successive year of drought in the country, which might explain the lack of growth in crop production. But, the drought would have also affected livestock badly, and yet it showed an impressive growth, thus validating our assertion that livestock rearing has emerged as a reliable means of supplementary livelihood in rural India. Fig 1 graphically demonstrates the growing importance of livestock in the agrarian sector. But this is merely a tiny fraction of the actual potential of this sector, given the vast untapped domestic market for milk, meat, leather and other ancillary industries. Apparently, India's livestock productivity is 20 to 60 percent lower than the global average, primarily because of insufficient feed and fodder, inadequate breeding and reproduction facilities and increasing diseases among animals. One can safely guess that with a little incentive and policy support the sector is likely to boom. (It probably needs to be added, however, that the reasons for lower livestock productivity in India are more complex. Marginal peasants keep livestock with multiple considerations. They minimise expenditure on feed since a sizeable share of the milk is for their own consumption. Maintaining cattle which meet global productivity levels may be beyond the spending capacity of marginal peasants.)

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<sup>47</sup> <http://www.mospi.gov.in/publication/national-accounts-statistics-2017>

Fig 1: Percentage Contribution of Various Components of Agriculture and Allied Activities at current prices 2011-12 to 2015-16



(Source: <http://www.mospi.gov.in/publication/national-accounts-statistics-2017>)

Thus over 93 percent of Indian farm households (with landholding up to 2 hectares) are able to hold on to their tiny piece of land by supplementing farm income with livestock rearing. But barely so, as for almost 70 percent of farmer households, total income from all sources (cultivation, farming of animals, non-farm business and wages) was still less than consumption expenditure.<sup>48</sup> Households with livestock as a major source of income include the most vulnerable sections of our society and therefore are over-represented by women, SCs, STs, Muslims and even the landless. According to the 70th round NSS report on Livestock Holding, over 90 percent of the land (smaller than 0.002 hectares, so unviable for crop production) owned by the 7.5 million landless households<sup>49</sup> is used to farm animals and fisheries.<sup>50</sup>

If an entrepreneur is defined as ‘person who organises and manages any enterprise, with considerable initiative and risk’, then these people are the true entrepreneurs of our nation: The self employed majority who have innovatively risen to all the adversities dished out to them by the global market and local constraints. All the gimmicks of the present Government with fancy terms like ‘Stand up India’, ‘Startup India’ and ‘Make in India’ have not been able to create any jobs, and the Government and its think tanks have blamed their epic failure on the global recession, lack of adequate skills, stringent labour laws, corruption, and a plethora of other reasons. Meanwhile, the poorest of the poor have survived amidst immense uncertainties and adversities, without any incentive

<sup>48</sup> <http://rupe-india.org/66/partthree.html>

<sup>49</sup> They probably earn a living as wage labourers in other people’s land or dairy farms, but rearing animals and fish provides essential supplement to their frugal consumption.

<sup>50</sup> 70th round NSS report ‘Livestock Ownership in India, 2011-2012’, p18

measures, or even policy acknowledgement by the Government. Instead of supporting their efforts the Government has actually dealt a death blow to the most vulnerable sections of the population. As has been discussed earlier, livestock rearing entails constant replacement of older and unproductive cattle by young stock and any constraint on this flow would make it economically unviable. And this is precisely why the notification, which implies a virtual ban on cattle slaughter, would be fatal for the livestock economy as it exists in the country today.

So which interests are served by the notification?

Since the present Government came to power in 2014 the cow and politics around the cow have never left the headlines. Over the last three years, there has emerged a plethora of vigilante groups – the ‘Gaurakshaks’ — accompanied by a spate of gruesome lynchings and harassment all over the country, usually directed Muslims and particularly oppressed castes.<sup>51</sup> At first glance, the party in power seems to be sacrificing its aggressively neoliberal ‘economic agenda’ to appease the ideological commitment of its parent organisation to ushering in a ‘Hindu Rajya’. The 23rd May notification regulating cattle slaughter seems to fit in with this logic too – as is evident from all the discussions above. The move does not seem to make any economic sense as it is likely to have disastrous implications not only for the beef economy but also to both the upstream sectors (milk and livestock in general) as well as downstream sectors such as leather and leather products, involving almost the entire population of the country.

Hence one is almost tempted to agree with the assertion of Justice Rajinder Sachar<sup>52</sup> that ‘the RSS has now made up its mind that 2019 is its target to declare India a Hindu Rashtra after the BJP returns to power’<sup>53</sup> and that is the primary political agenda of these moves. But one remains confused because certain decisions and policies of the government (demonetisation and the 23rd May notification) seem to hurt the economic interests of vast sections of population whose support the party badly needs. No doubt the Muslims and Dalits are worst hit, but Government decisions such as demonetisation and the

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<sup>51</sup><http://www.firstpost.com/india/una-alwar-and-delhi-cow-vigilantism-a-list-of-gaurakshak-attacks-since-2015-dadri-lynching-3401302.html>

<sup>52</sup> Who headed the Sachar Committee which studied the socio-economic and educational status of Muslims

<sup>53</sup><http://www.rediff.com/news/interview/in-2019-rss-will-declare-india-a-hindu-rashtra/20170417.htm>

restrictions on cattle trade hurt crores of self-employed, petty businessmen and shopkeepers, contractors and middlemen as well, irrespective of their religious affiliations.

However, history teaches us that even actions which appear motivated by non-economic considerations may serve underlying (and unstated) economic objectives. The medieval European crusades to the Holy Land may have mobilised armies of fanatical Christian volunteers, but they also wound up serving various worldly interests of the Church, the merchants of the Italian city states and the rulers of medieval Europe.<sup>54</sup> And more recently in 1991, just before George Bush Sr. began the bombardment of Baghdad, he stated that “the moral purpose” of the war could be found in an Amnesty International report detailing the tortures and killing of Kuwaitis by Iraqi soldiers.<sup>55</sup> There was no mention of Kuwait’s oil resources. But the world already knew the real reason, which was candidly declared by Lawrence Koth, former US assistant defence secretary, who said, “If Kuwait grew carrots, we wouldn’t give a damn.”<sup>56</sup> Our own rulers of today, in unguarded moments, reveal this division of public postures and private ends in their thinking. For example, BJP president Amit Shah recently said admiringly of Gandhi that he was a “Chatur Baniya” (a cunning member of the business caste from which Gandhi hailed), who used the Congress as a “special purpose vehicle”, to be discarded when the work of achieving ‘independence’ was achieved. Whether or not one subscribes to Shah’s views on Mahatma Gandhi, or on the role of the Congress Party, one should probably pay close heed to this assertion, as it provides an insight as to how Amit Shah thinks. Indeed that is of utmost importance, given that by all accounts he is the ‘master strategist’ of the party and has been recently ‘elected’ as the party President for the second term.<sup>57</sup> Probably, certain dramatic recent measures of the Modi government, while garbed as crusades against one or the other type of alleged social evil, actually function as “special purpose vehicles” to serve certain powerful economic interests. Let us look at the recent notification in this light.

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<sup>54</sup> Huberman, Leo, (1936) *Man’s Worldly Goods: The Story of the Wealth of Nations*, pp20,21

<sup>55</sup><http://www.nytimes.com/1991/02/03/weekinreview/the-world-bush-s-holy-war-the-crusader-s-cloak-can-grow-heavy-on-the-shoulders.html?pagewanted=all>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/jan/12/iraq.worlddispatch>

<sup>57</sup><https://thewire.in/20267/the-rise-and-rise-of-amit-shah-and-what-this-means-for-the-bjp/>

Prima facie, the simple notification on animal slaughter seemed to affect directly only the beef eating section of the population, who, though substantial, are not in a majority. After the initial outrage which sprang up in different parts of the country, even that concern seemingly was allayed by the recent clarification by the Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh,<sup>58</sup> that ‘the Centre was not against beef consumption’.<sup>59</sup> And he is in a sense correct — the notification is not against ‘beef consumption’ but against ‘beef production’ along with production of milk and milk products, leather and leather products and livestock in general, as is done today.

As has been discussed above, the beef economy is intricately and organically linked to several other sectors and in its totality, it affects the economic interests of almost the entire population of the country. Consequently, any change, which obstructs, restricts or stops the flow of money and material from one sector to the other would be detrimental to the entire cycle. And that is what the notification is likely to do. But who would gain from this? A cursory glance at these sectors internationally provides a clue to that. India is one of the major players in all the markets related to cattle economy – beef production, leather, leather products, milk and milk products, etc — but, in spite of its formidable size, these markets are largely disaggregated. They are part of livelihood economy and function mostly through innumerable tiny and even household level operators. Internationally, however, the scene is very different – most of these sectors are dominated by a few very large players, producing through highly mechanised industrial production methods. Let us examine each of the sectors in the light of this fact.

### Beef and carabeef

The major beef producing nations of the world such as USA, Australia and New Zealand produce beef by growing animal feed on large areas where food could instead be grown to feed human beings. In Brazil and other countries of Latin America, large beef corporations are steadily converting huge tracts of natural prime Amazonian forests, home to indigenous peoples, into grazing lands.<sup>60</sup> Compared to India these systems are environmentally unsustainable,

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<sup>58</sup><http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/centre-not-against-beef-consumption-rajnath/article18854483.ece>. Among the opponents of the ban were some members of the BJP itself, such as the chief minister of Arunachal Pradesh, Pema Khandu.

<sup>59</sup><http://www.nagpurtoday.in/i-eat-beef-nothing-wrong-with-it-says-bjps-arunachal-cm-pema-khandu/06021511>

<sup>60</sup><https://thewire.in/13849/why-the-ban-on-cow-slaughter-is-not-just-anti-farmer-but-anti-cow-as-well/>

contributing massively to carbon emissions.<sup>61</sup> The notification under discussion is aimed at the animal market but has no directives for large slaughterhouses with in-house breeding facilities, similar to those mentioned above. Thus can one deduce that the notification is merely to take away the business from small and tiny operators to large players in the name of prevention of cruelty to animals? (One is not even going into the discussion of how cruelly animals are treated in large industrial scale slaughterhouses)<sup>62</sup>

### Dairy industry

Similarly, the dairy industry worldwide is monopolised by a few large multinational corporations and is run like any other profit-focused business. It operates through large corporate dairies with hundreds of cows each, in stark contrast to the Indian dairy industry, which is based on the aggregation of the output of millions of small and marginal households owning mostly two to three cattle head each. Further, given the extremely disaggregated supply, there are uncertainties in both the supply quantity and supply volumes. Probably this is the reason why multinational companies have not been able to make inroads in the lucrative and growing dairy sector of the country. Fonterra of New Zealand, with a turnover of over four times that of Amul, did enter the market in a joint venture with Britannia in 2001 but had to exit in 2009. The reason for the failure of the venture, according to industry sources, was as follows:

A dairy business cannot succeed here unless it develops its own milk procurement network. But that does not fit in with Fonterra's main purpose, which is to market the milk of its 11,000 farmer-shareholders rather than that of Indian farmers.<sup>63</sup>

R S Sodhi, who heads Amul, put it pithily: 'To make money in dairy business you must make milk'.<sup>64</sup>

However, given the slump in the global demand for milk and milk products, and the huge oversupply in some countries like New Zealand, Australia and several EU nations, India remains a very lucrative market to enter. According to

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<sup>61</sup> This becomes relevant given that the notification has been issued by the Ministry of Environment.

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.peta.org/issues/animals-used-for-food/factory-farming/>

<sup>63</sup> <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/todays-paper/why-fonterra-chose-to-exit-from-dairy-joint-venture/article1050343.ece>

<sup>64</sup> [http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/to-make-money-in-dairy-business-you-must-make-milk-amul-s-r-s-sodhi-117040200334\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/to-make-money-in-dairy-business-you-must-make-milk-amul-s-r-s-sodhi-117040200334_1.html)



a US Department of Agriculture report, New Zealand has a surplus of milk production of over 15 million tonnes and EU at present has surplus stocks of Skim Milk Powder (SMP) of about 4.2 lakh tonne.<sup>65</sup> The Indian dairy industry has been able to survive the onslaught of dumping of milk and milk products because of the tariff protection provided to the sector -currently, the import duty on Skim Milk Powder (SMP) is 15 percent while in the case of butter it is as high as 40 percent.<sup>66</sup> Over the last several years there has been relentless international pressure on India to reduce import duties on agricultural products including the dairy sector. The latest is the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a mega-regional economic agreement being negotiated between the 10 Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries and their six FTA partners: Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea, under the ambit of Free Trade Agreement (FTA).<sup>67</sup> The country's two major dairy cooperatives have urged the Government to keep dairy products outside the ongoing trade negotiations, but the threat is real.<sup>68</sup> And with the notification on animal slaughter, which is likely to jeopardise the existing milk economy and the sustenance of millions of farm households, is it far-fetched to deduce that this would help open up the sector for the large players – both existing firms and new entrants?

### Leather and leather products

The leather and leather product industry in India had been largely restricted to the small scale sector till as recently as 2002.<sup>69</sup> Processing of rawhide, tanning, manufacturing of finished leather and even footwear production were carried out by small units in industrial clusters. As has been mentioned above, even today 80 percent of production takes place in small and medium units. The emphasis in this sector in the last two decades has been on the exports market and at present India is a significant player in the global market. But the Indian leather industry still operates on large volumes and low price, and hence remains vulnerable to competitive pressure from several other developing countries and of course China – the largest producer in the world.<sup>70</sup> The small

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<sup>65</sup><http://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/two-major-cooperatives-ask-government-to-keep-dairy-sector-outside-fta-negotiations-purview/574123/>

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> It came under the Government's reserved manufacturing list for small scale sector.

<sup>70</sup> <http://rupe-india.org/47/leather.html>

units in this sector have been able to survive in this price sensitive environment because of easy access to abundant and very cheap labour and raw material (hides of cattle). And hence the recent notification has serious implications for the survival of leather clusters around the country. In fact, the exports have already declined significantly.<sup>71</sup> There has already been a rise of medium and even large units who would have the financial clout to maintain larger stocks of raw material and also have access to formal hide procuring procedures. But in the near future, this \$18 billion industry could lure several large national and multinational companies. At least, that is what the Government hopes for, as is evident from policies listed under the Make in India<sup>72</sup> initiative:

- De-licensing of the entire leather product sector to ‘facilitate expansion on modern lines with state-of-the-art machinery and equipment’.
- Permission of 100percent Foreign Direct Investment through the automatic route.
- Abolition of Central Excise duty and import duty on raw hides and skins, semi-processed leathers like wet blue, crust leather or finished leather.

### Livestock economy

And this brings us to the livestock economy – which in spite of its humble size is crucial for the survival of the majority of this country. As has been discussed above, except for the top 7 percent of the rural population, the rest, with land holdings less than 2 hectares per household (including the landless households), need to supplement their income through cultivation with livestock farming and wages to meet their subsistence requirements. However, even that falls short of their meagre consumption expenditure, leading to widespread indebtedness. Apparently the debts of farmer households, as a percentage of their annual income, has risen from 49.6 percent in 2002-03 to 61 percent in 2012-13, an increase of 11.4 percentage points.<sup>73</sup> The livestock economy is anyway under distress because of the shrinking pasture and grazing land all over the country, leading to crisis in fodder availability. Only 4 percent of total cultivable land in India is available for fodder production, and it has remained stagnant for the

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[http://internationalleathermaker.com/news/fullstory.php/aid/3924/India\\_92s\\_leather\\_exports\\_continue\\_to\\_decline.html](http://internationalleathermaker.com/news/fullstory.php/aid/3924/India_92s_leather_exports_continue_to_decline.html)

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.makeinindia.com/sector/leather>

<sup>73</sup> [rupe-india.org/66/partthree.html](http://rupe-india.org/66/partthree.html)

last four decades in spite of the milk production having increased eight-fold in these years.<sup>74</sup> Currently, all three types of fodder are in short supply — green to the extent of 63 percent, dry 24 percent and concentrates as much as 76 percent.<sup>75</sup> The recent notification would make the economy completely unviable for the majority of rural households. But the implication would not be restricted to the loss of the livestock sector. Without the supplementary income, the marginal and small rural farm households will not be able to hold on to their land either. In spite of their micro holdings, together, the marginal and small farmers still own over 53 percent of the total land under cultivation – around 50 million hectares, an area slightly less than France or more than twice the area of United Kingdom.<sup>76</sup> This is the scale of land potentially up for grabs, land unencumbered by the intricacies of inconveniences like the Land Acquisition Act as it would be sold ‘voluntarily’ by their distressed owners. So is this the real motive for this ‘innocuous’ notification – naked land grab on a national scale? The analysis above definitely indicates so. And it may well not be as farfetched as it may appear at first.

Since the late 1980s and the early 1990s, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have been pressurising India to open up its economy. And the Indian government has been very obliging too, in return for the loans doled out to the country by these institutions over the years. India, with a total borrowing amounting to \$102.1 billion between 1945 and 2015, tops the list of countries in receipt of loans from the World Bank.<sup>77</sup> Over the last two and a half decades, successive governments of this country have implemented measures which have driven millions of people out of agriculture. They have dismantled the immense state-owned seed supply system, reduced agrarian subsidies, let public agriculture institutions go to disrepair, and given incentives for the growing of “cash crops” to earn foreign exchange.<sup>78</sup> This, in turn, has

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<sup>74</sup> [http://164.100.47.193/lssccommittee/Agriculture/16\\_Agriculture\\_34.pdf](http://164.100.47.193/lssccommittee/Agriculture/16_Agriculture_34.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.indiaspend.com/cover-story/with-pastures-shrinking-india-may-have-to-import-milk-by-2021-2021>

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.nationmaster.com/country-info/group-stats/Europe/Geography/Area/Land>

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.firstpost.com/world/india-largest-recipient-of-loans-from-world-bank-for-70-years-says-lending-report-2581900.html>

<sup>78</sup>

[https://www.theguardian.com/environment/1999/jun/19/food.food?CMP=share\\_btn\\_tw](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/1999/jun/19/food.food?CMP=share_btn_tw)

made the entire agrarian economy, susceptible to global uncertainties and machinations of large corporations.

A recent opinion piece in Forbes magazine on the ongoing farmer protests in several Indian states puts the Government's agenda as bluntly as possible. Titled 'But India's farmers should go bust, that's how economic development works', the piece begins:

There are protests, and calls for political action, over the plight of India's farmers at present — and the one important point we've got to get across to people is that India's farmers should be going bust because that's how economic development actually happens. People stop doing low productivity things like rain fed labour intensive agriculture and go off and do more productive things like working in factories or producing services. It's entirely true that we should make the transition as painless as possible, no doubt about that, but we do not want to be preventing the change from happening because that just keeps everyone poorer than they need to be. The harsh truth is that not being able to make a living doing something is the universe's method of telling you, you should be doing something else.<sup>79</sup>

The agrarian crisis, which has caused misery to millions of farmers and led lakhs of them to commit suicide, did not just happen but was a planned outcome of conscious Government policies.

To conclude

It has been a quarter of a century since India 'broke the shackles' of protection and ushered in the era of economic liberalisation. And the 'Indian economy' has done well – the GDP has grown over eight-fold, from \$293 billion to over \$2.4 trillion at present.<sup>80</sup> India has been hailed as one of the most happening economies by the global leaders and international press, primarily due to its impressive and consistent economic growth over several years. Apparently, there are even better days to come. In May this year, NITI Ayog has come up with an action plan to make India a \$7.5 trillion (at 2015-16 prices) economy in the next 15 years.<sup>81</sup> This general euphoria is marred by one small inconvenient detail, which keeps cropping up every once in a while (often in alternative or

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<sup>79</sup><https://www.forbes.com/sites/timworstall/2017/06/11/but-indias-farmers-should-go-bust-thats-how-economic-development-works/#33d8525c327e>

<sup>80</sup><http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/rVW5NwetwPuItO325fhhbj/From-here-to-20-trillion-Indias-economic-growth-strategy.html>

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

non-consequential media): namely, that though India has done well the majority of Indians have not. And however much the rulers and their coterie of advisors try to deny this, the facts stubbornly confirm the assertion that only the very few at the top of the pyramid have gained through this extraordinary bonanza. The share of the top 1 percent of the population has increased from about 36 percent in 2000 to 54 percent in 2016 – thriving even through the greatest global recession since the Great Depression.<sup>82</sup> For the majority though, India's extraordinary economic growth has resulted in acute misery and immiseration. As we have tried to argue above, this was not an unplanned outcome, but rather the outcome of the rulers' deliberate policy. In the last few years many have criticised the ruling party's policies as being "majoritarian",<sup>83</sup> but we think they are incorrect. India's Government policies have never been majoritarian, they have always been minoritarian – the minority of the elite.

India has never had a coherent pro-people policy which could have ensured equitable distribution of prosperity to all. But over the last two decades, the people in power seem to have stopped even appearing to do so, except as rhetoric during the run up to the elections. In fact, the Indian people are treated as a continued source of embarrassment by the rulers of this country, and their condition has been relegated to an inconvenient footnote of their grand scheme of things. In short, the people do not count anymore.<sup>84</sup> That is why the Forbes article is refreshingly honest when it brazenly asserts that 'Indian farmers should go bust' and that it is true that "the government did not want more income to farmers since it was not in tune with its economic reform policies".<sup>85</sup> It captures the actual agenda of the rulers, and we should appreciate it. Cavalier assertions that the Government is for Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas insult the brave efforts of the people who have been fighting a losing battle to hang on to a semblance of dignity in their lives.

How much would the vast majority continue to endure, and for how long? No one knows for sure. But even as we write this piece the entire country is reverberating with protests and demonstrations of peasants who have been short-changed in spite of producing bumper crops. In response, the various state governments have been at times repressing the protests, at times

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<sup>82</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/10/inequality-in-india-oxfam-explainer/>

<sup>83</sup> <https://thewire.in/124720/india-turkey-authoritarianism-modi-erdogan-politics/>

<sup>84</sup> <http://www.rupe-india.org/64/poverty.html>

<sup>85</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/timworstall/2017/06/11/but-indias-farmers-should-go-bust-thats-how-economic-development-works/#66c083e6327e>

scampering around offering concessions and loan waivers to assuage this collective fury. Is this a harbinger of change? We do not know that either. The only thing we know for sure is that — *change will not come from above!*

**Appendix 1: Overview of Industries Affected by the Notification**

Economic Activity Related to Cattle	Employment At Present (overlapping across sectors)	Ownership/Organisation at Present	Approximate Current Value (in Rs)	Growth in %	Alternate Form of Organisation Globally/Threats to Local enterprises
Beef/buffalo meat domestic market	22 lakh people <sup>44</sup> in meat industry	3600 registered slaughter houses + 30000 unregistered	1,00,000 crores		The highly industrialised beef-producing nations of the world – USA, Australia and New Zealand – produce beef by growing animal feed on large areas where food could be grown to feed human beings. In Latin America, large beef corporations are steadily converting huge tracts of natural prime Amazonian forests, home to indigenous peoples, into grazing lands; in short these systems are unsustainable, among other things contributing hugely to carbon emissions. <sup>45</sup>
Beef/buffalo meat exports		100 approved units	26,682 crores	29 % compounded annually	
Livestock	Part-employment to approx. 145 million rural households - chain of livelihood economy of the majority.		5,50,000 crores		
Leather & leather products exports	About 30 lakh people directly employed	80 % of production done in small and medium enterprises	39,000 crores	(-) 10 % in 2016 <sup>46</sup> exports	Serious competition from China and several other emerging economies in leather.
Leather domestic			78,000 crores		
Milk	75 million dairy farms –tiny household units		5,00,000 crores	16 %	EU, Australia, New Zealand and the US produce more than their domestic demand and are likely to dump large volumes of subsidised milk powder into India.
Milk products	At present dominated by Amul (Rs 31,000 crore turnover), but several multinationals and start-ups are in the fray. <sup>47</sup> Dairy cooperatives generate employment for 15 million families in rural India across 140,000 villages.		80,000 crores	Up to 26 %	

<sup>44</sup> <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/cattle-slaughter-economy-kerala-calf-beef-festival/1965765.html>

<sup>45</sup> <https://thewire.in/13849/why-the-ban-on-cow-slaughter-is-not-just-anti-farmer-but-anti-cow-as-well/>

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/leather-exports-fall-10-in-16/article9008504.ece>

<sup>47</sup> [http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/amul-is-now-world-s-13th-largest-dairy-outputs-67-revenue-growth-in-16-116061700784\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/amul-is-now-world-s-13th-largest-dairy-outputs-67-revenue-growth-in-16-116061700784_1.html)

# A THOUSAND FLOWERS SHOULD BLOOM FOR JUNAID

Binu Mathew\*

Junaid this is for you. Junaid this is to assure you that your death will not go in vain. You are a martyr for the idea of India. You are not a martyr in the conventional sense that you laid down your life with full consciousness of what you are doing. But your life was snatched away from you in the flower of your youth. But we, who are alive know that you are a martyr for India, the idea of India we all stand for.

Junaid (16) was returning from Delhi to his village in Kandhawal in Haryana after Eid shopping along with his brothers Hashim, Mausim and Sakir in the crowded Delhi-Mathura passenger. As the train reached Ballabgarh station on Thursday, June 22 some passengers called them “beef-eaters” and “anti-nationals”. According to news reports the men, manhandled the brothers and some of them stabbed them. Junaid succumbed to his injuries.

Hashim told Hindustan times “What did we do to deserve this treatment? I do not understand why they started calling us names. I know nothing about nationalism. All I know is that I am an Indian. This is my home.”

Mausim, who was also attacked told HT “Why were we cornered like that? To escape their blows and knife stabs, I hid under the seat of the train. I will never be able to forget helplessly looking at my brothers getting thrashed and then stabbed. There were so many people on the train, but not a single person stood up to help us. The men instead kept saying that we were beef eaters and deserved to die.”

After two hours of violence on the train, Hashim was allowed to get off at Asota with Junaid’s dead body and his two brothers, who too were badly injured.

When Narendra Modi government put restrictions on the sale of cattle for slaughter on the third anniversary of his government, this was my worst nightmare. This is what the beef ban has done to India. It has given the Sangh Parivar elements to lynch innocent people for their beliefs, identity and food habits.

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The lynching of Muslims by branding them as beef eaters started with the lynching of Mohammad Akhlaq in Dadri, Uttar Pradesh, a stone's throw away from the national capital New Delhi in 2015, a few months after Narendra Modi assumed charge as Prime Minister of India. Since then dozens of Muslim and Dalit men have been lynched allegedly for eating or transporting beef.

I don't generally celebrate religious festivals. But this Eid I went out with my son to have an Eid lunch. In the hotel menu, beef steak was mentioned. I ordered it. The boy was puzzled. Soon the manager came out with an anxious look and explained that they don't serve beef and also that they never served beef in the hotel. It was a Momos shop and the guys were from Darjeeling, West Bengal. I told them beef is not banned in Kerala and there is nothing wrong with serving beef here. An untold fear is gripping the country from Kashmir to Kanyakumari.

Some say it is an undeclared emergency, recalling the 1975 Emergency declared by Indira Gandhi. I think it is worse than that. Then we knew who the enemy was. Now, nobody knows who is your enemy. As it happened with Junaid the man sitting next to you could stab you to death. This is the slow emergence of fascism. India is diving headlong into a deep fascist state. Unless the conscious people of the country rise up, India as we know it will be gone.

The blood soaked picture of Junaid lying on the lap of Hashim reminded me of Michelangelo's 'Pieta' in which body of Jesus is lying on the lap of his mother Mary after the Crucifixion. This picture must torment every heart of India. The blood that Junaid shed should not go in vain. It is our duty to make sure that from each drop of blood that Junaid shed, a thousand flowers of resistance shall bloom. In the resurrection of Junaid, we will see the resurrection of India.



# “COWISTAN” AND “KALIBAN”!

Mohammad Ashraf\*

(RSS through the ruling BJP is aiming to turn the Great Republic of India into a “Cowistan” with the help of their Gau Rakhshaks who are India’s “Kaliban”!)

The obsessive protection of the cow and the subsequent attacks on people having various professional activities connected with it especially the Muslim minorities and the Dalits have created a piquant situation. India is being dragged back to the age of Brahmins and Vedas! According to many historians even at that time cow was not so much venerated and protected as it is now being projected by the Hindutva mobs.

Binu Mathew, the Editor of Countercurrents, an online news portal has written an article to motivate the progressive and secular Indians to rise and halt this fanatic religious onslaught on the minorities. He has specifically requested the Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to lead people against the onslaught on the food habits of the people. The article bears the title, “Unfurl the Tricolour and Say India Will Not Become ‘Cowistan’, ‘Kaliban’ Will Not Rule Us”! The recent obsession with the Cow and related violence by vigilantes seems to have prompted this comparison to the religious fanaticism seen in Afghanistan during the rule of Taliban. The deliberately inflamed obsession about the Cow is, in fact, virtually turning India into “Cowistan” and the RSS vigilantes, the “Gau Rakhshaks” are turning into “Kaliban”, the Indian equivalent of the Taliban! This is very tragic when one considers India’s history and the bonhomie of the past among its inhabitants belonging to various religions.

India as a large country of the size which it had just before partition in 1947 existed earlier in the time of Chander Gupt Maurya, King Ashoka and Akbar the Great. Chander Gupt Maurya ruled when it was totally a Hindu country. His top advisor was the famous Visnu Gupt also known as Chanakya who wrote the well-known treatise on governance called the Arthshastra. Ashoka in spite of having the largest kingdom had converted to Buddhism after the bloody battle of Kalinga.

According to Justice Markandey Katju, Akbar the Great was a real secular King who believed in the philosophy of all religions being equal and gave the notion of the Sulh-i- Kul. Muhammad Abdul Baki, in his history of Akbar’s reign,

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states: “Akbar extended toleration to all religions and creed, and would recognise no difference between them, his object being to unite all men in a common bond of peace”. The website [www.yourarticlelibrary.com](http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com) carries an article by Puja Mundal which gives detailed analysis of Akbar’s Sulh-i-kul.

Puja Mundal writes, “Sulh- i-kul was to become his method of judging what was legally right or wrong within his empire and was created because Akbar understood that he was trying to build political institutions for predominately non-Muslim society. Thus, in his empire, the beliefs and opinions of the orthodox mullahs were not to be the critical test for his rule because he wanted all of his subjects to be judged equally before the law”.

“Akbar established separation of state and religion and opened government positions to members of all religions. He abolished the jizya on non-Muslims and the forced conversion of prisoners of war to Islam. He converted the meetings of Muslim clerics into open discussions between Islam, Hindu, Parsi and Christian scholars and in 1579 issued an edict that made him the highest authority in religious matters”.

“In the civil courts, Akbar abolished laws that discriminated against non-Muslims. He raised the Hindu court system to official status side by side with Muslim law and reformed the legislation with the aim to maximise common laws for Muslim and Hindu citizens”.

Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and other progressive leaders of the Indian freedom movement followed Akbar’s model and had been aiming for the revival of the great secular and democratic republic of his time. Even Dr. Iqbal known as the poet of the East had composed his poem about India being the best country in the world. However, the RSS which did not support India’s freedom movement was bent upon declaring India a Hindu Rashtra and fulfilling the dream of its creator Sadashiv Golwalkar. It is because of the threat posed by them that the movement for Pakistan materialised. After accepting the partition of the country on the basis of religion it was virtually impossible to retain the secular and progressive character of India. In spite of all the difficulties and the tremendous Hindutva underground opposition which resulted in the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru tried his best to maintain the secular and progressive character of the Indian Republic. However, after his death, the communal forces had an open field and slowly and steadily grew in strength culminating in the takeover of the Republic by the BJP, the front organisation of the RSS. Now their declared aim is to turn India into a Hindu Rashtra by 2023! This was announced in a conclave held recently in Goa.

There is already virtual rebellion to this concept in the East and the South. The East, North East and the South have rejected the Central directive banning cow

slaughter. In fact, in Kerala the Assembly session was started with a beef breakfast and in the North East a number of people have left BJP because of the beef ban. If this onslaught on the secular and the democratic nature of the Republic goes unchallenged there is every possibility of its disintegration. India may get ultimately reduced to the traditional “Cow Belt”. There is an urgent need for all the secular and progressive people to oppose this march back to Stone Age and safeguard the secular and democratic character of the Republic! JP is aiming to turn the Great Republic of India into a “Cowistan” with the help of their Gau Rakhshaks who are India’s “Kaliban”!)

# COW, CASTE, CHE GUEVARA

Satya Sagar\*

Cows, cows and more chocolate brown cows. Driving on the highway that cuts through the vast Argentinian pampas, south of Buenos Aires, that's all one sees everywhere around for miles and miles on end. Thousands of cows, peacefully grazing on grass or eating non-stop at the feedlots – huge dumps of artificial feed where they grow fatter and fatter- till it is time to go to the slaughterhouse.

In the moist, black soil of the region, blessed by many small rivers and water sources, cows seem to spring from the ground like vegetables. For the average Argentinian cows are indeed a vegetable, eating beef as he/she does like an Indian would munch on his carrot or cucumber.

“When we say food, it means beef, nothing else” explains Eduardo, a doctor, in whose car I am travelling. Argentina has the world's second-highest consumption rate of beef, with yearly consumption at 55 kg per person. Only neighbouring Uruguay consumes more<sup>86</sup>

“What vegetables do you eat?” I ask, a bit worried about my next meal. “Chicken, ham, cheese...” he suggests without a trace of irony.

Rama, Rama, not a country for devout Hindus surely! (Since these are not ‘Indian cows’ being eaten, maybe the gau rakshaks don't mind?) Anyway, it is not a country for anyone in search of any kind of balanced diet either. If Indians don't eat enough beef the Argentinians eat too much of it, worrisome from a purely ecological point of view and also given the amount of antibiotics that are pumped into their cows.

As someone from India, travelling in Latin America, the ‘cow question’ is one I confront all the time. “Why don't Indians eat cows?” I have been asked dozens of times, especially in countries like Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil, some of the world's biggest exporters of beef.

The question is asked in bewilderment but also with some anguish. Why would one of the most undernourished populations in the world deny itself a relatively cheap source of nutrition? And besides, if Indians took to beef in a big way,

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<sup>86</sup><http://beef2live.com/story-world-beef-consumption-per-capita-ranking-countries-0-111634>

imagine the size of the export market that could open up for these cattle ranching nations – there is lots of money involved!

Conveying the complex answer to this seemingly simple query is not easy. No, eating beef is taboo only for a small minority of upper caste Hindus, the rest would love a well-done steak any time it is made available. India has the largest cattle population and also the highest number of undernourished people in the world – the math is straightforward.

Yes, the upper caste Hindus did eat beef once upon a time and the priestly caste, in particular, loved it and cows were ritually sacrificed all the time. Problem was the priests consumed often without paying the farmer anything, which is one of the reasons why the Buddha, 2500 years ago, strongly objected to cow slaughter. Sacrificing cows to feed the priests was a tax that was pauperizing the peasantry.

Subsequently, the Buddhist and Jain philosophy of not taking life in any form also turned many Indians vegetarian – though Buddhists did not have any taboo about meat eating. Around the 8th to 10th century as the Hindu upper caste sought to overturn the dominance of both Buddhism and Jainism on the Indian sub-continent they took to vegetarianism to establish moral parity with their rivals (I love my animals more than you do!).

The taboo imposed by upper caste Hindus on consumption of beef was also used by them as a weapon against those who depended on it for both nutrition as well as livelihood. As the scholar and statesman, Dr B.R.Ambedkar explained long ago in his thesis<sup>87</sup> on the origin of ‘untouchability’ in India, beef eating and handling products related to dead cows was what set the ‘untouchables’ or Dalits apart from the upper sections of the Hindu social hierarchy.

The insistence on banning beef consumption across India by the current Indian regime today is nothing more than an attempt to intimidate religious minorities like Muslims and Christians as also the Dalits – into becoming ‘obedient’ to the diktats of upper caste Hindus. Yes, it is all a bit of a complicated story – this interplay of politics, religion and dietary preferences.

Once on a trip to Ecuador, dreading the idea of dealing at length with the ‘cow question’ yet again, I cursorily told someone that Indians don’t eat beef because Indian cows run too fast for us to catch them! On another occasion, I

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<sup>87</sup> The Untouchables: Who were they and why they became untouchables?, 1948. <http://www.trinicenter.com/articles/1949.html>

remember telling an Argentinian woman that Indian cows lived under water and it was quite a task to fish them out!

Of course, they finally figured out I was joking but it took some time as India is still so exotic to many around Latin America, they are willing to believe the wildest story about it. Though the flow of information and people over the last decade has improved considerably the idea of India in these parts of the world is still stuck somewhere in the nineteenth century.

The other staple subject conversation inevitably drifts towards while in Latin America is about the Indian caste system. What is caste? How did the caste system evolve? Why is there no protest against the system?

The Indian caste system, like any other social hierarchy anywhere, is basically a way to ensure free flow of resources and energy from those at the bottom of the pyramid to the top. Talking about pyramids – the earliest of civilisations in ancient Egypt was run by Pharaohs – priests who were also kings, so what emerged in India was not completely new in human history.

What is unique about caste in India though, is that it has proved to remarkably resilient and survived to this day despite major social and political upheavals in the sub-continent over the last couple of millennia. Using a mix of colourful mythology, control over land, education and other resources plus a generous dose of violence when needed – Hindu upper castes have held on to power in Indian society very tenaciously.

More than a millennium ago, when Buddhism and Jainism were dominant religions in many parts of India, they were the constant target of Hindu upper caste hatred and propaganda. For Hindu upper caste revivalists today such hatred is reserved for religious minorities like Muslims and Christians or dissidents from within the Hindu fold, who espouse a secular polity run on the basis of the Indian Constitution. Anyone daring to disturb the cosy arrangement of the Indian caste system, that allows those on top of the ladder to freely feed off social and national resources, is asking for trouble.

I soon figured out a way of explaining the Indian caste system in terms my Latino friends could understand more easily – by looking at the parallels from Latin American history itself. I point out to them in the over 500 years since Christopher Columbus landed in the Americas the entire demography and social structure of these continents have changed dramatically.

When Columbus landed in the cluster of islands, that is now known as the Bahamas in 1492, the population of native Indians in the Americas is estimated to have been anywhere between 50-100 million. By the end of the 17th century almost 90% had died of disease or fighting with the European migrants.

Today the entire continent, through marriages – forced or otherwise- has become a bewildering mix of European white, native Indian and black Africans. While the countries like Argentina and Uruguay tend to be overwhelmingly white as one moves up the continent the mix of races becomes more visible, with Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Guatemala and Mexico still having large native Indian populations.

As far as power is concerned though, it is the descendants of white Europeans who hold much of the land, dominate the economy, education, culture and politics throughout the region. The indigenous people of Latin America – made up of dozens of unique tribes – are right at the bottom of the social, economic and cultural pile. They have lost everything over the centuries – from their resources, languages, religious traditions and even the right to live as human beings.

The Indian caste hierarchy, more or less, emerged through a similar process, except that it happened in slow motion over several millennia and hence is more difficult to track in terms of who did what and when. In all probability, in the Indian context, the equivalent of ‘white’ migrant populations of Latin America are the ‘Aryan’ populations descending in repeated waves for the last 4500 years or more from Central Asia, Turkey, Iran and even faraway Greece<sup>88</sup>. Many of the communities that call themselves Rajputs<sup>89</sup> – a dominant Hindu upper caste community today- came from Central Asia (north of the Great Wall of China) as recently as the 6th Century AD<sup>90</sup>.

Hinduism is nothing more than the body of belief systems, tales, rituals that evolved in the process of these migrants/invasers conquering or co-opting indigenous populations. While the migrants took freely from existing native traditions and cultural sources where required (animism, traditional medicine, yoga etc.), much of Hindu mythology is told from the point of view of fair skinned Aryans and is openly racist in its depiction of dark-skinned, curly haired indigenous populations.

For example, the Ramayana epic, which is certainly a founding myth of the Aryans in India –depicts the Kshatriya and Brahmin Hindu upper castes as always ‘good’ and indigenous people as ‘demons’. Even indigenous characters

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<sup>88</sup><http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/how-genetics-is-settling-the-aryan-migration-debate/article19091109.ece>

<sup>89</sup> From Sanskrit raja-putra, “son of a king”

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hephthalite>

like Hanuman and Angad, who side with the Aryan Prince Rama in his battle against Ravana the ‘demon’ king, are portrayed as ‘monkeys’ and ‘bears’. (Given the amount of veneration he commands among Hindu upper castes Lord Ram is probably the equivalent of Christopher Columbus in India) Most of the stories about the ‘avatars’ of the Hindu deity Vishnu again are also about the use of cunning and trickery to put down indigenous challengers to the might and power of the ‘fair skinned’ devas or gods.

Over the centuries, the hold of Aryan migrants on Indian society has been shaken repeatedly first by the emergence of Buddhism, Jainism and then much later, the coming of the Muslim and British rulers (the last two shaking up the Hindu caste order, while also bringing their own version of racism and social hierarchy to the sub-continent). Despite this today, in independent India, Hindu upper castes are the ones who dominate the country and seek to run a semi-colonial, apartheid system based on caste, colour and class.

While Latin America does not have an epic of the stature of the Ramayana it has its own deeply embedded mythology among the elites about the ‘civilizational’ impact of European migration on the ‘barbaric’ native Indians. Structurally most Latin American countries are built around the ambitions and values of the white or ‘mestizo’ (mixed) elites, with little concern for the needs or rights of indigenous communities that don’t fit into these categories. Even in countries like Ecuador, where there is supposed to be a left-of-centre regime in power for the last decade, indigenous populations are thrown off their native lands repeatedly under one pretext or the other<sup>91</sup>.

In recent decades though, indigenous people’s movements have seriously challenged the ‘White is Right’ political and cultural paradigm, throwing up leaders like Evo Morales in Bolivia and Hugo Chavez in Venezuela – the first ‘non-white’ individuals to come to power in their countries in the last 500 years. The strong assertion of their rights and priorities by indigenous populations in many countries of the region has also interestingly forced the Latin American Left to radically change its style of functioning as well as politics – including by giving up leadership to the indigenous movements.

“Historically the Left believed it was vanguard leading the masses, but since the early nineties it is the masses who are leading the Left”, said Pablo Miranda, a senior leader of an Ecuadorian left party told me several years ago. Though

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<sup>91</sup><https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/19/ecuador-indigenous-shuar-el-tink-mining-land-dispute>



nobody asked me about them the Latin American experience holds valuable lessons for the Indian Left too.

Along with change in leadership, one of the most significant changes that is strikingly visible within much of the Latin American Left is its adoption of the indigenous people's belief in the sacredness of nature or 'Mother Earth' and living according to the traditional principles of Sumak Kawsay or Buen Vivir (Balanced Life). The belief systems and spirituality of indigenous peoples is today the guiding light of the progressive sections of Latin America.

This has resulted in the Latin American Left getting deeply involved in struggles related to the environment like for example against use of Genetically Modified (GM) seeds in agriculture, large-scale deforestation, devastating mining projects and for shifting national development priorities away from urban to rural areas. At the more street level, Left organisations work on issues related to food safety, better quality and cheaper healthcare, greener cities and a host of other concerns that till a couple of decades ago they would have scoffed at as being too 'reformist' or 'soft'.

The resilience and popularity of the Left in many Latin American countries today certainly owe a lot to the incorporation of a clear ecological and spiritual dimension to its worldview, thanks to pressure from the indigenous people's movements. It has provided a much-needed correction to the Left's earlier championing of a soulless, industrial utopia of endless consumption and 'abundance of production', ideas borrowed entirely from the experience of industrialising Europe.

"If Che Guevara were still alive today he would surely have joined the native Indian people in their fight to save Mother Earth", says Severino, an indigenous rights activist from Ecuador. Given the amazing work that Cuba – whose revolution Che helped bring about- has done in promoting organic and urban agriculture<sup>92</sup> in the last couple of decades, there is certainly much substance to this claim.

As I return to India, I come away with this intriguing image of the new Che, still the long-haired, passionate fighter for justice, but less impulsive and far more reflective. Che, the eco-warrior, doing a yoga headstand under a peepul tree, while his gun rests against its mighty trunk, somewhere deep in the background.

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<sup>92</sup> <http://www.fao.org/ag/agp/greenercities/en/GGCLAC/havana.html>

# LYNCHING MOBS, STREET VIOLENCE AND STIFLED DEMOCRACY

Sukumaran CV\*

A semi-starved nation can have neither religion, nor art nor organisation. - M. K. Gandhi

There is no connection between mob violence and democracy. It seems that the streets of our nation today are in the reign and under the total control of lynching mobs. In this month alone (June 2017) we witnessed four gruesome lynchings— that of the 15 year old boy Junaid in Haryana and of a 52 year old lady and three young men in West Bengal! Certainly, the lynching mobs can be nothing but gang of psychopathic criminals. In Kerala, on Valentine’s Day this year, a gang of ‘moral police’ appeared in Ernakulam Marine Drive and canned young men and women celebrating Valentine’s Day. When the hooligans were arrested, it was revealed that many of them are accused in sexual exploitation cases. The lynching mindset exposes the alarming rot within and you can’t cover the rot within with the tricks like demonetisation and Mann ki Baat rhetoric.

Lynching has originated in North America. The hordes of white settlers who swarmed the Americas in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries first lynched and eliminated the Native Americans to rob their lands. Millions of Native Americans perished. The next victims were the African Americans. 3,446 African Americans were lynched between 1882 and 1968. If we fail to arrest this dangerous mindset which is similar to the Jihadi mindset of the outfits like the IS, India’s legacy of being a great syncretic nation of tolerance and diversity will be tarnished irreparably. To stem the menace, we have to understand it properly.

The Mahatma is the only politician who said that ‘whatever can be useful to starving millions is beautiful to my mind...I want art and literature that can speak to millions.’

In The Story of my Experiments with Truth, the Mahatma writes: “Bhitiharva was a small village ...I happened to visit a smaller village in its vicinity and found some of the women dressed very dirtily. So I told my wife to ask them why they did not wash their clothes. She spoke to them. One of the women

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took her into her hut and said: 'Look now, there is no box or cupboard here containing other clothes. The sari I am wearing is the only one I have. How am I to wash it? Tell Mahatmaji to get me another sari, and I shall then promise to bathe and put on clean clothes every day.' This cottage was not an exception, but a type to be found in many Indian villages. In countless villages in India people live without any furniture, and without a change of clothes, merely with a rag to cover their shame." (Part V, Chapter XVIII, 'Penetrating the Villages')

Today we talk about smart cities bullet trains and 'cashless' economy. We have tried to make India shining. We are going to make India a super-power by 2020. But still, we can see millions of people in our country in the condition described by the Father of the Nation nearly a century ago. And we are busy with lynching people. The irony is that both the people who are lynching and who are lynched belong to the same strata of society—Lower middle class or poor.

We create nuclear bombs and provide Wi-Fi facility in trains and try to make India Digital facilitate the needs of the elites at the cost of the poor and the needy, devastating the Environment which provides them at least their livelihood. And we celebrate development. The vast millions of ordinary people who are not the beneficiaries of the corporate oriented development are given the 'duty' of protecting cows and culture. And they know only the culture of violence. They are happy to mete out punishment to the 'enemies' of the nation—the poor and the hapless, the victims of the development just like the lynching mobs. Actually, they don't understand or realise that the real enemies of the nation are those who rule them and serve the corporate interests instead of helping to ameliorate their living conditions.

People are the bedrock of democracy, but in the present day India, we witness democracy being pushed to mobocracy by the people. It means democracy is being stifled by the people with the active support of the ruling political parties. This is a recurring occurrence in India. The British instigated the Indians to fight and kill each other on the streets in the name of religion in order to mitigate the threat to their power. In independent India, we saw this mob violence in its ugliest form in the 1984 killings of the innocent Sikhs in Delhi. Every political party encourages this mob violence. Each political party criticises mob violence only when the 'mob' does not subscribe to their ideology or is not affiliated to them.

What is to be radically changed is the attitude of each political party towards violence and its uses for furthering their own 'notion' of democracy which is always pathetically sectarian, intolerant, nepotistic and exclusive.

# MODI'S GOVT 'STAIN-LESS' AMIDST BLOODSTAINS ON THE STREETS?

Samar\*

'There are no stains on my government,' said Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his visit to the United States of America. This can only mean that the Prime Minister thinks the bloodstains of innocent Indians are not stains. In actual fact, no one can remember another time when so much blood was spilled in Indian streets. No one can remember another time when the state so nonchalantly backed off from its constitutional obligation of protecting its citizens' fundamental right to life.

A shiver runs down one's spine reading the media reports of three lynchings last week. This is a shiver known previously only to the hapless people of failed states, not those living in the world's largest democracy. The same shiver is felt when thinking of the 70-year-old Maulvi Mohammad Younus, who was shot dead protesting against four unidentified persons throwing meat in a mosque in Uttar Pradesh when he was offering 'namaz'.

And when thinking of Junaid, his brothers and friends, returning to their home in Haryana after Eid-Ul-Fitr shopping. A mob lynched him to death while also critically injuring his brothers in a train in Haryana's Ballabhgarh- not even 50 kilometres away from the national capital. The only person arrested in the case till now, is for 'looking like Muslims' and thus being potential beef eaters.

The lynching and prolonged aftermath of India's ruling dispensation speaks volumes about the current atmosphere in the country. One cannot even fault Junaid's fellow passengers for not coming to his rescue, as it is well known for these mobs, particularly in Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) ruled states, to lynch anyone trying to stop them, even cops in uniform. The cost of defending the boys could be too much for anyone who dared.

To add insult to injury, authorities are filing criminal cases against the victims, rather than protecting their constitutional rights. At other times, they are even denying that such incidents are taking place. Union Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi for instance, claimed in parliament that the lynching of 55-year-old Pehlu Khan in Rajasthan's Alwar never took

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place. The acknowledgement of the lynching by both the state government and the Union Home Ministry is irrelevant.

State Home Minister GC Kataria meanwhile, justified the lynching of Pehlu Khan, asserting that both parties were to be blamed as cow smuggling was illegal in Rajasthan. The fact that Pehlu Khan and his colleagues were not smugglers, but had bought the cattle from a state approved cattle fair, and had all the necessary papers for it, was not deemed important. Nor was it relevant that the assaulters were self-designated vigilantes and not the personnel of any law enforcement agency.

This attitude explains the spurt in cow vigilante attacks since the BJP came to power in May 2014; with 63 lynching cases occurring to date. Of these, 32 occurred in states ruled by the BJP.

While Prime Minister Modi was unaware of the lynch attacks and the collapse of rule of law on his watch, he did speak out when the cow vigilantes started lynching Dalits. The Dalit attacks were hurting BJP's poll prospects, which Modi could not afford. He then had a dramatic outburst, calling 80 percent of the cow vigilantes criminals. Focusing only on Dalits, despite the majority of the victims being Muslim, he offered himself to the vigilantes, rather than calling out the law enforcement for failing in their duty to enforce the law and protect citizens. His exact words, translated, were:

“I would like to tell these people that if you have any problem, if you have to attack, attack me. Stop attacking my Dalit brethren. If you have to shoot, shoot me, but not my Dalit brothers. This game should stop”.

The game did not stop. Vigilantes chose neither to attack him nor to stop attacking his Dalit brethren and Muslim whoever, both citizens of India. Law enforcement agencies chose to continue ignoring the attacks while filing cases against the victims. BJP leaders, including legislators and ministers, continued using every trick in the book to show their tacit approval for the vigilantes—from denial of the attacks to their justification.

While the Modi government continues to be 'stain-less', the country is getting more and more bloodstained with every passing day. That cannot augur well for any government.

# WAKE UP: INDIA IS CHANGING FASTER THAN WE CAN IMAGINE

Neha Saigal\*

Ever since the Rajasthan High Court judge made public, his suggestions on declaring the cow, the national animal of India solely based on his inner voice and also went a step further to enlighten us on his knowledge of the non-existence of sexual intercourse between peacocks and peahens, social media is in a frenzy with memes and jokes on the judge's absurd statements. For all those who feel like India is a bad comedy show but still can't help laughing, you need to snap out of it now.

This is not to undermine the creativity behind the humour, which should continue as it is vital for our democracy. But we should not lose sight of the tragedy that is playing alongside this comical fest. I get this really bad feeling in my gut that the issues of importance are clearly forgotten by frivolous and irresponsible statements made by characters that are introduced into this bad comedy at various points and we are caught unaware as it is cleverly orchestrated.

The most recent rules introduced by the Environment Ministry on the ban of sale of cattle for slaughter, at markets in the name of cruelty, is very suspect. While there were some heated reactions to this including from the Kerala Chief Minister, the momentum of dissent that this non-transparent and sketchy move by the Government required, died down quickly. Even for those self-proclaimed pious Indians, this move is worrying as it comes at a huge cost to our farmers and the meat industry. 90% of the meat industry relies on these markets for supply and in 2014-15 alone this industry brought in a revenue of INR 30,000 Crores based on export of buffalo meat.

The farmers, on the other hand, have built a model on the sale of these animals and their ability to buy a new animal which is more effective on the farm for tasks like ploughing. But the Government by simply using the word cruelty has undermined the part of economy that depended on the sales of these animals in marketplaces. What the Government has really done, is further alienated people on the margins and given a nod to cow vigilantism and the violence that accompanies it.

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Dr B R Ambedkar suggested that the food hierarchy in India segregates people into those who do not eat meat, those who eat meat but not beef and at the bottom those who eat beef. This food segregation is closely linked with the Hindu caste system which used food choices, like eating beef to outcast other religions and communities like the Dalits. The NSSO data tells us that 70% of the beef eating population is Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and the historical reason is, that it was the most easily available food. Sometimes the cows was the only available source of protein or even food for Dalits who were on the margins of society and unfortunately, they still are. It seems like archaic methods utilised by interest groups 1000s of years ago to ostracise people is now back with a bang but in a more sophisticated form of a law. And all of this has happened without our knowledge, who in some way will be impacted by this.

When a few people realised the damage that the Government's Rules could cause to food security and livelihoods, they had only started raising their voice when conveniently an interview of a non-consequential judge appeared everywhere on a suggestion he made to the Central Government as part of an order. The anger that was rising in all of us is now converted to a mere joke.

The violation to our food choices merits us hitting the streets in protest but that is now reduced to a meme with many likes and shares. But the fear is that while we laugh and ridicule the Government and its right wing trolls, people of less privilege will be lynched as they consume food and carry out trade involving the holy cow. And this is not because they are rebels but it's what they know.

Again this is not to remove humour from the equation which is by far one of the best ways to communicate but is to express an anguish that India is moving in a frightening direction and it's all happening with much ease. While we laugh and the Prime Minister fulfils his dreams of travelling every corner of the world, India is changing much faster than we all imagined. Wake up!

# BEEF BAN: PLAYING WITH FIRE

Oliver Dsouza\*

There is no doubt the government of India has attempted to prohibit through the backdoor, beef consumption across the country through new rules made under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. The rules per se do not explicitly ban cattle slaughter or beef consumption, but they ban the sale and purchase of cattle for slaughter in cattle markets, thereby having the same effect. Various experts on Constitutional matters have exposed the Constitutional illegality of the rules, while Madras High Court (at the time of writing this piece) has stayed the operation of the rules and there is little doubt that the rules will be consigned to the dustbin by the courts. However, the larger than usual acrimonious response of Keralites and of various state governments to this latest attempt to impose an anti-Constitutional diktat indicates that the people and various state governments have been pushed to the edge, with disturbing implications for the federation that is India.

The most explicit response is seen among the Twitterati from Kerala tweeting under the trending hashtag (at the time of writing this) #Dravidanadu, demanding a separate sovereign state consisting of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamilnadu and Kerala which speak Dravidian languages. Dravida Nadu was a demand of the Tamil people in between 1940 -1963. What's more is that preceding the Twitterati, the Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan responded to the new cattle rules saying, "Those sitting in Nagpur and Delhi cannot decide the food habits of the Malayalees". The CM's statement did not merely express his disdain for the extra-Constitutional authorities attempting to run the country viz a viz the RSS, which is headquartered in Nagpur, and for the authoritarianism that has been consistently demonstrated by the Union government which is the political arm of the RSS which seeks to install a 'Hindurashtra'. It also implicitly reminded the Union government of the terms under which Kerala, like any other state, became a part of the Union of India and these terms are the various constitutionally guaranteed rights, including preservation of the identity and culture of the 'Malayalee' people, just as is the case with all the states and UTs. Along with the resurrection of Dravidanadu demand by Kerala twitterati, such strong assertion by the Kerala government is a clear message that Kerala will not allow the imposition of Hindutva, even if it means churning the volatile pot of identity and autonomy.

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At the same time, various states ruled by non-BJP parties have outright refused to implement the new rules or have said they will have it scrapped by the courts. This includes Nagaland, Tripura, Mizoram, W Bengal, Karnataka and Puducherry. The Kerala assembly has already a resolution demanding the withdrawal of the rules, while its Chief Minister has taken the lead to get like-minded CMs to come together to fight the Union government on the rule. Mamata Bannerjee has gone a step further and accused the government of deliberately undermining the federal structure of the Union. These reactions are an open rebellion of elected state governments against the Union government, which is the first time this has happened in the Republic since 1947, highlighting the deep divergence between the Union government and non-BJP ruled states, even as enormous time and money is wasted over the issue which was not needed in the first place. The government cannot absolve itself of responsibility in the damage to the nation.

The Tamilnadu BJP unit president TAMILISAI Soundararajan lost no time in accusing through a tweet the demand for Dravidnadu as a secession demand, and though this is an immature and rather sportive tit for tat demand, one will have to concede that this is an understandable natural response of people fed up with the trampling of constitutional guarantees and rights by the Union government and by extra-constitutional groups. The last three years have seen the steady assault on various Constitutional guarantees including the right to expression, religious freedom and social freedom, resulting in violence and murder. Such disruption is usually caused by extra-constitutional groups patronised by the ruling dispensation, which, strive to enforce the government's unconstitutional diktats through violence and intimidation. Yet, the fact remains that there is only so much of violation that people will tolerate because they forwent their historical autonomy in exchange for preservation of their historical liberty, fraternity and equality, including the liberty to eat what they want, to form a new nation. Without guarantees that would ensure these, no British-era province, subsequently broken up into states, through their representatives in the Constituent Assembly, would have been signatories to the Constitution and become a part of the Union.

The diktats and their fallout have also become a constant nuisance to law and order and development in most states, making governance problematic. The federal structure requires a concerted effort by the Union and state governments to develop individual states, but this cannot happen when the state and the centre are at constant conflict with each other. In the process, there is also a criminal waste of focus, energies and resources of the state governments unproductively utilised to deal with the disturbances and the people's backlash to the diktats.

In effect, through its actions, rather than making efforts to strengthen the federation of states and promote their development and growth by sticking to the Constitution, the Union government is only sowing the seeds for all kinds of disturbing responses from the people and the states governments because of its unconstitutional diktats. If the Union government truly believes in the idea of India and believes in preserving the existing federation of states, there has to be a full-stop to the concerted attacks on the Constitution around which the states are held together to function as a nation. The Union government should also cease attempting to impose Hindutva on a population where a majority of it is not Hindu. The claim of the right wing that India is predominantly a non-beef eating Hindu nation by religion is a hoax.

Ever since elections were initiated by British rulers, the SCs and STs, who account for 24.2% of the total population, were nominally co-opted by the caste fraternity into Hindu religion to gain the advantage of numbers in the democratic political setup. Inversely, the religious fact is that these people are not initiated into the religion, while Manusmriti categorically emphasises their religious exclusion. Add to the numbers of such people the Muslim and Christian beef eaters, along with those within the Hindu faith who relish the meat and you have a situation where the preferences specific to little over one half of the population is being imposed on the other half. This simply cannot be expected to happen anywhere in the world without serious consequences as it is a deeply discriminatory and violating imposition. There is no collective good in making India a Hindurashtra. There is a future for the nation only in strengthening the 1950 Constitution, not undermining it. Alternately, it would be a case of playing with fire and expecting not to get burnt by it!

# COW AND HINDUTVA: MYTHS AND FACTS

Shamsul Islam\*

The Hindutva juggernaut which rode on with Ram, love jihaad and ghar wapsi on top of it, is riding with cow this time. There have been countless incidents of lynching, maiming and robbing of Muslims and Dalits in the name of saving holy cows. It is to be noted that there are large number of such attacks which go unreported. The videos of such lynching and maiming uploaded on the social media by the perpetrators as instances of latter's bravado are horrendous and blood curdling comparable only to the violence during Partition. This spectacle clearly shows the collusion of State with the criminals who fear no law. These shameful visuals show how brazenly Hindutva perpetrators make merry, celebrate and enjoy the 'game' of lynching. These criminals who are out on religious duty of saving holy cows are worldly mortals also. This is proved when we find them robbing the victims before lynching.

This killer cow juggernaut continues to roll down despite our PM, a senior RSS leader, describing most of these lovers of 'gaumaataa' in August 2016, as anti-social elements. According to him: "It makes me angry that people are running shops in the name of cow protection...Some people indulge in anti-social activities at night, and in the day masquerade as cow protectors."<sup>93</sup>

If despite this strong rebuttal by the PM, almost one year back, violence in the name of cow has become more common, covering larger areas of India, more strident and beyond control; it may have either of the two following explanations. Firstly, PM playing to the gallery spoke those words in order to diffuse the social anger against such criminal activities. Secondly, the current cow vigilantes are the ones who are not anti-social elements but fall into the category which has Prime Ministerial approval and sanction as genuine holy cow saviours. There is no doubt, these gangsters have sanction of the RSS and law and order machinery.

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<http://du-in.academia.edu/ShamsulIslam>

<sup>93</sup><http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/Cow-vigilantes-%E2%80%99anti-social%E2%80%99-Modi-breaks-his-silence/article14556739.ece>

Unfortunately, judiciary which is supposed to ensure that Indian rulers govern as per rule of the law and many times calls for scrutiny the issues of public concern before it has so far kept quiet emboldening the criminals. In fact, a judge of Rajasthan High Court instead of looking into the atrocities being committed by the cow saviours (Rajasthan tops in cow violence and recently witnessed horrendous public lynching of Pehlu Khan; the perpetrators uploading full video of the lynching)<sup>94</sup> ordered that cow be made a national animal and anybody found killing it should be given death sentence.<sup>95</sup>

Indian home minister, Rajnath Singh, a prominent ideologue in the RSS hierarchy, even invented a 'scientific' reason for holiness of cow. While referring to a report of the US Department of Agriculture he told a gathering of the RSS leaders that "80% of genes found in the cow are found in humans too" he called upon Indians to "save and worshipcow".<sup>96</sup>

Not surprisingly, as RSS cadre Singh was very selective, partisan and wrong. The findings of a leading English daily of India, based on a world acclaimed journal SCIENCE show that many other animals have greater percentage of genes like human beings. Chimpanzees, cats, mouse, dogs have 96%, 90%, 85% and 84% respectively genes like human beings. These are not only animals but even fruits; bananas having 60% similar genes.<sup>97</sup> It is to be seen when Rajnath Singh is going to announce these species also as HOLY! We also need to know from him whether minorities and Dalits are human beings too to be saved from lynching.

The latest victims have been the beef-eaters of IIT-M (this institute at Chennai continues with older nomenclature of the city Madras) who were victims of murderous attack by the ABVP (RSS student wing) activists in the campus.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup><http://indianexpress.com/article/india/alwar-lynching-assault-injuries-behind-pehlu-khans-death-says-doctor-who-conducted-post-mortem-4602917/>

<sup>95</sup><http://indianexpress.com/article/india/declare-cow-national-animal-says-rajasthan-hc-judge-among-a-few-other-things-4683614/>

<sup>96</sup><http://www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-3911022/COWS-80-human-India-s-Home-Minister-Rajnath-Singh-joins-cow-vigilantes-stage-claims-humans-cattle-similar-genes.html>

<sup>97</sup><http://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/genetically-speaking-were-all-chicken-banana-too-4363547/>

<sup>98</sup><http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/cattle-trade-rules-iit-madras-scholar-who-took-part-in-beef-fest-beaten-up-by-students/story-NosCMp145iBQXD7tnwbWHJ.html>

The continuing murderous attacks by the Hindutva cadres in the name of cow make one thing very clear that these fascist elements are totally illiterate about present day India and have absolutely no knowledge of India's history, especially Vedic history which they glorify as golden period.

If somebody is looking for a gurukul or university to graduate in deceit and lies, doubtlessly, the RSS will be his or her best choice. Its mastery over this trait is unparalleled and is proved once again by its criminal disregard of facts on the controversy over beef-eating in Indian history by Hindus of India. It aggressively claims that beef-eating started in India with the arrival of Muslims as rulers who initiated and subsequently popularised it in order to denigrate Hindus and their holy symbols. Golwalkar, a shameless liar while responding to a question, "How did cow slaughter begin in our country [India]?" replied, "It began with the coming of foreign invaders to our country. In order to reduce the population to slavery, they thought that the best method to be adapted was to stamp out every vestige of self-respect in Hindus...In that line cow slaughter also began".<sup>99</sup>

Such propaganda helps the Hindutva gang in terrorising the largest minority and Dalits of India who consume beef and are in its trade. It is to be noted here that since the early 20th century, coinciding with the rise of Hindutva politics, cow has been the most important issue which has triggered the maximum cases of violence against the Muslims and Dalits of the country. It is immaterial to the Indian heirs of Nazi propagandist Paul Joseph Goebbels that the claim that beef-eating started with the arrival of Muslims in India is not even in keeping with the Vedic version of history as narrated by 'Hindu' chroniclers.

Swami Vivekananda, regarded as a philosopher of Hindutva by the RSS, while addressing a meeting at the Shakespeare Club, Pasadena, California, USA (February 2, 1900) on the theme of 'Buddhistic India', declared:

"You will be astonished if I tell you that, according to old ceremonials, he is not a good Hindu who does not eat beef. On certain occasions, he must sacrifice a bull and eat it."<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> MS Golwalkar, Spotlight, Bangalore, Sahitya Sindhu (RSS publication house), 1974, p. 98

<sup>100</sup> Vivekananda, The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, vol. 3 (Calcutta: Advaita Ashram, 1997), p. 536.

This is corroborated by other research works sponsored by the Ramakrishna Mission established by Vivekananda. According to C. Kunhan Raja, a prominent authority on the history and culture of the Vedic period:

“The Vedic Aryans, including the Brahmanas, ate fish, meat and even beef. A distinguished guest was honoured with beef served at a meal. Although the Vedic Aryans ate beef, milch cows were not killed. One of the words that designated cow was aghnya (what shall not be killed). But a guest was a goghna (one for whom a cow is killed). It is only bulls, barren cows and calves that were killed.”<sup>101</sup>

One of the greatest researcher and authority on Indian politics, religions and culture produced a brilliant essay on the subject titled ‘Did the Hindus Never Eat Beef?’ All those who are really interested in understanding the Indian past and wish to challenge the supremacist myth making for cleansing and marginalising minorities must read this monumental work of Dr. Ambedkar.<sup>102</sup>

Dr. Ambedkar after studying very large number of Vedic and Hindu scriptures arrived at the conclusion that, “when the learned Brahmins argue that the Hindus not only never ate beef but they always held the cow to be sacred and were always opposed to the killing of the cow, it is impossible to accept their view”.

Interestingly, the findings of Ambedkar were that cows were sacrificed and beef consumed because COWS were HOLY. According to Ambedkar: “It was not that the cow was not sacred in Vedic times, it was because of her sacredness that it is ordained in the Vajasaneyi Samhita that beef should be eaten.” (Dharma Shastra Vichar in Marathi, p. 180). That the Aryans of the Rig Veda did kill cows for purposes of food and ate beef is abundantly clear from the Rig Veda itself. In Rig Veda (X. 86.14) Indra says: ‘they cook for one 15 plus twenty oxen’. The Rig Veda (X.91.14) says that for Agni were sacrificed horses, bulls, oxen, barren cows and rams. From the Rig Veda (X.72.6) it appears that the cow was killed with a sword or axe.”

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<sup>101</sup> C. Kunhan Raja, „Vedic Culture“, cited in the series, Suniti Kumar Chatterji and others (eds.), *The Cultural Heritage of India*, vol. 1 (Calcutta: The Ramakrishna Mission, 1993), p. 217.

<sup>102</sup> B. R. Ambedkar, ‘Did the Hindus never eat beef?’ in *The Untouchables: Who Were They and Why They Became Untouchables?* in Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, vol. 7, (Government of Maharashtra, Bombay, 1990, first edition 1948) pp. 323-328.] <http://www.countercurrents.org/ambedkar050315.htm>

Ambedkar concluded his essay with the following words: “With this evidence no one can doubt that there was a time when Hindus, both Brahmins and non-Brahmins, ate not only flesh but also beef.”<sup>103</sup>

The violence unleashed by Hindutva cadres on vulnerable sections of Indians also underscores hypocrisy as an integral trait of the RSS. In fact, to say that it indulged in double/triple speak would be an understatement in its case. RSS cadres are killing indiscreetly poor Indians, not only for slaughtering cows but for even transporting these animals. At the same time, RSS/BJP are ruling single-handedly States of Goa, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Arunachal and Manipur where cow slaughter is legal and beef is staple diet. The RSS dictum seems to be that in some areas you will go to hell for slaughtering COWS and in some areas you will rule for slaughtering COWS.

There are studies available which show that ban on cow trade and ban on beef is going to put Indian farmers under more severe burden who are already facing crisis of existence. After Modi government’s coming to power farmers suicides have increased by 30% and ban on cow sale is going to play havoc with farmers.

In fact, Sharad Pawar, a seasoned politician who learnt his politics as a leader of farmers has come out with an amazing proposal. According to him as Modi government is banning cow trade and slaughter under the diktats of RSS, the affected farmers who cannot afford to feed barren cows should leave them with RSS organisations to SERVE these HOLY COWS. It should not be a problem for RSS as it is one of the largest colonisers of land after government in India He has even demanded that RSS should turn its headquarter at Resham Bagh, Nagpur into a GAUSHALA so that individual farmers are not forced to feed such cows.

One not so hidden agenda of the holy war on cow seems to be to destroy the economy of Qureshis (who are in meat traders) among Muslims and Dalits who control skin processing. It is also to see the death of industry which at the retail level is almost in the unorganised sector. This will open Indian meat market to world meat processing cartels.

RSS trained in fascist culture practices multiple agendas with multiple tongues. Whenever one polarising agenda loses steam or becomes controversially hot the same is abandoned and a new polarising issue is taken out from the hat. Going

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<sup>103</sup> B. R. Ambedkar, ‘Did the Hindus never eat beef?’ in *The Untouchables: Who Were They and Why They Became Untouchables?* in Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, vol. 7, (Government of Maharashtra, Bombay, 1990, first edition 1948) pp. 323-328.

around polarising with Ram temple, ghar-wapsi (conversion of Muslims and Christians to Hinduism), love-jihad, now it is the turn of cow to divide India. The issue of cow as the only issue faced by India today is also an attempt to divert attention from poverty, unemployment, riots, violence against Dalits minorities and women. The RSS/BJP rulers believe that they can fool all the people all the times. They will prove wrong, that is sure, but by the time it happens democratic-secular India is going to have terrible time.



# NO LAW CAN BE MADE TO BAN COW-SLAUGHTER

Mahatma Gandhi

This is an excerpt from Gandhi's prayer discourse of July 25, 1947, from the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Volume 88, as published online by the Gandhi Heritage Portal.

Rajendra Babu tells me that he has received some 50,000 postcards, between 25,000 and 30,000 letters and many thousands of telegrams demanding a ban on cow-slaughter. I spoke to you about this before. Why this flood of telegrams and letters? They have had no effect.

I have another telegram which says that a friend has started a fast for this cause. In India no law can be made to ban cow-slaughter. I do not doubt that Hindus are forbidden the slaughter of cows. I have been long pledged to serve the cow but how can my religion also be the religion of the rest of the Indians? It will mean coercion against those Indians who are not Hindus.

We have been shouting from the house-tops that there will be no coercion in the matter of religion. We have been reciting verses from the Koran at the prayer. But if anyone were to force me to recite these verses I would not like it. How can I force anyone not to slaughter cows unless he is himself so disposed? It is not as if there were only Hindus in the Indian Union. There are Muslims, Parsis, Christians and other religious groups here.

The assumption of the Hindus that India now has become the land of the Hindus is erroneous. India belongs to all who live here. If we stop cow slaughter by law here and the very reverse happens in Pakistan, what will be the result? Supposing they say Hindus would not be allowed to visit temples because it was against Shariat to worship idols? I see God even in a stone but how do I harm others by this belief? If therefore I am stopped from visiting temples I would still visit them. I shall, therefore, suggest that these telegrams and letters should cease. It is not proper to waste money on them.

Besides some prosperous Hindus themselves encourage cow-slaughter. True, they do not do it with their own hands. But who sends all the cows to Australia and other countries where they are slaughtered and whence shoes manufactured from cow hide are sent back to India? I know an orthodox Vaishnava Hindu. He used to feed his children on beef soup. On my asking him why he did that he said there was no sin in consuming beef as medicine.

We really do not stop to think what true religion is and merely go about shouting that cow-slaughter should be banned by law. In villages Hindus make bullocks carry huge burdens which almost crush the animals. Is it not cow-slaughter, albeit slowly carried out? I shall therefore suggest that the matter should not be pressed in the Constituent Assembly...

I have been asked, 'Since in view of the atrocities being perpetuated by Muslims it is difficult to decide which of the Muslims are to be trusted, what should be our attitude towards the Muslims in the Indian Union? What should the non-Muslims in Pakistan do?'

I have already answered this question. I again repeat that all the religions of India today are being put to the test. It has to be seen how the various religious groups such as the Sikhs, the Hindus, the Muslims and the Christians conduct themselves and how they carry on the affairs of India. Pakistan may be said to belong to Muslims but the Indian Union belongs to all. If you shake off cowardice and become brave you will not have to consider how you are to behave towards the Muslims. But today there is cowardice in us. For this, I have already accepted the blame.

I am still wondering how my 30 years' teaching has been so ineffective. Why did I assume, to begin with, that non-violence could be a weapon of cowards? Even now if we can really become brave and love the Muslims, the Muslims will have to stop and think what they could gain by practising treachery against us. They will return love for love. Can we keep the crores of Muslims in the Indian Union as slaves? He who makes slaves of others himself becomes a slave. If we answer sword with sword, the lathi with lathi and kick with kick, we cannot expect that things will be different in Pakistan. We shall then lose our freedom as easily as we have gained it...

[Translated from Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan –I, pp 277-280

Note: The question of banning cow slaughter was debated in the Constituent Assembly and a consensus emerged that there should be no national statute banning the consumption of beef. The goal was instead included in the (non-binding) Directive Principles of State Policy.

# AMBEDKAR ON BEEF-EATING AND HINDUISM

The claim of the Hindutva gang that Dr BR Ambedkar endorsed the Hindutva project and opposed beef-eating as cow was sacred to Hinduism is a terrible travesty of facts. Dr Ambedkar, a great researcher, produced a brilliant essay on the subject titled 'Did The Hindus Never Eat Beef?' All those who are really interested in understanding the Indian past and wish to challenge the supremacist myth making for cleansing and marginalising minorities must read the above-mentioned work which is being reproduced below:

## Did Hindus Never Eat Beef?

Dr. B R Ambedkar

To the question whether the Hindus ever ate beef, every Touchable Hindu, whether he is a Brahmin or a non-Brahmin, will say 'no, never'. In a certain sense, he is right. From times no Hindu has eaten beef. If this is all that the Touchable Hindu wants to convey by his answer there need be no quarrel over it. But when the learned Brahmins argue that the Hindus not only never ate beef but they always held the cow to be sacred and were always opposed to the killing of the cow, it is impossible to accept their view.

What is the evidence in support of the construction that the Hindus never ate beef and were opposed to the killing of the cow? There are two series of references in the Rig Veda on which reliance is placed. In one of these, the cow is spoken of as Aghnya. They are Rig Veda 1.164, 27; IV.1.6; V 82-8; V11.69. 71; X.87. Aghnya means 'one who does not deserve to be killed'. From this, it is argued that this was a prohibition against the killing of the cow and that since the Vedas are the final authority in the matter of religion, it is concluded that the Aryans could not have killed the cows, much less could they have eaten beef. In another series of references the cow is spoken of as sacred. They are Rig Veda V1.28.1.8. and VIII, 101. 15. In these verses the cow is addressed as Mother of Rudras, the Daughter of Vasus, the Sister of the Adityas and the Centre of Nectar. Another reference on the subject is in Rig Veda VIII. 101. 16 where the cow is called Devi (Goddess). Reliance is also placed on certain passages in the Brahmanas and Sutras.

There are two passages in the Satapatha Brahmana which relate to animal sacrifice and beef-eating. One is at 111.1.2.21 and reads as follows:

"He (the Adhvaryu) then makes him enter the hall. Let him not eat (the flesh) of either the cow or the ox, for the cow and the ox doubtless support everything here on earth. The gods spoke, 'verily, the cow and the ox support everything

here; come, let us bestow on the cow and the ox whatever vigour belonged to other species (of animals); and therefore the cow and the ox eat most Hence were one to eat (the flesh) of an ox or a cow, there would be, as it were, an eating of everything, or, as it were, a going to the end (or, to destruction)... Let him therefore not eat (the flesh) of the cow and the ox."

The other passage is at 1, 2, 3, 6. It speaks against animal sacrifice on ethical grounds. A similar statement is contained in the Apastambha Dharma Sutra at 1, 5, 17, 29. Apastambha lays a general embargo on the eating of cow's flesh.

Such is the evidence in support of the contention that the Hindus never ate beef. What conclusion can be drawn from this evidence?

So far as the evidence from the Rig Veda is concerned the conclusion is based on a misreading and misunderstanding of the texts. The adjective Aghnya applied to the cow in the Rig Veda means a cow that was yielding milk and therefore not fit for being killed. That the cow is venerated in the Rig Veda is of course true. But this regard and veneration of the cow are only to be expected from an agricultural community like the Indo-Aryans. This application of the utility of the cow did not prevent the Aryan from killing the cow for purposes of food. Indeed, the cow was killed because the cow was regarded as sacred. As observed by Mr. Kane: "It was not that the cow was not sacred in Vedic times, it was because of her sacredness that it is ordained in the Vajasaneyi Samhita that beef should be eaten." (Dharma Shastra Vichar in Marathi, p. 180).

That the Aryans of the Rig Veda did kill cows for purposes of food and ate beef is abundantly clear from the Rig Veda itself. In Rig Veda (X. 86.14) Indra says: "They cook for one 15 plus twenty oxen". The Rig Veda (X.91.14) says that for Agni were sacrificed horses, bulls, oxen, barren cows and rams. From the Rig Veda (X.72.6) it appears that the cow was killed with a sword or axe.

As to the testimony of the Satapatha Bramhana, can it be said to be conclusive? Obviously, it cannot be. For there are passages in the other Bramhanas which give a different opinion. To give only one instance. Among the Kamyashtis set forth in the Taittiriya Bramhana, not only the sacrifice of oxen and cows is laid down, but we are even told what kind and description of oxen and cows are to be offered to what deities. Thus, a dwarf ox is to be chosen for sacrifice to Vishnu; a drooping horned bull with a blaze on the forehead to Indra as the destroyer of Vritra, a black cow to Pushan, a red cow to Rudra, and so on. The Taittiriya Bramhana notes another sacrifice called Panchasaradiya-seva, the most important element of which was the immolation of seventeen five-year old humpless, dwarf bulls, and as many dwarf heifers under three year old.

As against the statement of the Apastamba Dharma Sutra, the following points may be noted. First is the contrary statement contained in that very Sutra. At 15,

14, 29, the Sutra says: "The cow and the bull are sacred and therefore should be eaten". The second is the prescription of Madhuparka contained in the Grahya Sutras.

Among the Aryans the etiquette for receiving important guests had become settled into custom and had become a ceremony. The most important offering was Madhuparka. A detailed description regarding Madhuparka are to be found in the various Grahya Sutras. According to most of the Grahya Sutras there are six persons who have a right to be served with Madhuparka namely, (1) Ritvija or the Brahmin called to perform a sacrifice, (2) Acharya, the teacher, (3) The bridegroom (4) The King (5) The Snatak, the student who has just finished his studies at the Gurukul and (6) Any person who is dear to the host. Some add Atithi to this list. Except in the case of Ritvija, King and Acharya, Madhuparka is to be offered to the rest once in a year. To the Ritvija, King and Acharya it is to be offered each time they come.

What was this Madhuparka made of? There is divergence about the substances mixed in offering Madhuparka. Asv.gr and Ap.gr. (13.10) prescribe a mixture of honey and curds or clarified butter and curds. Others like Par.gr.13 prescribe a mixture of three (curds, honey and butter). Ap.gr. (13.11-12) states the view of some that those three may be mixed or five (those three with fried yava grain and barley). Hir.gr.I, 12, 10-12 give the option of mixing three of five (curds, honey, ghee, water and ground grain). The Kausika Sutra (92) speaks of nine kinds of mixtures, viz., Brahma (honey and curds), Aindra (of payasa), Saurnya (curds and ghee), Pausna (ghee and mantha), Sarasvata (milk and ghee), Mausala (wine and ghee, this being used only in Sautramanai and Rajasuya sacrifices), Parivrajaka (sesame oil and oil cake). The Madhava gr.1.9.22 says that the Veda declares that the Madhuparka must not be without flesh and so it recommends that if the cow is let loose, goat's meat or payasa (rice cooked in milk) may be offered; the Hir.gr. 1.13, 14 says that other meat should be offered; Baud.gr. (1.2,51-54) says that when the cow is let off, the flesh of a goat or ram may be offered or some forest flesh (of a deer, etc.) may be offered, as there can be no Madhuparka without flesh or if one is unable to offer flesh one may cook ground grains. Thus the essential element in Madhuparka is flesh and particularly cow's flesh. The killing of cow for the guest had grown to such an extent that the guest came to be called 'Go-ghna' which means the killer of the cow. To avoid this slaughter of the cows the Ashvateyana Grahya Sutra (1.24.25) suggests that the cow should be let loose when the guest comes so as to escape the rule of etiquette. Thirdly, reference may be made to the ritual relating to disposal of the dead to counter the testimony of the Apastamba Dharma Sutra. The Sutra says (Kane's vol. II, Part I, p. 545.):

1. He should then put the following (sacrificial) implements (on the dead body)
2. Into the right hand the (spoon called) Guhu.
3. Into the left the (other spoon called) Upabhrit.
4. On his right side the wooden sacrificial sword called Sphya, on his left side the Agnihotrahavani (i.e., the laddle with which the Agnihotra oblations are sacrificed).
5. On his chest the (big sacrificial laddle called) Dhruva. On his head the dishes. On his teeth the pressing stones.
6. On the two sides of his nose, the two smaller sacrificial laddles called Sruvas.
7. Or, if there is only one (Sruva), breaking it (in two pieces).
8. On his two ears the two Prasitraharnas (i.e., the vessels into which the portion of the sacrificial food belonging to the Brahmin) is put
9. Or, if there is only one (Prasitraharna), breaking it (in two pieces).
10. On his belly the (vessel called) Patri.
11. And the cup into which the cut-off portion (of the sacrificial food) are put.
12. On his secret parts the (staff called) Samy.
13. On his thighs two kindling woods.
14. On his legs the mortar and the pestle.
15. On his feet the two baskets.
16. Or, if there is only one (basket), breaking it in two pieces.
17. Those of the implements which have a hollow (into which liquids can be poured) are filled with sprinkled butter.
18. The son (of the deceased person) should take the under and the upper mill-stone for himself.
19. And the implements made of copper, iron and earthenware.
20. Taking out the omentum of the she-animal he should cover there with the head and the mouth (of the dead person) with the verse, 'But on the armour (which will protect thee) against Agni, by that which comes from the cows.' (Rig Veda. X. 16.7).

21. Taking out the kidneys of the animal he should lay them into the hands (of the dead body) with the verse, escape the two hounds, the sons of Sarma (Rig Veda X 14.10) the right kidney into the right hand and the left into the left hand.
22. The heart of the animals he puts on the heart of the deceased.
23. And two lumps of flour or rice according to some teachers.
24. Only if there are no kidneys according to some teachers.
25. Having distributed the whole (animal), limb by limb (placing its different limbs on the corresponding limbs of the deceased) and having covered it with its hide, he recites when the Pranita water is carried forward (the verse), 'Agni do not overturn this cup,' (Rig Veda, X. 16.8).
26. Bending his left knee he should sacrifice Yugya oblation into the Dakshina fire with the formulas 'To Agni Svaha, to Kama Svaha, to the world Svaha, to Anumati Svaha'.
27. A fifth (oblation) on the chest of the deceased with the formula 'from this one verily thou hast been born. May he now be born out of thee. To the heaven worlds Svaha.' "

From the above passage quoted from the Ashvalayan Grahya Sutra it is clear that among the ancient Indo-Aryans when a person died, an animal had to be killed and the parts of the animal were placed on the appropriate parts of the dead body before the dead body was burned.

Such is the state of the evidence on the subject of cow-killing and beef-eating. Which part of it is to be accepted as true? The correct view is that the testimony of the Satapatha Brahmana and the Apastamba Dharma Sutra in so far as it supports the view that Hindus were against cow-killing and beef-eating, are merely exhortations against the excesses of cow-killing and not prohibitions against cow-killing. Indeed the exhortations prove that cow-killing and eating of beef had become a common practice. That notwithstanding these exhortations cow-killing and beef-eating continued. That most often they fell on deaf ears is proved by the conduct of Yajnavalkya, the great Rishi of the Aryans. The first passage quoted above from the Satapatha Brahmana was really addressed to Yajnavalkya as an exhortation. How did Yajnavalkya respond? After listening to the exhortation this is what Yajnavalkya said: " I, for one, eat it, provided that it is tender."

That the Hindus at one time did kill cows and did eat beef is proved abundantly by the description of the Yajnas given in the Buddhist Sutras which relate to

periods much later than the Vedas and the Brahmanas. The scale on which the slaughter of cows and animals took place was colossal. It is not possible to give a total of such slaughter on all accounts committed by the Brahmins in the name of religion. Some idea of the extent of this slaughter can, however, be had from references to it in the Buddhist literature. As an illustration, reference may be made to the Kutadanta Sutta in which Buddha preached against the performance of animal sacrifices to Brahmin Kutadanta. Buddha, though speaking in a tone of sarcastic travesty, gives a good idea of the practices and rituals of the Vedic sacrifices when he said:

"And further, O Brahmin, at that sacrifice neither were any oxen slain, neither goats, nor fowls, nor fatted pigs, nor were any kind of living creatures put to death. No trees were cut down to be used as posts, no Darbha grasses mown to stress around the sacrificial spot. And the slaves and messengers and workmen there employed were driven neither by rods nor fear, nor carried on their work weeping with tears upon their faces."

Kutadanta, on the other hand, in thanking Buddha for his conversion gives an idea of the magnitude of the slaughter of animals which took place at such sacrifices when he says:

"I, even I betake myself to the venerable Gotama as my guide, to the Doctrine and the Order. May the venerable One accept me as a disciple, as one who, from this day forth, as long as life endures, has taken him as his guide. And I myself, O, Gotama, will have the seven hundred bulls, and the seven hundred steers, and the seven hundred heifers, and the seven hundred goats, and the seven hundred rams set free. To them I grant their life. Let them eat grass and drink fresh water and may cool breezes waft around them."

In the Samyuta Nikaya (111,1-9) we have another description of a Yajna performed by Pasenadi, king of Kosala. It is said that five hundred bulls, five hundred calves and many heifers, goats and rams were led to the pillar to be sacrificed.

With this evidence no one can doubt that there was a time when Hindus, both Brahmins and non-Brahmins, ate not only flesh but also beef.

[B. R. Ambedkar, 'Did the Hindus never eat beef?' in *The Untouchables: Who Were They and Why They Became Untouchables?* in Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, vol. 7, (Government of Maharashtra, Bombay, 1990, first edition 1948) pp. 323-328.]

[Compiled by Shamsul Islam] [This article appeared in *The Milli Gazette* print issue of 16-31 May 2010 on page no. 9]



# BEEF EATING: STRANGULATING HISTORY

Ram Puniyani\*

While one must respect the sentiments of those who worship cow and regard her as their mother, to take offence to the objective study of history just because the facts don't suit their political calculations is yet another sign of a society where liberal space is being strangulated by the practitioners of communal politics. Prof. D. N. Jha, a historian from Delhi University, had been experiencing the nightmares of 'threats to life' from anonymous callers who were trying to prevail upon him not to go ahead with the publication of his well-researched work, *Holy Cow: Beef in Indian Dietary Traditions*.

As per the reports it is a work of serious scholarship based on authentic sources in tune with methods of scientific research in history. The book demonstrates that contrary to the popular belief even today a large number of Indians, the indigenous people in particular and many other communities in general, consume beef unmindful of the dictates of the Hindutva forces.

It is too well known to recount that these Hindutva forces confer the status of mother to the cow. Currently 72 communities in Kerala - not all of them untouchables - prefer beef to the expensive mutton and the Hindutva forces are trying to prevail upon them to stop the same.

Not tenable

To begin with, the historian breaks the myth that Muslim rulers introduced beef eating in India. Much before the advent of Islam in India beef had been associated with Indian dietary practices. Also, it is not at all tenable to hold that dietary habits are a mark of community identity.

A survey of ancient Indian scriptures, especially the Vedas, shows that amongst the nomadic, pastoral Aryans who settled here, animal sacrifice was a dominant feature till the emergence of settled agriculture. Cattle were the major property during this phase and they offered the same to propitiate the gods. Wealth was equated with the ownership of the cattle.

Many gods such as Indra and Agni are described as having special preferences for different types of flesh - Indra had a weakness for bull's meat and Agni for bull's and cow's. It is recorded that the Maruts and the Asvins were also offered

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cows. In the Vedas, there is a mention of around 250 animals out of which at least 50 were supposed to be fit for sacrifice and consumption. In the Mahabharata, there is a mention of a king named Rantideva who achieved great fame by distributing foodgrains and beef to Brahmins. Taittiriya Brahman categorically tells us: 'Verily the cow is food' (atho annam via gauh) and Yajnavalkya's insistence on eating the tender (amsala) flesh of the cow is well known. Even later Brahminical texts provide the evidence for eating beef. Even Manusmriti did not prohibit the consumption of beef.

### As a medicine

In therapeutic section of Charak Samhita (pages 86-87) the flesh of cow is prescribed as a medicine for various diseases. It is also prescribed for making soup. It is emphatically advised as a cure for irregular fever, consumption, and emaciation. The fat of the cow is recommended for debility and rheumatism.

With the rise of agricultural economy and the massive transformation occurring in society, changes were to be brought in in the practice of animal sacrifice also. At that time there were ritualistic practices like animal sacrifices, with which Brahmins were identified. Buddha attacked these practices. There were sacrifices, which involved 500 oxen, 500 male calves, 500 female calves and 500 sheep to be tied to the sacrificial pole for slaughter. Buddha pointed out that aswamedha, purusmedha, vajapeya sacrifices did not produce good results. According to a story in Digha Nikaya, when Buddha was touring Magadha, a Brahmin called Kutadanta was preparing for a sacrifice with 700 bulls, 700 goats and 700 rams. Buddha intervened and stopped him. His rejection of animal sacrifice and emphasis on non-injury to animals assumed a new significance in the context of new agriculture.

### The threat from Buddhism

The emphasis on non-violence by Buddha was not blind or rigid. He did taste beef and it is well known that he died due to eating pork. Emperor Ashok after converting to Buddhism did not turn to vegetarianism. He only restricted the number of animals to be killed for the royal kitchen.

So where do matters change and how did the cow become a symbol of faith and reverence to the extent of assuming the status of 'motherhood'? Over a period of time mainly after the emergence of Buddhism or rather as an accompaniment of the Brahminical attack on Buddhism, the practices started being looked on with different emphasis. The threat posed by Buddhism to the Brahminical value system was too severe. In response to low castes slipping away from the grip of Brahminism, the battle was taken up at all the levels. At philosophical level Sankara reasserted the supremacy of Brahminical values, at political level

King Pushyamitra Shung ensured the physical attack on Buddhist monks, at the level of symbols King Shashank got the Bodhi tree (where Gautama the Buddha got Enlightenment) destroyed.

One of the appeals to the spread of Buddhism was the protection of cattle wealth, which was needed for the agricultural economy. In a way, while Brahminism 'succeeded' in banishing Buddhism from India, it had also to transform itself from the 'animal sacrifice' state to the one which could be in tune with the times. It is here that this ideology took up the cow as a symbol of their ideological march. But unlike Buddha whose pronouncements were based on reason, the counteraction of Brahminical ideology took the form of a blind faith based on assertion. So while Buddha's non-violence was for the preservation of animal wealth for the social and compassionate reasons the counter was based purely on symbolism. So while the followers of Brahminical ideology accuse Buddha of 'weakening' India due to his doctrine of non-violence, he was not a cow worshipper or vegetarian in the current Brahminical sense.

Despite the gradual rigidification of Brahminical 'cow as mother' stance, large sections of low castes continued the practice of beef eating. The followers of Buddhism continued to eat flesh including beef. Since Brahminism is the dominant religious tradition, Babur, the first Mughal emperor, in his will to his son Humayun, in deference to these notions, advised him to respect the cow and avoid cow slaughter. With the construction of Hindutva ideology and politics, in response to the rising Indian national movement, the demand for ban on cow slaughter also came up. In post-Independence India, RSS repeatedly raised this issue to build up a mass campaign but without any response to its call till the 1980s.

While one must respect the sentiments of those who worship cow and regard her as their mother, to take offence to the objective study of history just because the facts don't suit their political calculations is yet another sign of a society where liberal space is being strangled by the practitioners of communal politics. We have seen enough such threats and offences in recent past - be it the opposition to films or the destruction of paintings, or the dictates of the communalists to the young not to celebrate Valentine's Day, etc., - and hope the democratic spirit of our Constitution holds the forte and any threat to the democratic freedom is opposed tooth and nail.

# HOLY COW-BEEF AND INDIAN POLITICAL GAMES

Ram Puniyani\*

Can the dietary practices, the animal which is worshipped as a mother by section of population, be brought in on the political arena? While all this sounds surreal, it's true as far as the role of cow is there in Indian political firmament. Recently Maharashtra Government got the Presidents assent to the bill "Maharashtra Animal Preservation (Amendment) Bill 1995 which will now ban the slaughter of bulls and bullocks as well. The defaulters will face a prison term of five years and a fine of Rs. 10000. When I first read 'Animal Preservation' part of the title of the bill, I thought this is some bill related to all the animals which are used for human consumption or deals with the use of animals for different purposes by the society. Contrary to that it turned out that this applies only to Cow and its progeny. A decade ago I was shocked to read that one of the outstanding scholars of ancient Indian History Professor Dwijendra Nath Jha received regular threats on phone telling him not to publish his book, 'Holy Cow Beef in Indian Dietary tradition'. This scholarly work traces the place of beef in Indian diet from centuries.

The idea is to target the minorities for beef eating, and cow slaughter. One recalls that one of the slogans which rent the air in the run up the 2014 General elections was "Modi ko matdan, gai ko jeevadan [Vote for Modi, give life to the cow], BJP ka sandesh, bachegi gai, bachega desh [BJP's message, the cow will be saved, the country will be saved]". This slogan was propped up 'Cow Development Cell' of BJP.

As such emotive-identity issues are the hall mark of the politics in the name of religion. BJP built itself up on another identity issue, that of Ram Temple. The cow has always been accompanying and a parallel issue for political mobilisation by RSS-BJP. It has also been the point of triggering violence in many cases all through. With the formation of VHP by RSS in 1964, cow issue has been systematically propped up time and over again. Many misconceptions about

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cow, beef eating have been constructed. Building of misconceptions has also been extended to the dietary habits of the 'Muslim' community in particular. The profession of section of Muslims, Kasai (butcher), those in the trade of beef selling has been brought into the 'Hate other', 'social common sense' in particular. The result being that it is perceived at broad layers of society as if beef eating is compulsory for Muslims. The notion which has been popularised is that Cow is Holy for Hindus: Muslims kill her! The perception is that the Muslim invaders brought beef eating into India. These misconceptions are by now the part of 'social common sense' of the large number of people in the society.

All the components of this are myths and stereotypes have been constructed over a period of time. Time and over again one hears about some small communal violence, killing of Dalits and traders of cows leading to communal polarisation. Many dalits dealing with cow hide have been killed in places like Gohana in Haryana and the VHP leaders had justified such acts.

Contrary to this the beef eating and sacrifice of cows was prevalent here from Vedic period. The sacrifice of cows in the Yagnas (ritual around fire) is extensively mentioned in the scriptures. There is mention about beef eating in various books. There is a phrase in Taitreya Brahmin which states 'Atha Annam via Gau' (Cow is in veritable food) Different gods are mentioned to be having their choices for particular type of cow flesh. Prof D. N. Jha quotes innumerable examples of this in his masterpiece.

The preaching of nonviolence in India came with the rise of agricultural society. Jainism called for total nonviolence, while Buddhism talked non-violence; preventing of wasteful animal sacrifice in particular. It was much later that Brahmanism picked up cow as a symbol for Brahmanism in response and as a reaction to non-violence of these religions. Since Brahmanism has asserted itself to be the Hinduism it projects as if Cow is holy for Hindus overall. The matter of fact is that many sections of society, more particularly Dalits and Tribal have been eating beef all through. It is another matter that lately with the rising assertion of Hindutva, many communities which are dependent on beef as a rich and cheap source of protein are gradually being forced to either give it up or do a rethink on that.

In contrast to what is being asserted by BJP and company, Swami Vivekanand had a different take on the issue. He points out speaking to a large gathering in USA said: "You will be astonished if I tell you that, according to old ceremonials, he is not a good Hindu who does not eat beef. On certain occasions, he must sacrifice a bull and eat it."

[Vivekananda speaking at the Shakespeare Club, Pasadena, California, USA (2 February 1900) on the theme of 'Buddhistic India', cited in Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol 3 (Calcutta: Advaita Ashram, 1997), p. 536.]

This is corroborated by other research works sponsored by the Ramakrishna Mission established by Swami Vivekananda himself. One of these reads: "The Vedic Aryans, including the Brahmanas, ate fish, meat and even beef. A distinguished guest was honoured with beef served at a meal. Although the Vedic Aryans ate beef, milch cows were not killed. One of the words that designated cow was aghnya (what shall not be killed). But a guest was a goghna (one for whom a cow is killed). It is only bulls, barren cows and calves that were killed." [C. Kunhan Raja, 'Vedic Culture', cited in the series, Suniti Kumar Chatterji and others (eds.), *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol 1 (Calcutta: The Ramakrishna Mission, 1993), 217.]

In response to this bill thousands of workers of Devnar abattoir (Mumbai), who will be losing their jobs came on the streets to protest against this move of the government (March 11). Many traders, from different religion also came to Azad Maidan in Mumbai to protest this communal act of the Maharashtra Government. In a PIL filed in the Bombay High Court the petitioner argues that this ban on beef infringes on the fundamental right of citizens to choose meat of their choice is fundamental. The hope is that the society overcomes such abuse of 'identity issues' for political goals and lets the people have their own choices in matters of food habits, and let those who are making their living from this trade do so peacefully.

# POLITICAL ECONOMY OF BEEF BAN

Vidya Bhushan Rawat\*

The 'gautmata' brigade had started its march to Parliament Street once the new government took over in May 2014. JantarMantar saw a large number of Babas and Sadhus with their cows and carts until one fine day the NDMC officials had to act and forcibly evict them from the place. The matter is not whether they remained there or not but the realisation that their 'own' dispensation is there now and hence it was important to rake up the issue. A trip to the rural hinterland of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar will give you a glimpse of how the 'cow protection' is being converted into an electoral issue through polarising the society.

Soon after it different offshoots of the SanghParivar started raising issues, which are the 'heart' of the party and thought that it is the right time to raise them. While the politicians know it well that even if they get huge majority the issues the party is emphasising will only disintegrate the country. India can't afford another partition and its wounded psyche. The issues like Love-Jehad, Ramzade verses Haramzade, Vande-Mataram, Ram Mandir, Bangladeshi refugees, cow protection started cropping up again and again. The government on its own never tried to assure people of these 'agendas' and things became clear with BJP's choice of leaders in different states where party came to power. In Jharkhand, it chose a non-Adivasi to lead the party in a very similar way as Chhattishgarh'sadivasis are being ruled by another non adivasi Raman Singh. In Haryana and Maharastra, two SanghParivar persons without any administrative experiences were handed over the charge of their states. Both Mohan LalKhattar and DevinderFadnavis came from active RSS background and cleared their intentions in the very beginning. Khattar is unable to control communal riot in Haryana and implementing the Sangh agenda dutifully while Fadnavis too is focusing the Sangh agenda to polarise things.

Cow beef is banned in India and known to everyone but what is disturbing now is that Maharastra act brought into it the progenies of the cow family. Therefore slaughtering and killing of buffaloes, bulls, oxen too become illegal. The thought behind these things are very clear to push Muslims and others engaged in the business to virtually workless. There is no alternative provided by the government and more than the government agencies it is the Shiv Sena, the

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partner of the BJP in Maharashtra which is 'doing' the work, making allegations against Muslims and threatening people with dire consequences.

The fact is that Maharashtra is already reeling under severe drought and the government has failed to provide them any support. A huge number of persons engaged in the business will virtually become jobless as Times of India reports quoting, 'Mumbai Suburban Beef Traders' Association president Mohammad Ali Qureshi, said: "It will affect beef traders' business as water buffalo meat accounts for just 25 percent of our total sale. It will render many of us jobless while prices of other meat will go up and it will also affect rural economy. The farmers, already under debt, will have to maintain useless cattle on expensive fodder. The poor will not be able to afford high-priced mutton'. He said: "An ailing bullock or ox sells for about Rs 10,000 to 14,000 and farmers, unable to afford upkeep of such cattle, often sell it to slaughterhouses."

In Haryana where the economy of babas is growing like Gujarat as they get huge donation to 'serve' 'gaumata' but a farmer who met me recently informed how it is becoming difficult to control stray animals of cow family. The babas, he said, only need female cows and they leave the males as free. These male progenies of cows later become bulls and uncontrollable 'saands' who can enter in any field thus destroying crops and injuring and killing many innocent people. We have seen the condition of cows in Gujarat where they are allowed to roam around in the streets and in the night sleep in open. A country looking forward as modern nation of 21st century cannot afford such stupidities becoming our main work of life. One fact is clear that a farmer will find it difficult to own cow and its family as what happen once she stop giving milk. Where to cremate it? Do we need the enormous dangers of all this? We don't have space to cremate for human being. The biofuel is no more available and for burial we won't have enough space in future and we are now asking for more. At home, our parents suffer and we don't care for her mothers. We earn, go abroad, become even prime minister but have no time for our mother. We don't even feel her worthy of staying with her sons and daughters even when we have the capacity to keep her with us. Is not it the biggest hypocrisy of our time? Moreover, we appreciate those who cater their cattle but need to see what happen in the later years. A recent RTI revealed that Indian army gives a 'decent euthanasia' to its celebrity Dogs when they are out of use or say retired. Don't these dogs have right to life after they have finished their work in the army? It is clear that army has purely a work-based relationship with these dogs and once their services are over they are killed. It shows that human relationship with animals even when we all love them is till they are useful to us. We love them even for some more years but it may not be possible to keep them for over and doing 'seva' of them as the Babas want us to do. Not everyone has huge funds, Land and donation to serve



them as the big babas these days. All the animals can be useful to us during the life and even after the life too.

Interestingly after the Maharashtra ban, the Haryana government also acted. A number of the Sangh affiliates also jumped in and appreciated the Maharashtra government's effort in 'respecting' the Hindu 'sentiments'. The demand grew louder everywhere and Muslims were being blamed for 'eating' beef as if it is their sole concern. The Maharashtra act has draconian provisions where police can intrude in your kitchen and dining table too and question you regarding the food. Clearly, such tendencies were more political and economical in nature to destroy the business of Muslims and deny them their basic food. However, it is not just Muslims who eat beef as has been proved through many reports and arguments. BJP's agenda on beef is solely aimed at isolating Muslim further and creating a fictitious debate related to it.

One need to understand and ask a question as why Goa's BJP government did not ban beef as it is a state bordering Maharashtra? As per Indian Express report on March 21st, 2015, the chief minister of Goa, Laxmikant Parsekar on Friday said the state will never ban beef as it does not believe in interfering with the food habits of its people. Parsekar told The Indian Express, "As the CM, I have to take care of all people in the state including its 38 percent minorities. Christians account for 30 percent of the population while the remaining are from the Muslim community. It is not like they started consuming beef recently; this has always been part of their daily cuisine. How can I ban it?"

Later the Union Minister of State for Home MrKiren Rijiju also admitted that he too eat beef and that the ban can not work in the Northeast as it is the part of their food culture. Mr Rijiju's statement came in the aftermath of a protest against the visit of Amit Shah, BJP's president to the visit of North East. All the major political leaders of BJP actually openly said that they are not going to seek ban on beef in the Northeast.

Here lies the basic issue of beef eating, which as a habit and food culture, is accepted by the BJP leadership openly without any ambiguity. Though KiranRijiju has detracted his own statement as a 'beefeater' claiming he was misquoted yet he defended that beef was part of northeastern culture. Now question is when BJP's own leaders have accepted that beef eating is culture of many communities in India and not necessarily Muslims then why its leaders and ministers are unable to control them from raising the rhetoric of 'gaumata'. What forced Rajnath Singh to say that he would 'starve' Bangladesh of beef eating? One respect Rijiju's point that state should respect the 'feelings' of 'majority' community and therefore in the Northeast beef ban is unworkable as the majority community eats beef while in the other regions we should 'respect' the sentiments of the 'majority' community which does not eat beef.

Unfortunately, Riji must understand that democracy today is not a 'majoritarian' rule but respecting the 'sentiments' of minorities too. A huge number of people in each state today, are migrants who bring their cultures and practices to those states. It is a well-known fact that minorities are not supposed to merge and assimilate their identities and cultural habits in the majoritarian cultural but allowed to develop their own. These are well-established laws internationally and respected here in India too. If majority in several states speak Hindi does not mean people have no right to promote Urdu language. If a majority of Indians are vegetarian or eat non-beef meet we respect their sentiments and not put beef in their plate. Nobody ask for beef in the house of those who don't eat it. Nobody offer beef to anyone who does not eat it and that is what we call 'respecting' the sentiments. The cultural respect is powerful in India more than anywhere else and people respect vegetarian people's habits too.

The Central Indian states of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Rajasthan were more vegetarian in nature but there too it depended on communities. And communities too don't have the same food habits everywhere. It is not that upper castes don't eat meet or beef. There are so many of them who eat and there are hundreds of Muslims who are vegetarian but they is because of their choice and not of compulsion. Even among Dalits and Adivasis the food habit is not the same. A number of communities used to do the skin tanning work in the north but did not eat beef but at many places they ate it. And it is not beef alone, the forest dwelling working masses of this country depended on forest and hence forest produce were part of their food culture. They used the entire edible meat as protein and that is why physically all these communities were stronger and hard workers. Hence it is a conspiracy of the power elite to deny people rights over their resources and ensure that they continue to fight for their basic needs too. The reason for BJP not shouting beef ban in Goa and Northeast is the low population of Muslims which will not give them chance to communalise the issue and gain politically. One must keep in mind that it is not just Christians who eat beef in Northeast but Hindus too hence BJP and Hindutva's moral police can't implement its brahmanical agenda in the northeast and hence keeping quiet and respecting the 'sentiments' of the people.

Food habits are part of our long nurtured cultural practices. It depends on the geographical environment of the region also. Vegetarianism actually grew with places where farmers kept cattle as pet and agricultural help but it is also a fact that adivasis, Dalits and all those nomadic communities who lived with nature used to eat them. Today all the communities and their food producing resources are ironically in the hands of powerful corporate in the name of 'development'. It is not just beef eating which has been denied to India's indigenous people but they are also fighting for access to natural resources. Understand the economic

reasons of India's ruling brahmanical class using religious taboos to unleash its agenda for profit through business.

According to reports India was widely tipped as the topmost beef exporter in the world leaving behind Brazil and its beef exporter will record breaking this year as Russia too has approved India's beef for its consumption. So beef i.e. buffalo meat, has actually left basmati rice far behind as far as exports from India is concerned.

A report in Times of India suggests that beef meet has recorded 13% increase in value of Rs 26,965 crore and it's expected to cross over Rs 30,000 crore by the end of the year 2015. However, there is a slight slowdown as per the report but it is not due to any policy of the government but due to turmoil in the international market.

"The devaluation of Brazilian currency and problems in the re-export of buffalo meat from Vietnam to Hong Kong have affected Indian exports," said DB Sabharwal, secretary of All India Meat & Livestock Exporters' Association. Vietnam is the largest buyer of Indian buffalo meat, while Brazil is India's main competitor.'

The fact is that ban on slaughtering is not going to affect the export the buffalo meat as many in the market believe even today. We have to understand that the SanghParivar campaign is not to finish and eliminate 30,000 crore beef export business, many of whom may be their financiers. In fact, it is a careful strategy of the powerful companies owned by Jains and Marwaris who are in the business to promote this hysteria in India so that they can earn billions through exporting it. As per Times of India, PriyaSud, partner of Delhi-based Al Noor Exports feel that the Maharashtra and other acts would be beneficial for exports.

"It could bring an end to illegal slaughter and raise the price for buffalo meat, thus proving to be beneficial for companies like us who are engaged in legal slaughter and export of buffalo meat," said With prospects of purchases from a big market like Russia and several countries like Egypt buying more Indian bovine meat, the company will have to increase the production to full capacity, she added.

The glaring facts are open now. India registered a growth of 44% in meat export mainly the buffalo meat and is exporting meat to over 70 countries with demand coming mostly from Russia, China and other South East Asian countries. As per Times of India reported on April 1st, 2013, 'Uttar Pradesh is the top buffalo meat-producing state with 3 lakh tonnes in 2011. At least 70% of the buffalo meat is exported. "Our meat is lean and cheaper. We supply halal meat, which is preferred in Gulf countries," said Surendra Kumar Ranjan, director of Uttar Pradesh-based Hind Agro Industries'.

Bovine meat export is a huge business like any other export as it gives you big income. In India, it remained food of the underdogs as they can afford to pay for it. Unfortunately, it is not like sugar or onions where export created shortage at domestic level became an election issue and therefore government had to stop the export of these essential commodities. The underdogs of Indian society are not the Brahmins, Marwaris or Jains whose 'sentiments' the government is too much concerned about, but the poor Muslims, Dalits and Adivasis who have regularly faced state 'abduction' of their resources. Years ago the adivasis had access to minor or major forest produce like Anwala, Mahua and bamboo shoots but now they can't have that. Most of these produce have gone to private corporations making the lives of indigenous people more miserable. As a child of the mountains, I enjoyed eating vegetable of fresh bamboo shoots which was one of the most delicious food in Uttarakhand known as 'banskils' apart from many other local forest produce but today the forest department will now allow to access these. Our life has been snatched by the big corporations in the name of 'development' and poor people are being pushed to believing in 'Gods' for the 'ill-fate'. So snatch people's resources, hand them to crony capitalists and suppress people's voice through either sending religious pontiffs to these regions or if they too fail to curtail the rebellion then the armed police to kill. It is not without any reason that Madhya Pradesh government has stopped providing eggs in the mid-day meal to school children since the Jain community complained against it. It is shocking as this country has diverse people and much more than the Jains and Marwaris. Why should the government deny the eggs to Adivasi children? How are Jains getting offended with Adivasi eating eggs?

India is a signatory to all International treaties related to eliminating hunger, poverty and malnutrition. In 1996, at the World Food Summit in Rome, Heads of States of various countries adopted a definition of Food Security, "Food security, at the individual, household, national, regional and global levels [is achieved] when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life"

This definition is again refined in The State of Food Insecurity 2001:

"Food security [is] a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life".

The loud noise over beef issue is basically an attempt to hide the dirty fact from public life that on the one side it is an issue to keep the politics of polarization continue in the election so that all the non-Muslims are kept 'united' under one umbrella and their contradictions gets eliminated under the big umbrella of

Brahmanism while helping the 'exporters' to peacefully engage in their 'work'. The question we ask why beef is a stick to beat Muslims saving the powerful beef exporting lobby? Who are these beef exporters and its powerful lobby? I hope I need not write things here as I have already provided you their 'statement' about why the ban help them? One thing is clear that beef may be a food habit of Muslims and many others like Dalits and Adivasis, it's the business for those who most of the time claim that they can't even kill an 'ant' and are absolute 'vegetarian'. It's important for them to know that vegetarianism is not synonymous to 'goodness' as they think. If they are so much faithful to their 'religion' and ideology then they must leave their 'export' of beef and other meat product. Why should Muslims and Dalit face the tyranny of the Indian state when the leather shoes are not produced by them but by Batas, Action, MESCO and other companies who are definitely not owned by Dalits or Adivasis. Definitely, this leather is not of lion or goat. Let the anti-beef campaigner do campaign against all kind of leather product and start a dharna at the business houses of these people who produce them. It's not possible as here lies the reality of the corporate religion nexus. Habits, culture, principles, ideologies are meant for poor but for these 'sellers' it is profit even if they have to sell the sentiments of the people and lit a fire to kill people if that give them business. The right wingers in India will never touch an issue which is 'economically' as well as politically loss making. Beef ban and the noise subsequently help it both the way, a booming business of export and rich crop of hatred to harvest during the elections. Shame!

# WHO 'LOVES' MOB VIOLENCE? UNFOLDING HINDU RASHTRA IN SLOW MOTION

Subhash Gatade\*

Jaipur — Rajasthan State Commission for Minorities has sought a factual report on a video that went viral on Thursday showing four Sikh men purportedly beaten up by local residents of Chainpura in Ajmer district. The 51-second video shows four members of Sikh community being abused and thrashed by a mob as people witnessing the incident filmed the entire episode.....three to four sewadars (Sikh members) of a gurdwara from Alwar district had visited the village to collect donation. The local residents had then beaten them up alleging that they molested their women...However, according to police, the Sikh men were not found involved in molestation and were asked to file a cross FIR against those who thrashed them but they did not lodge any complaint. ([http://www.huffingtonpost.in/2017/05/25/rajasthan-govt-orders-probe-into-video-showing-sikh-men-beaten-i\\_a\\_22109202/](http://www.huffingtonpost.in/2017/05/25/rajasthan-govt-orders-probe-into-video-showing-sikh-men-beaten-i_a_22109202/))Hotel Hayat Rabbani in Jaipur has finally been opened.

It finally needed an order by an additional sessions judge to open it who when told that despite his order the Municipal Corporation has not complied with it had to send its 'Naazir' (head assistant) to the hotel who broke the locks and opened the seal. (<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-otherstates/sealed-jaipur-hotel-reopens/article18711035.ece>).

The more than two month ordeal faced by a law abiding citizen would be forever etched in the minds of the people.

Remember neither the forensic department's clean chit that the meat served in the highly popular eatery was not beef and nor the additional civil judge's injunction to reopen the hotel had changed its predicament. It was rumoured that one Kamal Didi – whose allegations that beef is being served in the hotel – had unfolded the set of events – and that also just by 'seeing' a hotel employee throwing hotel refuse on the garbage dump, was not satisfied with the report of the forensic dept and that's why there was dilly-dallying on the issue.

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The forcible closure of a popular hotel – owned by a person belonging to minority community – where the not so holy alliance between the vigilante mob owning allegiance to Hindutva Supremacist ideology and the police and the administration was starkly visible, in the capital of a state itself, is a representative image of our times.

1.

A less discussed aspect of this 'operation closure' of the hotel pertains to a WhatsApp message which was allegedly circulated by one of the seniormost functionaries of the city. The message had exhorted people to join this 'holy action'.

Someone who is supposed to be a custodian of the interests of the city and its residents provoking a section of the populace to join basically a criminal act! Now the element of surprise has gradually disappeared. One is reminded of Balzac's writings where the sheriff of the city metamorphoses into criminal/mafia don at night.

It is rightly said that times are such that it is difficult to differentiate between a vigilante mob and the state.

While the mob attacks the victims under whatever pretext it can think of, the police – the most visible of the state's arm – turns a mute spectator or at times even prods the attackers. One can have a cursory glance at the spate of such killing incidents which have been reported across India in recent times to understand the dynamic. Lynchings in Jharkhand have added a new 'dimension' to it.

May 18, 2017: Seven people were lynched in Jharkhand in tribal-dominated areas near Jamshedpur. The lynchings were done in two separate incidents following WhatsApp rumours of gangs active in kidnapping children in the region. According to a report in *The Indian Express*, police stood by watching the mob lynch four people. The police personnel who saw the lynching included a Deputy Superintendent of Police, a Circle Inspector, two Assistant Sub-Inspectors and at least 30 policemen including those from the local police station in Rajnagar.

((<http://indianexpress.com/article/web/jharkhand-lynching-adds-to-the-long-list-of-mob-violence-in-the-country-4669561/>))

We have a number of such examples before us where people have come under attack because of some mischievous rumour and were themselves put behind bars on some flimsy pretext, or seminars attended by leading scholars held in educational institutions have come under attack, participants brutalised and the police letting the attackers go away scot free. And there is growing 'normalisation of this brutality'...

Even if it is not possible immediately to comprehend the whole dynamic but future social scientist would have enough raw data available with them to know how a vigilante mob slowly merges into the state and vice versa and how the much cherished rule of law is put on its head or how the state 'outsources' work of silencing dissident voices to such mobsters.

The characteristic features of this unfolding violence are evident to even laypersons.

The violence is such that victims can be easily turned into 'real perpetrators' and the perpetrators are projected as 'martyrs'. Remember killing of five Dalits in Dulina, Jhajjar supposedly for skinning a dead cow in the year 2003 when a thousand strong mob had thrashed the hapless group in front of police station and in the presence of senior officers of the administration and the police had 'lodged' a case against the dead persons for 'provoking the people.'

## Lynchindia !

A spate of lynching incidents have been reported across the country in the last few months. The attacks have raised grave concern both with the society and the government at large. Here is a look at the attacks in the past three months ....

..May 2, 2017: A mob of right wing activists lynched a man after he eloped with a woman from a different community. The man was beaten to death. A press statement by the UP police said that members of Hindu Yuva Vahini were involved in the lynching.

April 30, 2017: A mob lynched two men in Nagaon district of Central Assam on suspicion of them being cow thieves. Abu Hanifa, 23, and Riazuddin Ali, 24, were chased down by a village mob and assaulted brutally. The two were rescued by the police but couldn't be taken to a hospital.

April 22, 2017: Four men purportedly from animal rights group People for Animals stopped a truck in Delhi's Kalkaji area and beat up the occupants badly for suspecting them of being cattle smugglers. ..

April 21, 2017: Cow vigilantes attacked a family of five including a nine-year-old in Reasi district in Jammu and Kashmir. The attack happened in the evening when the nomad family was herding their livestock in Talwara area...

April 1, 2017: A Muslim man named Pehlu Khan, 55, was lynched by a mob of hundreds of cow vigilantes in Alwar in Rajasthan...Not long ago, the Rajasthan government had set the punishment for cow killing to life imprisonment.



March 9, 2017: A Bangladeshi security guard was lynched to death in Tripura who was allegedly part of a group of 12 who had come with intentions of robbery in a village.

(<http://indianexpress.com/article/web/jharkhand-lynching-adds-to-the-long-list-of-mob-violence-in-the-country-4669561/>)

Another important thing to remember is that there is nothing spontaneous about it. Despite outward packaging of a sudden outrage, all such actions are well organised affairs, where the perpetrators know it very well that their public display of violence or even its recording or sharing it with a larger audience via social media etc is not going to have any impact on them

If anyone has any doubts about the planning which goes into it one can have a look at the a judgement of Punjab Haryana high court regarding the self proclaimed 'cow protector' vigilante groups which it delivered last year or report of Director General of Police, Gujarat during Una movement wherein the officer had castigated network of such cow vigilante groups in no uncertain terms and called for action against them. Independent journalists have also written how the new cattle slaughter rules would further embolden vigilantes. (<https://scroll.in/article/839086/the-daily-fix-new-cattle-slaughter-rules-may-end-up-giving-cow-vigilantes-a-new-sense-of-impunity>.)

## 2.

Normally religious minorities, Dalits along with dissenting voices of various kinds happen to be the usual targets of such violence. It is a different matter that with the spiralling of such violence people from majority community are also coming under attack as witnessed in the recent killings in Jharkhand.

Of course, whatever might be the scale of violence one witnesses that there is broader acceptance to such acts if they are targetted against the 'hated others'. Thus 'sacredness' of cow makes it possible that human flesh becomes less important than bovine flesh. The elopement of a girl from a majority community with a youth from a minority community – which is portrayed as 'love jihad' – can even lead to forcible expulsion of the minority ( maybe of the religious or the social type) families from the region with police becoming mute spectator. Or if one is found to be talking of human rights of Kashmiris, then apart from the mobsters the agencies of the state can also apprehend you for being an 'anti-national'

Thanks to the proliferation of internet this 'violence' has taken up another sinister dimension. Here vigilantes – who are called as 'trolls' engage in cacophonous clamour on social media to silence anyone with whom they do not seem to agree. The anonymity on virtual space further adds more power to their

voices. And thus a handful of people through their Twitter accounts can create illusion of a hugely amplified voice. The 'successful' manner in which it can be done can be learnt from the recent incident at Swedish Embassy in India which disinvented two leading women print and TV journalists – Swati Chaturvedi and Barkha Dutt “[F]ollowng mass populist trolling and complaints from the Twitteratti” to an event organised on the World Press Freedom day. ( Indian Express, 14 th May 2017, Free Speech ? You Must be Joking !- Nishant Singh)

Media, which is called as ‘watchdog of democracy’ seems to have largely abandoned its critical role and barring exceptions it thus either maintains silence over such incidents of organised violence or remains content in presenting a majoritarian viewpoint or even at times provokes people to join the ‘outrage’. Remember how a large section of media (especially the electronic one) ganged up last year when the government at the centre decided to target Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi under the false pretext that ‘anti-national’ slogans were raised. A few of them had no qualms in presenting fake videos to support their claims.

Judiciary, which is reported to be custodian of the constitution is also found to be wanting on this front. Reports galore in where we are told how it had earlier taken suo motto action while browsing through some newspaper report or when some judge found herself/himself caught in a traffic jam caused by striking workers. One is reminded of an article on ‘Judicial Activism’ by Justice Ahmadi, retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, wherein he had asked a pertinent question. Why does the much talked about judicial activism stops at the gate of communal violence/ hate speeches/targetted violence against the marginalised. Forget strict measures there are occasions when it is also found to move because of ‘collective sentiment’ of people.

Look at the Nirbhaya case in which all the rapists have been sentenced to death. While it has rightly raised debate about death penalty, no less controversial has been the remarks of the highest judiciary which had mentioned how this particular case impacted collective sentiment of people. T M Krishna in his well-argued piece on Scroll rights raises important questions in this connection :

..Collective conscience makes its appearance through the individual conscience of the judge. So, when judges use this phrase, it is really to express what is essentially their own viewpoint, or they have taken it upon themselves to determine “collective consciousness”. Both these positions are entirely self-generated...

..Our Constitution is based on the principle of justice for the most marginalised, disfranchised, oppressed, unknown, unseen and ignored. This spirit demands that law cannot rely on or be influenced by any delusionary sense or mood of the people.

(<https://scroll.in/article/837473/the-tm-krishna-column-the-problem-with-collective-conscience-as-reason-for-death-sentence>)

Situation is such that because of an enfeebled parliamentary opposition which has not been able to put up a strong fight for the defence of secularism or defending constitutional principles and weakness of social political movements of the transformatory kinds India has slowly started looking like a 'mirror image' of its 'arch rival' Pakistan.

3.

Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India, had rightly prophesied about this state of affairs during the tumultuous days of partition riots and asked India people to remain vigilant as he could see that India could easily turn into 'Hindu Pakistan'

While vigilante mobs kill here under the name of cow, love jihad or similar other emotive issue, innocent people are killed on the other side of the border under the name of blasphemy. Not some days ago Mashal Khan, a journalism student at the Khan Abdul Wali Khan University in Mardan in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, was stripped, beaten and shot in the head and chest by a mob under the charges of blasphemy. Mashal, a bright young student who talked of Che Guevara and Marx and looked critically at religion, by his fellow students who even videographed the whole lynching incident and circulated it on social media. Centre for Social Justice, a Lahore-based research and advocacy group, has collated information about such killings and according to it

'At least 62 men and women have been killed on mere suspicion of blasphemy between 1987 and 2015. So far, no one has been executed by the state.' (<https://thewire.in/98249/for-the-love-of-god-history-pakistans-blasphemy-laws/>)'

It further adds that

'[1], 472 people who have been accused under the blasphemy laws between 1987 and 2015 – specifically under sections 295-B, 295-C and 298-A of the Pakistan Penal Code. As estimated by the Centre for Social Justice: 730 of these are Muslims, 501 are Ahmadis, 205 are Christians and 26 are Hindus.'(-Do-)

There is a disturbing commonality even in the modus operandi of such vigilante mobs. Remember lynching of Akhlaq, from Dadri, around 50 kilometres from Delhi, national capital where a lynch mob in its hundreds had suddenly gathered at his house and killed him for storing beef in his refrigerator. Not very many people would like to remember that the lynch mob was mobilised by making announcements from the loudspeaker of a local temple. In Pakistan, a Christian

couple Shama and Shahzad Masih, from Kot Radha Kishan, not very far from Lahore, were dragged out of the 10-by-10 feet room in which they had sought refuge, bludgeoned with sticks and hatchets by a mob that eyewitnesses say numbered in the high hundred. And the lynch mob had gathered there when announcements were made from the local mosque.

No doubt there is no direct harm to the basic structure of the constitution, its formal structure remains intact, *de jure* India – as per Constitution does remain a democracy as well as a republic – but *de facto* democracy has slowly metamorphosed into majoritarianism and the *sine qua non* of a republic – that its citizens are supreme is being watered down fast.

The phenomenon of mob violence which is packaged as mob justice has not remained confined to the majority community in this part of the earth. It has spread to other religious communities as well and there is a conscious silencing of critical voices in very many ways. The hounding and deaths of two Sikh women in Punjab – both named Balwinder Kaur – under charges of ‘desecration of Guru Granth Sahib’ in controversial circumstances last year and the manner in which the earlier government increased the quantum of punishment in such cases, mainly because of popular pressure is a case in point. Radical Islamist groups active in South India are also reported to be involved in crushing of voices within community or attempting to discipline the whole community in particular ways similarly by mobilising people.

4.

While violence or fact of violence continues to remain a marker in these times, it would be worthwhile to see whether it could be ‘blamed’ merely on the agents/or actors of violence – the Hindutva Supremacist forces or fanatic forces of various kinds – or it has deep social roots in our society. Day and night we keep talking about tolerance of our great culture and keep patting our backs for the same, refusing to see routinization or normalisation of violence in our society.

It is worth noting that in a country which talks of the greatness of the apostle of non-violence, one type of violence is considered not only ‘legitimate’ but is sanctified as well. Violence against Dalits, women and other oppressed sections of the society has received religious sanction from times immemorial and the onset of modernity has not changed the broad picture. Interestingly imprints of many such customs and hierarchies which had their genesis in the Hindu religion is visible in religion as it is practised by others. Caste discrimination in Islam, Christianity or Buddhism which could be unimaginable outside is very much visible in the lifeworlds of the people. India could be said to be the only country where a widow is burnt alive on the dead husband’s pyre. If earlier

newborn daughter was killed in some brutal manner today parents employ sex-selective abortion – thanks to the developments in technology. It is not for nothing that India is the only country in the world where we have 33 million missing women. If we try to look impartially at precepts and practices in other religions, we will find similar valorisation of violence may be against the infidels or the heretics.

A cursory reading of Ambedkar's writings makes it clear how the violence is ingrained in the society here. He adds if a Hindu denies temple entry to a Dalit or thrashes him/her for reading Vedas etc. then you can see that this act may be 'illegal' in today's times but he is observing his religious duty only. His religion enjoins upon him to do it if somebody violates the code of conduct inherent in religion.

A related aspect of the 'legitimate-illegitimate' violence debate gets unravelled when one deals with riots and the related killings. To understand the gravity of the situation one can have a look at some old figures related to communal conflicts. 'Study by the Bureau of Police Research and Development, a Union Home Ministry body, says that between 1954 and 1996, almost 16,000 people lost their lives in 21,000 incidents of rioting, while over one lakh were injured. Only a handful have been held accountable.'(Communal Riots, India Today, July 21, 2003).

It is worth noting that the same citizenry which is categorically opposed to terrorism would exhibit a strange sense of ambivalence towards such indiscriminate violence and arson. This happens despite the fact that many indepth studies of 'riots' in post independent India clearly exhibited that today riots are less spontaneous but more organised affairs.

Looking at the fact that today the very act of riot making has reached what Paul R Brass likes to call 'institutionalised riot systems' stage in the country, we should be wary of searching for the element of spontaneity in any riot. One needs to emphasise this again and again because what we witness today is the continuous denial of justice to riot victims claiming 'spontaneity' to such mayhems.

One is reminded of the whole debate when one finds that it has been more than 34 years that Nellie massacre occurred and the perpetrators of this violence still remained unpunished. It was February 18, 1993 when armed mobs attacked and killed more than 1,800 Muslims (unofficial claims : 3,300 ) across 14 villages in Assam's central district of Nagaon in a span of mere six hours. The attackers of this worst case of religious-ethnic cleansing in independent India engaged in such brutal violence on the pretext that the victims were illegal migrants from Bangladesh. A report in "Tehelka" ( 14 th March 2009) tells us that the report

of an inquiry commission which was submitted quarter century ago still lies unattended. And there seems to have unfolded an unwritten consensus between the ruling and the opposition parties in Assam not to revisit the killings in the infamous Nellie massacre. It is not for nothing that successive governments which came to power in Assam have refused to publish the Tewary commission report which looked into the gruesome killings. And when a Japanese scholar wanted to present a paper on Nellie massacre at a seminar in Guwahati, she was denied the permission to present her findings without any reason being given.

5.

### Let us be 'Illegal'

In this gloomy situation when majoritarianism is masquerading as democracy and a de facto Hindu Rashtra seems to be coming into existence – albeit in slow motion – question of resistance becomes important. How to envisage it in such a context and how to break new grounds in strategising it remains a key question.

While we contemplate our response it would be opportune to remember the advice given by Martin Luther King – the legendary civil rights leader – in his 'Letter from Birmingham Jail.

We should never forget that everything Adolf Hitler did in Germany was “legal” and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was “illegal.” It was “illegal” to aid and comfort a Jew in Hitler’s Germany. Even so, I am sure that, had I lived in Germany at the time, I would have aided and comforted my Jewish brothers.

# INDIA'S BEEF BAN: PINARAYI VIJAYAN MUST STAND UP TO LEAD

Binu Mathew\*

The new rule notified under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act of 1960 banning cattle trade across India is clear encroachment of states' rights. It will end federalism and will be a death knell for farmers. It is a virtual beef ban across India and also will destroy the livelihood of millions of farmers.

The states have to come up with new strategies to protect their rights enshrined by the Constitution. It is time for state Chief Ministers affected by the rule to come together and protect their rights. The best man to take the lead in this matter is Kerala Chief Minister, Pinarayi Vijayan who has been very vocal and critical of the central government's new rules. He has written to all Chief Ministers asking them to write to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to revoke the new rule. Just shooting off letters to a dictatorial Prime Minister won't be enough. It's not the time for prayers but for asserting the rights of the states.

In 1996 Jyoti Basu had a 'golden opportunity' to become the Prime Minister of India. His own party's politburo vetoed it. Jyoti Basu had to rue later in life it as a 'historical blunder'. Now another golden opportunity present itself to Pinarayi Vijayan, Chief Minister of Kerala to take the leadership in building a coalition in protecting federalism against the incursion and intrusion of the central government into the food plates and livelihoods of majority of India's citizens.

He must urgently call:

1. A meeting of Chief Ministers of South Indian states to ensure the smooth transfer of cattle, meat, and meat products across these states, It is a life or death matter for millions of farmers meat and meat traders of these states.
2. A meeting of all Chief Ministers of India who oppose the intrusion of Central Government into the authority of the state listed under the Constitution.

This is a historical juncture in the history of India. It's time India must ask itself if it must continue to exist as a federal state or 'cow down' to the designs and manoeuvrings of the fascist Sangh Parivar. It is time someone must stand up

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right now and ask the right questions. Pinarayi Vijayan is the right candidate to do it. If he misses this 'Golden Opportunity', he'll have to rue later in life like Jyoti Basu. Moreover, he'll have to regret that he let down India in this historical juncture.

India stands at a crossroads. It's time to choose the path. One way leads to a fascist 'Cowistan', the other way leads to a federalist state which the builders of modern India envisioned. It's time to choose.



# CATTLE SALE RESTRICTION: A DEATH BLOW TO INDIA'S FARMERS AND FEDERALISM

Binu Mathew\*

On the third anniversary of Narendra Modi government, the government of India dealt a death blow to Indian farmers and its federal structure by bringing severe restrictions on cattle trade, virtually enforcing a cow slaughter ban across India. The new rule was issued by the ministry of environment.

The environment ministry's eight-page rule also bans setting of animal markets within 50 km of an international border and 25 km of a state border. Taking animal outside the state will require special approval of the state government nominee.

Although animal husbandry comes under state subject in India's federal structure, the Modi government has used Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act of 1960 that gives the Centre powers over animal welfare.

Well known ecologist S. Faizi wrote in Facebook "the centre cannot create any law or issue orders about a subject that is in the State list, in the division of legislative powers between the Centre and States. Livestock is a state subject. In the State List under Schedule VII: Paras 15 and 16 cover livestock."

Here are some of the Orwellian terms of the Notification:

Restrictions on sale of cattle. — The Member Secretary of the Animal Market Committee shall ensure that-

- a) No person shall bring to an animal market a young animal;
- b) No person shall bring a cattle to an animal market unless upon arrival he has furnished a written declaration signed by the owner of the cattle or his duly authorised agent
  - i. Stating the name and address of the owner of the cattle, with a copy of the photo identification proof;
  - ii. Giving details of the identification of the cattle;

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- iii. stating that the cattle has not been brought to market for sale for slaughter;
- c) every declaration furnished to the Animal Market Committee shall be retained by it for a period of six months from the date on which it is furnished to them and the Animal Market Committee shall, on demand made by an Inspector at any reasonable time during that period, produce such declaration and allow a copy of it or an extract from it to be taken;
- d) where an animal has been sold and before its removal from the animal market, the Animal Market Committee shall—

II (i) 17

- i. obtain the expenses incurred for each animal, as approved by the District Animal Market Monitoring Committee, so as to provide the basic facilities for animals and people;
- ii. take an undertaking that the animals are bought for agriculture purposes and not for slaughter;
- iii. keep a record of name and address of the purchaser and procure his identity proof;
- iv. verify that the purchaser is an agriculturist by seeing the relevant revenue document;
- v. ensure that the purchaser of the animal gives a declaration that he shall not sell the animal up to six months from the date of purchase and shall abide by the rules relating to transport of animals made under the Act or any other law for the time being in force;
- vi. retain such record for a period of six months from the date of sale;
- vii. produce such record before an Inspector on demand being made by him at any reasonable time during that period and allow a copy of it or an extract from it to be taken;
- e) the purchaser of the cattle shall –
  - i. not sell the animal for purpose of slaughter;
  - ii. follow the State cattle protection or preservation laws;
  - iii. not sacrifice the animal for any religious purpose;
  - iv. not sell the cattle to a person outside the State without the permission as per the State cattle protection or preservation laws;

- f) where a cattle has been sold and before its removal from the animal market, the proof of sale shall be issued in five copies, out of which first copy shall be handed over to purchaser, second copy to seller, third copy to tehsil office of the residence of purchaser, fourth copy to the Chief Veterinary Officer in the district of purchaser and last copy to be kept intact in the record by the Animal Market Committee.

As we can see the move introduces lots of paperwork for cow traders who are mostly poor and illiterate.

The annual meat business in India is estimated to be around Rs one trillion with exports worth Rs 263 billion in 2016-17. For large section of the rural population and farmers cattle is a source of income, especially during illness or to buy seeds. With the new government order it will be very difficult for farmers to sell their cattle. This will ultimately destroy cattle breeding and the whole cattle sector itself.

Political commentator Rathindra Roy wrote, "if this is implemented it will most probably go down in history not as a blunder, because it is premeditated and planned, but as perhaps the most mindlessly cruel ruling that will destroy large parts of our rural economy and disrupt what little social harmony we have left. Thank you Sangh Parivar.....as prophesied you have successfully and truly set in motion KaliYug!"

India, as envisaged by R.S.S, is 'Hindu-Hindi-Hindustan' – a tone deaf monocultural Hindu autocracy. They have advanced in this project to a great extent particularly in the Hindi heartland. Declaring financial and cultural emergencies, polarising people by spreading fake news and engineering riots, side stepping parliament in ratifying controversial laws and rules without due consultation and persecuting minorities and lower castes have all been perfected to become part of their arsenal. Now they are targeting South India and part of North East which is offering resistance to the 'Hindutva Project'.

It is at this juncture that the 'Slaughter Ban' which is directly impinging upon food rights of citizens and constitutional autonomy of states is becoming a matter of debate. For the multi cultural, multi linguistic societies of South and North East India, this is a matter of very survival. For the political parties ruling these states – this is the last chance to stand up against mono cultural Hindu Rashtra Project.

It is commendable that Mr.Pinarayi Vijayan, Chief Minister of Kerala has called for a meeting of like minded Chief Ministers to discuss 'Slaughter Ban'. Let it be the start of a wider campaign to achieve true constitutional autonomy for the states and preserve India as a multi cultural federation. The South Indian States

and like thinking counterparts like Bengal, Odisha and North Eastern States should come together to achieve this.

Here is a 'minimum agenda' for Federal Autonomy that would preserve the idea of India as a federal secular democracy

1. States should raise demand for items in concurrent list currently to be moved to State List to limit concentration of power at the centre. As a beginning, push for primary and secondary level education, animal protection, animal husbandry and agriculture to be moved completely to State List. Combined and sustained effort by states is needed for the same.
2. Like in the case of G.S.T – Direct Taxes including personal and corporate income taxes should also be equally shared between states and Centre. Total direct tax collection in 2016 stood at 7.48 trillion Rupees. If 50% of this goes to states, loss to states due to G.S.T can be offset and Petroleum cess (standing at 1.99 Trillion Rupees in 2016) that is causing widespread inflation can be abolished. Also, any financial assistance to states from the centre should be condition free. Press for these demands through G.S.T council and parliament.
3. 'Rajyasabha' should literally become 'States Council' as envisaged – a mechanism for giving due consideration to state's views in central administration. For achieving this – aberrations like nomination of members and provision to elect members who do not belong to respective states should be abolished. 'Money Bill' mechanism that do not require passage in 'Rajya Sabha' and is being misused today should be abolished. States should demand constitutional amendment for the same.
4. All official/scheduled languages should be encouraged equally and current status enjoyed by Hindi without constitutional mandate should be abolished. Railway tickets, announcements in Railway Stations and Airports, Banking forms, ATM Services and all other services controlled by central government should be made available in local language. Push for framing rules to recognise all official/scheduled languages equally at the centre.
5. Colonial remnants like Governorship, Indian Civil Services etc. are the tools by which centre is interfering in state administration. These undemocratic institutions that is an impediment to true co-operative federalism should be abolished through Constitutional amendment once and for all.

6. Evolve mechanisms for direct co-operation between states in advancing developmental, educational and ecological agenda

Upper caste Hindus treat the cow as holy and cow slaughter is banned in 24 out of 29 states in India. However, for the 170 million Muslim population of India and the lower castes who form almost 80% of the Hindu population, beef is an affordable protein rich diet. These communities engage in cattle, meat and leather trade. This new rule is a death blow to these communities. In fact, ever since Narendra Modi came to power in 2014, dozens of Muslims and lower caste Hindus were lynched by cow vigilantes called 'Gau Rakshaks' affiliated to right wing Sangh Parivar. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party to which Prime Minister Narendra Modi belongs is the political arm of the Sangh Parivar. It is to be noted that the new rule comes into effect just before the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. The Modi government has been engaged in social engineering to divide communities living in social harmony by playing divisive politics. This new rule will embolden the cow vigilantes to take law into their own hands and strike fear in people's minds. This rule will effectively enforce 'beef ban' in the remaining states like Kerala and the North Eastern states.

In November last year Modi government enforced a ban of high denomination notes dubbed as "demonetisation". It had disastrous effect on the economy as well as causing the death of hundreds of people. This new rule is greater social engineering than demonetization. Pitting one community against another, castes against one another. Human blood will spill across India. Farmers will starve. India has become a cow republic. If we don't resist it, it will be the end of India as we know it.

# NON STATE ACTORS AND MORAL POLICING

T Navin \*

In the recent past, one has witnessed violence being increasingly inflicted by actors such as Gau Rakshaks, Anti Romeo squads and Hindu Yuva Vahini. Violence by Hindu Senas, Ram Senas, Bajrang Dal was always there. These are extra-constitutional actors aiming to impose a culture through usage of physical violence. Under the current National regime and State regimes in BJP ruled states; these groups have become more emboldened. Violence by these forces has followed.

These extra constitutional groups work towards changing equations at the level of culture. They aim at creating a favourable environment for a Hindu Rashtra. This happens in the name of protecting the Indian culture. The Indian culture according to them is the ones which confirms to the norms set by Manu Smriti. Restrictions on eating, mixing, defining man-women relations, defining whom and whom not to worship, determining what to celebrate and not to is part of their role as cultural terrorists.

Such groups pose themselves as the Moral police. They try to impose their concept of morality. Society based on morality is the one which confirms to the laws of Manu. Hierarchy at the level of relations among people (beef eaters and non-eaters, meat eaters and non-eaters, upper castes and lower castes, man and women, majority religion and minority religion) are the ones they aim to bring back. A democratic and progressive culture prevents mainstreaming of an anti-democratic culture. Hence these groups aim to attack the democratic norms in the name of 'protecting Indian culture', 'morality', 'Indian ethos', 'Hindu sentiments'.

To impose their norms, they resort to the act of using physical violence. Recently, a mob of Gau Rakshaks in Alwar in Rajasthan dragged out a 55 year old dairy farmer named Pehlu Khan and whipped him up with belts and rods. He died three days later due to grievous internal injuries to chest and abdomen. Vipin Yadav was responsible for the death of Pehlu Khan. A self-proclaimed Sadhvi even went on to describe the act of murder by the Rakshak with that of Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev.

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In a sting operation by a news channel, the modus operandi of similar such groups was revealed. According to Nagendra Kumar, spokesperson for the Rashtriya Gau Raksha Dal in Moradabad “When we set out, we have a single objective. We carry lathis matching our heights. If they (cattle traders) don’t spare you or resist, you got to at least break their legs so that they cannot walk for the rest of their lives. We inflict injuries that leave no visible bruises. They don’t realise how seriously they might have been hurt. They should be hit hard. But there should be no bleeding. This is what our team in Aligarh mostly does,” he claimed.

Anti Romeo Squads is one more addition to the emergence of non state actors. These have been created in the name of checking eve teasing, stalking, harassment of women and checking ‘love jihad’. Though it is to be placed within the police system, instances of civilians and sometimes even from Hindu Yuva Vahini posing themselves as preventers of eve teasing actually harassing in the name of Anti-Romeo squads have come to light. These have even been described as ‘part II of Love Jihad’ campaign. Instances of their harassing young couples in public places are witnessed. According to some women’s groups while these squads may not really address the issue of harassment and violence against women, but will limit women’s freedom in the name of moral policing.

With Yogi Adityanath becoming the Chief Minister, a fanatic youth group started by him has entered into mainstream spaces. Recently a couple was attacked by Hindu Yuva Vahini in Meerut on the suspicion of “Love Jihad”. Banners with messages such as ‘India against Love Jihad’ and ‘I will rape you like Nirbhaya’ were carried by these groups. While on the one hand it talks of protecting women from harassment, on the other hand it provides rape threats to women.

The increasing accommodation of these non-state actors in BJP ruled states is with the aim to legitimise their presence in mainstream spaces. It is to legitimise a deviant behaviour and lumpenism in the name of ‘moral policing’. The saffron forces create and need them to impose their mythical concept of a “Hindu culture”. They cultivate and promote them. The increasing activities of these groups are an attack on a liberal, democratic and progressive culture. It is important for progressive forces to expose the reality of these non state actors.

# POLITICAL ECONOMY OF COW- MENTALITY IN INDIA

Parvez Alam \*

India is a mosaic of great cultures. Not now. The culture which we inherited from our founding fathers and martyrs who wanted to preserve the greatness would be ashamed to see India today. India today which is digital, India which is nuclear and India one of the fastest growing economies of the world is now also the land of cynical, hysterical and emotional people. In today's India citizenship is redefined based on emotions for cows. Gaurakshaks (Cow protectionists) are now new citizens. In hierarchy of citizenship, they are on the top. They are beyond the limits of constitution. They are limitless. No laws are applicable on them. They are new police. Sometimes it's their responsibility to police the Police also. Police is now spectator and governments are theatre troupes and gaurakshaks are directors. They are directing the new India. Disciplining and punishing is now their prerogative.

For the last two years it is very evident that if you are part of a mob which is intending to lynch your neighbour who is earning more in the free and competitive market, a mere rumour about beef can get your things done. You do not have to employ a sharpshooter to annihilate your competitor. Cow is now more powerful weapon than the Kalashnikov or AK-47. These are the same people who have overlapping membership of a political party, a cultural organisation and a mob. They are the one who have been involved in disciplining youths during Valentine day and attacking pubs on the eve of the New Year. These are the people who are running after rationalist and civil society activists in the country. These are the people who are engaged in mob violence in different states.

From Dadri to Una to Alwar, they are unchecked. They find shelter of politicians. Their vigilantism has paid dividend to those politicians who side with them. It is also evident that in every case they have been proven false and the victims have been found innocent. Is innocence of victim and guilt of perpetrators of violence create narratives other than what has been already established? No. It is the tactics and methodology of those political ideologues to maintain the narratives alive which quite naturally is created on the idea of 'otherization'. And the same kind of violence is repeated in very similar fashion somewhere else and the very news reverberates in different locations, where

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similar kind of incidents has already taken place in the past. Hence, polarization gets frozen in those 'sensitive' areas which are divided into binaries.

Even if civil society members make hue and cry and try to do justice with the victims, they cannot stop the next incident to happen. Legal recourse may give sigh of relief to civil society members but not a breathing space to the victims' family at large. Violence done with intention pays back not very immediately but it pays back definitely in a given time. There is no conception of repentance or remorse of such an act because it is motivated action and not an accident. It is pathetic for any society where politics is not based on compassion and empathy but hunger for power and subjugation of others.

Like traditions are invented to perpetuate hegemony, the creation of new normal adds to those structures of power. In redefined normality sahasheelta (tolerance) and ahimsa (non-violence) are lesser virtues. We Indians are now not frightened and disturbed while seeing dead bodies; we are now not disturbed because of violence. Our private spaces, our entertainment choices and our games are flooded with the themes of violence. Our cinemas are flooded with anti-hero characters. In the new normal, people are instinctively becoming violent.

It is mix of that psyche of violence and lack of compassion and empathy which has reduced a human being lesser than an animal. The sacredness of a deity which was tangible and static in the temples is now roaming around in each nook and corner of the villages and urban spaces. This is another way of capturing space. Sacredness is now installed into the body of an 'animal' by shifting the holiness of a temple which lacks utility in time and space. The moment body of an 'animal' is attacked, that will infuriate the worshippers and amount to desecration of sacred space. This is high symbolism and more apt political ideology to woo the masses who can easily understand this desecration than the complex theories.

As the politics of the nation is changing dramatically for the last two decades or so, the scientific temperament is cornered by the false and crafted emotionalism by certain sections of political class which has utilised tactically prejudices and myths prevailing in the society to consolidate and homogenised uneducated masses who are now biggest assets to right-wing politics. Tyranny of the majority is in offing in India because of the lack of value education to the citizens of this country by the previous liberal governments. The new liberal and market controlled education do not promote critical attitude hence conformity. Realities and truths are getting redefined. Emotions are getting consolidated and homogenised on communal line. Evil is no more evil, if it can win elections. Consent for crime is sought through elections and past crimes are getting endorsement in the binary politics. 'Us' and 'them' politics is precisely to win

elections. Issues are no more issues if they do not have electoral utility. Poverty, unemployment, price rise and accumulation of wealth by few people are non-issue today. Politics is now looked narrowly in terms of elections. This is new normal. Intellectuals are no more intellectuals. With the tag of intellectuals, they are busy in earning fame and post by conforming to the power centres.

Individuals are no more citizens, they are divided into beef-eaters, romeos, nationalists/anti-nationalists, love jihadis, Marxists, and sanghis (those from cultural organisation called Rashtriya Swaymsevaka Sangh). Institutions are no more independent, they have to align with the parties in power. Teachers are turning into ideologues and politicians. Students are becoming party workers and foot soldiers of those ideologies. The universities, colleges and schools are encroached not by ideas but by guns, lathis (sticks) and abuses (read Ramjas incident).

The era we are living in is the era of whispering and murmuring. One is on surveillance of the other. People are now becoming more sentimental and one should be careful about flagging issues about religion, castes and even questioning the leader, which might culminate into hurt-sentiment and consequently lynching. Families are now conscious of suggesting their kids and children not to enter into discussions over sentimental issues.

We are happy in identifying enemies than friends. We are living in the time where friends should agree with each other. There is no process of dialectics in discussions and deliberations. No counter questions. Agree, agree and agree if you want to avoid becoming enemy and getting targeted publicly. Uniformity is new normal. Conformity is new normal. Absolutism is new normal. Bestiality is new sacredness and man-eating is virtuous than beef-eating.

We have less confused and curious minds and more absolutist and rigid minds. We are living in the era of cacophony. Sharing and learning together is outdated things. If you can scream more in the discussion then that signifies you are speaking truth.

Criminals are rewarded for their criminality and hence aspirants are heading towards becoming like them. The best profession in our times is politics. The best method in our time to become a politician is to become gaurakshak (cow protectionist). It is guaranteed that, you will be rewarded with greater posts in your political career. I am aghast and appalled by the fact that the ghettoisation is becoming new normal, ghettoisation of not only minorities/communities but also ideas. This is higher version of governmentality, its gaumentality (cowmentality).

# HOLY COW: ONE MORE LYNCHING

Ram Puniyani\*

One Pehlu Khan from Haryana came to the cattle fair in Jaipur to purchase a buffalo. He was a dairy farmer. In the fair, he was impressed by high milk yielding Cow and bought that instead of his plan of buying a buffalo. On way back in Alwar 'Go Rakshak' (Protectors of Cow) attacked his group and mercilessly beat them up. (April 05, 2017) In the attack, Pehlu Khan died. Police were nowhere around when the brutal beating was going on. Police explained that there are Cow smugglers who escaped their watch and were caught by Go Rakshaks. Not only was this murder was done in broad daylight, the assailants were very bold and shared videos of the lynching on mobile. The Rajasthan Minister in charge said that it is OK for cow protectors to catch these smugglers but should not take law into their hands. BJP's Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, to promote his party's cow protection agenda, denied that any such killing has taken place. Pehlu Khan had all his papers in place to show the purchase of cow and to take it to Haryana.

This is the latest in the series of mob lynchings in the name of cow. Earlier we had witnessed that In UP Dadri, the local mob with few of those who were part of BJP lynched Mohamad Akhlaq on the charge that he had killed the calf. The state of affairs of our communalized police is starkly clear. In case of Dadri lynching Aklaq was charged with Cow slaughter and now a case has been filed against Pehlu Khan for doing illegal smuggling of cow! One recalls that in Una many dalit youth were mercilessly beaten by the cow vigilantes.

It is during last three years, with Modi Government (BJP-RSS) coming to power in the centre that such incidents and brutality of Go Rakshaks is going up by leaps and bounds. Number of Cow protection groups, inspired by VHP has sprung up. Now they feel that it is their own Government and that they can get away with whatever they do. As such what does the law say? Rajni K. Dixit in Kafila.in tells us that “ In the Constitution of India, prohibition of cow slaughter is included in the Directive Principles of State Policy (guidelines to the central and state government for framing policies, not enforceable in any court

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of law). The directives on cow slaughter are recorded in Article 48 which reads “The state shall endeavor to organize agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines and shall, in particular, take steps for preserving and improving the breeds and prohibiting the slaughter of cows, calves and other milch and draught cattle” (Directive Principles of State Policy, Ministry of Law and Justice).” (<https://kafila.online/2017/04/04/bovines-india-and-hinduism-rajani-k-dixit/>)

It is abundantly clear that ban is on the milch cattle, not the others. Also what the Constitution recognises is the economic and ecological dimensions of the issue, not the religious one. Over a period of time as the power of BJP-RSS has been going up, the laws are being made more stringent in state after state, more particularly in the BJP ruled states. With BJP led Government coming to power in various intimidating interpretations of laws began.

This makes it clear that the laws which came to be made over a period of time are in variance to the Directive principles envisaged by our founders. They are not against the slaughter of cows, but of milch cattle in general, and not for religious but for economic reasons. Raman Singh of Chhattisgarh says that they will hang anybody indulging in cow slaughter. Vijay Roopani, CM of Gujarat, got the penalty for cow slaughter extended to life imprisonment. On the top of that he has pledged that he will convert Gujarat into totally vegetarian state. Yogi Adityanath has not only talked against the cow slaughter (Which anyway is banned in UP) but has acted even against those selling mutton and chicken. Yogi had shown his colours earlier also when at the time of Dadri lynching he had offered Guns to Hindus. Taking the cue from UP’s Yogi; BJP ruled states of Uttarakhand, MP and Rajasthan have begun to crack the whip on slaughterhouses and retail shops. Meanwhile, VHP has other state Governments should emulate the laws of Gujarat with respect to Cow!

There is another shade to the BJP-Beef story. BJP candidate for Assembly in Mallapuram, Kerala, N.Sriprakash stated that he will ensure the availability of good quality beef in his constituency if he wins the elections. As per him “BJP has no objection towards consuming beef. The party has not banned beef in any of the states. Only cow slaughter was banned. There is no issue in consuming food of one’s choice,” In Kerala and North Eastern states BJP dare not raise the issue of Beef. In Assam elections, it had particularly promised that there will be no tampering with existing dietary practice.

A Two layered hysteria is on at the moment, particularly after Yogi becoming CM in UP. One is the intensification of attacks around Cow. Two, the general tirade against non-vegetarian food and harassment of meat-Chicken traders has been stepped up. In Bengal consumption of fish is being criticised. In overzealous Gujarat, the march towards total vegetarianism is planned.

Is it a matter of religion? No way! BJP's language in cow belt (UP, Rajasthan Haryana, MP) is different from its language in Kerala, Goa, Kashmir and North Eastern states. In other states it talks of respecting the food culture of local people. What about the diverse food culture of these states where the Gorakshkas are rampaging? This is totally against Indian culture and the norms of Indian Constitution. This is an attempt to impose the RSS-BJP-Brahmanical norms over the whole society and to intimidate the minorities in particular, to browbeat others who have different choices. As a byproduct of this identity related issue the economy will be suffering tremendously. The Cattle fairs in different places are being stopped, meat export will be declining and the ruin of farmers and dairy farmers is a foregone conclusion.

# IT'S NOT ABOUT BEEF ANY LONGER, IT'S ABOUT MY LIFE

Gaurav Jain \*

It's time the Supreme Court of India takes a firm stand. The court must decide whether it would continue giving ammunition to the communal elements to kill Akhlaqs, Nomans and Zahids in the name of "religious sentiments" or would it stand firmly and unambiguously by the side of fundamental rights of its citizens.

When the highest court of the country holds the beef-ban laws operational in various states as "Constitutional", it almost validates the highly contorted views of these Hindu-Supremacists that cow is a divine animal which must be protected. A view which is extrapolated to - whosoever tries to slaughter mother-cow or eats its meat deserves to be killed.

I am not saying that their ultra-sensitive sentiments would stop getting hurt if the beef-ban laws are repealed. But it would send a clear signal to these fanatics that their imbecile viewpoint has no state or legal backing. I am sure, in such a scenario, RSS would have found it a bit difficult to come up with a cover story in its mouthpiece 'Organiser' justifying the lynching of Akhlaq.

It's not just about Beef any longer. The way people are being mob-lynched on mere suspicion of eating beef or smuggling cows, It has encroached upon our fundamental right to life and personal liberty guaranteed by the Constitution of India under Article 21. Supreme Court has played a major role in expanding the scope of this article through its interpretation in various landmark judgements over the years. Right to food and freedom to choose what you want to eat - including Beef - is very well covered under it.

It baffles me, the ease with which governments comes up with arbitrary and illogical laws curtailing our choice of food and then shamelessly plead that it's within their prerogative and whatever restriction they are putting on our diet are in "Public good" and "reasonable" because, guess what, nobody dies if he doesn't eat beef!

If that's the logic being used, are we talking about fundamental rights guaranteed by the constitution or alms given to us by the state which can be retracted at any moment at the drop of a hat?

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I have never flown internationally in my life so far and probably never will. Incidentally, I have a passport. If tomorrow, the government confiscates it, the impact on my life would be zilch! Does that give any right to the government to actually do so?

Thirty-eight years ago, the government precisely did that - confiscated someone's passport in the name of "public interest". That someone was Maneka Gandhi. She approached the Supreme Court for violation of her freedom of speech and right to life and personal liberty. Repealing section 10(3)(c) of the Passport Act, the Supreme Court ruled that though the government has the power to make laws, they can't be arbitrary. They have to be just, fair and reasonable to be constitutionally valid.

The laws in various states banning cow-slaughter and consumption (even possession) of beef don't qualify on any of these 3 parameters laid down in 'Maneka Gandhi v. Union Of India' (1978 AIR 597). Except for the North-East of India and Kerala, almost all the states in India have a ban of different degrees and severity on slaughtering cattle yet all of them enjoy constitutional validity! All thanks to the mind-numbing verdict of the Supreme Court in 2005 in 'State Of Gujarat vs Mirzapur Moti Kureshi Kassab' (2005 8 SCC 534).

One of the arguments of the state government, in this case, was - "Beef contributes only 1.3% of the total meat consumption pattern of the Indian society. Consequently, a prohibition on the slaughter of cattle would not substantially affect the food consumption of the people."

A frightening chill ran down my spine when I read this preposterous conclusion. Since a handful number of people eat beef, ban it. Since a handful number of people are gay, ban them. let the majority rule!

The Judiciary validates such reprehensible attempts of the state under the assumption that the legislature best knows what is best for its people. The court, while holding this view, forgets that coincidentally, State is the biggest litigator, fighting cases against the very same people.

Another pro-ban argument of the Gujarat government was that slaughtering of bulls and bullocks beyond the age of 16 years was constantly declining and constituted only 1.10% of the total slaughtering in the last 8 years "which is very less significant to cause or affect the business of butcher communities."

Expressing his Bewilderment to this logic, Justice A K Mathur said, "I fail to understand how this legislation can advance the cause of the public at the expense of the denial of Fundamental Right of this class of persons (butchers)." Justice Mathur was the lone dissenting voice in the 7-judge-bench.

This 2005 Verdict over-ruled the consistent judgement delivered by the Supreme Court during as many as 5 previous occasions, Mohd. Hanif Qureshi & Ors. Vs. State of Bihar (AIR 1958 SC 731) and Hashmattullah Vs. State of M.P. & Ors. (1996 (4) SCC 391) being the most prominent ones.

The crux of almost all the verdicts was - A total ban on the slaughter of buffaloes, bulls and bullocks after they cease to be capable of yielding milk or breeding or working as draught animals cannot be supported as reasonable in the interest of the general public. Mind you, a total ban on the slaughter of cows, irrespective of her age or usefulness, was still held "reasonable".

It's worth noting that all the petitioners in the above 6 cases were Muslims whose profession was either slaughtering cattle or trading in beef etc. and they approached the Supreme Court because their fundamental rights to pursue their religion and profession under Article 14, Article 19(1)(g) and Article 25 were violated. A consumer of beef or a citizen, in general, has never taken offence of these bans so far and approached the Supreme Court for the violation of his right to life and personal liberty under Article 21.

In 2005, the Supreme Court ruled that even when a cattle becomes 'useless', it provides dung and urine which can be used to make organic fertilisers and pesticides in such colossal quantities that it offsets the cost incurred in maintaining the animal. Hence it can't be said that the cattle becomes useless and therefore should NOT be slaughtered.

In other words, the Apex Court held that the value of gaumutra (Urine) and gohar (dung) was more than our fundamental rights of life and liberty and profession and speech put together! Holy Sh\*t! Before this judgement, the only animal, to the best of my knowledge that had proven the worth of its life based exclusively on its excreta was Earthworm!

This verdict not only reduced the faith of an ordinary citizen in the judiciary, it also patronised the farmers. Just like I have my right to choose my diet, a farmer has the right to choose his farming style. If he wants to do away with his cows and bulls and use Urea and DAP instead, he should be free to do so. It's one thing to educate and incentivise them to adopt cow-dung, quite the other to thrust it down their throat!

Would the Lordships call it a "reasonable restriction" if tomorrow the government bans all the western style commodes and force us to use only desi toilet seats because according to a recent and highly reliable research report, squatting has been found to be the best way to defecate!

The bottom line is, why am I forced to maintain a dry cow or an old bull all its life without expecting any return from it (except, of course, dung, urine and



Methane farts, which contribute to global warming). If I am not able to maintain them, would the state provide me any kind of 'gau-subsidy'? If tomorrow, my young bull gets injured in some accident and become unfit for draught purposes, would the state transfer any money in my AADHAR-linked-bank Account to compensate for my loss and maintain it until it becomes fit-to-slaughter (if at all)? If I want money urgently but nobody is willing to buy my milching cows or working bulls, would the state buy them from me at a minimum-support-price? if not, why am I not free to sell them to a slaughterhouse? Why a quick death in a slaughterhouse a crime but a slow, painful death by starvation or poisoning by garbage or road accident is all fine?

By banning cow/bull slaughter, the government deprives the farmer of an income of anywhere between Rs 20,000-40,000 (an estimate drawn from the price a dry buffalo fetches). And this income is cash in lump-sum which can be used by the farmer in case of an emergency! One of my friend from Manipur told me that "In the north-eastern states, people are not milk drinkers. They breed cattle with the primary purpose of beef". Isn't that a legitimate reason to rear a cow/bull? Shouldn't the final call of the nature of enterprise - milk centric or beef centric - be left to the farmer? And if not, have the government ever considered making any law banning the real-estate developers who build flats and sell them instead of renting them out?

Also, why do Cows enjoy such a venerated status and legal protection?

As per the state, "Cows, bulls, bullocks and calves of cows are no doubt the most important cattle for the agricultural economy of this country." It's a statement that needs no proof. So the logic goes like - since the cows are economically important, they need protection. fair enough.

But when it comes to buffaloes, the same 'economic importance' became a lethal disadvantage. The state argued, "Female buffaloes yield a large quantity of milk and are, therefore, well looked after and do not need as much protection as cows." Hang on, If we go by the previous logic, doesn't it mean buffaloes deserve more protection?

The mental assault doesn't end there. The state further legitimises the discrimination stating - "As draught cattle, male buffaloes are not half as useful as bullocks." When asked why is it so, state's unconvincing reply was - "Based perhaps on age old experience Indian agriculturists habitually prefer a cow bullock to a buffalo bullock." This means there's nothing stopping the farmers from using buffalo bullocks in the farm other than their habit.

It clearly shows that these bovine categories are not based on agricultural or economic prudence but are concocted based on the religious significance of the

respective animal. Protection of cow in the name of agriculture is simply used as a disguise to push forward a highly communal agenda.

As Anup Surendranath rightly points out in his recent opinion piece in the Hindu, thanks to the secular nature of our constitution, "(it) does not protect the cow as a religious symbol." Also, Cow is neither a wild animal nor an endangered species which could be protected under the Wildlife protection Act. The government inadvertently resorts to the last and only weapon in its armoury - Article 48 of the Constitution under the Directive principles of the state policy.

This Article has been the fountainhead of all the idiocy and bigotry in the country. The article, not enforceable by any court, directs the state to organise agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines and take steps for preserving and improving the breeds, and prohibiting the slaughter, of cows and other milch and draught cattle.

The question is, is blanket-banning the only way to secure the preservation, protection and improvement of livestock as envisioned in Article 48? If yes, then why decades of such bans haven't succeeded in achieving these objectives?

According to a report carried in Hindu Businessline, Over the last three decades (1982 to 2012), average productivity of Indian cows has grown from 1.9 to 3.9 kg per day. Compare this with the best of global standards — UK, US and Israel are at 25.6, 32.8 and 38.6 kg per day, respectively. How did these countries achieve such unbelievable numbers? Did they also resort to banning cow slaughter? A simple answer is, be it Americans, Britons or Israelis, they simply love their STEAK!

The 19th Livestock census (2007-2012), reveals the failure of this 'cow protectionist regime'. Despite the almost-exclusive-slaughtering, the Buffalo (both male & female) population has gone up by 3% to 108 million whereas indigenous Cow (both Male and female) population has gone down by 9% to 151 million! During the same time the exotic/crossbred cattle population increased by 20% to around 40 million! Clearly, what farmers are able to get is missed by the state and the judiciary. Its the simple fact that rearing indigenous cows is a loss-making proposition.

Also, How do you justify a ban on slaughtering cattle in the name of agriculture in a state like Delhi which is almost entirely urbanised and the contribution of agriculture to the state GDP is less than 1%? What happens to the male-calves born here? Are they exported to other agri-states for draught purposes or smuggled to neighboring abattoir or illegally slaughtered within Delhi? And even if, for argument's sake, we make peace with the ban on cow and bull slaughter, why is eating and possessing beef a crime? If someone is importing

beef from Meghalaya or Brazil and eating or serving to his customers, why is the government bothered?

Let's ask an even more fundamental question. Why does a government bans a food product in the first place? Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, extensively defines "unsafe food" but we can all agree that a food which is unfit for consumption, poisonous, or potentially injurious to the body or mind can be restricted or banned by the government. On which ground does beef, imported from a state or country where cow-slaughtering is legal, qualifies to be banned?

While selling or distributing an unsafe/poisonous food which results in a "grievous injury" to one or more people can put you behind the bars for up to 6 years, Selling or storing beef, which has no such lethal side effects, might still get you imprisoned for 5 years. It doesn't matter whether you are in Delhi, Haryana or Maharashtra.

To rub salt in the wounds, they placed the 'burden of proof' on the accused rather than the prosecution, putting a harmless act of eating/selling beef into the category of heinous crimes like rape and dowry death.

In the Mirzapur Moti Kureshi Kassab case of 2005, the Gujarat government, led by Narendra Modi, succeeded in convincing the Supreme Court that "a restriction placed on any Fundamental Right, aimed at securing Directive Principles will be held as reasonable," thanks to its exceptional battalion of senior lawyers. I, despite being a first year law student, argue quite the opposite.

The situation in the society has changed drastically over the past couple of months. Extraordinary times demand extraordinary measures. The Supreme Court must take lead and enter into a new era of water-tight fundamental rights. Forget Directive Principles, to curtail a fundamental right, even the restrictions provided within the same article must not be allowed to be invoked unless the state is able to justify the inevitability of its actions not just reasonably but beyond reasonable doubt.

The current 'trickle-down approach' of the government and the judiciary towards our fundamental rights makes a mockery of them and almost defeats the entire purpose of having Fundamental rights in the first place.

# THE REASON THAT I, A US CITIZEN, STAND AGAINST THE INDIA BEEF BAN

Sally Dugman\*

The reason that I care about this food issue, although I personally can eat beef any day of the week that I may please since I live in the USA, is really simple. It ultimately goes back to the underlying theme of this poem:

“First they came ...” is a poem written by German Lutheran pastor Martin Niemöller (1892–1984). It is about the cowardice of German intellectuals following the Nazis’ rise to power and subsequent purging of their chosen targets, group after group. Many variations and adaptations in the spirit of the original have been published in the English language. It deals with themes of persecution, guilt and responsibility.

The text

The best-known versions of the speech are the poems that began circulating by the 1950s.[1] The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum quotes the following text as one of the many poetic versions of the speech:[2]

“First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me. ”

Niemöller created multiple versions of the text during his career. Though the most ubiquitous version is one that has been proliferated in the USA which omitted Communists (in a time of political sensitivity due to the Cold War). Niemöller’s earliest speeches, written in 1946, list the Communists, incurable patients, Jews or Jehovah’s Witnesses, and civilians in countries occupied by Nazi Germany. In all versions, the impact is carefully built up, by going from the “smallest,

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most distant” group to the largest, Jewish, group, .... and then finally to himself as a by then outspoken critic of Nazism. Niemöller made the cardinal “who cares about them” clear in his speech for the Confessing Church in Frankfurt on 6 January 1946, of which this is a partial translation:[1]

“When Pastor Niemöller was put in a concentration camp we wrote the year 1937; when the concentration camp was opened we wrote the year 1933, and the people who were put in the camps then were Communists. Who cared about them? We knew it, it was printed in the newspapers.

Who raised their voice, maybe the Confessing Church? We thought: Communists, those opponents of religion, those enemies of Christians – “should I be my brother’s keeper?”

Then they got rid of the sick, the so-called incurables. – I remember a conversation I had with a person who claimed to be a Christian. He said: Perhaps it’s right, these incurably sick people just cost the state money, they are just a burden to themselves and to others. Isn’t it best for all concerned if they are taken out of the middle [of society]? — Only then did the church as such take note. Then we started talking, until our voices were again silenced in public. Can we say, we aren’t guilty/responsible? The persecution of the Jews, the way we treated the occupied countries, or the things in Greece, in Poland, in Czechoslovakia or in Holland, that were written in the newspapers[.]

I believe, we Confessing-Church-Christians have every reason to say: mea culpa, mea culpa! We can talk ourselves out of it with the excuse that it would have cost me my head if I had spoken out. ” – From First they came ... – Wikipedia

Next are the madmen going for the beef eaters in some land far away from mine? Who’s to stop them if, as not shown in the above poem, we don’t stand up and stick up for each other?

The fact is that we are all in the same global mess together whether involving their fascism or other deep problems. For example, does anyone really think that climate change respects national boundaries? How about water deficits and poverty in some countries and regions that force people to flee to other ones? If a country increasingly faces creeping fascism, will it leave neighbouring countries alone? Anyone can look at WWI or II for answers to the last question.

So are the beef eaters, the beef farmers and others in the beef industry going to be a new target for the fascists ... well, at least in India? Are the rest of us just to turn a blind eye when one group after another is taken down as the above poem described can happen if we don't rise up to care for each other?

Creeping Fascism: It Can't Happen Here, Can It? | Alternet Trump's storm troopers and the possibility of American fascism. This piece originally appeared on TomDispatch.

Creeping Fascism — Alternative Radio Noam Chomsky. Noam Chomsky, by any measure, has led a most extraordinary life. In one index he is ranked as the eighth most cited person in history ...

Signs of fascism (and not all have to be present, nor at once, to constitute creeping fascism):

The 14 Characteristics of Fascism, by Lawrence Britt, Spring 2003

<https://ratical.org/ratville/CAH/fasci14chars.html>

Political scientist Lawrence Britt wrote an article about fascism ("Fascism Anyone?," Free Inquiry, Spring 2003, page 20). Studying the fascist regimes of Hitler (Germany), Mussolini (Italy), Franco (Spain), Suharto (Indonesia), and Pinochet (Chile), Dr. Britt found they all had 14 elements in common. He calls these the identifying characteristics of fascism. The excerpt is in accordance with the magazine's policy.

The 14 characteristics are:

1. Powerful and Continuing Nationalism

Fascist regimes tend to make constant use of patriotic mottos, slogans, symbols, songs, and other paraphernalia. Flags are seen everywhere, as are flag symbols on clothing and in public displays.

2. Disdain for the Recognition of Human Rights

Because of fear of enemies and the need for security, the people in fascist regimes are persuaded that human rights can be ignored in certain cases because of "need." The people tend to look the other way or even approve of torture, summary executions, assassinations, long incarcerations of prisoners, etc.

3. Identification of Enemies/Scapegoats as a Unifying Cause

The people are rallied into a unifying patriotic frenzy over the need to eliminate a perceived common threat or foe: racial, ethnic or religious minorities; liberals; communists; socialists, terrorists, etc.

4. Supremacy of the Military

Even when there are widespread domestic problems, the military is given a disproportionate amount of government funding, and the domestic agenda is neglected. Soldiers and military service are glamorised.

5. Rampant Sexism

The governments of fascist nations tend to be almost exclusively male-dominated. Under fascist regimes, traditional gender roles are made more rigid. Opposition to abortion is high, as is homophobia and anti-gay legislation and national policy.

6. Controlled Mass Media

Sometimes media is directly controlled by the government, but in other cases, the media is indirectly controlled by government regulation, or sympathetic media spokespeople and executives. Censorship, especially in war time, is very common.

7. Obsession with National Security

Fear is used as a motivational tool by the government over the masses.

8. Religion and Government are Intertwined

Governments in fascist nations tend to use the most common religion in the nation as a tool to manipulate public opinion. Religious rhetoric and terminology is common from government leaders, even when the major tenets of the religion are diametrically opposed to the government's policies or actions.

9. Corporate Power is Protected

The industrial and business aristocracy of a fascist nation often are the ones who put the government leaders into power, creating a mutually beneficial business/government relationship and power elite.

10. Labor Power is Suppressed

Because the organising power of labour is the only real threat to a fascist government, labour unions are either eliminated entirely or are severely suppressed.

11. Disdain for Intellectuals and the Arts

Fascist nations tend to promote and tolerate open hostility to higher education, and academia. It is not uncommon for professors and other academics to be censored or even arrested. Free expression in the arts is openly attacked, and governments often refuse to fund the arts.

12. Obsession with Crime and Punishment

Under fascist regimes, the police are given almost limitless power to enforce laws. The people are often willing to overlook police abuses and even forego civil liberties in the name of patriotism. There is often a national police force with virtually unlimited power in fascist nations.

13. Rampant Cronyism and Corruption

Fascist regimes almost always are governed by groups of friends and associates who appoint each other to government positions and use governmental power and authority to protect their friends from accountability. It is not uncommon in fascist regimes for national resources and even treasures to be appropriated or even outright stolen by government leaders.

14. Fraudulent Elections

Sometimes elections in fascist nations are a complete sham. Other times elections are manipulated by smear campaigns against or even assassination of opposition candidates, use of legislation to control voting numbers or political district boundaries, and manipulation of the media. Fascist nations also typically use their judiciaries to manipulate or control elections.

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This article was based upon the article “The Hallmarks of Fascist Regime” by Skip Stone, at [www.hippy.com/php/article-226.html](http://www.hippy.com/php/article-226.html).

Creeping fascism is a real occurrence that many countries are facing and we have to not be like the indifferent voice in the above poem, but stand together across national boundaries and in a sense of universal humanity with support to try to thwart it. Our massive union, unbreakable in strength through numbers, is the only way to possibly be successful.

So let's not be sheeple. Martin Niemöller surely shows about where that sheepy dysfunctional callous path leads:



Although the version of gradual fascist control is different in India, it is every bit as dangerous as ours in the USA or present in other countries in yet other continuously new developing forms.

... and I'll be darned if anyone is going to force me to pray on my knees five times a day, force me to wear oppressive garb just because of my gender, force me to never drive a car because of my gender, beat on me because of my sexual views that include support of the LGBT community, force me to conform to their sexual proclivities, nor force me not to eat certain kinds of foods like beef because it insults THEIR religion. I don't even care if their underlying reasoning includes a sense of misogyny or for any other reason wherein my will and freedom are oppressed by their misguided, tyrannical, sick notions. No matter, I will stand and if standing alone against such unacceptable ugliness is the result, so be it.

No, I will not become a meek obedient shadow hiding in the curtailment or loss of my identity while covered in clothing that to me signify defeat and diminution of self. No, I will not stop eating beef if my government says that I must do so or, if caught, be jailed. ... Ha-ha, I've had lots of friends jailed for civil disobedience and I'm not afraid of it. However, you will not put me in this plight, nor any other that ultimately manipulates and harms people:

Nope, this is not who I will ever become. Same for my friends, some of whom I met as a child. Here are two of many, who suffered for their views:

Turning Tide Productions

[www.turningtide.com/aoc.htm](http://www.turningtide.com/aoc.htm)

How far are you willing to go to stand up for your deepest beliefs? For Randy Kehler and Betsy Corner of Colrain, Massachusetts, their life-long commitment to ...

Randy Kehler – Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Randy\\_Kehler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Randy_Kehler)

Randy Kehler is an American pacifist activist and advocate for social justice. Kehler objected to America's involvement in the Vietnam war and refused to ...

Andrew Goodman – Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew\\_Goodman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_Goodman)

Andrew Goodman (November 23, 1943 – June 21, 1964) was one of three American activists of the Civil Rights Movement and also a Social Worker, murdered ...

Goodman, Chaney and Schwerner embodied the coalitions of black and white, Jew and Christian, young and older Americans working together to form a more perfect union for all. Now a historic figure and role model to many, Andrew Goodman was first a beloved son, brother, friend, theatre student and passionate advocate for fairness and equality. – From Andy's Story – Andrew Goodman Foundation

Meanwhile, Sheshu Babu is right when he writes: The government of India is deliberately taking retrograde and regressive steps. A dangerous design of promoting Brahminism is in full swing. Since most of the North Hindi belt is occupied by the tight wing party, it is feeling absolutely powerful. 'Power corrupts power and absolute power corrupts absolutely' ...and this is what is happening to BJP and its Hindutva forces. While the country is reeling under poverty and malnutrition, the food containing proteins and rich in minerals is being banned. People depending on animal husbandry are forced into poverty. Nationwide protests should start immediately [.]

So let's, yes, resist together. Rise together and be an incredibly strong force across the world and in our various individual countries connected by the internet and other means.

Likewise, know that you have support and encouragement from around the planet from your brothers and sisters, who share your views that no cultural, religious, ethnic, nor other group has a right to oppress and control another one! Such ugliness and hubris!

It will not stand when they try to do it on a national or even smaller level, such as when it leads to murder in Mississippi of a childhood friend of mine working to support universal human rights. No, it will not stand!

Andy Goodman's death in Mississippi didn't scare me, although it grieved me to no end. Instead, it empowered me to be even stronger to follow in his path – an unintended consequence from his murderers as, rather than creating fear, they made, even more, people go with ever greater full force against them.

We, generation after generation of us, will always step forward to thwart unacceptable brutish dictates and patterns of behaviour forced upon us! These maladjustments in societies must always be hindered and, then, stopped in entirety with the full force of our beings since the alternative is unacceptable!

The bottom line is this: We're in this together since we face the same underlying troubles despite that, on the surface, yours involves beef and mine – other variables. So what that I'm half of a world away from India?

Now imagine if across all countries, we all rose up to support and assist each other? Picture it and, then, join forces, direct and indirect forces across the

world, to peacefully strike a new path forward. Martin Niemöller shows the stark results if we do not combine together for the common good.

# POLICE SNIFFING IN KITCHENS WHILE RAPISTS ROAM THE STREETS

Asian Human Rights Commission \*

The latest statistics put out by the National Crime Record Bureau gives the Haryana state of India a dubious distinction. It stands second in the number of complaints lodged with the police, second only to Uttar Pradesh. That the population, in general, views police as the last resort in cases of injustice, puts the statistics in perspective.

Haryana, the state with the worst sex ratio in India is particularly notorious for crimes against women, ranging from female foeticide to gang rapes and “honour” killings. It has also seen large-scale violence, including unconfirmed reports of gangrapes of commuters recently, and it took the deployment of the Army to bring the situation under control.

Yet, the government seems to be bothered about something very different from the overwhelming injustice and violence. It is extremely concerned with the protection of cows.

One of the very first things the state government did after assuming power was to constitute a Haryana Gau Seva Ayog (Haryana Cow Service Commission). The Commission was given more teeth with the formation of a specialised Cow Protection Task Force (CPTF) within the police, with the mandate of checking cow slaughter and consumption of beef, which are crimes in the state but not across India. A point to note is that it is only the meat of the progeny of cow that qualifies as beef for the bans.

The Commission and the cops in CPTF have taken their jobs seriously. This is exemplified by their decision to check the samples of Biryani, a traditional rice and meat delicacy, from hotels in Mewat area of the state, in order to enforce the beef ban. Media reports also indicate that police have been even mulling making checks in private residences. A senior officer of the state animal husbandry department asserted that there would be more raids if they were to receive complaints.

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\* The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) works towards the radical rethinking and fundamental redesigning of justice institutions in order to protect and promote human rights in Asia. Established in 1984, the Hong Kong based organisation is a Laureate of the Right Livelihood Award, 2014.

What would these ‘complaints’ be like? Who would make them? These would, of course, be private citizens. Here is a question: which section of the Indian Penal Code allows the police to enter kitchens of private citizens on “information” given by other private citizens? Further, what if the “informers” make complaints to settle personal scores, something routine in India and in the state? What if the complaint is found to be false? It would get the family marked out as “beef suspects” regardless and thus make them vulnerable to violence by vigilantes for life? CPTF and the Commission intend to save the cows, but who will save their victims?

The answers are found in the political geography of the raids, which were not statewide. The raids targeted only Nuh, a district with significant population of Muslims, a minority in India. Furthermore, that they were conducted just before Eid-al-Adha (the festival when Muslims sacrifice animals) make them even more suspect, and hint at this being a brazen attempt to polarise communities and give rise to sectarian violence.

Such attempts are not new for the state. Cow vigilantes have been at it for years now. This time, however, it is not the vigilantes, but a Commission appointed by the state itself that is playing this role. Moreover, the State is using the police, oath-bound to adhere to the secular Constitution of India and to not indulge in religious witch-hunt of any community.

This does not augur well for anyone: neither the citizens being hounded by their own government nor the Haryana state, which stands second in crime complaints in India.

The state government has shown that there is virtually no one to stop the farce, rein in the Gau Seva Commission, and stop it from breaking the law itself!

It is time for higher ups, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to rein in the state government being run by his own political party. Mr. Modi had himself said once that 80 percent of cow vigilantes are day-time-vigilantes-night-time-criminals. His understanding of the realities could help him check the actions of the state government.

Independently, the Supreme Court of India needs to look at this attack on the rule of law, being as it is the custodian of the law.

# COW WORSHIPPERS CHEW UP THE RULE OF LAW

Samar\*

A magisterial/judicial order directing the police to register a first information report and investigate a family that lost its provider in a mob lynching would seem impossible for anyone living in a rule of law system. But in the self-designated largest democracy of the world, this is what happened on 14 July 2016.

Here is a quick recap for the uninitiated. On the evening of 28 September 2015, a mob set out for the house of Mohammad Akhlaq, 52, after a public announcement from the local temple that the family had consumed beef in Bishahra Village in Dadri, Uttar Pradesh. The consumption of beef, read “cow or its progeny” is not banned in the Province – unlike some other provinces because of the majority Hindu community’s treatment of cow as sacred. This fact did not deter the fanatical mob in the least.

The mob reached Akhlaq’s house, dragged him out, and lynched him, while also grievously injuring his son, Danish. The police officers who reached the scene confiscated the meat remaining in the family fridge, and sent it for forensic investigation, confirming if it was really beef or not! Instead of arresting the culprits and providing security to the surviving members of the family, this was the first thing they did. A preliminary inquiry by the Uttar Pradesh Veterinary Department, three months later, in December 2015, found it to be meat of “goat progeny”, and not beef. No one knows when it changed/mutated, but then another 6 months later, in June 2016, University of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry, Mathura, found it to be beef, or meat of “cow or its progeny”.

And, lo and behold, the recovery memo prepared by the police had duly recorded that this meat was collected from the place where the mob allegedly gathered to attack Akhlaq, not from his fridge! The judge would not have any of this. That the fact of the public announcement of the family having consumed beef, followed by the attack, and the site of recovery of the aforesaid ‘beef’, reeks of outright conspiracy has not bothered him. He has nonchalantly ordered

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\* Samar is Programme Coordinator – Right to Food Programme Asian Legal Resource Centre / Asian Human Rights Commission, Hong Kong

registration of an F.I.R and consequent investigation, against the still traumatised family, for cow slaughter.

It is not the fault of the judge alone. The case has exposed the rot that runs deep in the system as few cases have done before. Here is a state probing what ‘progeny’ the meat was from – cow or goat – instead of prosecuting the murderers. If that was not absurd enough, here are the police collecting the meat from a place where the lynch mob gathered, and not from the fridge of the family, for which the family members were lynched. Here is a judge who did not even blink over this huge sham and passed an order to investigate the family, instead of throwing the petition out of the window.

But wait a minute. Where was the public prosecutor to oppose such miscarriage of justice and argue against passing such an unjust order? Was he in the court in the first place? Did the government of Uttar Pradesh remember to ask him to be there in court? And if it did, and he was indeed in the court, whose brief was he carrying? Also, did the victim’s family have their lawyer present in the court to intervene against precisely this eventuality? Could the family afford to have one monetarily? Could it also find one ready to go and represent them in a court full of hostile relatives and friends of the accused without fear of bodily harm?

And what of the civil society? Where were the champions of justice, liberties, secularism, and other isms? One remembers them duly “outraging” after the lynching, after the meat was sent for “forensic investigation”. Where did they disappear after that? One cannot be naïve enough to think that they are ignorant of the labyrinth of injustice that is the Indian judicial system. How could they simply move on to ‘other cases’, of which there is no dearth due to this system that underpins it all.

And all this while similar lynch mobs kept committing such “beef murders” across India on mere suspicion. They happened in Jharkhand, in Haryana, in Himachal Pradesh, and elsewhere, with perpetrators hardly ever brought to book. The last of these beef murders occurred in Una, Gujarat, wherein the perpetrators were brazen enough to beat up 4 Dalit youth right in front of a police station.

Blaming it all on the right wing Hindutva regime that has come to power in the country in 2014 is a mere easy way out. The regime, of course, wants to hammer in its beliefs and values on the body politic of the Republic, with utter disregard to pluralism. But, food habits are not the only thing it wants to alter. It has also attempted, and failed, in many other endeavours, toppling democratically elected opposition governments in the provinces for instance. It failed to have its way, first in Uttarakhand and then in Arunachal Pradesh, with the Supreme

Court of India striking down the imposition of President's rule and even the installation of a government later.

Why does the same Judiciary fail to do justice to the victims of criminal lynch mobs – that are often referred to as cow vigilante groups in the media – by taking the criminal tag away? The answer to this question exposes the facade that the justice system of the country has successfully maintained despite its gigantic failures in delivering justice to the poor and the needy. It has failed the victims of mass violence repeatedly: remember sectarian carnages from Nellie in Assam, Delhi, or Gujarat. It has also repeatedly failed to deliver justice to victims of other mob crimes, more so if they are poor and needy.

Why does it fail to deliver justice to those who need it the most, like Akhlaq's family in this case? It fails, because it is just as much, if not more corrupt than any other organ of the state. It fails because it is biased against the poor and the marginalised and is infested with the vested interests organised around the hundreds of fault lines, like those of caste, religion, ethnicity, and gender that define the country.

It was not for nothing that the prosecutor, public or otherwise, did not point out to the judge that meat was not from the victim's home in the first place. It is not for nothing that the victim's family, likely, had no lawyer to defend it from such travesty.

The justice system of the country has already been chewed up virtually entirely. Cow defenders are now grazing on the last clumps of grass left.



# BEEF AGENDA: ANOTHER TOOL TO PERSECUTE MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS

Shamsul Islam\*

The worst part about any debate on political/social/religious issues in India is that you introduce a Muslim dimension to it and the whole discourse will turn into an emotive issue with total disregard of facts. This situation has greatly aggravated with 'swayamsevaks' ruling a democratic-secular India. Currently, it is happening on the issue of beef. The Hindutva camp is using it to demonise India Muslims by arguing that consumption of beef started with the arrival Islam/Muslims in India. This thesis was laid out by MS Golwalkar, the most prominent ideologue of the RSS in 1966 when he said: "It began with the coming of the foreign invaders to our country. In order to reduce the population to slavery, they thought that the best method to be adopted was to stamp out every vestige of self-respect in Hindus. They took to various types of barbarism such as conversions, demolishing our temples and mutts. In that line cow slaughter also began." [M. S. Golwalkar, Spotlights, (Bangalore: Sahitya Sindhu, 1974), pp. 98-99.].

Thus cow became another issue to attack Muslims and continues to be a factor in unleashing violence against them. The latest contribution to this theatre of the absurd was made by Haryana CM, ML Khattar by arguing that Muslims can live in India but they would have to give up eating beef. He went on to tell that "It is written nowhere that Muslims have to eat beef, not is it written anywhere in Christianity". Khattar is right that in Islam & Christianity beef is not revered and is not a staple food. But he must know that Muslims & Christians got used to it in India. It was with the advent of Jainism and Buddhism which coincided with the rise of agricultural society animal sacrifices including cow and bulls (an integral part of Vedic rituals) were decried and cow came to be revered. The fact is that beef eating in India existed long before the advent of Islam on this earth and arrival of Christianity in India.

It's shocking that a person holding a constitutional office in a secular-democratic country is touting extra-constitutional conditions borrowed from RSS shakhas for Muslims' stay in the country. This gentleman who is fond of flaunting his RSS background should explain why only Muslims. Even

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Christians, Hindus and Dalits consume beef legally in seven States of the North-east, Kerala, Goa, Karnataka & Bengal. Will they also be de-nationalized?

As an RSS senior cadre, he must be familiar with the name of Swami Vivekananda. This is what Swami said about eating of beef by 'Hindus' in ancient India. "You will be astonished if I tell you that, according to old ceremonies, he is not a good Hindu who does not eat beef. On certain occasions, he must sacrifice a bull and eat it." [Vivekananda speaking at the Shakespeare Club, Pasadena, California, USA, 2 February 1900, cited in *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, vol. 3 (Calcutta: Advaita Ashram, 1997), p. 536.]

This is further corroborated by other research works sponsored by the Ramakrishna Mission established by Vivekananda. According to C. Kunhan Raja, a prominent authority on the history and culture of the Vedic period, "The Vedic Aryans, including the Brahmanas, ate fish, meat and even beef. A distinguished guest was honoured with beef served at a meal. Although the Vedic Aryans ate beef, milch cows were not killed. One of the words that designated cow was aghnya (what shall not be killed). But a guest was a goghna (one for whom a cow is killed). It is only bulls, barren cows and calves that were killed." [C. Kunhan Raja, 'Vedic Culture', cited in the series, Suniti Kumar Chatterji and others (eds.), *The Cultural Heritage of India*, vol. 1 (Calcutta: The Ramakrishna Mission, 1993), p. 217.]

Another great researcher on Hinduism, BR Ambedkar penned a scholarly essay (which is available on net) titled 'Did Hindus never eat beef?' According to his findings, "the Aryans of the Rig Veda did kill cows for purposes of food and ate beef is abundantly clear from the Rig Veda itself. In Rig Veda (X. 86.14) Indra says: "They cook for one 15 plus twenty oxen". The Rig Veda (X.91.14) says that for Agni were sacrificed horses, bulls, oxen, barren cows and rams. From the Rig Veda (X.72.6) it appears that the cow was killed with a sword or axe".

The Manusmriti which RSS wants as the Constitution of India replacing the present Indian Constitution, in its chapter V mentions recipes of how different kinds of meats should be cooked/processed. The verse 32 says, "he who eats meat, when he honours the gods and manes, commits no sin, whether he has bought it, or himself has killed (the animal), or has received it as a present from others". It does not bar beef.

This statement adds a new dimension in the Hindutva discourse on who is an Indian. So far Muslims and Christians were kept out of Indian nation for belonging to foreign religions, not being Aryans, not knowing Sanskrit and not having Hindu blood in their veins. They were described as Malechas. These conditions were imposed by VD Savarkar and Golwalkar. Now beef is another

condition. The only problem is that with this new add-on many more Indians, Dalits and those Hindus who eat beef are going to be de-franchised.

# COWS ARE PROTECTED; HUMANS ARE NOT: A NEW REALITY IN DIGITAL INDIA!

George Abraham\*

When Narendra Modi was campaigning, voters were led to believe that he would fight against corruption and promote a developmental agenda, if he were to be given a chance to govern. While only 31% of the voters heeded his call, it was sufficient to capture an absolute majority of the Lok Sabha seats for BJP and catapult him to the highest office of the land.

Sadly, to the disappointment of even his most ardent followers, governance in India now seems to have taken an ugly turn, with a focus on divisive cultural and religious issues, which have the potential to derail his promised agenda and to threaten the very fabric of the nation that is on the brink of greatness.

The Prime Minister has just returned from a trip to Silicon Valley in California, selling 'Digital India', a program to transform India to a digitally empowered society. Addressing the audience in Silicon Valley, he said the following: "I know, to achieve the vision of Digital India, the government must also start thinking a bit like you".

According to news reports, days later at Dadri, UP, not too far from the Capital of India, a mob converged at the door of Mohammad Akhlaq, based on the rumour that a cow's slaughtered meat was stored in his refrigerator at home. The mob broke open the door and bludgeoned Mr. Akhlaq; smashed his son's head with a brick; and then dragged Mr. Akhlaq down 14 cement steps, and out to the main road where he was left for all to see. His son is currently fighting for his life in a hospital. The extremists did not even spare Akhlaq's mother who is 70 years old, leaving her with a black eye. They also abused his daughter-in-law and granddaughter.

Does this medieval barbarism of lynching of a person for his dietary practice go with the vision of 'Digital India'? It may have played a part after all, first to orchestrate the assault using 'WhatsApp' and 'Facebook' and then broadcasting to the entire world the aftermath. According to New York Times which reported the story, many members of the 'save the cow' movement are also prominent local organisers in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's BJP administration. Seven of the 10 youths named in the Dadri lynching FIR are

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\* Writer is a former Chief Technology Officer of the United Nations and Chairman of the Indian National Overseas Congress, USA

said to belong to the family of district BJP worker Sanjay Rana. The list also includes Rana's son, Vishal. A man is killed and his family is upended because what he eats! It is wrong.

Another sad commentary about this madness is that it has happened to a father of an Air Force personnel, who is serving to protect the country from external threats. Akhlaq's eldest son, Sartaj is with IAF. Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha termed it as an 'unfortunate incident' and promised to move the air warrior's family out of their area of a residence to a secure air force area.

It is quite incredible that the AkhileshYadav government in U.P. has sent pieces of meat in the refrigerator for a forensic test to find out whether it is beef. Does that mean if the results proved to be positive, Mr. Akhlaq deserved to die? This is part of the idiosyncrasy that is taking place along with the irrational deeds of the political class, both of which damage the unity and harmony of a nation.

This is not the first such incident. However, something is different this time around. Although the account of the incident is on every news channel, the government refuses to acknowledge it, and Prime Minister NarendraModi's silence in this regard is especially deafening. While he cannot be responsible for every incident anywhere in the country, the person who tweets about Billiards championship, can certainly do more to set a moral tone for the country and calm the situation using his own digital capability. There is no doubt that the Hindutva brigade is getting emboldened since Modi took office, and his silence is interpreted by many as tacit approval of the actions of these far right groups.

One of the known BJP tactics includes creating panic and polarising communities ahead of an election. This has happened in Muzaffarnagar, UP before the 2014 Parliament election. I recollect visiting the town and a refugee camp in the aftermath. I have heard story after story directly from many in that Jat community, detailing how Hindus and Muslims were living side by side for centuries without serious incidents. However, an auto accident involving young people was used as a pretext to create a wedge between two communities, and the subsequent riots resulted in the death of 60 people and rendered about 5000 people homeless. The violence of this degree did help to consolidate the Hindu Jat vote bank, and delivered almost all of the Lok Sabha seats from western U.P. to the BJP. As the local elections are fast approaching, one could not discount the possibility of incitement in this case.

One of the ironies about the cow slaughter debate is that India retains its top spot as the world's largest exporter of beef, according to data released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and has extended its lead over the next highest exporter, Brazil. According to the data, India exported 2.4 million tonnes of beef and veal in FY2015, compared to 2 million tonnes by Brazil and 1.5 million

by Australia. There is also misconception that beef is consumed only by Muslims and Christians, however, poor Tribals and Dalits sustained themselves by consuming beef all throughout the history.

Dadri reminds us of the depth of hatred and barbarism that still exists in the society, and how it is being practised and nurtured for political ends as some kind of a devotion to the Hindu Rashtra. The people in the rural areas, and many from the backward castes are increasingly falling prey to the Sangh Parivar's divisive rhetoric, and taking the law unto their own hands.

While Modi is touring continents and rubbing shoulders with tech CEOs, and promoting the transfer of technology and inviting investments, Mahesh Sharma, his Minister of State for Culture said the following; "we will cleanse every area of public discourse that has been westernized and where Indian culture and civilization need to be restored – be it the history we read, our cultural heritage or our institutes that have been polluted over the years."

For Sharma, globalisation is a one-way street. Promoting Yoga on a worldwide stage or sharing India's culture, food and festivals in various capitals may be fine with him. But his appeal to the rest of the world may sound like this: bring in only the money and the soft code! There is no doubt that these regressive policies are part of a deliberate and larger effort to transform India, and to impose upper caste culture on all Indians. Sadhvi Prachi, a BJP leader known for her controversial remarks justified the Dadri lynching. "Those who consume beef deserve such action against them".

The ongoing saffronization of secular institutions, and the silence of those who are in power when minorities are attacked may only lead to more political instability and social disharmony at home. Speaking on a seminar on communal amity, Vice-President of India, Hamid Ansari said the following: 'Article 21 of the Constitution provides for Right to life and it was the responsibility of not only the government but people as well to ensure that every Indian is secure. "We have our own religious books, but as a citizen, the constitution is one religious book. It says the right to life is a basic right of every citizen" he said.

# ELECTORALLY HOLY COW

Afroz Alam\*

For many of us, beef has become ‘news’ of an unpleasant sort. There is now a forensic report after eight months from a lab in Mathura which claims that the meat found inside the lynched man, Mohammad Akhlaq’s home at Dadri “belonged to beef or a cow progeny”. It is in contrast with an earlier report by the Greater Noida Veterinary Officer which declared that the meat was mutton. Be it beef or mutton, no respectability is shown to the right to food, the notion of privacy and right to life of the citizens of India. On the contrary, the present forensic report is now widely circulated with right-wing bias. There is now a cynical-switch to ramp up communal narratives. The hype around this report is just an attempt to keep the electoral theology in circulation well in advance in the election bound Uttar Pradesh. In other words, beef is back to deliver for the Brahminical right-wing in the cow-belt region of India as a part of the ‘Mission 2017’.

There appears now a tactical design on the ownership of the reports. The Mathura Lab report is now owned by the right-wing groups like BJP whereas the report of Veterinary Officer enjoys the backing of Samajwadi Party (SP). BJP is working on the utilitarian design of ‘beef’ to keep the majoritarian passions on bowling point in the state to draw electoral advantage. Similarly, minoritarian victimhood is invoked by the SP to keep the Muslim vote intact with the party. There appears a strategic consensus between both the parties to turn ‘beef’ into a political agenda in the forthcoming election. There is every possibility that cow-mobilisation will speed up with the active engagement of SP and BJP during the coming months when the Muslim festivals like Ramazan, Eid and Eid-ul-Adha are due.

It must be noted that the invocation of ‘beef’ in Bihar election did not yield desired results for BJP. At the same time no serious attempt was made by the party to make beef as an agenda in the recently held Assembly elections in Assam, Kerala, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. The reasons were clear. The electorates of Puducherry and Tamil Nadu are completely indifferent to any symbols deployed by the Hindutva brigand. Elections in these states are purely on local and regional issues and party loyalties. The issue of ‘beef’ become dysfunctional in Assam, Kerala and West Bengal despite the sizable

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presence of Muslims in these states. However, the strategy of the BJP in these states was to avoid the concentration of Muslim vote in favour of any political party. The overplaying of 'cow' would have backfired like Bihar. Another reason for BJP not to invoke cow-mobilisation was the absence of legal restrictions on cow slaughter in Kerala and West Bengal.

It does not mean that cow-mobilisation was completely absent in Assam. The issue of beef was invoked much before the election as a preparatory instrument to subtly mobilise the Hindu passions in the state. For instance, there were communal tensions in Agomoni area of Dhubri when a communally charged group beat two Muslim youth alleging that they kept 'beef' near a temple in Kaldoba area. In a similar incident, tension gripped Silchar town of Cachar district after the recovery of a cow's head near a Kali temple in Meherpur area. In both the cases, the self-styled radical right-wing groups were held responsible for inciting communal tensions.

To polarise voters, intense communal antagonism was also created in neighbouring states with a broad national coverage to influence the conscience of Hindu voters. For instance, the age-old tactic of putting beef outside temples in Ranchi, Lohardaga, Palamu and Chatra districts of Jharkhand took place. Similarly, a Muslim man was beaten to death in Saharan, Himachal Pradesh in October 2015 for allegedly smuggling cows. New Delhi also witnessed cow-mobilisation in Bawana region over the rumour of cow-slaughter on the day of Eid-ul-Adha. Similar movements happened in Hyderabad and Kerala too.

We also witnessed an opposite trend when we saw certain Muslim clerics, intellectuals and organisations called on Muslims to refrain from sacrificing cows on the day of Eid al-Adha to avoid communal conflict. But sadly, no political party wished for the same. For them electoral dividends are more important than the communal harmony.

The appeal to avoid cow-slaughter has a history in India. To respect the religious sensibility of people, the Mughal emperor Babar declared that killing cows was forbidden and also asked his son Humayun in 1529 to do the same through his Wasiyyat Namd-i-Majchfi. Babar wrote: "And in particular refrain from the sacrifice of cow, for that way lies the conquest of the hearts of the people of Hindustan; and the subjects of the realm will, through royal favour, be devoted to you." We found a remarkable incident pointed out in Major Charles Stuart's translation of the reminiscences of Zohar, the servant of Humayun. During a journey to Iran, Humayun asked his staff to fetch food from his stepbrother Kamran who was camping nearby. Food consisted of vegetables and meat was served to Humayun. Humayun doubted the meat as beef and said: "Oh Kamran, is this the way to fill your stomach? You feed the same meat to your holy mother. Now you are incapable of getting four goats for



your mother.” As per Zohar’s account, Humayun did not touch the food and left.

A decree of 5 June 1593 from Akbar’s reign barred the killing of cow. Later Mughal Kings exercised selective restrictions on cow slaughter. However, Hyder Ali, the ruler of Mysore (1761 to 1782) declared cow slaughter a punishable offence. Similarly, Maharaja Ranjit Singh and later Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar banned cow slaughter throughout their domains.

Here I argue that unlike the present day politicians, the ruler and the ruled during ancient, medieval and early modern time but before British took the issue of ‘cow’ very compassionately and without vengeance. The cow became a political animal only when British used it for their survival in India after 1857 revolt. We already know the united front of Hindus and Muslims on the issue of paper cartridge greased with cow and pig fat. As a sign of Hindu-Muslim unity, Muslim Ulemas also called Muslims to avoid the slaughter of cows or buffaloes during Eid-ul-Adha. Thus, cow mobilisation during this period was not against Muslims but purely against British.

However, the cow protection movement became intense when Dayanand Sarasvati published a book *Ocean of Mercy for the Cow* in 1881 and in 1882, he founded cow protection committee which later spread all over India. The first agitation over cow slaughter took place in Punjab when British refused to acknowledge the cow slaughter as capital offence. In 1886 certain Hindu organisations have demanded a legal ban on cow slaughter within municipal area of Allahabad. The issue reached to the court from here to rest of India. In 1888 the North-Western Provinces High Court decreed that a cow was not a sacred animal. Shrewdly, British turned the whole cow-mobilisation against Muslims. The first explicit Hindu-Muslim violence took place in Mau, now a district of Eastern Uttar Pradesh, over the conflicting interpretations of British local magistrate’s order on cow slaughter. The very confession of Queen Victoria in a letter dated 1893 clearly reflects the British design on the issue of cow protection movement. She wrote: “Though the Muhammadan’s cow-killing is made the pretext for the agitation, it is, in fact, directed against us, who kill far more cows for our army, &c., than the Muhammadans.” After two decades from 1893, Ayodhya in 1912-13 and Shahabad in 1917 witnessed communal conflagration on cow slaughter. John McLane is right when he argues that the disappearance of cow protection movement thereafter “suggests that popular sentiment was not broad or adamant and that Hindu leaders regarded the alienation of Muslims and the government as too heavy a price to pay for any possible benefits.”

Interestingly, Congress’ support to Khilafat movement had the pretext of cow protection. Gandhi appealed to Hindu elites that “the best way and the only way

to save the cow is to save the Khilafat.” Shaukat Ali and Mohammad Ali renounced beef. Abd al-Bari of Firangi Mahal asked Muslims to stop cow slaughter. Muslim League too passed a resolution in 1919 recommending the substitution of “the sacrifice of other animals in place of cows.” Similarly, the Nizam of Hyderabad banned cow slaughter.

Nevertheless, cow movements remained more or less anti-British campaign before and a decade after the creation of right-wing organisations like Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha. Tragically, it was only post 1920s witnessed a phenomenal rise in Hindu-Muslim antagonism due to the aggressive campaign of Hindu Mahasabha and Jan Sangh which by then entered into electoral fray to gain mass support on the issue of reviving Hindutva symbols. At the beginning of 1920s Lord Meston, former Lieutenant Governor of United Province remarked that: “With us the rule was simple, that the owner of a cow has a right to kill it, so long as he does not thereby cause such reasonable annoyance as it likely to provoke a breach of peace; and we held that, where cow slaughter has been customary, annoyance would not be reasonable. This rough, very British, rule of thumb has served out purpose and prevented much bloodshed; but we cannot hope that it will be acceptable either to Moslem zealot or to humanitarian Hindu. Yet some *modus Vivendi* will have to be established, and the fitness of the people to govern themselves will be judged before the world by their success in composing such a difficulty.”

Whatever may be, the issue of cow slaughter was never dealt by any organisation, party or individual to settle the matter once for all by building consensus between both the communities. But politicians from both the religious groups found the ‘cow’ electorally relevant to build internal unity and nourish Hindu-Muslim conflict for political gain. Cow is used now to incite violence and mobilise voters. The noble animal has become political and thus ‘unholy’ in bad sense. A great deal of what is really a senseless propaganda is not only delivered through the cultural apparatus of the right-wing but also churned out by media, knowingly or unknowingly. We are undergoing through an explosive time. Anything and everything is justified to attain the winning margin in elections.

As a consequence, there were aggressive campaigns to ban cow slaughter by the Hindu right-wing in post independent India. There was a demand for a national law to ban cow slaughter. The 10 August 1947 just five days before Independence was observed as Anti-Cow-slaughter day. The government of Jawaharlal Nehru was against the national law to ban cow slaughter for which he had to bear the brunt of Hindu right wing. His father Motilal Nehru was accused as beef eater. In 1952 Nehru through an office memo asked the Congress men to keep themselves away from the campaign of national ban on

cow slaughter. In fact in April 1955, Nehru threatened to resign if a bill to ban cow slaughter was passed by the Lok Sabha. The bill was defeated. Here Nehru's adamant approach was meaningless on two grounds. First, cow-slaughter has never been the only and sole concern of Muslims nor Muslims were going to gain anything. In fact the overplaying of cow-slaughter gimmick by the Congress strengthened the right-wing politics in India. Secondly, the policy regarding cow slaughter has already been declared "the exclusive sphere of the State legislatures". It was by now made a part of Directive Principles of State Policy as Article 48 which says, "The state ... shall, in particular, take steps for preserving and improving the breeds, and prohibiting the slaughter of cows and calves and other milch and draught cattle." It must also be noted that many state governments by the end of 1947 already banned cow-slaughter before this article came into force.

A major agitation for national ban was engineered in 1966 by the united front of all communal parties guided by the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) with a plan to attack Parliament followed by hunger strike. Though the agitation was crushed but the cow protection became the major electoral agenda against Congress in 1967 elections. We have already seen that how the BJP governed states like Maharashtra, Haryana and Rajasthan gave communal colour to ban the sale of beef at the time when Bihar election was due in 2015.

While carrying the historical legacy, polarity is now engineered in Uttar Pradesh over the issue of 'cow slaughter'. To serve the purpose, cows have emerged electorally 'holy' animal. Though, it is disproportionately senseless. But, alas, we have suspended our rational sensibility to understand the overall cost. As per the report of Indian Express published on 8 October 2015, 'at least 330 incidents of communal violence over alleged cow slaughter have been reported in Uttar Pradesh since June 2014.' Surprisingly, of the 330 incidents, 216 alone were reported from Western UP, a communally charged region of Uttar Pradesh. Saharanpur and Aligarh witnessed communal violence on the alleged cow-slaughter and the sale of beef in September 2015. Similar was the case in Mainpuri in October 2015. There was communal uproar by the right-wing on beef-biryani at Aligarh Muslim University canteen in February 2016. Gautam Budh Nagar, Meerut, Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur districts of Uttar Pradesh are already on boiling point on the question of cow-slaughter.

If I am to put it very strongly, I would say that a host of right-wing politicians and polemics are trying to succeed in stirring up the anxieties of the so called 'touchable Hindus' for the noble cow to suit the Mission 2017. They are deployed to commit senseless hate speeches with a great sense of impunity. Is it not a strategic attempt by the present-day politicians to polarise the consciousness of Indian electorates in binary terms?

In the overall number game, the sole object of the political parties is to treat ‘we the people’ merely as electorates but certainly not humans. It is really painful. It is also dangerous for another reason. Given the profound spirituality, communal passions are easily mobilised in the name of holy cow to bring electoral incentives to the right-wing political parties. Let us save of our ‘holy cow’ from becoming the subject of vulgar stereotype by the right wing politics of the country.

## THE “BEEF” WAR!

Mohammad Ashraf\*

Easiest way to divert peoples’ attention from the basic problems is to start some emotional controversy and the eating or not eating, the “Beef”, is an explosive one!

The likes and dislikes of the various items of food eaten by people in different parts of the world are varied and sometimes contradictory. Everyone has his own preference and like or dislike of different edible items. Apart from normal things like chickens, mutton, pork, and beef people also eat snakes, snails, turtles, and even dogs! Assamese are supposed to be fond of dog meat! Muslims and Jews abhor pork. They don’t even take the name of the animal! Cow is holy to Hindus and they call it the “Mother Cow” or “Gau Mata”! However, there has never been any religious association with the eating habits of various people. People have been eating both beef and pork in different parts of the sub-continent without anybody interfering in their eating styles. Cow Slaughter had been banned in Kashmir by a law enacted in the nineteenth century during the rule of Dogra Maharajas. Even after partition with the establishment of a local government no one made any effort to get the law repealed. However, there never was a problem here as generally Kashmiris are not fond of beef. They prefer mutton.

The recent controversy about the beef ban connected with cow slaughter is alleged to have been started by certain elements with ulterior motives. It is said to have a well-defined pattern as the controversy with some gory incidents including the one at Dadri appear to be part of a long term strategy of turning India into Hindutva State. It is the beginning of the end to the so called “Secular” character of India. A columnist friend calls it the “Unmaking of India”. A number of prominent persons have returned the state awards protesting against some of these incidents connected with communalisation of India starkly manifested by the beef controversy.

As usual, Kashmir became the epicentre of the controversy. The instigators fully know about the emotionally charged atmosphere in the state especially the extreme alienation. Kashmir has been considered a powder keg in the recent times and any mischievous person can light a match to blow up the whole thing up. The Hindutva promoters from outside the state used their Jammu plants to light the fuse. The first red rag was the filing of a Public Interest Litigation in

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the State High Court regarding implementation of the Cow slaughter ban by a Government Advocate. The Court's direction to the State Police Chief resulted in a counter action of cow slaughter in public by the emotionally charged youth. Then there was a chain reaction and the last act in the series was the attack on Kashmir bound truckers in Udhampur. The Jammu instigators threatened to enforce an economic boycott of the valley. The public display of eating beef allegedly indulged in by someone claiming to be a peoples' representative was not in good taste. People on the social network Facebook alleged it to be gimmickry amounting to demagoguery! A protest shut down in Kashmir spiralled the situation on the pattern of 2008 Amarnath land controversy which had finally resulted in the collapse of the government and imposition of Governor's rule. It is said history repeats itself and in Kashmir it repeats itself endlessly! Fortunately, the initiative from Chamber of Commerce, Jammu may defuse the situation and expose the mischievous elements. Also from the Kashmir side, the leader of the popular movement advised people to follow the teachings of Holy Quran to respect others' religion and desist from public display of their own belief.

However, the unfortunate part of the whole spiralling controversy is the shelving of the most urgent tasks. The first has been the rehabilitation of the flood affected people and restoration of the damaged infrastructure. The exponentially increasing number of unemployed educated youth. Total anarchy and lack of accountability both in the administration and in the society in general. The fast deteriorating natural environment. Above everything else the perennial political uncertainty. It had been observed by many political analysts that a strong central government especially of BJP will be able to take revolutionary decisions in solving the long pending Kashmir problem. However, the reverse is happening. By their Hindutva tirades and anti-Muslim campaigns, they are surely heading for the "Unmaking of India"!

Narendra Modi through his utterances and very subtle actions has shown that he is giving a practical shape to the RSS agenda of a Hindu Rashtra. He may be dreaming to become a Chandragupta Maurya in whose time India existed as a very large Hindu Empire. However, he needs to study the history in its entirety. Chandragupta Maurya towards his end adopted Jainism and starved himself to death. His grandson Ashoka had the largest ever empire but after the battle of Kalinga, the mayhem resulting in death and destruction made him turn towards Buddhism. He gave up his throne and became a Buddhist monk! Let us hope that the "Beef War" started in Modi's time does not end in a similar fate for him!

# WHY I WILL CELEBRATE THE BEEF FESTIVAL

Dr Akhileshwari Ramagoud\*



Students of the University College, Thiruvananthapurama, Kerala taking part in a beef festival organised by the SFI in Thiruvananthapuram on Friday.— Photo: C. Ratheesh Kumar/The Hindu

I will participate in the Beef Festival being organised by students on the Osmania University campus on December 10. Or wherever they choose to hold the festival since the OU authorities have refused to give permission. Or whenever it is held. I will participate because being a free citizen of this free country, I have every right to do so. That is guaranteed to me by the Constitution as citizen of this country. I might hurt some sentiments of some people but the Constitution has put no qualifying clauses to my freedom in this democracy especially where a totally private issue like food is concerned. When food is forcibly brought out of the privacy of our kitchens, and into centre-stage

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in public, with the single motive of driving a wedge between ‘us’ and ‘them’ then our sentiments too have been hurt, our sensibilities have been outraged and we have to assert our rights over the food we prefer to eat or not eat.

Most importantly, as an individual in this free country, my strength is equal to everybody else, alone or together: Strength in terms of legal rights over choice of food and also strength in terms of my belief, my values of right and wrong and my freedom to eat what I want to, need to or prefer to, eat.

Let me at the outset clarify my own background: my father was born a non-vegetarian but opted to give up meat and other animal products like eggs as a young man. He remained a vegetarian his entire life. As a result, meat was banned in our house. It was cooked and eaten on the sly, if at all, in our vast household. Later, as we grew up, he relaxed his stand and allowed the growing children to eat meat. But eating meat was never as big a treat as say, a laddoo or Shrikhand, a sweet made from curds. This was so because our culture at home and within the extended family of a dozen families or so was entirely Brahminical despite our roots being in the service caste since we were among the wealthiest people in the region. There was nothing “BC” about our lifestyle, our language, our food habits, our religious ceremonies, or even death ceremonies. The extended family comprising several brothers and their families patronised Brahmin pandits, held pujas and even hired Brahmin cooks for the regular feasts and festivities. My grandfather, a well-known philanthropist in my home town, even got a guest house constructed to house the visiting Brahmin priests and their families. This ‘Sanskritisation’ of our family was also perhaps responsible for my father’s decision to get all his children, girls and boys, educated in top schools in Hyderabad, Pune and Bangalore, making us the first generation of educated career women in our community in the entire region, if not in the State. Therefore, while killing of animals and consuming their flesh was literally a taboo in our home, we also respected those who enjoyed their biryani or kheema-khichidi or mutton fry or kababs. The two issues were kept separate as they should be. In short, we lived and let live. ‘They’ , the meat-eaters, could eat whatever they fancied while we ate whatever we fancied.

### An Assertion of Right to Choice of Food

Holding a beef festival or participating in it is not an issue of secularism of ‘pseudo secular’ people or ‘sickular’ people, to use Hindutva parlance. It is no display of secularism. It is an assertion of people of their right to eat what they want, including beef, including pork. It is their protest to halt the communalising of food. Since we are not being spared even if eat in the privacy of our homes, we have to hit the streets, resist all such tyranny publicly. We cannot submit to the tyranny of the minority, the Hindu fundamentalists, who



have developed muscle after the BJP has come to power and Narendra Modi became the prime minister.

Beef is the food of not just Muslims but several non-Muslims too. It is consumed by majority of Christians, Dalits, Lambadas and Adivasis. For the large number of Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic communities that are largely invisible, and whose lifestyle involves being on the move all the time not just beef but 'anything that moves' is food, such as crow and squirrel, in the words of a leader of a Nomadic community. Since they did not have the luxury of a settled community that grew its food in fields or reared animals for milk and meat, they consumed whatever they could trap and catch. While some OBCs do eat beef, most consider it 'Dalit food' and therefore, to be avoided. Increasing brahminising of society has also resulted in the cow being seen as 'sacred' and rejecting beef as food across the caste spectrum.

### Ganga-Jamni rule of Hyderabad State

The former Hyderabad State that saw 400 years of Islamic rule, is known for its 'Ganga-Jamni Tehzeeb' or pluralistic culture. Interestingly, the elite Muslims who were the ruling class, did not eat beef out of deference to their upper caste/class Hindu fellow citizens. And across the State, pork was avoided by all including those OBC castes who had traditionally enjoyed pork as it can still be found in coastal Andhra OBCs. The exceptions were those communities of pig-rearers. What is to be noted is that in the entire four centuries of Muslim rule pork was not banned by the rulers in deference to the food habits of the people. Although the rulers were monarchs and their writ ran large, they still did not encroach upon the subjects' food choices. Beef in the 400 years of Kutub Shahi and Asaf Jahi rule was the choice of only the poor Muslims. This phenomenon continues even today in the Muslim elite of former Hyderabad State. Such was the sensitivity of people and rulers.

### Tyranny of the Majoritarianism

Let me give two examples of the tyranny of the majoritarianism that I experienced personally. After the last beef fest held in Osmania University in 2012, (in which I participated and hogged beef biryani) I wanted to write on the food culture of the people. When I approached two Lambada leaders, both of them, one after the other, refused to be interviewed for the story or admit that they eat beef. They apparently feared their acceptability would be compromised, their leadership and scholarship would be devalued if they went against the 'mainstream'. A leader of the nomadic communities insisted that he was vegetarian and a Shiva Bhakta, apparently fearing he would be 'disqualified' by the 'mainstream' and rendered a pariah if he admitted to eating beef. In effect, it might compromise his dreams of making it big in the state politics.

This tyranny has grown exponentially in the last 18 months of BJP rule in the Centre resulting in violent assertion by the Hindutva groups emboldened by the ascension to power of BJP and Modi with unbeatable majority in the Lok Sabha. This march of majoritarianism has to be halted and it can be done only with people's resistance. Majoritarianism has no place in a democracy. If majoritarianism is allowed to run amuck then the very democracy that allows the flowering and nurturing of diverse and even opposing points of views, will be endangered and would be replaced by authoritarianism.

I will participate in the Beef Festival. And also in a Pork Festival especially if it gets banned by the State. I will not allow any minority such as the Hindutva fundamentalists to asserting its intolerance in the name of the majority of Hindus, in my name, in the name of my family, in the name of hundreds and thousands of Hindus who share my agony and fears. Therefore, I will celebrate beef festival.

# LET'S HAVE A 'BEEF ONAM'

K.P. Sasi\*

The festival of Onam is on September 16th. As per the myth, Mahabali ruled the region of Kerala, even though the state of Kerala was formed only during the 20th century. Mahabali was an Asura and therefore as per the Brahminical definitions, he was an 'Avarna' (a Dalit) and not a 'Savarna' (upper caste). However, as per the myth behind Onam festival, there are enough songs to glorify Mahabali, saying that during his rule, 'everybody was happy and everybody was equal' – an image which was not achieved by even the communist governments right from 1957 in Kerala. In any case, as per the myth, when a Dalit king ruled this region, there was socialism. Mahabali's pictures found today in the advertisements of jewellerys, sarees and other commercial ventures resemble a fat comedian with a big belly and often with a Brahminical thread and a Brahminical umbrella. This king was said to be the most generous king whose fame threatened the 'Devaloka'. The 'Devaloka' (the polit bureau of the upper caste Gods) decided that this guy has to be handled and they sent Vishnu in the form of a Brahmin boy. The Vaamana (Brahmin boy) visits Mahabali and requests for charity. The generous Dalit king promises his need, which was only three feet of land. The shrewd Vamana became huge as a giant immediately and with his mega foot measured the whole earth and the sky and asked the poor Dalit king where the next foot had to be measured.

You must remember that this also resembled the stories of the way the European colonial invaders cheated and acquired the lands of the Red Indians in the United States, or how most of the Adivasi lands and forests were taken over by the upper castes. This myth also speaks a lot on the conquest of Aryans over the Dravidians. Mahabali understood that he was tricked and cheated. However, for the measurement of the third foot of Vaamana, our charismatic and non-defeated Dalit king offered his head, which was the only space available. Perhaps, during those days the socialists believed in practising what they preached. Vishnu the hulk, cheerfully pressed his mega foot on his head and pressed him to 'Paatal' (the underground). From that time onwards, the underground days of the great socialist Dalit king began in the region what is known as Kerala today. And with all his guilt, the great lord Vishnu offered him a 'parole' once in every year to see his people in this region. And that is Onam festival!

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It is my humble request to all activists to bring this underground Dalit activist king to the mainstream world with all his possible dreams, when we celebrate Onam festival. For it was only when a Dalit king ruled this region, 'everybody was happy and everybody was equal', an image not achieved by Russia or China. And as a Dalit king, we must understand that he would have loved beef. If Mahabali were an Asura as per the myth, he would have been definitely a non-vegetarian. So the question is, why the whole of Kerala is welcoming Mahabali with 'vegetarian' food? The only way we can welcome Mahabali is with the food that he would definitely enjoy and that is beef – a food which is extremely nutritious and functions as a medicine for many health disorders. Politically, this is also a question of food sovereignty of a large section of Dalits and Muslims in this country. Therefore, it is high time that Mahabali must be freed from the appropriation of the 'savarnas' and feed Him properly with a 'Beef Onam'. I request all my friends to celebrate Onam on September 16th with good beef curry, beef chilly, beef fry, beef soup or any other dish which a Dalit king can enjoy. Please publicise with photographs of your celebration in the Facebook and all other platforms. Happy Onam!

# COW IS A POLITICAL ANIMAL

Parul Verma\*

Recent outbreak of swine flu cases in India was due to the mutated strain but the on-going communal tension around the nation is more than just any mutated strain, for the religious manipulation is dominating its strain. Indians are being haunted by the basic questions around this new political animal of the nation (THE COW).

What exactly is India's beef with the beef? Is it really about the beef to begin with or the crass execution of the demonstration of THE power? Is the animal being (mis)used by the two polarities of the skewed political and religious ideologies of the right wing Hindutva community?

Understanding the current scenario using politically correct statements would be a form of linguistic fascism. Hence questioning the recent communal riots, through a critical prism is much needed. The landslide use of power to promote the Hindutva religious ideologies by BJP is plaguing the nation, at the cost of oppressing anything and everything that do not comply with their religious ideologies.

An article in RSS organ panchayat said “ the Vedas order killing of anyone who slaughters a cow. cow slaughter is a big issue for Hindu community. For many of us it is a question of life and death.”

The religious justification of the law supporting criminalization of cow slaughter by the Hindutva community does not align with the historical and archaeological facts. Irony penetrates in the status symbol of the cow, of then and now, once researched extensively. The ancient Vedic literature suggested that the Gopatha Brahman describes 21 types of yajñas (sacrifices), the most important of which included animal sacrifice. The offering varied depending on which god was being propitiated Gods such as Indra had a special preference for bull's meat while sacrifices to Agni were of both bull's and cow's. Vedic traditions suggest that the Maruts and the Asvins were also offered cows. The Asvamedha and the Rajasuya yajñas all included animal sacrifice in large numbers. In Asvamedha for instance, more than 600 animals were killed, and its end was celebrated with the sacrifice of 21 cows. The archaeological excavations reflect ample of empirical evidence for the same. Excavation at Lal Quila, district bulandshehar—[source:-Indian Archaeology 1969-70 A Review] conducted by

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the Archaeological Research Laboratory at Oxford, indicate a mean date of 1880 B.C found animal bones in large numbers. The cut-marks, present on many of them, suggest that the meat was the staple diet. Evidence of some grains(cereal), suggested agriculture as a subsidiary occupation, was also available (source: -beef eating in ancient India: Sanjeev Sabhlok)

The Hindutva community should re-read the Vedas and the practices implemented in the era to religion-mise any animal for that matter. If cow slaughter was a ritual being practised during the Vedic era, then why the ban now? The role of the cow here is that of a swinging animal with politics and religion as its two polarities of the pendulum. As camouflage reveals itself, argument supporting the rise of Hindu nationalism and the preveiligised laws towards a particular religion is what's at play, placing 'others' at the lowest denominator. Communal aggression in India has witnessed the rise of incidents up by 24% and related deaths by 65% , since Modi's rise to power in 2014. From the recent murder of a Muslim in Dadri for allegedly slaughtering a cow to the torching of the mosque in Ballabgarh, are very few incidents that got media coverage. The latest data , by the Union Home ministry, reflects the reporting of 287 communal incidents alone in 2015 (data till May 31st 2015). Most of the victims were Muslims and Christians. The response of the BJP (Hindu ruling party) towards the violence against Muslims has been highly disappointing ,particularly that of the Dadri incident.

The lynching of a Muslim man was not justified, on the suspicion of slaughtering a cow . The status of the cow as an animal has been reformed into the political symbol via which the privileged religious ideologies is being endorsed. The political cow is being misused for the crass exertion of the political power of the skewed ideologues . What needs to be questioned is power of the impunity. What is plaguing the nation is the power to abuse and the abuse of the power without the fear of its consequences. The implementation of endorsing one privileged religion over another is an act of religious bigotry. If the condition is not intervened with just policies that operate with the zero-tolerance towards any civilian exgravating the communal riots, the nation shall foresee a tragic future.

# THE UNWANTED MALE CALF

Vidya Bhushan Rawat\*

Just a few days back one of the cows at our Purna Kendra delivered a male calf. My colleague called me to inform about the birth of it. Everyone, there was waiting for the cow to deliver and as usual each one was expecting a female calf. My colleague was sad to inform me about the birth of male calf. Human beings are very 'matlabi' or selfish as in the so called civilised world, they celebrate the birth of the boy but in the animal kingdom particularly of those whose milk we use without their permission, actually, we feel highly disturbed of a male calf.

In the olden days, it was not an issue as most of the male calf would be used as an Ox for ploughing but now with mechanisation male calf are unwanted as farmers are not in a position to take care of them. With fast disappearing meadows and high cost of fodder, it is impossible for farmers to keep male calf without its usage. So most of the time the farmers leave those male calf and it becomes a nuisance particularly for the crop as they damage it.

With the cattle markets coming to virtually stand still, farmers will have to suffer more unless government come out clearly as what is its idea. We are hearing that the government want Adhar Card for cows. I don't know who has been giving such fantastic ideas to government. Cows are definitely not endangered species and if sale and purchase of cows are risky then this is a conspiracy against farmers to leave this occupation voluntarily and then allow the likes of M/s Ambanis and Adanis to take over. The problem with them is that they want to occupy every small thing which were part of the unorganised sector or informal sector work.

If a farmer want to sell old cow or buffaloes to buy new one, it has become impossible now.

After lots of thoughts, three years ago, I thought of starting a dairy and purchased several cows and a buffalo. The number has now grown to 15 in three years though we are still not able to have enough milk to survive. As part of our initiative to empower the most marginalised communities like Mushahars, Kalandars, we started these animals on share basis as per the normal practice in the village. Which means after the cow or buffalo's deliver their babies or when they are about it, the villager find out the possible price of the cattle which is then divided equally between the owner and the person who

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took care of it. That way, a Mushahar family could earn between 20,000 to 30,000 for taking care of one cow or buffalo which they could use for their personal work. Most of the time, people use the money for the marriages of their children.

The cow which delivered the male calf was with a Mushahar family. It was waiting for the day. We asked them to find out and decide. I am shocked to inform you that the price of the cow which is now giving milk and delivered its first calf, was priced for Rs 20,000/- which means they will only get Rs 10,000/-. It is disturbing that so many families depending on these cattle are facing the brunt of the idiocies of the politics in the name of cows. We decided that we will try to help out the family through our own ways and will not go by market logic at the moment.

A few months back, we had lost a cow. We fed it for nearly one month when her condition was bad. Villagers use to come, worship her. When she died, we buried her with all our best effort. It needs nearly one quintal of salt during the process.

Rearing cattle are difficult but they were part of empowering processes to the communities. Government should promote it but at the same point of time if there is no market for them, the farmers will commit suicide as it is very difficult to maintain them. The fodder cost is too high while the milk in the village is still Rs 25/- per litre.

There are big gaushalas of Babas and mutths. They get huge donation in the name of cows. The devotees send them fodder but if the government want to help farmers, promote cooperatives, it must not only allow sale and purchase of them but provide subsidies in fodder as well as buy the product. The government must further decide as what should be done with the male calf. Should the people leave them as is happening these days? If not then what is the option? We must understand where is the space for keeping these animals if their sale purchase is not allowed. Where should the farmer send their bulls and oxen or old cows. Maybe the government can think of old age homes for these animals as it will be beyond the strength of people to feed them in these times of heavy inflation when everything has to be procured from the market.



# THE MAHARASHTRA BEEF BAN IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL

Committee for the Protection of Democratic Rights<sup>\*</sup>

As if the 1976 Maharashtra Animal Preservation Act banning the slaughter of cows, including the male and female calf of the cow, enacted by the Shankarrao Chavan-led Congress government during the Emergency was not enough, the Devendra Fadnavis-led Bharatiya Janata Party-Shiv Sena government is elated that the 1995 Maharashtra Animal Preservation (Amendment) Act, enacted by a previous BJP-Sena led by Manohar Joshi, that extends the ban to include slaughter of bulls and bullocks, has now received presidential assent. Despite the BJP's claims justifying the ban on agro-economic grounds, among others, the driving force behind the prohibition is the ideology of Hindutva, presented as "a way of life" rooted in the central beliefs of neo-Vedantic Hinduism, of which cow slaughter and beef eating are supposedly anathema.

All such anti-cow slaughter laws enacted by state governments in independent India claim to derive their inspiration from Article 48 of the Indian Constitution, but this Directive Principle of State Policy includes only those bovines presently or potentially capable of yielding milk or doing work as draught cattle, and does not extend to cattle which may have been milch or draught cattle but have since ceased to be so. The Committee for the Protection of Democratic Rights (CPDR) holds that extending the ban to non-milch and non-draught cattle leads to resource waste (e.g., of cattle feed, etc that preservation of useless cattle entails, besides their being left to a slow death) and deprives many people of their livelihood and staple food. The loss of livelihood extends to those who are engaged in the animal husbandry business, including trade and commerce thereof, as also butchers and other workers at the abattoirs, those who skin the carcasses of cattle (mainly Dalits), hide merchants, workers and owners of cold storages stocking and restaurants serving beef, etc. Moreover, the ban will deprive many Hindus (i.e., mainly the so-called lower castes), Dalits, tribals, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, and others of the little animal protein food that is within their means to consume once or twice a week.

The BJP spokesperson Madhav Bhandari, besides mentioning Hindu religious faith, justified the ban in terms of adherence to the Gandhian principle of *ahimsā* (non-violence) and of supporting the state's agro-economy. The fact however remains that as far as the gowalas and other practitioners of agriculture

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and animal husbandry, mostly Hindus, are concerned, as soon as the cow goes dry or the bullock is no longer able to act as a draught animal, and is consequently uneconomical to maintain, they sell it and it invariably lands in an abattoir for slaughter. And, as regards *ahiṃsā*, doesn't this principle apply to all living beings, and therefore, logically, why only to cows and bulls? And, of course, killing human beings in revenge for having killed cows or bulls is no sign of *ahiṃsā*. So, while the cow supposedly engenders *ahiṃsā*, violence is unleashed against the Other in the guise of the holy cow's protection.

What makes the cow and the bull sacred to the highest degree? In his book *The Myth of the Holy Cow* (New York: Verso, 2002), the eminent historian D J Jha documents in copious detail — from the Vedas among other sources — the fact that in ancient India, “Hindus” ate beef. Babasaheb Ambedkar in his *Riddles of Hinduism* variously established that not only Hindus but Brahmins themselves ate cow meat. The historian D.D. Kosambi writes in his work *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India* (1964), “A modern orthodox Hindu would place beef-eating on the same level as cannibalism, whereas Vedic Brahmins had fattened upon a steady diet of sacrificed beef.” The Hindutvavadins have, however, been spreading the falsehood that it was only with the Muslim conquest that cows were first slaughtered in India. But, as Professor Jha puts it: “Self-styled custodians of non-existent ‘monolithic’ Hinduism assert that eating of beef was first introduced in India by the followers of Islam who came from outside and are foreigners in this country, little realizing that their Vedic ancestors were also foreigners who ate the flesh of the cow and various other animals” (page 20).

The CPDR holds that the Maharashtra Animal Protection (Amendment) Act, 1995 is not in consonance with Article 48 when this is viewed in conjunction with the fundamental rights of citizens under the Constitution. This Act is not even based on Hindu religious faith. Contrary to Hinduism, which is a conglomerate of beliefs and faiths aimed at achieving spiritual salvation, the ideology of the majority in the Maharashtra Assembly that enacted this law in 1995 is that of Hindutva, which is aimed at attaining political power, and is the Indian variant of Nazism. The Act is aimed at depriving the Other of her livelihood and way of life, which must be condemned by all those who stand for pluralism, secularism and democratic rights.

# DOES BHARAT MATA APPROVE OF BEEF LYNCHINGS?

Samar\*

“A mob is the scum that rises upmost when the nation boils.”

John Dryden, English Poet

The picture showing two Muslims – one of them a teenage boy – hanging by a tree in Latehar, Jharkhand is going to haunt the Republic for a long time. Nothing indicts the failure of a criminal justice system like a lynch mob. Whether they may seem to reflect righteous anger or not, whether they operate by design or default, lynch mobs prove that the State has lost sole control over coercive power, the cornerstone of maintaining law and order.

And, in this case, the lynching was by design. But first, let's look at some facts of the case. The victims were cattle traders. Self-designated vigilante groups, moonlighting to protect cows, which sacred to Hindus, the majority religion of India, apparently killed the two traders. One of the five arrested suspects, Mithilesh Prasad Sahu, is, in fact, a member of a cow protection committee, something disclosed by the Latehar Police Chief Anoop Birtharay. These vigilantes are nothing new to the countryside, it must be noted. It is just that they were never this murderous before the incumbent regime came to power.

And it is here that the design enters the frame. The Latehar lynching is not the first one. The murders started in Dadri, a village in Uttar Pradesh, thousands of kilometres away, in the outskirts of Delhi, the national capital. A lynch mob was organised there following open calls on a public address system of a temple against a family's alleged consumption of beef.

Cow slaughter is illegal in many Indian states, including Uttar Pradesh, but not in all Indian states. While, consumption of beef is perfectly legal in Uttar Pradesh, and, in fact, consumption of buffalo meat is legal in all Indian states. But, this meant nothing to the mob. It attacked the family and lynched its head, 50-year-old Mohammad Akhlaq.

And, despite the media controversy that followed in its wake, the lynching was not going to be the last beef murder either. The scene of action soon shifted to

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Himachal Pradesh, where a Muslim man was killed by ‘villagers’ over the suspicion of cow smuggling.

And, the next murder was reported from Haryana where armed vigilantes attacked a group of migrant workers based on the suspicion of the workers having smuggled cows. It is just that this time the mob arrived along with the police, as admitted Mr. Hanif Qureshi, Inspector General of Police, Karnal. The Officer went on to admit that it is normal practice in Haryana for cow protection volunteers, working in coordination with police authorities, to nab cattle smugglers. Such close cooperation between police and beef vigilantes is not surprising, in a state ruled by the Bhartiya Janta Party, the right wing Hindutva outfit currently in power of the Union government as well.

And this is only recounting the cases wherein the mobs could kill, not instances where the Muslims were “merely” beaten up or even arrested, like this one in Rajasthan last week.

The killings do not augur well for the Republic, already beleaguered by increasing violence from right wing Hindutva forces. Worse, it does not augur well for the Republic’s criminal justice system, which had somehow successfully maintained the facade of being a functional system, despite its institutional failures making it so similar to those of Banana Republics. It had largely failed to deliver justice till now. And now, it has begun failing to curb injustices like beef murders being committed by murderous mobs despite, often, being well informed about them.

The mobs have not come out of a vacuum. Conditions have been ripe for long; hardly ever in India has anyone been punished for their role in mob crimes – be it mobs killing people over some emotive issue in countless riots or violent mobs taking a whole state to ransom and killing and maiming people for some socio-political demand. Unlike the new-age Hindutva vigilantes, however, most of these mobs did not have specific and long-term plans.

Also, seldom did these mobs erupt and indulge in violence across the country, in actions that range from synchronised lynch mob attacks to lone wolf attacks. They did not erupt in this manner because they were not always this sure of the political protection they have now.

Once the lynch mob takes over, it does not leave anyone, not even those instrumental in unleashing the mob. Today it is beef, tomorrow it may be chicken. Remember Uma Bharati, now Union Minister, doing exactly that as Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh? Yes, she indeed had declared three cities as “holy” and banned sale of liquor and meat there.

Herein lies another sad comment on the civil society's failure to comprehend the urgent need for legal and criminal justice institution re-engineering in India. Rather than embrace and espouse this need, the civil society often jumps from outrage to outrage on issues, to the extent of legitimising this outrage as a source of law-making, as evidenced by the recent passage of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Bill, 2015. Ultimately this is what the righteous outrage over the infamous 16 December gang rape and murder of a young student in Delhi brought about, a decision to punish children as adults.

And, if outrage is the way for the civil society to handle all issues, rather than constructive institutional rebuilding, what say now that this same method is employed for the right wing fanatics too, who only take their sense of outrage up a notch, and murder those they oppose.

It is the absence of a fair and functioning justice system that creates such a sense of outrage, and allows for lynch mobs to run rampant, and for a government to support such mobs.

The writing is on the wall. The beef murders are just the beginning of a long and arduous process, wherein the final pretence of our justice institutions will collapse.

The only way out is to transform our outmoded institutions.

# CELEBRATE THE FOOD DIVERSITY

Vidya Bhushan Rawat\*

It is interesting to see some of the students who organise beef festival terming me as Islamophobe and part of Hindutva game plan since I said food should be celebrated and I wish to say that they could have organised a festival where all kind of people come and enjoy the food.

I don't need to repeat here whether I am a Hindutva agent or Islamic agent or a state agent or caste agent. I speak for myself and stand with all those who are fighting for their human rights. There is a fact that I am a dissenter among dissenters and hence the problem start.

I have similar views earlier also as I wish to state that there is enormous diversity within the Dalit Bahujan communities. And the Brahmanical hatred against beef is its linkage to Muslims. It is their effort to tease Muslims that they use Pork to counter it. My point is that both these taboos could be easily challenged if we have food together since the Dalit Bahujans and many others eat both of them. I bet if beef was not linked to Muslims, we would not have any violence. The Hindutva's communal fringe want to do that to polarise the atmosphere in the country. Hence we should strategise it in a much better way.

Let beef eaters, pork eaters, vegetarians, those non-vegetarians who don't eat beef and pork come and enjoy the delicacies together. As I said I have not asked for any ban as I am against the ban culture. I was only reacting to foolish and intimidating statement of the BJP MLA who was threatening to kill the people if the beef festival goes on. As friends, there may be many suggestions and voices by many like us who have known the sinister designs of communal forces and who want to communalise the University campuses.

Beef is the food of Dalit Bahujan communities is a very generalised statement which we should avoid. It is like linking beef with Muslims and Christians. In the northeast beef is the food of everyone including Buddhists. In South East Asia all the Buddhists countries eat each kind of meat but in India Buddhists might say no to this. I say, Dalit Bahujan communities are as diverse as anyone else. Beef might be the food choice of Dalit Bahujan communities in the Telangana or South but it is not so in the north where Goats, lambs and most importantly Porks are part of Dalit Bahujan food culture. Beef was part of

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upper caste food in Nepal and many part of Uttarakhand once upon a time. Even during the Dusshera days, Nepal has huge buffalo slaughtering. The Yadavas, Kushwahas, Kurmis, Marathas, Jats, Gujjars and other OBCs rear animals and don't kill them as they use cows for milk purposes. I am not going into history lessons as why they do it but currently, they do it.

Let me be clear that food culture is developed locally and geographically. Culturally there are certain taboos for various communities. Pork became taboo for Muslims and Cow for Hindus. A large number of communal rights in India has happened because of the two. So much so that Prof Iqbal Ansari once suggested Muslims to voluntarily leave the beef but I confronted him saying that we must enjoy food culture. His argument would only prove as if only Muslims are beef eaters which the Sangh Parivar want to communicate. If he want voluntarily Muslims leave beef habit then the Hindus or others who eat Pork must do so. It is a give and take relationship. For me rather than doing this, the best is to enjoy and not impose our wills on others.

Let me be candid here. If only Dalits and Bahujans were eating beef, there would never had been any problems for the goons of Hindutva. It is the Muslims who they want to starve. Don't we know there were sacrifices in the Vedic period including horses. What was 'Ashwamedh Yajna'. Prof D.N.Jha and many other historians have written about beef eating practices among caste Hindus. We also know that most of the beef exporters are caste Hindus who are enjoying government's largess

I again say that there was no demand from my side to ban the food festival. Neither I am a person who would say we should not eat it. I grew up eating pork during student days in Dehradun as it was cheapest available food and I enjoyed it. Today, I relish any food which is eatable and local in nature. I have on record saying how Kerala's beef is perhaps the best beef that I have ever eaten so in any part of the world. I want to add here I enjoyed all varieties of beef as it is perhaps best food available abroad.

Food culture needs to be celebrated. I wish to see people coming together eating everything. I don't say you should not challenge the Brahmanical hegemony but hegemony inside us also. If we feel that all the Dalit Bahujans eat beef and all non-Dalit Bahujans are vegetarian then we are caught in the Brahmanical lies. There are thousands of Ambedkarite Buddhists who do not eat meat. There are thousands of Muslims who are vegetarians and there are millions of Hindus who eat meat and many who eat beef of all variety. It was this point that I wanted to communicate that please respect diversities among the Dalit Bahujan communities and make your festivities inclusive yet if you feel I am wrong, I defend your right to have your beef festival. My comments were aimed at the MLA's remark and not at the students who were organising. I

never knew who are they and as a well wisher I only expressed the viewpoint that they could have done a bit more and make the festival a time to celebrate our diversity.



# LYNCHING OF MOHAMMAD AKHLAQ & UNDOING THE IDEA OF INDIA

Suhail Qasim Mir\*



Photograph of 50-year-old Mohammad Akhlaq

The lynching of Mohammad Akhlaq (50) and brutally beating up his son, Danish (22) by a mob in Dadri, UP for allegedly consuming and storing beef marks the travesty of the democratic and non-violent credentials of India. The culture of tolerance and secularism, which India is boastful about, seems to be misplaced. When endeavours are being made all over the world to embark new journeys towards peace and reconciliation, India seems to be moving back into history. Imposing ideals from a mythic past, which are objectionable to a large section of the population, seems to be the course that India has chosen.

India celebrates itself as the world's largest democracy and takes pride in having the longest written constitution. And it is this constitution which provides the right to freedom of religion to its citizens. However, despite its secular Constitution, India remains strikingly unequal. The recent beef bans and the violence surrounding this issue is an eloquent testimony. The state in a democratic set up can't force and tell the individuals what to eat and what not to. The right to choose between the things is the essence of democracy. In every sense of the word there is actually an attempt to uphold one single Hindu culture defined by Hindutva ideology by subduing every other culture. Ban on

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the beef, the consumption of which is an intrinsic part of the indigenous food culture of Dalits and Muslims, is a clear manifestation of Brahminical food fascism. The forced majoritarianism will go a long way in polarising the society and leave it for manipulation by few ogres to serve their vested interests.

For some petty political brownie points, politicians in India are busy dividing people along religious lines and ironically people get divided because most of the population in India due to illiteracy or low education can't make a difference between right and wrong. So masses are not to be blamed. There is somebody else fanning the communal fires and helming India towards a horrible annihilation. Though beef ban has been a contentious issue in India since times immemorial but it is only with the change of the guard at centre that the issue has surfaced again. The RSS and other fringe groups with their anti-Muslim ideology remain undeterred because they remain unbridled, in fact they ironically derive their strength from the present government which itself is founded upon the Hindutva bedrock.

The promulgated beef ban across several states of India is not just about weaning the choice of people about what to eat and what not to, but, essentially undermining all those people who don't affiliate to the Hindutva ideology. Nobody in India talks about prohibition of liquor and other intoxicating substances when the constitution in the Article 48 openly advocates for prohibition of such substances. Why? Because the mainstream Hindu culture doesn't oppose it and banning it would mean a loss of huge electorate. So everything is meticulously calculated, religion is manipulated for political interests and so fissures are created in the society.

India is marked by a myriad diversity; people here are divided along the lines of cast, religion, region, language, ethnicity and gender. Each group has its own culture and a way of life and thus forcing one major culture and expecting everybody to abstain from beef eating and cow slaughter just because some groups don't do it is bound to create a feeling of oppression and alienation. And it is in this context when these groups develop anti-national feelings and turn outlaws.

Obscure groups such as Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) are trying to impose a culture often through violent means, infringing upon the fundamental rights and seeking to subdue the diversity of India. It is essential for pseudo nationalists and the Hindutva fringe groups to realise that only by taking every community on-board can India stay in one piece. What essentially is required is the utmost need for reconciliation and accommodation.

# BEEF BAN IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR: A DANGEROUS POLITICAL GAME

Imran Khan\*

Many times in my childhood years, while watching India-Pakistan cricket matches, immaturely and not knowing the context and history, I used to wonder about why Muslim League under the leadership of Mohammad Ali Jinnah advocated and supported “Two Nation Theory” which resulted in the creation of Pakistan, as the two countries could have lived together in harmony as single united country and subsequently India-Pakistan cricket teams would have been a single strong team ruling the entire cricketing world. However after even a brief study of history, one comes to know easily about why Muslim League demanded the creation of Pakistan in 1940, and now with fascist and communal face of India wide open, there remains no further scope of any such query. The seeds of communalism sown by Britishers have grown into huge trees with deep roots, strong trunk and countless branches. Thanks to all the nourishment it received all these years at the hands of communal elements in India.

After Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Rajasthan, now beef is being banned in the only Muslim majority (so called state) of Jammu and Kashmir. Neither the collective conscience nor the fundamental rights (particularly the right to freedom of religion) were cared while pronouncing such an unjust and biased decision.

The irony, however, is that after such communal and fascist policies every Institution of Indian society gets busy in defending their government and institutions. Be it soulless Politicians, Judiciary, Police and particularly Media every organ of Indian society remains busy in drawing logic and reason out of such draconian policies and decisions. This, however, is not surprising given the fact that a communal party, and politicians with criminal and communal background were overwhelmingly voted to power, which again reflects nothing but the increasing communal mindset of Indian society.

The ban on beef in the Muslim majority state of J&K came at a time when Muslims here were busy in the preparations of “Eid al-Adha” and Qurbani, (Sacrifice of an animal in the name of Allah). This new alarming and dangerous development in the Muslim majority state of J&K has again added to the already fragile faith of the people here on democratic and justice institutions of India.

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Now like before the Kashmiri Muslims once again will have to fight for their rights and thus a new cycle of unrest and violence is likely to follow, and communal mindset of Indian Government and biased Justice System once again will become a hindrance in the lasting peace and harmony in the state.

At a time when Mumbai High Court ridiculed the ban on animal slaughter in Mumbai as “not feasible” and when Mumbai witnessed protests on the streets by political parties, including ruling BJP’s ally Shiv Sena and opposition MNS, it is really confusing that what made J&K High Court to impose ban on beef in the only Muslim majority state of Jammu and Kashmir and subsequently what made BJP to welcome such a step, knowing the sensitivity and ramification of the issue here.

The question also arises that if such a decision by J&K High Court came after the petition stated that slaughtering and sale of bovine animals severely affects the religious sentiments of a section of the society, What about liquor? Does that not hurt the religious sentiments of the Muslims in Kashmir? Is it not that India is pumping alcohol in Muslim majority Kashmir even when prohibition of liquor and other intoxicating drugs is in directive principles of state policy in Indian Constitution or Is it that the religious sentiments of Muslims is not important for BJP and their communal elements in Jammu?

Suppression of minorities, intolerance, and communalism has already bifurcated India into India and Pakistan and now the divisive forces have turned their eyes to the state of Jammu and Kashmir. With Jammu likely to support and enforce the beef ban, India has successfully communalised the state of Jammu and Kashmir and murdered the age old “Kashmiriyat” for the sake of their so called national interest. With Jammu voting BJP and Kashmir giving a strong mandate to PDP the division within the state got quite clear in the last year elections. Initially, however, the alliance of PDP-BJP was advocated as an alliance for Kashmiriyat, peace and progress but within a year only the communal and anti-Kashmir mind set seems getting better of PDP-BJP alliance. And with issues like beef ban, Chopper tax row, Article 370 and a difference of opinion with regard to solution of Kashmir, talks with Pakistan and Hurriyat, the alliance seems less likely to complete its full term. And if does in presence of such issues, it will be nothing but a suicide for PDP particularly in Kashmir.

With India inching closer towards a blend of Autocracy, Tyranny and fascism, it is time for the so called conscious class of Indian society to come forward and stop themselves from a mess taking control of their hearts and minds. India needs to understand that that as Germany faced the consequences of Hitler and Nazism and are not able to escape from the burden of it even today, India too will have to face the consequences of Modi and Hindutva and they cannot escape from the reality of it. Trotsky once described Hitler’s triumph as “the

greatest defeat of the proletariat in the history of the world” which got proved later. In the same way Modi’s victory in 2014 elections seems the greatest defeat of liberals, seculars and peaceful people in India.

For BJP in Kashmir, getting dictations from RSS and walking on the footsteps of Modi will prove to be a murder of the long communal harmony of the state (Kashmiriyat) at their own hands and will also be politically suicidal for them in the long run or at least it will severely harm the bond of Jammu with Kashmir.

Though Kashmiris will not accept and follow any such beef ban, but it is time for our society and leaders to unite together and protect our religious rights and at the same time show tolerance and stick to communal harmony and treat an issue like beef ban as a handiwork of few communal elements only. With such a mindset we can protect our religious rights, destroy communal forces, safeguard our “Kashmiriyat”, and above all continue to enjoy “Bud maaz wazwan” (Beef wazwan).

# HOLY COW, UNHOLY CARCASS AND DALITS

Peoples Union for Democratic Rights\*

PUDR condemns the incident of flogging, stripping and parading of seven men belonging to the Chamar caste by vigilante gaurakshaks on 11 July 2016 in Mota Samadhiyala village, Una taluka, Gir Somnath District Gujarat, which has brought the Brahmanical character of Hindutva cow politics and the caste character of the state to centre stage. It has been widely reported that the assault took place just outside the police station, using the lathis of the on-duty policemen.

There is a spontaneous and widespread outburst of the people across the state against this brutal attack. People have shown their anger in different forms. We support the laudable form of protest adopted by Dalit groups first in Una on 19 July, subsequently in other districts of Gujarat, which reveals the duplicity in the 'cow politics' of the casteist Hindutva forces. By dumping carcasses of cows outside offices of state authorities, Dalit protestors are challenging the gaurakshaks, and the police machinery that supports them, to deliver on their self-proclaimed duty of protecting their holy cow.

Vigilante gaurakshak groups, who are attacking Muslims for transporting cattle allegedly for cow slaughter or allegedly possessing or eating beef, are also targeting members of Dalit communities engaged in skinning carcasses of cattle, tanning or for eating beef. Significantly and ironically these activities are mandated as Dalits 'traditional' occupations within Brahmanical Hinduism, and then the same Dalits are being termed as anti-Hindu for carrying out the tasks assigned to them for legitimising the attacks by the Hindutva flag bearers. With rituals of purity and pollution at its core, Brahmanical Hinduism perpetrates structural caste-based violence through division of labour, relegating 'polluting' tasks of skinning, disposing carcasses to Dalits, who are already landless. Labour relations around cow and cattle involve a variety of occupations including killing cattle in slaughter houses to supply the meat, or collecting carcasses of cattle that die naturally, skinning the carcasses livelihoods. All these are structured along lines of caste community, Gauraksha and beef politics, and now, under the garb of cow protection, RSS and VHP are further perpetrating the structural violence, inherent to the Indian caste system.

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\* Deepika Tandon, Moushumi Basu | Secretaries, PUDR (PEOPLE'S UNION FOR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS)

The recent protests against the Una incident in Gujarat in which more than 20 Dalits attempted Suicide, many vehicles were torched, highways blocked and 1 policeman died of injuries following stone pelting is the biggest Dalit movement witnessed in the state in the last 30 years, since the community had agitated for reservation in 1985. The force of the agitation has also brought to light other recent incidents of assault on Dalits by vigilante gaurakshaks in the area and other parts of the state and country. NDTV has for instance, reported a similar assault against 7 tannery workers in Rajkula, Gujarat on 22 May by gaurakshaks alleging that the Dalits had slaughtered the cow. The attack on Dalits by these vigilante groups is not confined to Gujarat but also in other parts of the Country. In Koppa in Chikkamagaluru district, Karnataka a Dalit family was attacked by Bajrang Dal members in Koppa on 24 July, over allegedly cooking beef in their house, when there is no ban on beef in the state. Significantly the police initially arrested the victims on grounds of cruelty to animals and took action against the attackers only after protests by Dalit rights groups. In Delhi, on 24 July, Hindutva supporting 'Singh Sena' members inflicted physical violence and verbal abuse on Dalit groups led by Youth for Buddhist India, demonstrating against the Una incident at Jantar Mantar. On 26th July, two Muslim women were slapped abused for an hour by a vigilante mob in Mandsaur Railway Station, Madhya Pradesh for possession of Beef and have been booked for lack of permit to sell the meat. The failure of the police to protect the Dalits and Muslims and act against the aggressor gauraksha groups was the common factor in all these assaults.

The protests by Dalits in Gujarat are a strong indictment of justice system of the state which has failed to provide redress against the high rates of caste atrocity. Gujarat accounts for only 2.33% of India's Dalit population, yet ranks in the top half of country in the incidence of crimes against Dalits. As per 2013 NCRB data, only 2.5% cases registered for crimes against Dalits secured a conviction in the state, when the national average stood at 23.8%. In 2014, this was 3.5% against a national average of 28.8%. This has only recently climbed up to 6% in 2015, but continues to be weighted heavily against the victims throughout the justice chain, from the police, prosecutors and judges. This dresses atrocities with an alarming degree of impunity, such that the gaurakshaks were emboldened to shoot and circulate videos of their own crime, ironically as a 'warning' to others.

The Una incident and the subsequent mass protests across the state compel us to look at caste-based hierarchies, and occupational structures around the cow, that are centrally implicated in Hindutva politics, and underlie the extreme forms of violence perpetrated by vigilante cow protectors on Dalits and Muslims. The current government's staunch endorsement of the politics of gauraksha, manifested in the blatant impunity enjoyed by such vigilante groups,

reveals a serious threat to democratic rights to life with dignity and livelihood. The protests expose the fact that those who promote the ideology of Hindutva and the rhetoric of a pan-Hindu nationalism, with the cow as its symbol, stand for a fundamentally unequal, oppressive society. And when state authorities promote these the implications for democracy are indeed very grim.

PUDR demands:

1. Strict action against the gauraksha groups and 'samitis' under the SC & ST Prevention of Atrocities Act, and for inciting hatred against communities
2. Action against the police personnel for dereliction of duty.
3. Discontinuing all proceedings against the victims of cow protection vigilante groups, be it for possession, transport or consumption of beef, or for cruelty to animals



# OF LAWS AND HOLY COWS

Cynthia Stephen\*

Infochangeindia.org

In fulfilling its election promise of banning cow slaughter on religious grounds, the BJP government in Karnataka ignores the fact that it is not just minorities whose livelihood will be badly hit but also Dalits and other poor sections of society who depend on the cattle industry for a living

On March 19, the Karnataka assembly passed the Karnataka Prevention of Cow Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Bill 2010 by voice vote after uproarious scenes and an acrimonious four-hour-long debate. All opposition parties were against the bill, which has caused much consternation in the minds of many sections of Karnataka society. It has yet to pass into law as it has not been brought before the upper house, the Vidhan Parishad. The government did not table it in the just-concluded session as it is in a minority in the upper house, a fact that could change once the elections to the vacant MLC seats are conducted. Hence the tactical delay in tabling the bill.

The bill states that the slaughter of a cow, calf, bull, bullock, buffalo was completely banned in the state. There was also prohibition of sale, usage and possession of beef and restriction on transport of cattle.

Clause 5 prohibits not only slaughter, but also “usage and possession of beef”, which would practically mean a complete ban on beef eating. Clause 8 states that not only slaughter, but “sale, purchase or disposal of cattle for slaughter” when the seller or buyer in question has “reason to believe that such cattle shall be slaughtered” will be deemed as a committing crime.

The bill is also aimed at preservation and improvement of cattle breeds and to endeavour to organise agriculture and animal husbandry in terms of Article 48 of the Constitution. The bill provides for stringent punishment for violation of the act, and also provides for powers of search and seizure of any premises, vessel or vehicle.

The offence is punishable with imprisonment of not less than one year which may extend up to seven years or a fine of Rs 25,000-Rs 50,000 or both; second and subsequent offence would attract a fine of not less than Rs 50,000 up to Rs 1 lakh along with imprisonment penalty.

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Home Minister V S Acharya said the bill was "in tune with the sentiments of the majority community", as per the election manifesto of the ruling party in the state, the Bharatiya Janata Party, and the judgments of the Supreme Court and Karnataka High Court.

The BJP government may have brought in this law with the intention of putting pressure on the lifestyle and livelihoods of the minorities, but in fact large sections of the state's population will be affected directly once the bill passes into law, including farmers, milk producers, and leather workers, most of whom are Dalits and Muslims, and of course the common man.

One of the main reasons for the bill, claimed C T Ravi of the BJP, is the likelihood of shortage of milk due to the "current rate of cow slaughter in the state".

This assertion is refuted strongly by Mustafa Beig, a researcher and political analyst, and convener of the United Forum for Public Awareness. "There is a 2007 report of the cattle census in the Department of Animal Husbandry that has been kept unpublished because it will give the lie to this claim. The report says that between 2003 and 2007, the number of cattle in the state actually grew from 95 lakh to 1.49 crore," he says. "No one sells milch cattle that are worth over Rs 15,000 to be slaughtered, so the claim is totally specious."

This bill has grave implications for the majority of people in the state. It is a myth to think that this will only affect the minorities, mostly Muslims and Christians, as it is they who slaughter the cattle and for whom it is a means of livelihood and a source of low-cost protein. In actual fact, it is the livelihoods of large sections of the state: farmers, cattle traders, transporters, loaders, milk producers, especially those who have taken loans to purchase milch cattle and are mostly women in Self Help Groups, the leather industry, the pharma industry, the meat producers and sellers who include a large section of the economically weaker section and most Dalits.

In the case of milk producers, the profitability of milk production will be adversely affected as they will be forced to care for male cross-bred calves that are considered surplus and sold because they are not suitable for use in agriculture. This will increase the price of milk in the short term. As milk producers will be faced with caring for economically unproductive, aged cows, they will stop rearing cattle. In the medium term this will result in lower milk production thus adding to the cost of milk and milk products, directly affecting the general population. In fact, farmer's groups have already demanded that the government grant a kind of subsidy for rearing aged and unproductive cattle.

To get a further idea of what this implies, let us look at the economic implications of the proposed blanket ban on cattle slaughter:

It is estimated that every day, all over the state, about 20,000 economically unproductive cattle are slaughtered in about 10,000 shops, resulting in the production of about 2 lakh kilos of meat worth about Rs 2 crore. Other by-products generated such as hide, bones, horns, hooves, sinews etc are worth about Rs 1 crore. These by-products are also the raw materials for the leather, pharmaceutical and sugar industries which will be directly affected. The common man will feel the impact with the rise in the cost of products such as iron and calcium supplements, shoes, handbags, and sugar.

It is estimated that the production of meat from cattle, directly and indirectly, employs about 12 lakh persons, mostly from the poor and marginalised sections - landless and marginal rural individuals who buy, sell and transport cattle, producers and vendors of meat and by-products, etc.

As farmers and cattle-rearers will no longer be able to sell their cattle, they will be forced to look after them at their own expense, with no hope of economic gain. This will discourage them from rearing cattle and will actually cause a decline in the cattle population.

Culling of animals is a scientific and economically prudent method of managing livestock. The ecological impact of looking after lakhs of economically unproductive cattle, daily increasing by 20,000, has to be considered. Where there is less and less arable soil and water, how and where does the state government plan to find the fodder and water to meet the needs of these unproductive cattle, when, according to Mustafa Beig, there is a present shortage of 150 lakh mt of grain for cattle-feed alone, not to speak of the huge demand-supply gap of both green and dry fodder for the existing economically productive cattle.

Further, what is the government's plan for the disposal of the carcasses after the cattle die a natural death? Will they bury or cremate them? Who will pay for the cost? What about the air, water and soil pollution that will be caused as a result?

The government offers goshalas run by charitable trusts attached to religious mutts as an alternative means of "pensioning off" these cattle. But critics say that this is a ploy to transfer public lands and public resources to religious institutions, with total lack of transparency. On the contrary, says Sardar Ahmed Quraishi, president of the Tippu Sultan United Front, it is a way to impoverish and criminalise the 12 lakh population of the poor and marginalised, mostly minority and Dalit, whose livelihood is based on the economy around the slaughter of economically unproductive cattle. "After all, when the animal is old, nobody is going to look after it. We are giving it Mukti (freedom)," he says.

James, a young Dalit activist, is more graphic. "You (upper castes) take the best of the cow - its labour, its milk, its offspring, and sell it after you have no use

for it. When we find ways to use this resource, you attack us and even kill us (referring to the killing of five Dalits in Jhajjar, Haryana in 2008 who were skinning the carcass of a cow after purchasing it). You are taking our livelihoods from us, even though we make it out of the waste you discard. Is this justice?"

"This law will take away food from the poor who cannot afford to buy chicken or mutton," says another Dalit activist.

"The cost of mutton, already high, will go up to one thousand rupees," said Siddaramaiah, leader of the opposition in the assembly. Thus you will be thrusting vegetarianism on the people. This is only possible in Hitler's regime. Is this a Hitler regime?"

Many civil society groups have already been agitating against the bill and the agitation is likely to gain momentum as the June session approaches. Thus it would behove the government to pause and rethink this hasty and ill-advised law into force. The government's real agenda of using the law to hit out at the minorities is hardly a hidden one. But in the process, it will adversely affect large numbers of the state's population. There will be a daily loss of a minimum Rs 4 crore to a large section of the poor and marginalised population who are bound to become restive at the loss of their livelihood.

# VEGETARIAN VIGILANTISM

Vidya Bhushan Rawat\*

Vegetarianism is basically considered to be a 'nonviolent' approach towards nature and our food habits. People who did not like 'animal slaughtering' and 'cruelty' on them would often turn vegetarians. Many people are vegetarians because of their taste for the food others are because of basic cultural values they inherited but it is a fact that a majority of India is not vegetarian and that vegetarianism is basically belonged to the values of caste Hindus in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan regions. Most vegetarians in India are becoming highly illiberal and contemptuous towards those who are 'different' than them in food habits. It was not true several years back. My mother was a devout vegetarian but she did not stop us eating meat. Many of my friends even today may not eat non-veg but they are cook non veg and perhaps delicious than others.

The war in India is not just being vegetarian and non-vegetarian but gone further. It is a well thought action to isolate Muslims and Christians on the basis of their food habits even when the facts are that not all of them eat it. Contrary to this, a very large number of caste Hindus eat beef. It was never a taboo with communities of Dalits and Adivasis. But the politics behind the whole debate actually intend to communalize the matter further for ulterior political profits.

The debate now is not between vegetarianism versus non veg loving people but it further aim to divide the non-veg lovers and hence those who eat beef are sought to be isolated in this entire game plan. Frankly speaking cow slaughter was banned in India since 1947 and various states too had enacted different laws towards cow protection hence raking up that issue is nothing but purely political. Fact right now is that they have further expanded the 'cow family' and hence decided that they are not just contend with cow slaughtering but even beyond that and hence the slaughtering of buffaloes and others animals of cow family is legally prohibited in Maharashtra and other states. The hidden agenda of the SanghParivar and its various offshoots is visible with state after state amending their laws and including more 'progenies' of the cow family, which was not there earlier. So, it is not merely that you are satisfied with Cow but now the Maharashtra act has extended the 'protection' to the progenies of cow. In fact, India's home minister openly said that he would 'starve' Dhaka of its

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basic diet, as police would be more vigilant to stop smuggling of cows and its progenies.

So the distortion of the news is that we are talking against cow slaughtering, which is already prohibited under the law, but its progenies, which was never, and no religious sanctity was given to them at any point of time. In fact, slaughtering of buffaloes has been one of the major rituals in Nepal as well as in several temples in Assam and Uttarakhand in India.

Historically cow and its progenies were useful animals for people for not just milk and other produces but also for the purpose of farming. There are proofs of Brahmins eating beef as said by Prof D.N.Jha in his famous work. The Dalits and Adivasis too eat beef and other wild animals, which were the biggest source of protein for them. There is no Yajna in the ancient text without killings of animals. The gods and goddess that are displayed in today's time have a violent track record and non-talked about nonviolence. Hence it would be a travesty of truth to suggest that vegetarianism is part of India's culture.

Nonviolence was a Buddhist doctrine while Bhagwat Gita and Ramayana's stories are not just full of violence but 'adharmā' too as Dr Ambedkar exposed in his skillful analysis of 'Riddles of Hinduism'. It is not a hidden fact that all the 'rakshasas' and 'evils' in these 'epics' are either people of black color or Dalit-Adivasis. So 'dharma' became a doctrine to create and impose a brahmanical supremacy over Dalit Bahujan masses. When Buddhism was spreading in entire country and became the philosophy of life for millions of people here the brahmanical forces retaliated violently against the same and the result was Buddhism was thrown out of its land of birth. Jainism too was a nonviolent doctrine but unfortunately it has completely coopted by the Hindutva and their business interests today. The Aryan Supremacy was established 'mythologically' to kill the spirit of the asserting Asuras or anaryas so varnashram dharma and its 'divine' philosophy became the biggest weapon.

Over the period the struggle for human dignity and human rights are part and parcel of India's social as well as mythological structure. The mythological structure that denied the vast majority basic human rights and human dignity actually continued to humiliate them till the oppression gave rise to different new philosophies of life which provided a window of opportunity to all the oppressed. Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Kabirpanthis, Ravidasis provided the opportunity further. That apart, Islam and Christianity too came as a liberator for thousands of people who were treated as untouchables. The vast working masses of Indians belonging to Dalits, adivasis and backward communities were actually protectors of natural resources, environment and animals. But at the same point of time animal meat of any variety was a source of protein for them.

The Brahmins realized this and used 'nonviolence' as a tool to make these powerful communities virtually 'vegetarian' and ensured that their 'assertion' and 'rebellion' is dumbed through 'divinity' of these acts. Brahmanical 'nonviolence' therefore was nothing but a multipronged strategy to defeat Buddhism philosophically on the one side and develop an alternative where its supremacy remained intact. Hence throughout the history brahmanical vegetarian violence has played a dangerous game in dividing communities. When Buddhism was reaching the masses the Brahmins used all kind of violence to stop its growth but after the Mughal rule in India the priorities shifted. They were the first to compromise and adjust with the power but once the British arrived in India these same forces formed groups and associations to be associated with them. Cow Protection and vegetarianism gained currency during the British period when the Muslims were on the receiving end and Indian civil services were being replaced by the caste Hindus, however, the influence of Muslim remained powerful as ever and they fought against the British regime with much vigour and power. In the 1920s when Congress was attempting to bring Muslims in its fold to fight a joint battle against British, the RastriyaSwayamSevakSangh was also taking shape in Nagpur, a land of revolution and revolt of the Dalit Bahujan against Brahmanical hierarchy. Islam and Christianity was proving to be a liberating ground for the Dalits to get rid of the untouchability and further an alliance of these forces would have made the status quo difficult to maintain. The politics of symbolism began from here to mobilise people under 'Hindu' identity and for that an artificial construct of India as 'pitrabhumi' or fatherland came handy to create an impression that only those who have India as their fatherland are actually the rightful inheritor of this country. The Dusshera festival and using the brahmanical symbolism became a fashion for political mobilisation as from Tilak to Gandhi all used these symbolism for their own political purposes resulting in deep division among the society.

The problem with such divisive Hindutva politics was to deliberately blame Muslims for all the ailments of India to legitimise their vicious communal agenda. Hence after the partition when we had the national government under PanditJawaharLal Nehru, RSS continued with its divisive legacy of Hindu Rastra as a counter to political Islam. As Pakistan was created in the name of religion, RSS wanted a Hindu Rastra, which according to their own theology was 'brahmanical' in nature. There is no history of the RSS fighting against caste system, untouchability, dowry system and other evils of Hindu society. Their focus was Muslim and Islam so that they can cover up the whole inequality and dirty caste system of the Hindu society. Assault on Muslim was also necessary to arrest the 'conversion' and keep the Dalits within the Hindu caste framework. Initially, they provided the cheap services and later with assertive

Dalits with Ambedkar's vision became the real cultural threat for brahmanicalHindutva and hence all efforts were made to co-opt and assimilate them in broader agenda of SanghParivar.

As the Muslims and Dalits along with OBCs and Adivasis were coming together and forming rainbow coalition to fight against Brahmanical hegemony the worries of SanghParivar were inevitable. While they condemn Congress party for 'appeasing' Muslims and not acknowledging DrAmbedkar, it need to be checked if our memories are not faded that DrAmbedkar was given Bharat Ratna by V.P.Singh who is the most hated figure for the SanghParivar and their upper caste followers. In fact, if V P government had survived in 1990, the political landscape of India would have been absolutely different than what it is today. That government fell in the house of people on November 7th, 1990 for fulfilling a constitutional obligation to protect religious place of fellow countrymen in Ayodhya. Yes, Singh acted toughly against Hindutva elements who tried to demolish Babri Masjid in October, 1990.

The biggest challenge for the SanghParivar led brahmanicalHindutva was to break the alliance between these diverse segments. Their number increased in Parliament and state assemblies. The issue of Ram Mandir flopped and slowly Dalits have fascinatingly adopted DrAmbedkar's way of life and embraced Buddhism. All the Babas and corporate attempt to bring them to Hindu fold failed and hence it became essential to divide them further aliening with Muslims. Today, the SanghParivar is celebrating DrAmbedkar's birthday but don't we know one of their ideologue ArunShourie wrote 'Worshipping the False God' in the 1990s. SanghParivar is trying to use Ambedkar from 1990s but it never condemned Shourie's writings on Ambedkar and his attempt to denigrate Ambedkar and make him look a petty politician. There are many Dalit 'scholars' at the disposal of SanghParivar who compared Ambedkar and Jagjivan Ram. Two mouthpieces of Sangh namely 'Organiser' and 'Panchjanya' devoted its whole issue on DrAmbedkar and his 'association' with Hindutva. His term 'reclamation' of our inheritance is being misinterpreted and his differences with Congress are being highlighted. One has to understand that DrAmbedkar fought against Congress because he felt that it was serving the upper caste Hindus interest and is least bothered about Dalits and other marginalised. If Sangh was that powerful those times, he would have fought against them too. Ambedkar's writings are selectively being used against Congress and Muslims. As mentioned earlier Ambedkar's fight was against inhuman brahmanical system and he wanted a dignified solution to the issue of Dalits where they participate in power structure with their head high and ensure that benefit of this participation reach to the poorest of the poor.



The vegetarian vigilantes today have made life of law abiding Indian citizens difficult. Understand it how they are intruding in your personal lives right from your right to freedom of expression to food habits to who should be your soul-mate. They have become extra-state actors at the moment though acting at the behest of state and using its absolute freedom towards them. They started with Vandemataram and Ram Mandir movement and realised that they have to move ahead and hence used corruption as an entry point. Today in power, they want to control everything. So it is not merely what you should eat but who you should stay and who you should love. Every day hundreds of their 'philosophers' and 'guides' are looking for new issues to humiliate and intimidate the Muslims and Christians and create an artificial threat to others. It is important to understand the designs of such forces that India will have to run through the preamble of its constitution and all the international charters that we signed.

It is important to understand their modus operandi and why beef has now become the major issues and it will remain as long as we have 'democracy' and 'elections' to win but every issue that the SanghParivar raises have not just politics but 'economic' interest too and therefore ignoring the vast business interest of their 'client' would be detrimental for them.

# THE COLOR OF HUMAN FLESH!

Prof. Shah Alam Khan\*

Flowers, clouds, butterflies and rainbows rule our imagination largely because of their colours. Colours make our lives, red is celebration and black, mourning. The abstract of black and white, yellow & green or red & blue is poetry of life. Colours define our identities too; Saffron is Hindu and green, Muslim.

But how many of you know the colour of human flesh? It is lilac coloured. Believe me it is and I know because I am a surgeon and I see raw human flesh every day! So you think it's useless to know the colour of human flesh? No, not in today's India. Knowing the colour of human flesh can be useful in differentiating it from beef meat, the red loaf with yellow streaks of fat. But where is the connect between human flesh and beef meat? Well, even I thought so, where is the god damn connect?

Dadri's Mohammed Akhlaq Ahmad Saifi defined the connect!

But yes, the human flesh IS lilac coloured! Trust me!!

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# FANATIC FRINGE IS MODI'S MAINSTREAM

Samar\*

"Incidents like Dadri and Ghulam Ali are really sad but what is the role of the Centre in them?" These are the words of Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, who finally appears to have broken his silence in this statement made to the Bengali newspaper Anandabazar Patrika on the increasing instances of sectarian killings in the country.

The "incidents" he refers to include the mob lynching of a Muslim man over a rumour of him having eaten beef. Eating beef is not a crime in Uttar Pradesh where the murder took place. Local members of the right wing Bhartiya Janata Party, i.e. the party Mr. Modi leads, announced this "rumour" from a temple loudspeaker, perhaps in first such use of Hindu temple ever.

It has taken him more than a year to speak up after the first such hate killing, which resulted in the death of Mohsin Sadiq Shaikh, a 24-years-old Muslim techie in Pune. This occurred within weeks of his becoming the prime minister. He maintained similar stoic silence over virtually all other hate crimes committed by various Hindutva outfits including those affiliated with the Rashtriya Swyamsevak Sangh (RSS) whose political arm the BJP is, while choosing to tweet during this period even on local inconsequential BJP victories and even to congratulate individual players of India's World Cup Cricket team. His silence on hate crimes has continued in the face of murders of writers and activists like Govind Pansare and M.M. Kalburgi allegedly, again, by members of Hindutva outfits.

He has remained steadfast in his silence, until he was hit by an avalanche of writers returning their awards, including those by the Sahitya Akademi, the apex literary body of the country, which is government funded, but autonomous. He has been forced to speak when protests escalated to the extent of Dalip Singh Tiwana, an 80-year-old celebrated Punjabi writer, returning her Padma Shri, i.e. one of the highest civilian awards in the Republic. The avalanche of protest made the possibility of his stoic silence unfeasible. Only then has he spoken, to a Bengali newspaper.

Now that he has spoken, apart from the fact that he has spoken, naturally, attention needs to be paid on what he has spoken. And, what he has spoken

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should bother the country more than his studied silence in the face of attacks and rising intolerance across the country.

This is not the first time India has seen a spurt in sectarian tension. Mr. Modi himself presided over Gujarat in 2002, when one of the nation's worst communal pogroms that ensued after ghastly attack on a train in Godhra rocked the nation. Many will recall that his – controversial at best and partisan at worst – handling of the pogrom and riots earned him a rebuke from none other than Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the then Prime Minister of India and a founder of BJP. Mr. Vajpayee had asked Mr. Modi then to follow “Rajdharm” and not discriminate on the basis of caste, creed, or religion.

Mr. Modi might claim to be sad over “incidents” like Dadri, but his actions betray both the hollowness of the claim and that he never took Mr. Vajpayee's advice seriously. Immediately after Dadri murder, Union Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma pontificated on the nature of injuries, which, for him, showed that there was no desire for the mob to engage in a lynch. As if that was not enough, he also took pride in the fact that the 17-year-old daughter of the victim was not touched by the mob. Mahesh Sharma is not the first minister of the Modi cabinet to indulge in such brazen defence/legitimization of Hindutva fanaticism. Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti, for instance, is notorious for having exhorted the Delhi electorate to choose between Ramzades (sons of Lord Rama) and Haramzades (illegitimate children).

And, these two do not represent anomalies in the Modi cabinet, which is known for rewarding and not penalising such behaviour. One can recall how Mr. Modi had inducted Giriraj Singh, a first time Member of Parliament from Bihar, despite him facing criminal charges for allegedly delivering a hate speech that suggested that after Narendra Modi became Prime Minister his critics would be banished to Pakistan. Similarly, awarded with a ministerial berth in the Modi Cabinet was Sanjeev Baliyan, who is facing criminal charges over his role in inciting the Muzaffarnagar riots, which claimed more than 60 lives in 2013.

The writing on the wall is clear. Rioting, as well as less intense forms of communal polarisation, has long been a prized weapon of politicking in India; even the so-called secular parties have employed them time and again. However, no party has ever dared to bring the associated rioters in the mainstream until now; they have been accommodated and rewarded by different means until now. The Republic remembers how many of those involved in rioting against Sikhs in 1984 were rewarded, but it also remembers how even tall leaders of the Indian National Congress like Sajjan Kumar and Jagdish Tytler were made to pay a heavy political price for their alleged involvement in the riots. They had to be relegated to the fringe, and they never found their way back into the mainstream.

Even that pretence has now been done away with since the rise of rabid Hindutva politics led by Modi. The experiment that started in Gujarat when a violent murderous fringe started being accommodated in the mainstream has now become successful with the induction of riot accused ministers in the Union government.

It is in this context that Modi's self-claimed helplessness becomes a significant marker of the times to come, and not only because his claim is plain wrong. India, after all, is a Union and the Union government has a plethora of constitutional rights to intervene if state governments fail in their mandatory duty of protecting citizen life, in this case that of minorities.

Further, these provisions are not limited to the much-misused Article 356 of the Indian Constitution that allows for imposition of presidential rule in states. There is also Article 365 that authorises the Union government to intervene in cases where state governments fail to follow its directions. Article 365 reads as follows in its entirety:

“Effect of failure to comply with, or to give effect to, directions given by the Union Where any State has failed to comply with or to give effect to any directions given in the exercise of the executive power of the Union under any directions given in the exercise of the executive power of the Union under any of the provisions of this Constitution, it shall be lawful for the President to hold that a situation has arisen in which the government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.”

The writing on the wall is clear. It is not some constitutional provisions that have prevented Mr. Modi from speaking up or asking chief ministers of states showcasing increasing violence to ensure the rule of law and punish the troublemakers, most of whom are in any case from RSS that Mr. Modi himself owes allegiance to. This is why Modi's decision not to ask even the chief ministers of states ruled by his party either alone or in alliances, never mind the ones ruled by parties in opposition, becomes tacit approval for such attacks by the erstwhile fringe.

This is exactly what Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut has exposed when he lashed out at Mr. Modi's “sadness” over Dadri and the cancellation of a Ghazal concert by Ghulam Ali. One does not get an ally exhorting to Mr. Modi's Godhra past everyday and here is a senior Shiv Sena leader speaking the obvious: Modi is known around the world for Godhra and this is why Shiv Sena respects him.

The irony hidden in the outburst is startling. Shiv Sena has long been the violent fringe of Hindutva politics – the violent and uncouth fringe. It was never known for lacking in guts to call anyone with any names. But then, exhorting

the PM's not so inspiring past with sound logic exposes how far the fringe has travelled.

The problem with the fringe becoming mainstream does not augur well for the future of the republic, and not just for the future of its beleaguered minorities. Once the fringe entrenches itself in power, it turns against everyone, even those instrumental in bringing it there. Experiences from recent history bear witness to this. Pakistan has learnt the lesson that no amount of pretensions can turn a faction of Taliban into a good faction without high cost.

India, too, will arrive there if the governments, both at the union and provincial levels, fail to crack down on the fringe decisively. Being sad is okay but one cannot fight crime with that; it requires prosecution and punishment for those responsible. Sadly, with ministers accused of inciting riots and delivering hate speeches, the current regime does not seem to be particularly interested in the punishment of such crimes.

# LYNCH AND BURN: HINDUTVA'S SLAUGHTER METHODS

Megha Bahl & Sharmila Purkayastha \*

On 18th October 2015, Zahid Ahmed Bhat succumbed to his burn injuries in New Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital. Bhat, a resident of Batengoo, Anantnag district, was a nineteen year old cleaner of a truck that was set on fire on the night of 9th--10th October 2015 by a Hindu mob in Udhampur town on suspicion of cattle smuggling and cow slaughter. A petrol bomb was hurled inside the truck, on its three sleeping inmates. While the driver, Rameez Bhat, managed to escape, Zahid Ahmed and Showkat Ahmed sustained severe burn injuries and they were also thrashed by the mob. As of now, Showkat is battling for his life. The truck was returning to Kashmir carrying coal after it had unloaded a harvest of apples in Delhi.

On 15th October, twenty-two year old Noman, a resident of Raipur village in Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur district, succumbed to the injuries that he suffered at the hands of a lynch mob in Nahan district of Himachal Pradesh. The allegation was that Noman and four others were smuggling cattle—five cows and ten oxen—when they were spotted and chased by local Bajrang Dal mob. The truck met with an accident and the men allegedly offloaded the cows, abandoned the vehicle and took shelter in a nearby forest before they were spotted by the lynch mob which outnumbered the police. According to residents of Noman's village, the latter had gone to Punjab to purchase bullocks.

On 9th October, in Mainpuri, Agra district, two men, Rafeeq and Habib, were severely thrashed by a mob of 500 strong, on allegations of slaughtering a cow. While the UP police filed an FIR against the two men against the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, and also one against the mob, the post-mortem showed that the cow had died of natural causes, a point confirmed by the owner, Ghanshyam, to the police.

These incidents which have occurred on the heels of the Dadri lynching of September 30th demonstrate how the Hindutva agenda relies on mob violence. At the same time, the political success of the hate campaign has derived legitimacy from the Prime Minister's studied silence and been backed by

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\* Megha Bahl and Sharmila Purkayastha | Secretaries, PUDR | 20th October 2015

comments such as those by the Union Minister, Mahesh Sharma, who described the Dadri incident as an “accident” or that by Chief Minister of Haryana, Manohar Lal Khattar, who stated, as recently as 15th October, that Muslims can reside in India provided they agree to give up eating beef.

The anti-beef incidents have redoubled the brazenness of the Hindutva mob as they hardly care that none of the deceased, Akhlaq, Noman or Zahid were actually involved in acts of slaughtering cows or were consuming beef. In a political climate where rumours and perceptions have gained ground, the legitimacy of rule of law has dissolved and disintegrated. What can be more telling than the fact that the police at Mainpuri slapped the two youth under the Prevention for Cruelty to Animals Act for skinning a naturally deceased cow. If such an act constitutes an offence, then what is at stake is the livelihood of a large number of people who depend on beef trade. While the profitability of the trade is well known, it is also clear from the Mainpuri incident that those situated at the lowest rungs of the trade are most vulnerable to such attacks. In Maharashtra which has the largest abattoir in the country, the Qureshi community has been badly affected by the recent extension on the ban on buffalo slaughter. Till now, the BJP state government has offered no alternate or rehabilitation plan for them.

The present Hindutva campaign has not only polarised and communalized the question of livelihood, religious identity and dietary preferences, but has also shown the hollowness of its agenda. If cow protection is the goal of the campaign, then, why is it that Manohar Lal Khattar’s Sonipat district offers such a grim picture of ageing and abandoned cows for aging in rubbish dumps, as exposed in a news analysis in Scroll.in? The report also shows why dairy farmers prefer to buy buffaloes as the milk yield is higher and the saleability of cattle is permitted, unlike the cow or bullock. Worse, the gaushalas which are routinely used for publicity stunts remain cash- strapped as politicians fail to pay the sum they announce with much fan-fare. Consequently, dairy farmers have to pay money to institutionalise their ageing cow as the Haryana government political promises of cow protection have only remained rhetorical. The fact that the buffalo has replaced the cow as the queen of cattle is a timely lesson which needs to be learnt in these times of “one man’s meat is another man’s poison”

The rapidly deteriorating scenario, of the breakdown of law and order endangering life and liberties of the citizens, has only one answer: the government must realise that it is responsible for the mob violence which it has covertly unleashed and overtly sponsored and protected. It is only seventeen months since Mr. Modi assumed office as the Prime Minister; how much more intolerance will his government preach?



# DECONSTRUCTING YOGI'S MEAT POLITICS

Aftab Alam\*

The crackdown on illegal abattoirs was one of the first decisions taken by Yogi Adityanath soon after taking over as Chief Minister of the most populous and politically crucial state of the country following the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) resounding victory in the recently held assembly elections.

The UP is the country's largest meat exporting state having a business of Rs 26,000 crore and providing directly or indirectly employment opportunities for more than 25 lakh people. Out of 72 government approved slaughterhouses in the country, 38 are in UP accounting more than half the share. However, most of these approved slaughterhouses only cater for export and the local needs are met only by the small illegal and individual slaughterhouses operating from pavements and congested residential areas and often in unsanitary conditions with no proper provision of disposing off or treatment of animal waste causing health and environment hazards.

The CM can't be faulted for his action against illegal slaughter houses as the state government was well within its rights to take stern actions against them and it was also completely in line with the election manifesto of the BJP which had clearly stated that it would take "stern steps to close down all illegal slaughterhouses, besides banning mechanised slaughterhouses", but it can certainly be questioned for putting forth wrong data to justify its agenda. The manifesto had falsely claimed that due to rampant bovine smuggling during the reign of past state governments there has not only been a fall in cattle counts but also in the milk production. The facts, however suggest otherwise. The UP livestock census has shown a consistent growth in buffalo population, from 229 lakhs in 2003 to 306 lakhs in 2012 also indicating a 6.5 percent increase in cow population from the previous census in 2007. Similarly, the national dairy board's figures for UP have also shown an increase in the production of milk from 24,863 tonnes in 2012 to 29,086 tonnes last year – a jump of 17 percent.

Notwithstanding the action of the Yogi government being both legally and politically 'correct' it raises many questions that need to be discussed dispassionately. Is the BJP deliberately treading on agenda that will alienate the Muslim minority who are believed to be largely involved in the meat industry and thus affected by this decision? If the crackdown is only against the illegal abattoirs then why those having licenses are also being harassed? Has the

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government prepared any roadmap to rehabilitate lakhs of people whose livelihood was adversely hit by this action? Why did the government before the drive against the illegal slaughter houses not first ensure that its own slaughterhouses were made fully functional? Had it not been more prudent on the part of the government to first give them an opportunity to renew their licenses which has not been done since 2014? Are environmental and health considerations, as stressed by the NGT order, the only considerations behind this drive or religio-cultural issues have anything to do with this move?

While the state Government has clarified that the drive is only against the illegal slaughterhouses the heat is being faced by legal abattoirs as well. In frantic searches even many legal units were also sealed on minor lapses such as non-functional CCTVs to a pending permission for groundwater use. The meat traders have also accused of injustices and harassment in the name of such drive both by the police and the so-called vigilantes.

The drive against the illegal slaughter houses has also been shrouded in controversy amidst allegation of the fringe Hindutva groups taking law in their own hands. There are media reports from burning of meat shops to their forceful closure by the Hindu vigilantes in some parts of the state. At one place members of the Hindu Jagran Manch tried to enter the top meat exporting unit to conduct their own searches. The Bajrang Dal activists have reportedly raided a meat packaging unit on their own without informing the authorities and beat up a worker who was later discovered as a BJP member. The small meat shop owners fear the vigilantes more than the authorities who have become emboldened with BJP in power. Many of them have shut down their shops just to avoid unnecessary harassment as fear grips the entire community in the meat trade.

Perhaps no one is against the CM's drive to check unauthorized and illegal abattoirs as he is simply discharging his constitutional duty to implement the orders issued by the Supreme Court and the National Green Tribunal which the previous SP government did not act upon as it could not muster required political courage for the same, but many certainly question the manner in which the whole drive is being hurriedly carried out. Those who were running illegal slaughterhouses or meat shops without proper licenses should have been first given an opportunity to secure the legal permission after fulfilling all requirements. The government should have also made its own slaughterhouses functional with soaring meat demand before the crackdown on illegal abattoirs. The government should have come out with a detailed roadmap for transforming existing unauthorised and illegal abattoirs to more compliant and regulated ones before the crackdown. All of them should have been insisted to

follow the norms pertaining to pollution control, disposal of animal waste and health and hygiene.

Many have tried to project the crackdown as a Muslim issue to give it a communal colour to further vitiate the atmosphere in the state. It is true that the meat industry is a sector dominated by the Muslims but it also provides employment opportunities to a good number of low caste and backward class Hindus too and also a good source of the government revenue. The crackdown will backfire if an impression is created that the move is purely political and driven by culture, religion and faith. The involvement of Hindu vigilantes in raids and issuing warnings to those involved in the meat industry is bound to create such impression. The government should not forget that besides Muslims and Christians, beef is the dietary choice of a substantial section of Hindus as well.

Furthermore why actions should not be taken against the officials who have become hyperactive this time for letting the illegal abattoirs to flourish in the state at the very first place? No illegal activities at such a large scale can be carried out by anyone without the patronage of the officials? The illegal small slaughter houses flourished in the state because the government owned slaughterhouses were shut. The illegalities were committed by many units also because the whole procedure is very cumbersome as abattoirs have to comply as many as two dozen of regulations from treatment of animals to their transportation to veterinary certification and the treatment of wastes. As per existing law the local bodies are required to build, maintain and license the slaughterhouses to meet the local requirement of meat. The government should come out with more pragmatic solutions than frantic and knee-jerk actions. The government cannot also ignore the interests of the farmers too as they are badly hit by the drive as they are not able to dispose of even unproductive cattle and buffaloes at the same time they cannot afford to feed them and are forced to leave them uncared.

# THE POLITICISATION OF COW IN NORTH EAST INDIA

Susmit Isfaq\*

Three people, including a minor, was arrested on 5th of April for cooking beef. The news is not from the state of Uttar Pradesh or Chhattisgarh, where eating or possessing cattle meat is prohibited. Sadly, It is a news from the North Eastern part of India and to be precise, it is from Jorhat district of Assam.

“They bought beef from somewhere on Tuesday and went to a vegetable market where they talked about their purchase. Some people took it seriously and lodged a complaint following which we picked them up,” said the police in charge who arrested those persons for possessing beef meat.

## ‘Barking Up The Wrong Tree’

The complainant, who is a local BJP leader of that area lodged a FIR accusing the beef possessors of ‘hurting religious sentiments’. The interesting part is that there is no law in Assam that penalise people for eating or possessing cattle meat. So, on what grounds did the police arrested them? It is under Cattle Preservation Act of Assam, 1950. Now, the most interesting part. Under Cattle Preservation Act of Assam, 1950 there is not a single section that defines that possessing and eating beef is an offence. The charges placed on the three arrested person are section 5, and 6 of the Cattle Preservation Act of Assam, 1950 and Section 295 A of IPC. Section 5 talks about “Prohibition of slaughter of cattle without certificate” and Section 6 is “Prohibition of slaughter of cattle in places not prescribed for the purpose”. Hence, on what ground did they arrest? Why are Assam police barking up the wrong tree? They were supposed to first check the slaughter house if they possess any authorised ‘certificate in writing signed by the Veterinary Officer for the area where the cattle was slaughtered.’ ( Section 5(1) of the CPA, Assam). If s/he had the certificate, it was all ok to do so as the veterinary officer wouldn’t have certified him/her for slaughtering if the cattle was under fourteen years of age or if the cattle hadn’t become permanently incapacitated from work or breeding due to injury, deformity or any incurable disease. ( Section 5 (2) (a) and (b) of CPA, Assam respectively) Hence, The duty of the Assam police was to first check the slaughter house.

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The other section charged upon the accused persons is 295A of Indian Penal Code. The section states ‘Deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs.’ The accused persons are construction workers who were staying at the construction site. They were cooking beef at their temporary house in the construction site. It is hard to believe that the kid and the other two were ‘deliberately’ and ‘maliciously’, ‘intended’ to hurt one’s beliefs. By merely cooking at their own place, it can’t hurt one’s sentiments. If it is being hurt, then the act of getting hurt might be ‘deliberate’ and ‘malicious’ which is politically motivated. Currently, the adult accused persons are in police custody and the minor is in observation home for eating beef.

### Sanskritization of Assamese ‘Gamusa’

Now let us stop beating around the bush and let us come to the real point. Cultural chauvinism is what defines the ideals of the ruling party. Be it ‘Hindutva’ politics or beef ban. The North East is not made up of a single culture, it is a chorus of culture. What ruling party with their chauvinistic mentality doing is that they are trying to impose a single culture. They have started their job quite fluently. They have started worshipping the lifeline of North East, the Brahmaputra with fest like ‘Namami Brahmaputra’. The Brahmaputra was never regarded as ‘Baba Brahmaputra’. It was never ‘holy’ in that sense. Though some tribe worship it, it was never in a Sanskritized manner. It is a lifeline for the people and is a part of the greater Northeastern culture. Shockingly, the government called more than 20 Brahmins from Haridwar to ‘purify’ Brahmaputra. Was it impure because of we northeastern stay by it, who do not divide people on caste, creed, and eat beef, pork and other meat? or is it because people here don’t care about what is your surname and religion? The North Eastern part of India is known for its cultural heritage, traditions and rich food habits. Here, the ‘cow’ is not a political animal, like any other animal. It is very sad to see, that the members of ruling party in Assam and at the centre have started #BeefPolitics in North East too.

It is the starting of the flood season in Assam and here, the ruling party is engaged with the worshipping ‘Baba Brahmaputra’ and playing petty Beef game. In 2014, they came to power in Assam by promising people of Assam-development and good governance. But, it seems BJP chose to renege. The ruling party and its allies should try not to play BeefPolitics and Hindutva politics in Assam and North East. I assure you, it won’t work here. We are proud of our cultural diversity, and to rule Assam, you need to respect the diversity.

# FOR RSS-BJP CHARITY DOES NOT BEGIN AT HOME

Shamsul Islam\*

Gujarat Assembly on March 31, 2017 passed a new law on cow-slaughter. Anybody involved in this would be awarded life sentence. Next day, in order to outdo Vijay Rupani, CM of Gujarat, the CM of Chattisgarh, Raman Singh announced that anybody found doing it would be hanged. These two chief ministers, if they are serious in revering mother cow, must ask RSS/BJP to begin this process in Goa, Manipur and Arunachal where despite RSS/BJP governments beef is officially available. The rulers there should be tried hanged or imprisoned for life.

Since RSS/BJP are committed to undo wrongs done to Hinduism in the past, they should declare Swami Vivekananda a liar, who while speaking at the Shakespeare Club, Pasadena, California, USA on 2 February 1900 on the theme of 'Buddhistic India' told the gathering:

*"You will be astonished if I tell you that, according to old ceremonials, he is not a good Hindu who does not eat beef. On certain occasions, he must sacrifice a bull and eat it."*

[Swami Vivekananda, The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, vol 3, (Calcutta: Advaita Ashram, 1997), p. 536].

A great expert of ancient India, C. Kunhan Raja who while contributing to the series 'Vedic Culture' for Ramakrishna Mission established by Swami Vivekananda wrote:

*"The Vedic Aryans,  
including the Brahmanas, ate fish, meat and even beef. A distinguished guest was honoured with beef served at a meal. Although the Vedic Aryans ate beef, milch cows were not killed. One of the words that designated cow was aghnya (what shall not be killed). But a guest was a goghna (one for whom a cow is*

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*killed). It is only bulls, barren cows and calves that were killed.”*

[The Cultural Heritage of India, vol 1, The Ramakrishna Mission, Calcutta, 1993, p. 217]

Moreover, Dr. BR Ambedkar based on exclusively Vedic original sources wrote an amazing piece, ‘Did Hindus Never Eat Beef?’ [<http://www.countercurrents.org/ambekar050315.htm>] which proved conclusively that beef was part and parcel of the Vedic life.

Such writings must be banned immediately and the writers must be tried for blasphemy posthumously. The Sanskrit word ‘goghna’ must be removed from the Sanskrit vocabulary.

Unfortunately, India is witnessing a bizarre reality; RSS/BJP feels that they can fool all the people, all the times. If they do not do take action against those who proved that beef was consumed in Vedic India, we will have to alter the proverb, charity begins at home to CHARITY DOES NOT BEGIN AT HOME!

# A HOTELIER ATTACKED IN THE NAME OF BEEF IN JAIPUR

Kavita Srivastava\*

One Kamal didi ( she signs as Kamal didi too) of the Rashtriya Mahila Gau Rakshak Mandal was trying to catch stray cows with the help of the Nagar Nigam to take them to the Gaushalas, when Qasim a cleaner boy from Rabbani Hotel came to throw garbage in an empty plot near the dustbin on Kanti Chandra Road. All the hoteliers and other private residents throw garbage there. Some of the stray cows who were hanging out near the kachra, (The stray cow population of the city is always hovering near dustbins, as they are very hungry) immediately went for the freshly thrown bags, which had food waste along with some chicken / mutton bones.

Kamal Didi immediately started thrashing Qasim that he was trying to pollute the cows with so called beef and dragged him and brought him to the hotel, with 15 other of her followers. Very Soon more than a hundred people joined them later, all wanting Rabbani to come out. The police was called that beef was being Cooked and served in this hotel. The police and the media came together. The Gau Rakshaks are always with the media. When they could not find Rabbani, they picked up Wasim the receptionist and the cleaner and booked them under section 151 CrPC and arrested them. At the hotel they found brochures on the activities of the SIO (the Jamaat Student wing), writings of Maulana Wahauddin and the communal HARMONY campaign literature of Jamait Islami Hind , so the police reached the Jamaat office asking for Naeem Rabbani. When they learnt that he was not there, they went to his house and as said by filmstar Ajeet's in his famous dialogue "uski ma, behen ko utha lao", they picked up the brother in law Abdul Rehamn, who had nothing to do with the hotel. Which is when people got in touch with me.

I and Komal rushed to the Sindhi Camp police station, the police let the brother in law go, it was only on our way out that we learnt that they had picked up two others of the hotel, after dropping Abdul Rehman safely to his relatives, we went back to the police station to meet the other two and get them out. But the police told us that they had been booked and arrested. They would be produced in front of a magistrate and restrained.

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\* Kavita Srivastava belongs to PUCL, Rajasthan



What is interesting is that the protest over the hoax cry that beef was being cooked, resulted in police taking the meat samples and also the Jaipur Municipal Corporation sealing the hotel. They got all the guests out and sealed it. What is sad is that Hyatt Rabbani has been getting awards regularly from the hoteliers association for good service among the other things. Now the hotel is closed. Rabbani is being asked to show up in the morning and will also be restrained under sec 151, Cr PC.

The Muslim community leadership is in a state of shock as to how could the police come under pressure and book Rabbani and pick up his staff over just an allegation of beef being cooked and served when it was all false. They are very upset. The electronic media, has kind of declared that the meat samples were of suspicious nature. Did not seem mutton or chicken.

So even before Yogi Adityanath takes over as UP CM, the rest of their lot are so emboldened that they take no time in declaring a Muslim who runs a hotel as committing blasphemy. Some were also sure that this was done by the next door hotelier who was threatened by their booming business. The ward councillor Nirmala Sharma was also there. Who was directing the JMC staff to seal the hotel. While this was being done, the crowds were shouting Jai Shree Ram. Infact, Jai Shree Ram and other slogans were constantly being raised in the drama which lasted 4 and a half hour. From 6pm to 10.30pm

Qasim and Wasim are spending the night in the police station, Hopefully should be released tomorrow. Rabbani not knowing what has hit him, he was just working hard and doing business, is now preparing to face the police. His hotel has been shut. All guests driven away.

His friends and other members of the Muslim community kept saying that all over Jaipur people are throwing garbage as there are not even garbage bins, why take action against us only. When I told this to a senior police official he said we only act somebody complains.

This is not the first beef related case in Rajasthan. On 30th May 2015 in village Birloka, Khimsar Tehsil, Nagaur District 60-year-old Abdul Ghaffar Qureshi was lynched by a mob for no fault of his. Simply because a rumour spread that Muslims had killed more than 200 cows for a feast and pictures of the carcasses started circulating on social media. Young men in thousands gathered in the fields of Kumhari village where the carcasses were lying as the municipality contractor had rented the field to dispose of a cattle carcass, as a routine municipal exercise, hate speeches and protests took off all over and before one knew Abdul Ghaffar Quereshi who had nothing to do with the incident was beaten with iron rods and killed in the marketplace, despite some of his Hindu

neighbours trying to help him. The hate speech had provoked the neighbourhood to just kill the man as there wanted him out of the village.

# NOW, HARYANA COPS ASK “WHAT’S IN YOUR BIRYANI?”

Binu Mathew\*

India’s beef ban politics has taken a turn for the bizarre with Haryana police have started collecting samples of Biryani sold in Mewat district, the states only Muslim dominated district. The biryani checks are taking place days ahead of Eid festival. The biryani checks have taken many by surprise asking whether the police should be focusing on other crimes in the state which sees the second largest number of complaints to the police.

State Minister Anil Vij on Thursday justified the move, saying: “They (police) are in charge of implementing the law. It is part of their duty to check that beef is not consumed, as it is illegal in India.”

The chief of the Haryana Cow Welfare Commission, Bhani Ram Mangla, visited Mewat on Tuesday and instructed the police to make sure no beef biryani is sold.

“The police have been directed to collect samples of biryani from villages where it is being sold and check which meat has been used to prepare it,” said Bharti Arora, a police officer in the special task force for cow protection.

Police claim to have found beef in the biriyani they have been collecting over the past few days. The samples were tested in a government lab in Hisar.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in a statement strongly condemned the move by the Haryana government to collect samples of Biryani in the Mewat area of the state in the run-up to the Bakri-Id festival. The statement said “this move is allegedly intended to find whether the samples contain beef. Even at the time of enactment of Cow Protection and Conservation Act in the state, the Party had protested against it as it could be misused to terrorise a religious minority and polarise the society. It is important to note that the minority population in Haryana is extremely small and is concentrated in the Mewat area.

It is amply clear that RSS/BJP actually has no concern for the protection of the cow and its progeny. In Goa, the Party defends the right of the people to consume beef. In the North East, it is in favour of beef consumption. But in

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Haryana, clearly, this is being used to terrorise and sharpen communal polarisation with clear political and electoral considerations.

The Polit Bureau demands that this obnoxious campaign with government patronage be stopped forthwith.”

Several State Governments and Union Territories (UTs) have enacted cattle preservation laws in one form or the other. Arunachal Pradesh, Kerala, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Lakshadweep have no legislation. All other states/UTs have enacted legislation to prevent the slaughter of cow and its progeny.

In Haryana, cow protection laws are among the toughest. The punishment for cow slaughter is 10 years in jail and for trading in beef, a person can be jailed for five years.

In December last year, a migrant worker from Uttar Pradesh was shot dead by ‘cow protection vigilante’ team.

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar recently said in an interview that “Muslims can continue to live in this country, but they will have to give up eating beef” because “the cow is an article of faith here”.

On 28 September 2015, a mob lynched a 50-year-old man, Mohammed Akhlaq, over the rumours of eating and storing beef. The Muslim man’s killing led to a massive outrage across the country.

# BJP, DALITS, AND THE ‘COW POLITICS.’

George Abraham\*

“In these four years, I also saw with, some disquiet, forces of divisiveness and intolerance trying to raise their ugly head. Attacks on weaker sections that militate against our national ethos are aberrations that need to be dealt with firmly. The collective wisdom of our society and our polity gives me confidence that such forces will remain marginalised, and India’s remarkable growth story will continue uninterrupted” so said honourable Pranab Mukherjee, President of India, addressing the nation on the eve of the 70th year Independence Day from British colonialism.

It is indeed quite an emphatic and forceful statement coming from the bully pulpit of the highest office in the land. It also put to shame those who refuse to acknowledge the growing intolerance and prejudice that is sweeping across India by the rightwing zealots who are emboldened by the election of Narendra Modi to power. The question to ponder is whether this is only an aberration or a growing trend that may have disastrous consequences to the way of life as we experience it today!

Just as India was celebrating its Independence Day, the word has come out from Bengaluru that SEDITION charges are being filed against Amnesty International of India, an organisation that promotes human rights and creates awareness when it is violated in any part of the world. Once again, it appears that the law enforcement agencies are made pawns by ultra-nationalists who bent upon imposing their version of cultural hegemony on the diverse people of India.

Millions of Indians everywhere must be feeling the shame of India as the President has spoken out on the continuing assaults of Dalits. In a recent incident in Una, Gujarat, four Dalit youths were severely beaten up and dragged on the road for nearly a kilometre for allegedly possessing beef. It is widely known that the so-called upper castes will not touch the carcass and the Dalits are forced clear or handle it and when they do, they are mercilessly beaten up in the name of self-appointed ‘Gau Rakshak Samiti.’

Dalits who constitute one-sixth of India’s population, some 170 million people, live in precarious existence, shunned by much of Indian society because of their rank as “untouchables” or Dalits – meaning broken people – at the bottom of

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India's caste system. Dalits are discriminated against, denied access to land and basic resources, forced to work in degrading conditions, and routinely abused at the hands of police and dominant caste groups that enjoy state's protection.

It appears that the Prime Minister had finally broken his silence when he made a statement in a town hall meeting saying that "I feel really angry that some people have opened shops in the name of cow protection. I have seen that some people commit anti-social activities through the night, but act as cow protectors by day". It is noteworthy that Modi did not call for the prosecution and punishment of these cow vigilantes but asked the authorities to prepare 'dossiers' on them and keep them under control!

Almost a year ago, a mob lynched Mohammed Akhlaq in Dadri U.P. on suspicion of possessing beef in his home refrigerator. Subsequently, the meat was sent for forensic examination. In June, Baliyan, who is a member of Modi's Council of Ministers, BJP MP Yogi Adityanath and BJP MLA Sangeet Som defended the killers and demanded action against the dead man's family for the 'crime of eating beef.'

If there is growing intolerance on the dietary habits of Indians and rising violence by the emboldened vigilante groups who have taken up law unto their hands, many in the current leadership are in complicity lending credence to their nefarious activities with their overt or covert support to this highly charged environment.

Amit Shah, the President of BJP, boasted once that wherever there is a BJP government, there is a ban on the beef. Raja Singh, a member of Parliament, went even further stating that he extends his full support to all those who take it upon themselves to teach those Dalits a valuable lesson! Mohinder Lal Khattar, the current Chief Minister of Haryana, is on the record saying that Muslims can live in the country only if they give up eating beef. Panchajanyam, an RSS newspaper has quoted Vedic scriptures that ordered the killing of sinners who slaughtered cows and the Union Minister of Agriculture Radhamohan Singh termed cow slaughter a 'mortal sin.'

There is no doubt that these vitriolic statements from higher ups have given fodder and cover to these cow vigilantes who roam the streets and become the judge, jury, and the executioners. Since BJP came to power, states like Maharashtra, Haryana and Jharkhand have tightened laws against cow slaughter, but those in the leadership used the beef issue as an emotive political tool without any repercussions from the Prime Minister. In Maharashtra state, one may get five years incarceration for possession of beef as opposed to two years for sexual harassment of a woman!

Prime Minister himself effectively conjured up the spectre of a 'pink revolution' – cow killing on a mass scale – in the event of a BJP's defeat in the 2014 election as a part of a strategy to motivate people and to vote for his party. Both in Western Uttar Pradesh and again in Bihar Modi spoke at length about the dangers of 'pink revolution.' "The agenda of the Congress is the pink revolution," he said. "we have heard of the green revolution and white revolution but never pink, and this means the slaughter of animals (pashu). You see, the colour of mutton is pink, and they are committing the sin of exporting it and bringing revolution...Because of this, our animal wealth is being slaughtered, our cows are being slaughtered, or sent abroad to be slaughtered....And now the Congress is saying, 'if you vote for us, we will give you permission to kill cows'"

It is quite apparent that if Modi has to call the heinous and brutal beating of the Dalit boys in Gujarat as criminal wrongdoing and ask that the perpetrators to be punished, he would have to cross that ideological line he and his party have helped to formulate in attaining the power. However, what he has done with his recent statement to the nation is an attempt to soothe the bruised feelings of Dalits who are critical to the BJP's prospects in the upcoming elections in U.P. and Punjab. What else could explain his silence in all these months when Muslim youths were lynched or beaten up by cow vigilantes?

The very idea of a consolidated vote bank based on the ideology of 'Hindutva' to include the Dalits and other backward castes may be fast unravelling as the video footage of the beating has gone viral and stoked Dalit Anger. The nation also witnessed the de-recognition of the Ambedkar Students Association in Chennai, mistreatment and subsequent suicide of the Dalit scholar Rohit Vemula in Hyderabad, torching of a Dalit home in Haryana and killing of the two children. All these incidents may only reinforce the age-old Dalit thinking that BJP is essentially a party dominated by an upper caste ideology, and there may be very little room left in it for anyone else!

# NARENDRA MODI, THE MACHIAVELLIAN PRINCE OF INDIA

Sukumaran CV\*

It is essential to understand this: that a prince cannot observe all those things for which men are considered good, for in order to maintain the state he is often obliged to act against his promise, against charity, against humanity, and against religion.—Machiavelli

The 18th chapter of Niccolo Machiavelli's famous work *The Prince* is titled "How a Prince Should Keep His Word" and the very beginning of the chapter is as follows: "How praiseworthy it is for a prince to keep his word...nevertheless the princes who have accomplished great deeds are those who have cared little for keeping their promises and who have known how to manipulate the minds of men by shrewdness."

Doesn't the image of our Prime Minister come to your mind when you read the above-quoted sentences of Machiavelli?

The gau rakshaks publicly flogged four Dalits in Una on July 11, and nearly one month after, Narendra Modi reacted 'sternly' by saying that the government will not tolerate atrocities against the Dalits and in his characteristic rhetoric, he said: "You can shoot me rather than targeting the Dalits." Who are the 'You'? The gau rakshaks? No. You and I and everybody who has no role in the atrocities against Dalits are included in that 'You', but nobody who perpetrates the atrocities. Modi doesn't want the gau rakshaks hear his criticism and the gau rakshaks don't mind his criticism either, because the 'criticism' is meant to satisfy those who are against such vigilantism.

Narendra Modi is a consummate politician who has used the politics of silence to look the other way when violence is perpetrated on the hapless people by those who are the part and parcel of the political organisation or party he represents.

He has used this silence in 2002 when hundreds of innocent people were being butchered on the streets of Gujarat. "On March 6, as many as 96 bodies of genocide victims were buried in a mass grave in the Dudheswar graveyard....another mass grave for about 200 victims was being readied in Sarkhej...A big grave was dug and the bodies lowered into it one by one. ...

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Among them were five children, including a six-month-old baby; 46 women, including one who was pregnant, and a handicapped man whose crutches lay by the side. 500 persons silently watched and prayed. CM Narendra Modi driving less than a kilometre away did not visit the graveyard.”—says Communalism Combat (March-April 2002, page 19).

He has used this silence when Muhammad Akhlaq was lynched in 2015, and when the Dalit youths were flogged in 2016. After using the silence of politics very fruitfully, he would use his rhetoric to ‘condemn’ the ‘anti-social elements’ in order to reiterate his distance from them. Of course, he keeps his safe distance from them. He doesn’t have the intention to reign in the vigilante and other fringe groups who have donned the mantle of protecting the cow and the culture of India, especially since Mr. Modi became the PM. At the same time, with his rhetoric, he unfailingly sends the message that he ‘criticises’ such vandalism in strong words. That is all.

It seems that the nature of all our politicians can well be explained by the words of Machiavelli. But Modi becomes the perfect politician to suit Machiavellian description of a good prince. He says that “it is not necessary for a prince to have all qualities, but it is necessary for him to appear to have them. Furthermore, I shall be so bold as to assert this: that having them and practising them at all times is harmful; and appearing to have them is useful; for instance, to seem merciful, faithful, humane, trustworthy, religious and to be so; but his mind should be disposed in such a way that should it become necessary not to be so, he will be able and know how to change to the contrary.”

What we witness in our country today can only be explained fully through the words of Jawaharlal Nehru: “[T]he alliance of religion and politics in the shape of communalism is a most dangerous alliance, and it yields the most abnormal kind of illegitimate brood...the combination of politics and of religion in the narrowest sense of the word, resulting in communal politics is —there can be no doubt—a most dangerous combination and must be put an end to. This combination is harmful to the country as a whole.”

It seems that Indian democracy is under siege from the vigilante groups—the most abnormal kind of illegitimate brood Jawaharlal Nehru refers to. What we witness today in our country is the vigilantes of various hues belonging to a particular religion enjoying impunity to indulge in hooliganism in the name of protecting the cow or the culture. In a democracy, the weakest sections should enjoy safety and security just as the strongest section. But in the present day, India atrocities are perpetrated on the Dalits and Adivasis with greater impunity than in ancient India. The killing of Kalburgi in Karnataka, the lynching of Mohammad Akhlaq in U P, the flogging of Dalit youths in Una, spring from the

same source –the cultural intolerance that is diametrically opposite to democratic values.

The basic problem seems to be that the Modi government has nothing to deliver for the well-being of the people as a whole, especially of the downtrodden. The government is looking after the affairs of the corporate sector indeed and only in words it looks after the downtrodden. That is why the vigilante groups are given absolute freedom to ‘engage’ the people. In his 32-minute long speech delivered extempore at the Central Hall of Parliament on 20th May 2014, Narendra Modi said that his “government is one which thinks about the poor, listens to the poor and which exists for the poor. ... The new government is dedicated to the poor. This government is for the villagers, farmers, Dalits and the oppressed, for their aspirations and this is our responsibility.”

We have a Prime Minister who said that this government is for the Dalits, and the same Prime Minister says nothing when Dalits are publicly flogged by the gau rakshaks. Everybody knows on whose side he stands, but with his rhetoric, he tries to convince the civilised world that he criticises the vigilantism that targets the Dalits.

The day after tomorrow we are going to celebrate the 69th Independence Day and we are going to hear the Prime Minister’s commitments towards the poor and the downtrodden in his passionate rhetoric. You should not compare his speech with the realities; the speech is only a speech, that is all.

# COW PROTECTORS: FAKE AND REAL

T Navin\*

The Prime Minister came out with statements condemning the act of Cow vigilante groups. By stating that most of self styled cow protectors are anti-social elements, he tried to create a dichotomy that there are fake and real protectors. Fake protectors are into anti-social activities, resort to violence, and ignore important issues such as cow deaths due to consumption of plastics. On the other hand the real protectors are non-violent, socially constructive and take up genuine issues related to cow. A statement by RSS Chief Suresh Bhiyyaji was released immediately in which he said that such groups should not be linked to those who carry out pious work in cow protection. The process of creating this dichotomy is only an attempt at depicting the Sanghi affiliated cow protection groups as non-violent, socially constructive and genuine and being different from other groups.

In such circumstances, it would be important to look into the statements by some of the RSS affiliated groups on cow issue. Sadhvi Prachi, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader earlier in the year referring to violence in Dadri had mentioned that “those who consume beef deserve such actions against them”. National Convener of Bajrang Dal a day before the statement by prime minister stated “those involved in smuggling and slaughter of cows will not get spared. Dadri is an example of this”. BJs Raja Singh referring to Gujarat event had mentioned in his Facebook posting that “those Dalits who were taking the cow, the cow meat, those who were beaten, it was a very good thing to happen”. Each of these statements clearly shows that there is a thin line between fake and real protectors. Those who resort to violence (by fake protectors) are justified by the Sanghi groups (real protectors). VHP (real protectors) a part of the Sangh Parivar and other vigilante groups (fake protectors) both are questioning the PM for being critical of Gow Rakshaks. So what is the line of control between fake and real?

It is also important to look into their texts on cow protection which incites violence provoking thoughts. RSS texts do invoke hatred in the name of cow through equating beef eating to Religion. Golwalkar in Bunch of thoughts mentions that “We are to protect the cow not because the cow has been for ages an emblem of Hindu devotion but because the Muslims kill it”. Anyone

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within its consideration of Hindu fold but into eating beef is automatically termed to be culturally in non-Hindu category. Referring to a person who questioned practice of eating beef by a Hindu, it states “Muslims and their vices had left their deep impress upon his mind and made him culturally a Muslim, though he remained politically a Hindu”. Referring to beef eating by a Muslim, it also states “If we worship cow, he would like to eat it.” This logic only means that all categories in Hindu fold who are into eating beef are Muslims. The RSS official mouthpiece Organizer too earlier published a front page article stating that the Vedas sanctioned the killing of anyone who slaughtered a cow. Taken together these only mean that the act of resorting to violence in the name of cow slaughter is justified.

Violence in the name of cow protection has been an integral part of Hindu mobilisation by Sangh Parivar. In 2002, five Dalits were lynched to death in Jhajjar, Haryana, by a frenzied mob. At the heart of the incident was the cow-slaughter theory. In January 2003, VHP attacked home of a Muslim under the pretext of cow slaughtering. Within hours 132 of 144 Muslim shops were burnt by Sangh Parivar. Dadri and Gujarat incidents are only the recent ones. Such instances only show that non-violent nature of real cow protectors in the form of Sangh Parivar is only an illusion.

It is also important to note that what the Prime Minister claims to be fake Cow protectors were more emboldened in BJP ruled states. Bhartiya Gow Raksha Dal incidents of lynching cattle traders, mostly from minority Muslim community and Dalits are in BJP-led states like Gujarat, Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. Hence it lends little credibility to the point that state governments should maintain dossiers and keep a watch of such protectors.

The ideological basis of Hindutva and actions by Sangh Parivar only lend little credence to the fake vs. real cow protectors.

# MODI SAYS “SHOOT”! BUT WHOM?

Samar\*

Narendra Modi’s high octane poll campaign was littered with the promise of Development, with a capital D. Big business, in India and abroad, had bought his promise too. And now, after a little more than 2 years old premiership, the developments under his watch have rattled most of them. The ‘developments’ were not the “development” they were looking for. Further, the consequences of developments under Modi were harming their prospects.

The growth he had promised was nowhere to be seen in economy. The only thing that had really grown under him was violence- be it large scale ones for quotas that crippled Haryana and Gujarat for weeks or its MSME version- Micro, Small and Medium level violence committed by self-appointed and regime supported cow vigilantes running amok and bleeding everyone in their way- from farmers to people traditionally dependent on skinning dead cattle and dealing in hides.

Leather industry was an obvious loser with almost 10% decline in exports in 2015 as compared to 2014. Yet, it was not the only one. For instance, cricket, the religion that unites Indians, was an unlikely victim with balls costs soaring multiple times. They had to, as the best balls are made of cow skin sheets and they were nowhere to be found in Modi’s India. The industry, overall, was worried and it showed in its clarion calls.

Others were worried about violence too- albeit more over its social costs than economic ones. The media was one of them, of course with the notable exception of most of Indian electronic media. The New York Times summed up the anger in its editorial that slammed PM Modi’s ‘shameful silence on cow vigilantes’. The ever so conscious of his image abroad PM was expected to take note, and that he did the day after, fittingly in an event mimicking ‘Townhall’ addresses of President Obama.

The outburst against Gau Rakshaks (cow protectors) was stunning to say the least, more so from someone who had made his political career attending cow protection events and slamming an imaginary “pink revolution” based on cow slaughter. Yes, imaginary, as the statistics showed that even as Modi talked about large scale cow slaughter, the population of cows in India grew by more than 6%. The outburst was even more spectacular in its sustainability, PM Modi

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slammed the cow vigilantes again in less than 24 hours, this time in a meeting with Bhartiya Janata Party members in Telangana.

Unfortunately, a closer look at, or listening to, the outburst must have sent shivers down the spine of those who believe in democracy and rule of law and all that both these terms entail. In the townhall meeting at Delhi, named MyGov anniversary meeting, Modi expressed deep anguish at cow vigilantes and termed 80 percent of them as rank anti socials. He accused them of wearing the garb of cow protectionism to hide their criminal activities.

He went a little further a day later, in Telangana meeting, and pleaded for stopping the violence against his “Dalit Brethren” at once! Here is what he said exactly:

“I would like to tell these people that if you have any problem, if you have to attack, attack me. Stop attacking my Dalit brethren. If you have to shoot, shoot me, but not my Dalit brothers. This game should stop”.

Nothing wrong in the statement itself, unless one notices the spectacular omission. The omission of Muslims, the prime target of the violence by the cow vigilantes till the focus shifted towards Dalits! Yes, he had not even bothered to mention the need of stopping the cow vigilante violence against Muslims, forget expressing any anguish for them!

Not that he could be unaware of the facts. He had to break his silence on Dadri where a mob had lynched a man over suspicion of beef consumption. The news of similar attacks in Pratapgarh, Rajasthan, lynching and hanging of two Muslims, one a minor in Latehar, Jharkhand, killing of another in Nahan, Himachal Pradesh and recent attack on Muslim women in Mandsaur, Madhya Pradesh were all over the place.

Why, then, PM Modi singled out his ‘Dalit Brethren’ while leaving Muslims, equal citizens of India out completely? The only possible explanation for the bizarre, and unbecoming of the leader of the country, omission can be an attempt to create a rift between Dalits and Muslims- tied together both by economics of leather and attacks by vigilantes. Both the communities have come together strongly in the recent past to take on the cow vigilantes and their political handlers, and it must have rung alarm bells among PM’s right wing Hindutva party. Howsoever divisive his past could be, a PM doing this is plain shocking and ominous for the Republic.

Sadly, the problem with his outburst doesn’t stop at polarising. It rather went several notches up with his melodramatic, almost Bollywoodish call of ‘come and shoot me, but not my Dalit Brothers’. Was that some sort of admission that law enforcement agencies of India cannot take on these outlaw vigilante

groups? Or it was a backhand message to them to read through what he omitted and not take his outburst seriously? It is not every day that a PM of a country aspiring to be a superpower pleads to criminals for attacking him and sparing his brothers!

This also exposes the final chink hidden in the armour of this supposedly anguished outburst. It was not really an outburst- it was rather a 20 to 30 percent controlled shrewd political statement. PM Modi did not stop at asking for identifying and cracking down on 70 to 80 percent criminals among the ranks of cow vigilantes. He also called for identifying the real ones and respecting and supporting them. In plain words that is nothing but legitimising and institutionalising vigilantism and that's dangerous for a democratic country that operates by rule of law. Vigilantism is illegal in any form in a country that follows rule of law. All the grievances in such a country should be channelled by public institutions of justice and law enforcement, not by vigilantes. Even if they are, as PM insinuated, true cow worshipers.

Looking at it whichever way, the outburst doesn't augur well for our beloved country.

# NEW YORK TIMES CALLS MODI'S SILENCE "SHAMEFUL"

Samar\*

One doesn't often see a respected international media house asking a democratic republic's prime minister to break his silence in an editorial. Even more rare is it to see this "silence" tagged with the adjective "shameful". The New York Times did exactly that today, 4 August 2016. The editorial forewarns Mr. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, of the bleak future awaiting him and his political party if he "does not break his shameful silence on cow vigilantes, and reset his political compass on a course of economic opportunity, dignity and justice."

Poignantly, the newspaper has done its homework. It has recounted a number of instances of vigilante violence against the country's Dalits and Muslims. It has also documented the very visible and vocal support these vigilantes are getting from elements entrenched in the regime. It quoted the President of the Bhartiya Janata Party, a right wing political party in power, as well as elected members of the country's legislative bodies.

As a result, the newspaper cannot be faulted by say anti or post-colonial victimhood pretensions, racism, or even the time tested patriotic "don't interfere in our country's internal affairs" ruse.

The government of India has in the past claimed caste issues as an "internal matter of India". It did that, for instance, when it opposed demands to make caste based discrimination an aspect of racial discrimination at the Durban World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, 2001 and also in its failed opposition to Britain's decision of including caste based discrimination as aspect of racism in its Equality Act, 2010.

It has repeatedly asserted that the Indian State was making all attempts to put an end to caste-based discrimination. This, ironically, goes against its own glorious legacy of struggle against apartheid in South Africa. One can simply ask, as was asked earlier too: "If caste issues are an internal matter of India, would not apartheid be an internal issue of the governments of apartheid-era South Africa?"

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Vigilante violence is essentially lawless, and any government supporting it either by commission or omission cannot claim to be a government abiding by the rule of law and thus immune to the international community's scrutiny in its internal matters. Sadly, the incumbent government of India has supported such violence since it came to power in May 2014. Instead of strengthening police and justice institutions, it has been accused, often convincingly, of trying to align law enforcement with vigilantes affiliated with regressive politics.

India has witnessed numerous cases of cow vigilantes attacking those they suspect of smuggling cows, with the law enforcement agencies choosing to look away. The police have mostly remained a silent spectator to such attacks/beatings/lynchings and have then booked the victims, not the tormentors, under the animal cruelty act.

Ironically, it would be difficult to fault them for what India has become today: It is an India where the remarks of Bihar M.P. Rajesh Ranjan, alias Pappu Yadav, were expunged from the records of Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Indian Parliament, for privileging the life of a human over that of a cow, and thus offending sensibilities of a few fellow parliamentarians!

Yes, you have read right. The Parliament of India found the statement privileging life of a human over that of a cow being unparliamentary and expunged it!

Now, the recurrent and increasingly violent cow vigilante attacks on Dalits and Muslims should have put the government in a fire-fighting mode and restore the law and order, at least. Its tacit support to the lawless crowds, on the other hand, has sent a different message altogether: any group capable of indulging in violence can get whatever it wants. The country has seen the gory consequences of the message ever since: the violence that rocked Gujarat when the Patels, a caste community, demanded reservation; when Haryana burned for days over a similar demand by the Jat community; and when in Andhra Pradesh the Kapus came to the streets.

This time, however, the stakes have gone up; is not merely the vigilantes who are on the streets. The victims, dejected with the State's failure in protecting them, and convinced of its tacit support to perpetrators, are on the streets too. Gujarat has been on the boil, as Dalits are on the streets seeking justice. Had they turned violent like the vigilantes, it would have resulted in mayhem.

Alas, it is not about Gujarat alone. Both the attacks and anger against these attacks are at a tipping point, at the very least in the states of Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh. This is almost half of India in terms of population. With Gujarat alone having caused so much consternation, the message is on the wall.

It is high time for the government of India, and its Prime Minister, to take heed of the advice, act against cow vigilantes, and invest in providing economic opportunity, dignity, and justice. It must also remember that just reigning in the vigilantes will not suffice; disbanding them altogether is the only way ahead.

# AN ESSAY ON COW

T Navin\*

*The lesson on Cow is a popular lesson among School children. If School Children were asked to recite an essay on Cow in present times, it would go like this:*

Cow is a sacred animal for some Hindus. Cow is our new national animal. This is not yet made official. But our Government led by Sri. Narendra Modi ji has made it an unofficial national animal.

Cow has four legs. Our prime minister has given each leg of cow a new role. The first leg is communal leg. The second leg is caste leg. The third leg is fascist leg and the fourth leg is Hindu leg. She has two eyes. Each eye has been given a task. The first eye is hatred eye and the second eye is violent eye. Cow feels bad with this new role.

Cow is an important political animal. She is a national animal domesticated by Bharatiya Janata Party. She provides a lot of benefits. She is a humble animal and completely unselfish. She provides political milk to BJP in the form of votes. From this political milk called votes, BJP is able to convert it into pure cow ghee called seats in assembly and parliament. From this pure ghee is prepared the tasty sweets in the shape of powerful political positions. Cow helps BJP politically so much. But she does not demand anything back in return from its masters.

Cow also offers its services to its main master the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). While she offers her services, she does never question its masters RSS and BJP. Cow has been given the role by its masters to help maintain the caste divide in Hinduism. Cow has been maintaining this caste divide from times immemorial. Her masters maintain laws of Manu Smriti and Brahmanical order through use of Cow. Those who eat beef are put under impure category and others under pure category. Thus cow is used to create highs and lows based on beef eating practices.

Cow is used to promote Brahmanism. However, Brahmins were once eaters of Beef. Maharshi Yagyavalkya in Shatpath Brahmin pointed "I eat beef because it is very soft and delicious". In Rigveda, it is stated, "Indra used to eat the meat of cow, calf, horse and buffalo". In one of his writings, Swami Vivekanand says

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“You will be surprised to know that according to ancient Hindu rites and rituals, a man cannot be a good Hindu who does not eat beef”.

Cow also helps its masters to create divide between Hindus and Muslims. Her masters say that she is a sacred animal for Hindus. Anyone who is suspected of eating beef is lynched. The lynchings are offered complete protection by RSS/BJP.

Beef consumption was a practice much before the emergence of Muslim rulers in India. It was part of Indian dietary practices. Cow has become a prisoner as she gets used for bringing religious divide.

The real Cow is a non-violent animal. She is called mother by her masters. But her masters are totally violent. They use violence using her name. Cow soldiers named as GauRakshaks as body guards use her name to undertake physical attacks on Dalits and minorities. They do this in the name of protecting cow and serving its masters RSS/BJP.

Cow has now become an inspiration for the Dalits. They are saying “No” to handling dead carcass of cow.

Cow was used by her masters to suppress others till now. But now the Cow has started shaking her own masters the RSS / BJP. Cow has now become a symbol for Dalits to shake the purists. Cow is now a liberative animal for the Dalits. Now the cow has become a sacred animal for the Dalits.

# ONION-EATERS OF KERALA

B.F.Firos\*

When Qutubuddin Ansari, the now-familiar face of Gujarat genocide, met Ashok Mochi, the Bajrang Dal leader who was pictured brandishing a sword during the riots, at a conciliatory event organised by the Kerala unit of CPM in Kannur, so many enthusiastic locals made a beeline to meet and greet the duo. Later, they told the media: “So many people came to see us here. But we couldn’t make out their religion.”

It was their epiphanic moment; a realisation, and a far-cry from the greatly polarised and communally compartmentalised state they hail from. No doubt, they were in thrall of the distinctive characteristics of Kerala.

It is precisely this entrenched social system that helped Kerala fend off Sangh Parivar from pulling the state into the national quagmire of cow, its latest political tool, after the due expiration of the shelf value of Ram Mandir and Love Jihad. Primetime TV debates saw demagogic BJP leaders justifying the Dadri killing. But that cut no ice with the Kerala civil society. The many public beef fests conducted by Left student unions across the state saw crowds swarming and relishing the spicy beef served hot.

The BJP’s primetime-news warriors won’t be keen to admit it, but the fact is that beef is considered a secular (and succulent) meat in Kerala! And Hindus, obviously, are no exception when it comes to basking in this delectable beef journey. Undoubtedly, they will collectively show their impulsive middle fingers to anyone who will lecture them to skip their favourite parotta-beef combo. They prefer beef ecstasy to communal ecstasy and invariably scorn anyone who tries to hard sell the Sangh Parivar’s latest election tool in cow form.

Definitely vegetarians, a relative minority, do exist and they remain so not because they are intoxicated by any RSS ideology, but out of personal or religious reasons.

And, the Hindus (and other communities as well) in Kerala are mature enough to show political propriety and social sobriety to take this meat off their dining tables if eating it truly, madly and deeply hurts the religious sentiments of any Holy Texts; but they are unlikely to succumb to the poll pranks of RSS’s political face BJP.

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K Surendran of BJP, one of the many 'leaders' whose only ticket to political glory is his almost-daily nocturnal appearances on TV primetime news, fell into a hot soup after a photo of him apparently munching parotta and beef in a restaurant went viral, making him the butt of massive trolling and online ridicule. He immediately went on defensive mode, saying that it was onion curry, not beef.

Thank God something like onion existed lest he wouldn't have been able to make a deft use of it in order to easily extricate himself from the gastronomy-induced political predicament he found immersed in.

Parotta-beef is a staple diet of Keralites. But parotta and onion curry is as weird a combo as Mother Teresa and Hitler! And the culinary connoisseurs of Kerala have knighted Surendran for adding this exotic culinary combination into the dining tables. And fervent efforts (GPS-Google included) to locate the restaurant selling this rare onion curry met with little success!

A social media user expressed his dismay over Surendran's discovery in an online forum this way:

"It looks like he is eating parotta, I am from Kerala and I never been to a restaurant that offers parotta and Onion curry....it is always parotta and beef curry.....so he is most likely lying....most people in Kerala eat beef....then again i think its more Buffalo meat than beef."

History teaches us that Kerala Hindus have shunned regressive practices like untouchability et al a long time ago, much before RSS reared its ugly head, and embraced modernity and civility, thanks to a wave of social reforms and renaissance movements and the good works of Christian missionaries. And efforts to airdrop the North Indian version of the caste system and all its concomitant paraphernalia including the cow-is-the-mother dogma into the state may not fetch the desired results, though it is a fact that BJP has made inroads here. But despite everything, it continues to be a liberal bastion till this day.

So Surendran need not to worry about the food on his plate as long as he lives in Kerala. He can eat whatever he wants in a place like this, even though his party's attempt is to take away that very personal freedom.

# SERMONS

Sheshu Babu\*

Brothers! Sisters! Every citizen !  
These are days of bovine !  
If you look at farmer with a cow<sup>104</sup>  
Catch him somehow  
Follow and thrash them  
Creating mayhem!

Every citizen! Listen!  
These are days of divine!  
If you see Muslims praying Rahim <sup>105</sup>  
Force them to chant Ram! Ram!  
Till they divert  
Their attention and convert

People of the nation!  
These are days of saffronisation!  
Where ruthless administration  
Stifles students discussion  
On food rights and beef ban ! <sup>106</sup>  
Attack teachers and activists

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\* Sheshu Babu is a writer from anywhere and everywhere and who wants to foster the whole world.

<sup>104</sup> Pehlu khan attacked April 7, 2017 ( Times of India)

<sup>105</sup> Don't take Allah name say Sri ram ( Kractivist.org)

<sup>106</sup> IIT beef festival

The Political Economy of Beef Ban

Brand them as terrorists !

But,

Brothers! Sisters! Listen!

In these days of male domination

When women are raped and humiliated

And disabled incarcerated

Hindutva forces on the prowl

Media news is fake and foul

Every step is haphazard

And every moment a hazard

So,

Brothers ! Sisters ! Listen !

Unite and hasten

To counter cow vigilantes

Forced religious conversions

Voice right to dissent

And rights of women empowerment

Release of illegal detainees

Without speedy trial and justice



