

THE HOLY COW AND CRUELTY WITH THEM

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ABSTRACT:

The Cow is a sacred animal and the symbol of wealth in India since ancient period. However, they were neither violable nor revered in the same way today. Besides these sacred positions of the cow, there was another subject of cruelty with the cow in India also shown. The cow slaughter is a historically taboo subject in India had occurred. So, with these events, Hindu community also made many of the associations regarding the protest against the cow slaughter in India with powerful sound. This paper will highlights on the cow position in India since ancient to modern times. It will also highlights on the cruelty with the cow had occurred in India since ancient to modern period. It also focuses on the slaughterhouses and condition of slaughtering the cattle in India. This paper will highly focuses on the cow slaughter and protest against them from ancient times to modern times.

Keyword: Cow, slaughter, protest, protection, movement, India.

INTRODUCTION

The cow is a sacred animal and a symbol of wealth in India since early times. However, there were neither inviolable nor revered in the same way till modern days. In the Vedic corpus, the cow had the position of gold or money, it had the common wealth for the people and they were used through barter system for fulfill the demands of people in daily needs. More cows mean more wealth in the Vedic period. In many inscriptions, wars had been pointed out due to cow and the famous word “*gavishthi*” means war for the cow is mentioned in Vedic corpus. *Dasyu and Das* community were stolen the cows of Aryan which had the cause of war. In early days, cattle being limited to select few fortunate folks, the cow enjoyed the important status even today also. But in some places in Vedic corpus, it described many Gods such as Indra, Agni as having preferences for cattle meat. According to Puranas, ancient Hindu text eulogizing various deities, the first sovereign Prithu chasing earth-goddess Prithvi, who is in the form of cow and Prithu milked the cow to generate crops for humans. The cow’s status in the Hindu

community as a “care-taker” led to identifying it as an almost behaving in the way that mother does towards her child (hence the term “gaumata” the mother cow). Even ancient to modern period, cow being limited to select few fortunate folks, the cow enjoyed the status that gold or money. Hinduism is based on the concept of omnipresence of the divine and the presence of a soul in all creations including bovine. Lord Krishna, one of the incarnations (Avatar) who tended cow. The cow and the bull represent the symbol of Dharma. In Brahmanical texts, it was used to products of a mixture of five elements of cow milk, curd, ghee, urine and dung called *panchagavya* were generally used by people for smeared on ulcers as a healing products. In Buddhism and Jainism, the cow protection idea was taken of the Hinduism and both of religion were highly pointed out that the ritualistic practices lime animal sacrifices are not good.ⁱAn English travelers named Ralph Fitch who travel in India at the reign of Mughal Emperor Akbar had pointed out about the cow that “the people of India have a very strange order among them – they worship a cow and esteem much eat flesh of cow, but live by roots, rice and milk.”ⁱⁱ

COW SLAUGHTER

With the advent of Muslim rule in India, the cow slaughter became started here. The Muslims people had the habit of beef eating and cow slaughtering in their native places because in Islamic tradition, goats, sheep, cow, buffalo, bull and camel were legal to killed as a sacrifice and consumption as a food. They were begun sacrificing of cow on the occasion of Bakri-Id also in India. Cow slaughter is a historically taboo subject in India because of the cow’s traditional status as respected creature of God in Hindu tradition. Dairy products are extensively used in Hindu culture and are one of the most essential nutritional components of Hindu meals.

Besides the habit of cow slaughter in India, many of examples shows that cow slaughter was banned by some of the rulers in India. According to one legend, a real son was punished to kill by his own father Chola King Manu Needhi Cholan to provide justice to a cow. The King hung a giant bell in front of his courtroom for anyone needing justice to ring. Once, he heard the sound of ringing bell and found that the calf of that cow was killed under the wheels of his son’s chariot. In order to provide justice to the cow, he killed his own son Veedhividangan in the same manner that the calf had been killed. In the Mughal period, Emperor Babar, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Ahmad Shah, Bahadur Shah Zafar imposed selective restricted bans on cow slaughter but it was not prohibited at the reign of Aurangzeb. In the Maratha Dominion, the person who were killed the cow might be punished or fined. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was also banned the cow slaughter in their state.ⁱⁱⁱ

With the advent of British rule in India, a new situation was created with the arrival of the Europeans who were habituated to eating beef like as Muhammadans. Beef was a popular food both for the Muslims and Europeans.

When there were increasing demand of beef meat with the increasing population of Muslim and Europeans. The First Governor of Bengal, Robert Clive, established a first slaughterhouse at Calcutta in 1760. Slaughterhouse is a place where the animals are slaughtered in a civilized method for the consumption of human being as a food. Slaughterhouses that process meat not intended for human consumption are sometimes referred to that area of a slaughterhouse where carcasses unfit for human consumption are rendered down to produce useful materials such as glue, meat, hides, etc.^{iv} Slaughtering animals have a large number of problems like logistical, animal welfare problems, public health requirements, religious problems, etc. Some of Animal welfare societies raised concerns about the method of transport, preparation, herding and slaughtering in slaughterhouses etc. After slaughtering, some parts of an animal are a waste and the remaining parts of the animal is turned into animal products such as leather products, soaps, candles, and glue etc. But in the modern period, the slaughter of animals generally took place in an unsystematic and unregulated manner in a diverse place.^v These slaughterhouses were primarily catering to the domestic market. Exporters had been also procuring the meat from some of these municipal slaughterhouses. Most of these slaughterhouses are very old and have outlived their utility. The slaughterhouses lack essential amenities such as water, light, drainage, lairage, holding pens, etc. The Government felt the need to improve and modernize the conditions of slaughterhouses catering to exports.^{vi} In the British period, the British had to improve the conditions of the slaughterhouse and were made many of laws and byelaws regarding the improvement of slaughterhouse and meat trade factories. The butchers who hereditary occupation with the slaughtering of animals mostly from the Muslim community such as qassab, Qureshi, etc, because the religion Islam gave the authority to the Muslims for slaughtered some of short-listed animal and birds to consume as a food. So, the importance of slaughterhouses is fulfilling the need of a hygienic place for slaughtering the animal. There were many of slaughterhouses in different regions of India established by the colonial government. According to the census of 1951, livestock population increased by 62% and human population increased by 134% but the number of authorized slaughterhouses has no increased to meet the demand for meat production. At present time, there are 2702 slaughterhouses in the country, which are recognized or authorized by local bodies or Government bodies.^{vii}

CRUELTY IN FLAYING

According to that report was made by government officer in 1907, that there were the Muhammadans' butchers who in the habit of flaying the skin with necks of goats and calf before killing them in many of the districts of United Provinces^{viii} such as Agra, Allahabad, Gorakhpur, Sultanpur, Rae Bareilly, Gonda, Garhwal, Kumaon, and Fyzabad etc.

This decision was communicated to the Government of Bengal in the Home Department letter no. 1190, dated the 21st May 1908, a copy of which was forwarded to the Government of United Provinces, with the endorsement no. 1191, dated 21st May 1908. It would be observed that the objections taken to the particular suggestion negative were:-^{ix}

1. That it would cover many skins of animal legitimately slaughtered;
2. That it would give an opening for police oppression and extortion; and
3. That the absence of the skin of the head would not prove that the goat and calf had not been flayed alive, any more than its presence would prove that it had been treated in that manner, and it would, therefore, be impossible to impose and very deterrent punishment on persons selling skins with the skin of the head attached.

Then, the Government made the act for the prevention of cruelty to animals and the practice of flaying goat alive was strictly prohibited.^x The government also passed the new proposal in 1953 regarding human treatment with animals such as proper shelter, water, etc. before slaughter and their painless slaughter without agony would be duly incorporated and properly enforced by the general elected body of the municipality and to prohibit slaughtering of horned cattle that used in plugging.^{xi}

PROTEST AGAINST COW SLAUGHTER IN INDIA

In 1870, the Namdhari Sikh started a cow protection revolution in India.^{xii} Swami Dayanand Saraswati called for the stoppage of cow slaughter by the British and suggested the formation of Gosamvardhani Sabhas.^{xiii} The first Gaurakshini Sabha was established in the Punjab in 1882. Cow protection sentiment reached its peak in 1893. Large public meetings were held in Nagpur, Hardwar, and Banaras to denounce beef-eaters.^{xiv} In 1912, there were the serious protesting against the slaughter and ill-treatment of cattle in the Braj Bhumi, district Muttra (Mathura).^{xv} The locality of Muttra was wanted to stop the killing the cows and selling their meat in the bazaar of Muttra. In Hardwar, Babu Bhagwan Das, manager of Sarbdeshi Gohitkari submitted a memorial addressed to his Imperial Majesty the King-Emperor praying for the intention of the protection to the cow against indiscriminate slaughter in 1911.^{xvi} In 1912, on the occasion of Id-uz-zuha or Bakra-Id, the Hindu objected on a butcher who performed the ceremony of cow sacrificing at the Muhalla of Agra in an open place or near by the temple. Another trouble was shooting out by the enquiry directed by the government into the custom of cow sacrificing in Ajodhya (Faizabad) where *qurbani* of cow was carried out. So many Hindus were objected and made a resolution

to stoppage of cow sacrificing which was given to the government authorities. Muslim league also passed a resolution to ban of cow sacrifice on the occasion of Bakri-Id at Amritsar session in 1914.^{xvii}

In 1921, Lala Sukhbir Singh of Muzaffarnagar, a member of All India Hindu Mahasabha at Hardwar had set up the anti-cow killing movement in UP and delivered a powerful speech on April 10, 1921 at Hardwar.

“There could be no difference of opinion in the matter of the protection of cows. Every Hindu is prepared to protect cows. There was a time in India when money was not the measure of our riches, but a man was wealthy in proportion to the number of cows he kept. It was forbidden to sell cows. Now a single cow is not to be seen in each and every household. Now we purchase ghee, milk from the market where the fats of animal was mixed with ghee and water with milk. What is it due to? Cow-slaughter was totally stopped during the rule of Hindus in India. Nobody even thought of slaughtering cows. In this connection, I am prepared to say that the Nizam of Hyderabad has stopped cow slaughter in his own state, while cow slaughter had not been stopped in the British dominion. What is the reason? Because they eat beef so they are not prepared to protect cows. Besides this Jagatguru Ji has explained to us the extent of the religious duty of Hindu in connection with the protection of cows. Everybody knows that lakhs of cows and bullock are sent to Burma. I prayed to government and moved a resolution in the legislative council that cow slaughter which is done for exportation to Burma should be altogether stopped. At present there are about 70,000 troops in India. You will be surprised to hear that 7000 tons of beef i.e. 2 lakhs maunds are supplied to them in a year. (Shame, Shame,). This proves that British government is not prepared to stop cow slaughter. A month has passed when I moved a resolution in the Council of state, the supreme council in India. The object of the resolution is that this government should enact laws to stop cow slaughter. Our Muslim brothers may not be restricted in any way and it should be left to their will whether they slaughter cows on Bakri-Id occasion or not. I am sorry to say that some of my Hindu brothers absented themselves, two of my Hindu brothers, Srinivas Shashtri and B.N. Sharma opposed the resolution. They said me that they used Burma rice and when Burma rice is not imported into India there is no reason why beef should not be exported to Burma. (Shame, Shame,). During the course of hundred years, the British government did not listen to this remonstrance. It is very necessary for us to respect our religion and mother. We cannot improve our lot without the protection of cows. You know how great the need of cows is while we live in this world. We want milk and ghee to eat. Our Hindu brothers are not flesh eaters, but they are only vegetarians i.e. eat corn and vegetables. Flesh eaters are less in number than vegetarian. Muslims killed cows only once a year. If you go to Bombay and see, you will find that no less than one thousand cows are killed. You must be remembering that the Central Provinces government had sanctioned a slaughter house to be opened. They issued a communiqué inviting the public to bring their cows to be killed there. When Hindu Maha Sabha learnt this they began an

agitation and told the Government that it should not have done so. The Government was compelled to close the slaughterhouse. This was the result of our strength. Therefore, our brothers, if we agitate here with one voice, the production of two lakhs maunds of beef will be stopped. What right they have to kill cow and eat them. Is it your duty to see cows killed before your eyes? It does not matter if cows killed on Bakri-Id occasion. But it is also not their duty to kill cows when sheep are available. Some of our friends think that on this occasion, cow question will spoil the Swaraj problem. The Muslims may be displeased and may think that the Hindus want compensation for taking part in the Khilafat movement. There will be unity in India as long as cow slaughter is stopped here. The British government is trying to encourage the Muslims to kill cows, while Hindus are trying to stop it. When my resolution was moved in the council, then it was said that it could not be done. I replied that the Hindus and Muslims were trying for the betterment of India and so they would support the resolution, but those who did not understand this might do what they lived their religious work. Twelve years ago, I raised the question of stopping the Burma trade. I also wrote to the Cow Conference held at Calcutta and the practice was stopped at Calcutta, Lucknow, Cawnpore and many other municipalities. Leave aside other affairs of the world and give cow protection the first importance. The members of the committee must give up all other works. I am then ready to work in this behalf. If they want to treat it as a fun only, I should like to be excused. The resolution was reject in state council. I made up my mind to start propaganda work on the banks of Ganges. If this propaganda is carried on vigorously and slaughter of cows ceases within 4 or 5 months. India makes considerable progress according to the words of Jaga Guru. We will have the same old India. Such authors will come into being who will convert all to Hinduism. A time will come when the Hindus will predominant the whole world and we will say that we are the votaries of the Ganges, which has given us this power.”^{xviii}

On July 16, 1947, Shri Hari Kirtan Singh of Saidpur, Ghazipur District had addressed to the Hon’ble officer of U.P. that the first annual session of Shri Hari Singh, Saidpur was held on July 6 and 7, 1947 was attended by 500 persons. He put a resolution for stopping ‘cow-slaughter’ before and it was unanimously passed cow slaughter by August 15, 1947, the day in India was going to be independent and another resolution was passed by the Bareilly Goshala Society in Aug, 11, 1947 for the protection of cow wealth and totally banned on cow-slaughter for the sake of cow life.^{xix} In 1948, the deputy secretary of govt. had taken up a step for banned the slaughtering of cows and taken steps to protect that cattle fit for plugging purpose should be intimated to Government of UP.^{xx} During the colonial rule, there were several cases of communal riots caused by the slaughter of cows. A historical survey of some major communal riots, between 1717 and 1977, revealed that out of 167 incidents of rioting between Hindus and Muslims, that although in some cases the reasons for provocation of the riots was not given, 22 cases was attributable directly to cow slaughter.^{xxi}

CONCLUSION

The position of Cow was fabulous in ancient India and it was treated as mother or the wealth of the people. While entering the Muslims and Europeans in India, the position and condition of cow was going to burst because both the parties were commonly habituated to having beef in their daily life. So, the Hindus who were called the Cow as a mother or “gau-mata” did not sit quiet. They raised their voice about cow slaughter and want totally ban on cow slaughter in the country. So, time to time, they were organized many sabhas or conferences in different cities and made resolution against cow slaughter. All India Hindu Mahasabha was one of the popular organizations who had done lot of regarding the ban of cow slaughter in India. So, after the independence, Article 49 of the constitution of India mandates some of the state to prohibit the slaughter of cows and calves and others milch and draught cattle.

NOTES

ⁱ [https:// en. Wikipedia.org/wiki/Cattle_Slaughter_in_India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cattle_Slaughter_in_India). Retrieved 2016-07-16.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} [https:// en. Wikipedia.org/wiki/slaughterhouse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/slaughterhouse). Retrieved 2016-07-16.

^v Ibid

^{vi} AF_Animal_Meat_Intro.Pdf. Retrieved 2016-09-06, p. 26.

^{vii} Goel, Shilpa. "An in-depth study of India's leather industry with special reference to export prospects of leather products." *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences* 3.1 (2014): 56-67.

^{viii} UPSA, GAD, File no. 552/1915, Box no. 308.

^{ix} Ibid.

^x Ibid.

^{xi} UPRA, Agra, Municipal Dept., File no. 38/1953, Box no. 54, p. 33.

^{xii} Ibid, p. 8.

^{xiii} Ibid, p. 8.

^{xiv} Ibid, pp. 8-9.

^{xv} UPSA, GAD, File no. 159/1912, Box no. 242, p. 3.

^{xvi} UPSA, GAD, File no. 527/1912, Box no. 251, p. 20.

^{xvii} Progs. Of Govt. of United Provinces, GAD. File no. 297/1913, p. 4.

^{xviii} UPSA, GAD, File no. 214/1921, Box no. 138.

^{xix} UPSA, GAD, File no. 169/1947, Box no. 650.

^{xx} UPRA, Agra, Animal Husbandry Dept., File no. 87/45-48, Box no. 394, p. 1.

^{xxi} [https:// en. Wikipedia.org/wiki/Cattle_Slaughter_in_India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cattle_Slaughter_in_India). Retrieved 2016-07-16, p. 10.

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7. UPRA, Agra, Municipal Dept., File no. 38/1953, Box no. 54.
8. UPSA (Uttar Pradesh State Archive, Lucknow), GAD, File no. 169/1947, Box no. 650.
9. UPSA, Animal Husbandry Dept., File no. 313/1945, Box no. --.
10. UPSA, GAD, File no. 159/1912, Box no. 242.
11. UPSA, GAD, File no. 552/1915, Box no. 308.
12. UPSA, GAD, File no. 214/1921, Box no. 138.
13. UPSA, GAD, File no. 509/1938, Box no. --.
14. UPSA, GAD, File no. 527/1912, Box no. 251.