

Human Rights Violation in the name of Protecting Cows

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I. INTRODUCTION

Human Beings are the only species gifted with the ability to think, reason and speak. They acquire certain rights for just being humans by birth. 'The Universal Declaration of Human Rights' was universally declared by the *United Nations General Assembly* on 10 December 1948 at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris, France. What constitutes the Human Rights? Are these same for all? Is it really being followed or just declared for name sake? The life of a human being is more valuable or a cow? Let us try to answer these questions as honestly as possible in the following discussion.

Human Rights:

According to the *United Nations*' 'The Universal Declaration of Human Rights' Article 25 (1), "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including **food**, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."

From the above declaration, it is clear that a human being is free to live a standard of life based on his tastes and interests for the wellbeing of himself and his family. The detailed study of the *Preamble* and the *30 Articles* in the UDHR gives a clear picture that **Human rights** are moral principles or norms that describe certain standards of human behaviour, and are regularly protected as legal rights in municipal and international law. They are commonly understood as inalienable fundamental rights "to which a person is inherently entitled simply because she or he is a human being," and which are "inherent in all human beings" regardless of their nation, location, language, religion, ethnic origin or any other status. They are applicable everywhere and at every time in the sense of being universal, and they are egalitarian in the sense of being the same for everyone. They are regarded as requiring empathy and the rule of law and imposing an obligation on persons to respect the human rights of others, and it is generally considered that they should not be taken away except as a result of due process based on specific circumstances; for example, human rights may include freedom from unlawful imprisonment, torture and execution.

After the detailed study on *Human Rights*, the question here arises if these human rights are actually in practice or just written and declared for the name sake? The honest answer for this question is certainly a big 'No'. There are many instances to support this answer not only in India but also among other countries. The recent issue of 'Cow slaughter ban' and 'Beef ban' in India is a great example for the violation of the '**Human Rights**'.

Causes for the so called 'Protecting of Cows' through 'Cow slaughter ban' and 'Beef ban'

- In India, majority of the population consists of people belonging to *Hinduism* who worship 'cow' as a sacred animal or goddess.
- The emotional attachment and kindness towards the animal.
- Issues related to illegal slaughter houses and Cattle theft.

Consequences of the bans if imposed:

- Beef, which is considered a "poor man's food" is an item of food for a large section of the people in India. If the ban is imposed, the poor who can hardly buy fruit or milk or ghee will be deprived of their main source of nutrition in their food, thus, leading to malnutrition.

- According to Icra, India stands top second in the world ranking for buffalo meat and beef export in the year 2015-16 resulting to 26,682 crore. If there is cow slaughter ban, definitely there will be a negative impact on the Indian Economy.
- The main source of food for the animals living in zoo like the Tiger, Lion and other carnivorous animals is the beef meat which is cheap and readily available. The ban may affect even the food habits of such animals.
- The ban may result in closure of the slaughter houses in many parts of the country resulting in unemployment bringing down the standard of living of the people in society.
- The ban may pose to be a threat to the minority and weaker sections of the society who are deprived even of their basic 'human right' to eat the food what they can afford.

From the analysis of the above causes and consequences, it is evident that the main reason for the government to impose ban is none other than '*Hindutva*' under which the sanctity of the cow is integral to the ideology of Hinduism. The other reasons mentioned above can certainly be overcome through some strict measures.

The consequences of the ban are definitely detrimental to the society. It is in no way justified that to support the ideology of some section of the people, the others are deprived of even their basic necessities of food, shelter and clothing. As stated earlier, the instances of ban is not only in India but other countries as well. We can see many countries where *pork* is banned like Iran, Kuwait, Pakistan and others. It is ridiculous to even think that the government or the ruling party decides what the layman has to eat or drink.

We call India a democratic country. I feel it is necessary for all of us to refer back to the definition of democracy where *Abraham Lincoln* states in simple words that it is *the government of the people, by the people, for the people*. India has really been in the limelight due to its series of bans imposed in the country. One has to realize that before we belong to any of the religions, we have one common religion of being '**Humans**'. We have to come out of our prejudices, egos, and selfish motives behind imposing such unnecessary ban and focus on the issues that really need our attention to make India a model country to the world. We have to pause for a while and think if we are really being humans who have common intention of '*live and let live*'. Recently, I had an experience where my husband refused to carry lunch to his office because it was beef curry and rice. He said, "I have my lunch with my friends who are Hindus and they shall not join me for lunch if they'll know I eat beef." It's really a worst situation where people are still narrow-minded like the '*frogs in the well*'. We are even instilling this narrow thinking among the younger generation. The other day in the college, I heard one of the students speaking to the other telling that, "You eat beef and by that you have offended me. So you are no more my friend."

This is not the India which Rabindranath Tagore dreamt of in his poem, 'Jana Gana Mana' the song which we sing as our *National Anthem* without understanding the meaning of it. We have no right to disrespect any human or religion or any practice or tradition.

The question still remains unanswered that a sheep or goat is sacrificed for the deities worshipped by numerous people which is not considered a sin but if by killing one cow, a hundred humans are being fed, can it really be called a crime?

Finally, I would conclude by quoting from some of the Hindu scriptures and works by famous personalities.

"It is not sinful to eat meat of eatable animals, for God has created both the eaters and the eatables". -

Manusmriti: Chapter 5 verse 30.

"You will be surprised to know that according to ancient Hindu rite and rituals, a man cannot be a good Hindu who does not eat beef". -

Swami Vivekananda

Hence, it is the duty of the intelligent citizens of India who have to decide whether to follow the illiterate provokers or use their common sense and presence of mind.

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