

JALLIKATTU

It is a traditional event mostly practised in Tamil Nadu on the occasion of the Pongal (harvest) festival celebrated annually in January. Also known as sallikkattu or eru thazhuvuthal and mañcuvirattu. It is a bull-taming sport between man and bull, participants (a crowd of men) try to hold the hump of the bull while the bull attempts to escape. The event symbolises the quality of cattle, the breeding skills of cattle rearers, increases the livelihood of locals, etc. Madurai, Tiruchirappalli, Theni, Pudukkottai and Dindigul in Tamilnadu are popular for Jallikattu.



A 1,500-year-old cave painting discovered near Madurai, Tamilnadu shows a man trying to control a bull. (Left)

Stone carved artwork found in Alwarthirunagari at Perumal temple. (Right)

The event has been criticized as

- violent in nature that can cause death and injuries to both the bull and the man.
- Cruelty to animals, violating animals' rights.

JALLIKATTU: CULTURAL RIGHTS VS PUBLIC SAFETY

The Animal Welfare Board of India and PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), an animal rights organization that protects animals from abuse, asked to bar the practice of Jallikattu.

The Supreme Court banned Jallikattu in 2014, upheld in 2016, citing a constitutional obligation to have respect for animals. The movement to oppose the ban started in 2017 involving students, professionals, women and children not only in Tamilnadu from abroad too, to protect cultural identity.

They defend the State's traditional sport as a fundamental right to culture under Article 29 of the Constitution of India.

- Article 29 provides the right to conserve distinct language, script or culture of its own.

The case is pending before a Constitution Bench.

The Jallikattu movement sparked interest in native cattle breeds, re-established the connection between the urban population and sustainable livestock.