

A SOCIO-PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF ANIMAL SLAUGHTER BAN IN INDIA

*** Dr. Abhinay Kumar**

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21076407>

Abstract:

This research paper analyzes in depth the contradiction between the theoretical basis and practical consequences of a hypothetical nationwide ban on all types of animal slaughter in India. The philosophical principle of non-violence, which is deeply rooted in Jain, Buddhist, Hindu and Gandhian thought. All these philosophical principles of non-violence present a high moral ideal. But, when this philosophical principle ideal of non-violence converts into a homogeneous legal order, it will create serious conflict with India's complex socio-cultural plurality, economic viability, ecological stability and constitutional democratic values. Using a qualitative methodology, this study concludes that such a ban will disproportionately adversely affect religious minorities (Muslim, Christian), Dalit and tribal communities, and livestock-dependent livelihoods, in violation of the principles of social justice. It will disintegrate the country's integrated livestock economy (milk, meat, skin). The stray will make the crisis of animals worse. and violate the fundamental rights of religious freedom, freedom of business and equality. Ultimately, this study comes to the conclusion that the universal ideal of non-violence cannot be achieved through punitive restriction. Rather, the universal ideal of non-violence is possible only through an inclusive regulation-based context, sensitive and welfare-centric policy framework. This inclusive regulation-based context, sensitive and welfare-centric policy will establish respect and harmony with socio-economic reality and constitutional values in achieving the universal ideal of non-violence.

Keywords: Nonviolence, Animal slaughter ban, livestock economy, Religious plurality, Constitutional rights, Social justice, India.

**Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, Kartik Oraon College, Gumla*

Introduction:

The duality between the ideal and practicality of non-violence on the platform of Indian civilization and philosophy, the principle of non-violence, i.e., non-violence against any creature, has always existed as a fundamental and profound moral formula. It is not just a conduct, but a philosophical departure point that defines the overall attitude towards life. This is the highest state of the Supreme Dharma in Jainism. In Buddhism, it is the basis of compassion and right livelihood. And in the Upanishads and Gita of the Hindu philosophical tradition, it is an essential part of the path to salvation. In modern India, Mahatma Gandhi lifted this principle from an individual morality to establish it as a powerful weapon of collective political resistance and social change. The concept of non-violence permeates deeply in Indian consciousness as a symbol of morality, spirituality and social reform. But, parallel to this high philosophical ideal, India's socio-cultural and economic history has been witness to a complex and multifaceted reality of animal use and consumption. In the Vedic era, sacrifice of sacrificial animal sacrifice was prevalent. Ancient medical texts describe the medicinal properties of meat. From the medieval period to modern times, diet and livelihood systems based on animal products have developed in various religious communities (such as halal among Muslims,

specific non-vegetarian traditions among Christians) and cultural groups (especially tribal and Dalit communities). This duality has been an integral part of the historical fabric of Indian society on the one hand and the practical imperative of animal use on the other. This duality raises not only a practical problem, but also a profound philosophical question: Can the ideal of moral purity be achieved by imposing uniformity on the complexities of collective life?

In post-independence India, this duality has become a complex political and legal dispute. Under the Directive Principles of the Constitution, Article 48 directs the state to ban animal slaughter (especially milch and carrier animals). As a result, most Indian states have restrictions or stringent regulations on the slaughter of cows. However, this research article explores a serious "contradiction" at the core of this proposal. Does a moral philosophical ideal, when moulded into a homogeneous legal order, still maintain its morality? Can a highly diverse, multi-religious, multicultural and socio-economically stratified democracy like India, a policy that imposes uniformity in terms of diet, livelihood and religious conduct can be just, practical or desirable?

In search of an answer to this central question, this study presents a consolidated and in-depth analysis of the socio-cultural (religious and ethnic), economic, ecological,

and constitutional dimensions of the proposed complete ban. This argument analyzes that a complete animal slaughter ban in the name of non-violence can actually lead to social injustice, economic disparity, ecological imbalance, and erosion of constitutional values, which will itself result in the opposite of the ideal of non-violence. The true meaning of non-violence is non-violence not only towards animals but also towards humans, their diversity, rights and dignity.

Historical context: coexistence of non-violence, sacrifice and practicality

There has not always been uniformity in attitudes towards animals and their use in the Indian subcontinent; it has been a history of dynamic and multifaceted thought. In which the ideals of non-violence, religious practices of sacrifice and economic-cultural practicalities have existed together.

Table 1: Nonviolence and Animal Use in Indian History: A Chronological Approach

The following table presents an essence of this historic journey:

Period (estimation)	Major ideology/influence	The approach of animal slaughter / sacrifice	Major texts / evidence	Contemporary effects
1500-500 BCE	Vedic tradition	Animal sacrifice in sacrifice is a prevalent and desired religious act.	Rigveda, Ashwamedha, Rajsuya Yagna description.	Religious rituals, social prestige and association

Period (estimation)	Major ideology/influence	The approach of animal slaughter / sacrifice	Major texts / evidence	Contemporary effects
800-200 BCE	Upanishadic philosophy	Criticism of sacrifice, rendering non-violence as a high spiritual principle.	Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (6.2.13-14).	The beginning of tension between ideal and behavior; spiritualization of non-violence.
600 BCE onwards	Sramana tradition (Jain, Buddhist)	Declared non-violence as the ultimate religion/supreme morality. Strong condemnation of animal sacrifice.	Jain Agam; Buddhist Tripitaka (the teachings of Buddha).	The status of virtuous conduct to vegetarianism; profound impact on social morality.
200 BCE-200 CE	Theology / memory literature	complexity and practical adjustments. Non-violence ideal, but allowing non-vegetarianism	Manu Smriti (5.31-32, 5.56); Mahabharata.	Code of diet according to social stratification; the duality of

Period (estimation)	Major ideology/influence	The approach of animal slaughter / sacrifice	Major texts / evidence	Contemporary effects
		sm in specific contexts.		ideals and ethos established.
Medieval (1200 CE onwards)	Islamic influence	The status of a religious ritual to slaughter in the Halal system. Religious duty required to sacrifice.	Quran; Islamic jurisprudence.	New dimension in Indian cuisine and religious landscape; linkage to communal identity.
pre-modern period	Tribal/local traditions	Hunting, fishing and animal husbandry are part of livelihood and cultural identity. Animal sacrifice included in religious rituals.	Oral traditions, folklore.	Symbolism with nature; conservation of cultural diversity.
19th-20th century	Colonial period and Gandhism	Politicization of cow protection; Gandhi's conversion of non-violence into active socio-political philosophy.	Gandhi Rachnavali; colonial records.	A medium of nationalist and communal mobilization; the concept

Period (estimation)	Major ideology/influence	The approach of animal slaughter / sacrifice	Major texts / evidence	Contemporary effects
		Moral choice of vegetarianism, but opposition to legal coercion.		of self-confidence for change.

Source: Compiled by the author based on various historical and religious texts.

It is clear from the chronology shown in this table that the ideal of non-violence in India has never been a stable and unanimous principle; rather it has been a dynamic idea, which has been communicating and struggling with various religious, philosophical and social forces.

Vedic and early Hindu tradition: transition from sacrifice to non-violence

Vedic literature (about 1500-500 BC) is a witness to the practice of animal sacrifice (yajna). Horses and other animals were sacrificed in Mahayagyas such as Ashwamedha, Rajasuya, which was considered necessary for the establishment of prosperity, power and kingship (Doniger, 2009). Some of the Rigveda mantras describe the sacrifice of a horse. This practice was associated with religious rituals and social prestige. However, there is a philosophical change in the Upanishads (about 800-200 BC). The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (6.2.13-14) criticizes animal sacrifice and describes it as the karma of the 'ignorant' people. This

transition period symbolizes the tension between the sacrificial practice and non-violence. Here non-violence began to be associated with a higher spiritual knowledge.

Sramana Traditions: The extreme expression of non-violence in Jain and Buddhist philosophy

Jainism and Buddhism, which emerged in the sixth century BC, established non-violence as the highest moral principle. In Jainism, non-violence (Ahimsa Paramo Dharma) is not just karma but a very subtle concept of not hurting any creature with mind, word and body. It is the essential path to self-purification and salvation (Chapple, 1993). In Buddhism, non-violence stems from compassion (compassion) and is the basis of a right livelihood. Gautama Buddha strongly criticized animal sacrifice and described it as meaningless and violent. The impact of these traditions was profound on Indian society and vegetarianism gained a reputation as a virtuous conduct.

Theology and memory literature: the philosophy of complexity and duality

This complexity expanded further in theological texts such as Manusmriti. On the one hand, Manusmriti (5.56) states, 'A man who eats meat eats God, it is the opinion of scholars.' But on the other hand, it also allows the consumption of different types of meat, especially as the remaining offerings of the sacrifice (Manusmriti 5.31-32). The

Shanti Parv of the Mahabharata also praises non-violence, as well as details of hunting by kings. In the Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 17), in the discussion of Satvik, Rajasik and Tamasik diet, non-vegetarian is described as Rajasik or Tamasik, which is a barrier to spiritual progress. This duality shows that non-violence was an ideal in classical Hindu thought, but different rules were applicable to different contexts and classes in social practice. This is a clear indication that Hinduism has never taken a uniform and absolute stance towards animal use.

Medieval period and the influence of Islam: the inclusion of new dimensions

With the advent of Islam in the medieval period, the practice of slaughter of animals was established by the halal method. The practice of sacrifice, especially on the occasion of *Eid-ul-Adha*, is the center of the religious identity of the Muslim community. This practice is performed in memory of the obedience and renunciation of Prophet Abraham. In Islamic tradition, slaughter must be done under a certain ritualistic process (halal), which strives to ensure minimum suffering towards the animal. There are examples of communal harmony as well as tensions over cow protection during this period, which began to turn the issue of animal slaughter into a socio-political symbol.

Tribal and local communities: symbiosis with nature

The cultural and economic system of India's tribal communities (tribes) has often been based on hunting, fishing and animal husbandry. For these communities, animals are not only a source of protein but also an integral part of religious rituals and social gatherings. For example, pork is a symbol of social prosperity and celebrations in many communities in northeast India. Hunting and animal sacrifice in tribal communities of central India are linked to their myths and belief systems. These practices are linked to centuries-old beliefs and cultural identities.

Colonial period and Gandhism: politicization of non-violence

During the British period, the cow protection movement emerged as a means of building a communal identity and political mobilization (Freitag, 1980). Mahatma Gandhi transformed non-violence into an active political and social philosophy. For him, non-violence was compassion and respect not only for animals, but also for all beings, even the adversary. Gandhiji gave moral grounds to vegetarianism, but he was opposed to legal coercion. He believed that change should come from a change of heart, not from fear of punishment. His view was clear that the path of non-violence is voluntarily adopted self-discipline, not the external rule imposed by the state.

It is clear from this historical perspective that the ideal of non-violence in India has been a dynamic idea, rather than a stable and unanimous principle, which has been communicating and struggling with various religious, philosophical and social forces. This history provides an essential background for understanding the complexities of the proposed uniform legal ban.

Literature Review

There is a rich literature available in India on animal slaughter, non-violence and related policies, which seeks to understand the subject from various disciplinary perspectives.

Historical scholars have shed light on the history of non-vegetarian and animal sacrifice in India. Jha (2002) wrote his impressive work 'The Myth of the Holy Cow.' It has presented solid historical evidence of the consumption of various types of meat, including beef, in ancient and medieval India. They argue that the current uniform idea of the overall sanctity of the cow is a historical construction, the result of various socio-political processes. Freitag (1980) analyzed the cow protection movements of the colonial period, showing how the cow emerged as a symbol of a communal Hindu identity and the issue of animal slaughter became a powerful means of communal mobilization.

From a sociological point of view, Lodrick (2005) has studied the role of livestock in Indian society. He showed how vegetarianism was linked to the moral superiority, purity and power of the upper castes (Brahmins, Vaishyas), while non-vegetarian (especially beef and pork) was given the tag of 'impure' and low by linking it with Dalit (untouchable) and tribal communities. This caste bias is still deeply ingrained in Indian social behaviour today. Contemporary scholar Krishna (2020) has demonstrated how anti-cow slaughter laws have become tools for violence, discrimination and social exclusion against Dalit and Muslim communities in practice, deepening the questions of social justice.

Economists have emphasized the highly integrated nature of India's livestock economy. Economists like Birthal (2008) argue that dairy, meat and leather industries complement each other and form a cyclical economy. The shifting of obsolete animals from the dairy industry to the meat and leather industry is an important part of this cycle. Narayanan (2018) has elaborated that the ban on cow slaughter creates a serious economic crisis for dairy farmers, especially small and marginal farmers. The ban increases the cost of raising unusable animals and the elimination of an important source of income (animal sale) reduces the profitability of the dairy business.

Animal welfare researchers have expressed concern over the unintended consequences of the restrictions. Balakrishnan (2018) has shown that the ban on slaughter can lead to a huge increase in the population of stray animals, which worsens the welfare of animals. A study by Raj (2021) showed that there has been an increase in the number of stray animals, agricultural damage and road accidents in states that are strictly enforced by cow protection laws.

Constitutional scholars have thoroughly examined the legal aspects of the animal slaughter ban. Legalists like Baxi (2007) have made it clear that the Directive Principles of the Constitution (such as Article 48) cannot take preference over fundamental rights (such as Article 25, 19 (1) (g), 14). Historical judgments of the Supreme Court such as *Minerva Mills* (1980) have established the principle that Directive Principles should be applied in harmony with fundamental rights.

Research Gap

Despite the rich literature above, some important research gaps are clear. First, most of the research and political debate has focused on cow slaughter and beef politics. The systematic study of the potential overall socio-economic effects of an overall ban on all types of animal slaughter (poultry, sheep, goat, fish, pigs, etc.) is relatively limited. Second, detailed

and comparative research is needed on the impact of such restrictions on animal-based livelihoods, cultural practices (such as hunting, fishing) and nutrition of tribal communities living in different parts of the country. Third, an in-depth analysis of the widespread ecological effects of a complete ban - such as the impact on biodiversity, pressure on fodder and water resources for billions of unusable animals, increased methane emissions, and impact on waste management systems - is a relatively new area of research. IV, a comprehensive comparative religious-philosophical analysis in terms of animal sacrifice, mention of non-vegetarianism and their contemporary interpretation in Hindu religious texts, which encompasses all major Indian traditions, is still an essential task.

Research Objectives

- To evaluate the socio-cultural and religious consequences of an imaginary nationwide ban on animal slaughter, analyzing the concept of non-violence in Indian historical and philosophical traditions.

- To study the complete ban on animal slaughter of India's integrated livestock economy, dairy farmers, trade and workers associated with leather and meat industry.

- To examine the unintended consequences of ecological and real animal

welfare of the complete ban on animal slaughter.

- To critically analyse the constitutional validity of the nationwide ban on animal slaughter, the scenario of balance between fundamental rights and Directive Principles.

Research methodology

This research is a qualitative, analytical and descriptive study. Since the purpose of the research is to develop a conceptual and theoretical understanding of the multidimensional effects of a hypothetical policy scenario (the nationwide ban on animal slaughter), it has extensively used secondary sources. Sources include: (a) articles from peer-reviewed academic journals, (b) relevant books and research texts, (c) government reports and documents (such as livestock census), (d) important decisions of the Indian judiciary, (f) authentic translations of historical and religious texts and analytical work of scholars on them, and (g) analytical articles of reputed national and international news journals.

An interdisciplinary approach has been adopted in the study. History, sociology, anthropology, religious studies, economics, environmental sciences, animal welfare studies and the literature of law have been coordinated and analysed together. The method of thematic analysis was used to analyse data. After a thorough

study of the related literature, the major themes were identified from it. These include: (1) multiple interpretations and historical contexts of non-violence, (2) cultural identity and religious rights, (3) economic viability and livelihood crisis, (4) contradiction of animal welfare, (5) question of ecological sustainability, and (6) conflict in constitutional values. A coherent argument has been developed by establishing the connection of these themes with each other.

Findings and discussion

Socio-cultural and religious dimensions:

India's social structure is a living example built up by the unique diversity of caste, religion, region and cultural traditions. A uniform nationwide ban on animal slaughter will create a deep and widespread conflict with this plurality.

Influence on religious minorities: In Islam and Christianity, animal slaughter and non-vegetarianism are not just dietary priority, but an integral part of religious identity and conduct. In Islam, offering sacrifice on *Eid-ul-Adha* is an essential religious duty. A complete ban would be a direct violation of the right to religious freedom guaranteed under Article 25. The Indian judiciary has made it clear in decisions such as *Hansa Wakeel vs State* (2017) that religious practices must be protected. An ubiquitous restriction would

be tantamount to imposing a particular religious interpretation of 'public morality'.

Impact on Dalit and tribal communities: Caste bias on non-vegetarianism has been there for centuries in the Indian social system (Lodrick, 2005). The reality is that cheap protein sources have been an important basis of nutrition for these marginalized communities. Also, leather processing, selling meat, etc. have been their traditional livelihood. A complete ban, which will be seen as the moral ideal of the majority community, will further strengthen structural discrimination against these communities.

Suppression of regional diversity and federalism: India's cuisine is a living example of regional diversity. Pig meat is the central part of the northeastern states. Fish is an integral part of the diet and economy in coastal areas. A centralized policy will destroy this diversity and also violate the federal structure of the Constitution, as agriculture and livestock are subjects of the state list.

The complexity of religious texts and contemporary practices: Case Study - Rajrappa and Chandwa Nagar Bhagwati Mandi

A subtle analysis of Hindu religious texts contradicts the idea of a simplified 'complete nonviolent Hinduism'. Even today, the tradition of animal sacrifice on festivals like Durga Puja, Kali Puja is prevalent in

some parts of India. A vivid example of this is the famous Rajrappa temple (Maa Chinnamastika) in Jharkhand, where thousands of goats are sacrificed. This practice is associated with an ancient tradition of Shakti Puja, in which animal sacrifices are performed to please the goddess. Similarly, the Bhagwati Temple in Chandwa Nagar, Jharkhand also organises large-scale animal sacrifice on the occasion of Navratri. These practices are associated with the deep faith and cultural identity of local tribal and rural communities. Banning these would be a profound blow to the religious autonomy of these communities. Therefore, the statement 'Hinduism is completely non-violent' ignores the historical, communal and regional diversity of this religion.

Economic dimension

Econ omic Zone	Curren t Import ance / Size	Immed iate effects of the ban	Long- term results	Most affecte d groups
Dairy Indus try	World's largest milk produc er; ~8 crore farmer s.	Stop sale / withdr awal of unusa ble animal s. Huge increa	The loss of dairy business; decline in milk producti on and producti vity; debt trap	small and margi nal dairy farmer s.

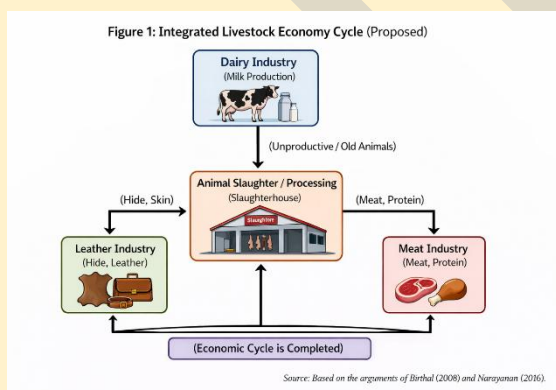
		se in rearin g costs.	of farmers.	
leath er indus try	World leading ; ~4.5 million jobs; annual exports ~\$5-6 billion.	The supply of raw materi als (anima l skins) comple tely stoppe d.	complete industria l collapse; loss of huge export revenue; massive unemplo yment.	Artisa ns and worke rs of the Dalit (Cham ar) comm unity.
Meat and poult ry indus try	Rapid growth agri- busines s; million s of jobs; major source of protein .	Stoppa ge of produ ction, proces sing and distrib ution chain.	wiped out the industry; nutrition crisis (protein deficienc y); food inflation.	Poult ry farmer s, butche rs, meat sellers, consu mers (especi ally the poor).
infor mal secto r	Million s of small butche rs, food vendor s, transpo rters, restaur ants.	The compl ete apocal ypse of livelih ood.	The potential for intense economi c crisis, unemplo yment, social unrest.	Urban and rural worke rs of low- incom e groups .

Revenue and GDP	Significant contribution to tax revenue; the bulk of agricultural GDP.	Tax revenue from related industries zero.	Negative impact on national income and economic growth rate.	exchequer, economic planner.
-----------------	--	---	--	------------------------------

Source: Based on data compiled by the author from various sources (20th Livestock Census, CLE, DAHD).

“Figure 1: Integrated Livestock Economy Cycle (Proposed)”

The simple diagram (ASCII) given below illustrates how the dairy, meat, and leather industries are interconnected:



Narayanan (2018) has clearly demonstrated that dairy's economic logic is incomplete without the meat and leather market. After the milk-giving productivity of a milch animal decreases, selling it for slaughter is an essential economic clearance for the farmer. If this evacuation stops, the huge cost of keeping the unusable animals

alive will make the dairy business unprofitable. The nutrition crisis is also a serious concern. Meat, poultry, fish and eggs are the major sources of cheap protein and essential nutrients for millions of poor and middle-class families.

Ecological and animal welfare dimensions

Ironically, a complete ban policy aimed at preventing animal slaughter can cause more suffering for the animals themselves.

Crisis of stray animals: The closure of economic evacuation for unusable animals will force dairy farmers to abandon them. This will lead to a huge increase in the population of stray animals, as already seen in states with cow-protection laws (Balakrishnan, 2018; Raj, 2021). These stray animals cause road accidents, destroy farm crops, and lead neglected lives.

Increase in illegal trade and cruelty: A nationwide animal slaughter ban will encourage a wider network of animal trafficking and illegal slaughter. These activities will take place in hiding, unhygienic and extremely cruel conditions, which will increase the total suffering of animals much more than legitimate, regular slaughterhouses.

Ecological pressure: To keep millions of unusable animals alive, huge amounts of fodder and water will be needed, which will put huge pressure on already limited natural

resources. At the same time, emissions of methane gas will also increase.

Constitutional dimension: conflict with fundamental rights

A complete animal slaughter ban will come into serious conflict with the basic structure of the Indian Constitution.

Table 3: Constitutional evaluation of the complete animal slaughter ban

The following table shows major constitutional conflicts:

Constitutional provisions	The essence of the provision	possible confrontation/violation from the ban	judicial principles/judgment (example)
Article 25: Religious freedom	Freedom to preach religion to all under public order, morality and health.	Ban on the sacrifice of Muslims and non-vegetarian traditions of Christians.	Hansa Wakil vs State (2017): Preservation of essential religious practice. The imposed morality is against secularism.
Article 19 (1) (g): Freedom of businesses	All citizens have the right to do	Forcibly termination of business of crores of farmers, traders, workers.	The principle of proportionality: Restrictions must be necessary

	any business, profession, business.		and least interfering for achieving objectives. The absolute restriction is not proportional when the option (regulation) is available.
Article 14: Right to equality	The State will not deprive any person of equality before the law and equal protection of laws.	A neutral-looking law will have an extremely heavy impact on Muslims, Christians, Dalits, tribals (indirect discrimination).	Interpretation with Article 15: Discrimination on the basis of religion, caste, place of birth, etc. A law with unequal impact could violate it.
Article 21: Life and personal liberty	Without the procedure established	Violation of the rights to livelihood, nutrition and cultural expression,	The right to life includes the right to a dignified living.

by law, no perso n will be depri ved of his life and perso nal libert y.	which S. According to the judgment of Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017), Article 21 is part of a dignified life.	
--	---	--

Source: Based on the author's analysis of constitutional provisions and judicial decisions.

The Supreme Court has made it clear in the Minerva Mills case (1980) that the Directive Principles of Policy should be applied in harmony with fundamental rights. A complete ban would prioritize Directive Principles while crushing fundamental rights, which is contrary to the basic principle of the constitutional framework.

Policy recommendations

Instead of a complete ban, a balanced, pragmatic and inclusive policy framework is needed:

1. Strengthening of animal welfare laws: Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and slaughterhouse rules should be updated and strictly enforced. Human slaughter practices should be made mandatory.

2. Promotion of integrated livestock management: Dairy farmers should be given financial assistance for management of unusable animals. A network of scientifically managed gaushalas / sanctuaries should be developed.

3. National Mission on stray animal management: A comprehensive mission of sterilization, vaccination, sanctuary construction to tackle the problem of stray animals.

4. Social justice and livelihood transition: retraining, skill development and alternative employment schemes should be formulated for affected workers.

5. Promotion of vegetarianism, not coercion: Educational awareness campaigns should be conducted about the benefits of vegetarianism, but these options should be non-binding.

6. Promote scientific innovation: Encourage research and development of alternative protein sources such as plant-based meats and cell-culture meats.

Conclusion

The philosophical ideal of non-violence, which is a bright and compassionate stream of Indian thought, can undoubtedly be a guiding principle in building a just society. However, this research has clearly demonstrated that when this high moral ideal is moulded into a punitive, uniform and coercive legal restriction, it becomes deeply inconsistent

with India's social fabric, economic base, ecological balance and constitutional democratic values.

A nationwide ban on animal slaughter is a simplified answer that addresses extremely complex questions; it does not solve the problem, but initiates new, more serious crises. The ban will violate the fundamental rights of religious minorities, Dalit-tribal communities and crores of innocent citizens. This will create a deep economic and nutrition crisis by demolishing the country's integrated livestock economy. Ironically, it will lead to the tragic distress of stray animals in the name of animal welfare, the rise of illegal cruelty and ecological pressure.

Constitutionally, this policy will go against fundamental rights and destroy the delicate balance established by the framers of the Constitution.

In conclusion, therefore, the true imagination of a non-violence-centric society lies not in the forceful imposition of any moral uniformity, but in an inclusive, pluralistic agreement. This agreement should be based on open dialogue, empathy, mutual respect and collective responsibility among all sections of society. The goal should not be to eliminate animal slaughter altogether, but to build a human, regulated and sustainable system. A system that establishes the highest standards of animal welfare, ensures social justice and economic

justice, accepts economic realities and ecological boundaries, and respects individual freedom and religious diversity.

This is the balanced path that is in line with India's spirit of 'Unity in Diversity' and its democratic, value-based constitution. The true meaning of non-violence is non-violence not only towards animals but also towards humans, their diversity, rights and dignity. India's future lies not in repressive uniformity, but on the path of just, inclusive and sensitive progress.

References

- Balakrishnan, J. (2018). The stray cattle conundrum in India: An animal welfare and policy perspective. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 53(17), 35-41.
- Baxi, U. (2007). *The future of human rights*. Oxford University Press.
- Birthal, P. S. (2008). Linking smallholder livestock producers to markets: Issues and approaches. *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 63(1), 19-37.
- Chapple, C. K. (1993). *Nonviolence to animals, earth, and self in Asian traditions*. State University of New York Press.
- Doniger, W. (2009). *The Hindus: An alternative history*. Penguin Press.
- Freitag, S. B. (1980). Sacred symbol as mobilization ideology: The north Indian search for a "Hindu" community. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 22(4), 597-625. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417500009464>
- Jha, D. N. (2002). *The myth of the holy cow*. Verso Books.

- Krishna, C. S. (2020). Beef, law, and the Indian republic. *Journal of Constitutional Law*, 5(2), 112-145.
- Lodrick, D. O. (2005). Symbol and sustenance: Cattle in South Asian culture. *Dialectical Anthropology*, 29(1), 61-84.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10624-005-5801-1>
- Narayanan, S. (2018). The economics of a nationwide ban on cow slaughter in India. *South Asian Journal of Macroeconomics and Public Finance*, 7(2), 221-254.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2277978718795140>
- Raj, A. (2021). Animal welfare policies and their unintended consequences: A case study of cattle protection laws in India [Unpublished manuscript]. Centre for Law and Policy Research.
- Bhagavad Gita (Translated by Eknath Easwaran). Nilgiri Press.
- Manusmriti (The Laws of Manu). Penguin Classics.
- Minerva Mills Ltd. & Ors. vs. Union of India & Ors., AIR 1980 SC 1789.
- Hansa Vakil vs. State of Rajasthan, 2017 SCC OnLine Raj 436.
- Government of India. (2019). 20th Livestock Census - All India Report. Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries.