



Jallikattu

Why in News

As the assembly polls are to be held in Tamil Nadu in 2021, the [Pongal festival](#) and [Jallikattu](#), the traditional bull-taming sport, have caught the attention of the Political Parties in the country.

Key Points

▪ About Jallikattu:

◦ Traditional:

- A tradition over 2,000 years old, Jallikattu is a **competitive sport** as well as an event to honour **bull owners** who rear them for mating.
- It is a violent sport in which contestants try to tame a bull for a prize; if they fail, the bull owner wins the prize.

◦ Areas of Sport:

- It is popular in **Madurai, Tiruchirappalli, Theni, Pudukkottai and Dindigul** districts of Tamil Nadu known as the **Jallikattu belt**.

◦ Time of Event:

- It is celebrated in the **second week of January, during the Tamil harvest festival, Pongal**.

◦ Importance in Tamil Culture:

- Jallikattu is considered a traditional way for the peasant community to preserve their **pure-breed native bulls**.
 - At a time when cattle breeding is often an artificial process, conservationists and peasants argue that Jallikattu is a way to **protect these male animals** which are otherwise used only for meat if not for ploughing.
- Kangayam, Pulikulam, Umbalachery, Bargur and Malai Maadu are among the **popular native cattle breeds used for Jallikattu**. The owners of these premium breeds **command respect locally**.

▪ Legal Interventions on Jallikattu:

- In 2011, the Centre added bulls to the **list of animals whose training and exhibition is prohibited**.
- In 2014, the Supreme Court banned the bull-taming sport, ruling on a petition that cited the **2011 notification**.

▪ Current Legal Position on Jallikattu:

- The state government has legalised these events, which has been challenged in the court.
- In 2018, the Supreme Court referred the Jallikattu case to a Constitution Bench, where it is pending now.

▪ Conflict to be Resolved:

- Whether the Jallikattu tradition can be protected as a **cultural right of the people of Tamil Nadu which is a fundamental right.**
 - **Article 29 (1) against Rights of animals.**
 - Article 29 (1) mandates that “any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same”.
- **Position in Other States for Similar Sports:**
 - Karnataka too passed a law to save a similar sport, called **Kambala**.
 - Except in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, where bull-taming and racing continue to be organised, these sports remain **banned in all other states** including Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Maharashtra due to the 2014 **ban order from the Supreme Court.**



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