

Comments on the Petition Report No 151 filed before the Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions for Review of Meat Export Policy

Aiming to get meat export banned, Jain Acharya Vijay Ratnasundersuriji and two others filed a Petition before the Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions seeking a Review of the Meat Export Policy by the Government of India, resulting in the Petitions Committee Report No. 151 dated 13th February 2014. The report discusses the issue, submissions by the Petitioner and other stake-holders, and along with discussion has given its findings, observations and recommendations.

The Rajya Sabha secretariat admitted receiving over 10 lakh memoranda in support of the petition. People expected the Committee to seriously reconsider meat export and recommend a ban but despite an overwhelming public demand for cogent reasons, there is good reason to fear that some recommendations will in fact lead to more animals being slaughtered.

Certain parts of the report have been carved out and are reproduced, followed by comments in *red italics* made by those working for animals over decades. The report's findings, observations and recommendations have been critically examined with the sole aim of drawing attention to areas of inconsistencies and suggesting where and how they could have been more forthright and effective.

1. The Committee observes that in India, since centuries, for animals, society is having compassion all throughout and not only that, some animals are worshiped. Compassion is to such an extent that without feeding the animal may be dog, goat, cow or milch animals, person would not take his meals. The dichotomy in the approach towards preserving our animal wealth becomes apparent from the fact that one hand we have The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 which has stringent provisions to provide protection to wild life wherein there is no cogent, coherent policy to preserve our domestic cattle wealth. Animal slaughter goes against the basic principles of Indian culture and philosophy, which teaches compassion for animals and is against the teachings of 'Ahimsa' taught by Mahatma Gandhi, Father of the nation. The Committee recommends for a more humane and compassionate approach towards preventing the slaughter of animals. **(para 9 of the Report)**

Comments:

It is very heartening to note that the Committee has praised the virtue of compassion practiced in our country. The recommendations of the Committee could very well have been in line with this virtue, but they are not so. The recommendation "for a more humane and compassionate approach towards preventing the slaughter of animals" is ridiculous because compassion and slaughter cannot ever go together.

The Committee ought to have recommended an outright ban on export as its two beneficiaries are: (a) the meat eaters abroad for whom our country has no obligation to supply the meat; and (b) the meat exporters who are private entrepreneurs in business for personal profit and in the process they are destroying our national cattle wealth to meet their supply targets. In fact, meat export is not in the interest of people at large of this country.

The policy is not in the interest of animals either and is absolutely contrary to the "basic principles of Indian culture and philosophy". "Ahimsa" means no-killing, not more so-called "humane and compassionate approach towards preventing the slaughter of animals".

The Wild Life Act, 1972 was mentioned, but not the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, and other relevant laws.

2. The Committee raised its concern over administration of abattoirs and their maintenance. The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare should send a team comprising of specialists to places like Aligarh and provide a status note on the sanitary conditions in areas in and around abattoirs and slaughter houses. **(para 9.1 of the Report)**

Comments:

The status note on the sanitary conditions of slaughter houses should be submitted to whom? And, what thereafter? How will it help animals after they have been killed? In fact, the presence of abattoirs (however clean or so-called environmentally friendly) results in ill health of those living in the area because they pollute the air and land even if the effluents released have been taken care of in water.

3. The Committee has noted that as per the Supreme Court Direction, the review of the meat export policy was not done properly. The Committee also notes the dichotomy in the statement that the only old and unproductive animals are slaughtered whereas the real fact is that young and healthy animals are also being slaughtered. The Committee is also distressed to note that the meat export policy is being looked from foreign exchange point of view only and the Ministry has not conducted any study on eco balancing and the damage that is being done to the country and environment. As on date, the country has a foreign exchange reserve of 300 Billion Dollars. Meat export provides for merely only 1% of the total foreign exchange reserve. **(para 9.2 of the Report)**

Comments:

The Committee simply "noted" serious things like as per the SC direction the

review of the meat export policy was not done, that it was a fact young and healthy animals were being slaughtered, and that meat export was merely 1% of the total foreign exchange reserve.

Why then did the Committee not recommend a ban on the export of meat? One wonders what could have influenced them not to do so.

4. The Committee was apprised that as per the present Foreign Trade Policy in context of meat export policy S.No.19 (a) export of carcasses of buffalo is prohibited along with other cuts with bone in despite the fact that certain countries are ready to import these, mainly Pakistan which permits import of these items through land route from Wagah border. The Committee recommends for reducing the carcass overload within the country by making requisite changes in the trade policy. The Committee recommends for reducing the carcass overload within the country by making requisite changes in the trade policy.

(para 9.3 of the Report)

Comments:

The Committee recommended reducing "the carcass overload within the country by making requisite changes in the trade policy" thus indicating that the Committee was in favor of exporting meat to Pakistan.

5. The Committee is distressed to note that monetary greed is causing people to sell even young animals for slaughter and even buffaloes as young as two or three years are being slaughtered as their meat is tender. The Committee is also distressed to note that pursuant to the Supreme Court orders, the Department of Commerce sought comments from the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, Department of Environment & Forests, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion but no public opinion was invited or considered. The Committee is also distressed to note that contrary to what it is being claimed roughly few thousand people are being given direct employment by abattoirs recognized by APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) for export. Even if people involved in packaging and other ancillary activities are taken into account the number is not very significant. The majority of people are involved in the domestic sector and export sector hardly provide for much employment. Hence the contention that ban on export of meat would lead to massive unemployment is neither sustainable nor tenable.

(para 9.4 of the Report)

Comments:

The Committee was distressed over issues like monetary greed, killing young animals, and that it had been wrongly projected that a "ban on export of meat

would lead to massive unemployment is neither sustainable nor tenable". How come that neither their "distress" nor "noting" serious flaws (para 9.2 above) resulted in the Committee recommending that the export of meat be banned?

Public opinion could have now been invited for consideration since the Committee felt that "animal slaughter goes against the basic principles of Indian culture and philosophy" (para 9 above).

6. The Committee is distressed to note that there are several Departments dealing with the issue of animal health i.e. the Department of Animal Husbandry, Animal Welfare Board, Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Dairying & Fisheries, Department of Environment & Forests and Ministry of Commerce resulting in total chaos. The Committee, while highlighting the fact that the international standards of meat necessitate slaughter of young and healthy animals rather than old and unproductive animals as stated by the Ministry, recommends that critical analysis of meat export policy may be done by a Commission comprising of farmers, cattle owners, experts working in this field and its recommendations should be implemented by the Government. The Committee also recommends that the Government should not grant permission for functioning of any new slaughter house until the critical analysis by the dedicated Commission is complete. The Committee also advocates review of policy of giving subsidies to the meat exporters and recommends a total ban on the subsidies and tax benefits. The Committee further recommends strict implementation of the rules and orders pertaining to the meat export policy. **(para 10 of the Report)**

Comments:

Who exactly will constitute the proposed Commission and how will they be chosen? "Experts in the field" means stake holders like butchers and meat exporters. What will be the time frame for making recommendations? Will this Commission also analyze the meat export policy in addition to the Department of Commerce which is also directed to review meat export policy? If there are contradictory recommendations whose views and stand will prevail? The Committee notes that there is a total chaos due to involvement of several Ministries and Agencies. This chaos can be set right only with directing a total ban on export of meat.

The Committee has suggested a review of the subsidy regime; and has also recommended ban on subsidies. This is a good recommendation. Something is better than nothing. However, the pertinent question is whether this will happen and how soon? But in view of the Administration's bias in favour of meat exporters, it remains to be seen if and when this will get implemented.

When the Committee has observed that the international standards of meat necessitate slaughter of young and healthy animals rather than old and unproductive animals, is this itself not enough to have made the Committee recommend that meat should not be exported?

The Committee has recommended that the Government should not grant permission to any new slaughter house until the critical analysis by the dedicated Commission is complete. Will this happen?

It is therefore pointed out that over the last year the government approved 3 new export-oriented units of buffalo meat processing plants. According to APEDA, there are about 3,600 slaughter houses in India and one integrated abattoir and meat processing plant for buffaloes; plus 24 meat processing plants, of which 13 are exclusively for export.

7. The Committee strongly recommends that no permission should be given under any circumstances for opening up of new abattoirs unless the old ones are administered and maintained properly as per the APEDA's (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) guidelines.

(para 10.1 of the Report)

Comments:

The guidelines of APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) are only in respect of export oriented slaughter houses/ meat processing units. How will they apply to slaughter houses operating for domestic consumption as these are not registered with APEDA. For such slaughter houses there are slaughter houses rules under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. However, there is no effective implementation or monitoring agency for these rules.

The Committee should have recommended that those slaughter houses that are not administered and maintained properly, be closed down immediately.

8. The Committee is of the opinion that proper method of animal carcass disposal for slaughtered animals must also be designed. **The Committee feels that the very best method of dealing with disposal of animal carcasses is to avoid the need to slaughter the animals.** The Committee strongly recommends that the local Veterinary Administration must assume the responsibility for proper disposal of carcasses. The Committee also recommends that a list of pathogens, method of transmission, zoonotic potential, environmental resistance and susceptibility to disinfectants as well as disinfectant availability may be made by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and issued to APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) and state governments so that slaughtering of animals

does not become a health hazard as prevalent in areas like Aligarh. The Committee recommends for a complete ban on pyre burning, composting, mass burial or open farm burial, commercial landfilling and fermentation of carcasses to prevent air, water and soil contamination. **(para 10.2 of the Report)**

Comments:

Strangely, one does not understand how "disposal of animal carcasses" is needed when carcasses are exported as meat after processing. In para 9.3 above it is stated that even in case of rendering plants where slaughtered animals are processed daily to manufacture tallow, bone meal, etc. "after removal of the skin whole carcasses are boiled, tallow is skimmed off and effluents generated are allowed to stagnate on to surrounding land without any treatment. While the bones are sent to the bone meal plant, cooked meat is crushed and used as meat meal ingredient."

Further, more than the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, the Central Pollution Control Board and State Pollution Control Boards need to be involved. The Environment Ministry under which the subject of pollution falls is mandated to deal with such issues. They have to stop their "who cares?" attitude.

9. The Committee recommends that all kinds of carcasses should not be allowed to create an unhygienic dumping ground and should be appropriately utilized or disposed of hygienically and scientifically by making necessary changes in the trade policy to reduce carcass overload within the country. **The Committee feels that the very best method of dealing with disposal of animal carcasses is to avoid the need to slaughter the animals.**

(para 10.3 of the Report)

Comments:

*The feeling of the Committee is highlighted in the above para in **Bold** letters. Similar sentiments are expressed in para 10.2 also which are highlighted in **Bold** letters. Having expressed itself in such unequivocal terms, one again wonders why there is no strong recommendation made by the Committee to ban slaughter for export? This is a very strange and inconsistent attitude.*

Furthermore, the above recommendations for change in trade policy to reduce carcass overload (more animals slaughtered than meat required) by permitting its exports to countries like Pakistan (para 9.3) is opening up another area of export (meat cuts with bone) besides existing meat and leather exports. Will this not increase the slaughter of animals for export? This recommendation runs totally contrary to the purpose of the entire exercise. It will lead to more animals being slaughtered since a big demand will be created and met.

10. The Committee strongly recommends that the Department of Animal Husbandry may undertake a National Survey by taking at least five districts in

each state on a random basis to study the reasons for declining female buffalo population with each progressive year. The Committee also strongly recommends that the Department of Animal Husbandry should play a more proactive role in preserving the cattle wealth of the country instead of being a mute spectator.

(para 10.4 of the Report)

Comments:

A survey as suggested is unnecessary – it is a fact that female buffaloes are also slaughtered for meat and this is the reason for their declining population.

In any case, the regular quinquennial census also lacks credibility. When the Al-Kabeer slaughter house case was before the Supreme Court, the Government had submitted census figures of buffaloes in Andhra Pradesh. To counter check these figures, the Appellants in that case had also carried out a sample survey in 500 villages spread over eight districts of Andhra Pradesh and the Sarpanchas had given sworn affidavits, some stating that no census in their villages were carried out for the past 5 to 40 years! When these findings were presented before the Supreme Court, the Government dismissed these facts saying that the sample size was too small and the Government's figures are not challengeable. They had no answer to census not being carried out for decades. Obviously, census forms may have been filled up sitting in the offices of Animal Husbandry Departments of the Blocks/Districts. In view of this, the random survey suggested by the Committee may also meet the same fate and not be of any help.

11. The Committee is constrained to note that the Department of Animal Husbandry has not taken this problem seriously and has not paid adequate stress to enhancement of buffalo population. The Committee feels that incessant increase of milk prices to the range of 20% year to year basis is an indication of a deeper malaise having created a mismatch between demand and supply of milk and recommends that Department of Animal Husbandry should initiate a pan India programme to organize Animal Husbandry on modern and scientific lines and also take steps for preserving and improving the breeds and prohibiting the slaughter of healthy and milch animals.

(para 10.5 of the Report)

Comments:

The Committee has quoted from Article 48 of the Constitution (Directive Principles of the State Policy). The Government uses this Article as an argument to justify the slaughter of animals terming them "useless". Dung is useful so no animal can ever be "useless".

Permitting slaughter puts every single animal at risk. The short term gain of selling the animal overrides the long term gain of milk production as well as dung production.

12. The Committee is pained to know that time and again during the course of examination the Department of Commerce and other Government agencies which appeared before it, have generally given the impression that only male buffaloes are slaughtered for export and females are kept for milk. The Committee strongly condemns slaughtering of female milch buffaloes and recommends that the Government should immediately stop export of meat of female buffaloes. The Committee notes that despite regulation the procedure followed to certify each and every animal by the veterinary professionals is a mere formality and eyewash. The Committee understands that veterinary inspectors succumb to inducements and pass animals not really unproductive as useless and fit for slaughter. The Committee in this background strongly recommends for amendment in the current Foreign Trade Policy with reference to meat export policy S.No19 (a) Tariff item HS Code 0201 which reads as 'Meat of buffalo (both male and female) fresh and chilled as permissible items for export' to read as 'Meat of buffalo (strictly male only)'. The Committee further recommends that all APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) recognized export houses for meat export should not be allowed to export until they involve themselves in actual rearing of buffaloes. **(para 10.6 of the Report)**

Comments:

The Committee has recommended ban on slaughter of female buffaloes for export, but it has also taken note of the inducements and the position prevailing with the implementing agencies. Given this situation, how does one ensure that female buffaloes are not slaughtered? Female buffaloes will continue to be slaughtered and the certificates/papers will be made indicating slaughter of male buffaloes. It is doubtful whether the forensic laboratories also can differentiate between the flesh of a female and the male buffalo. Furthermore, who will ensure that every bit of meat is from male buffaloes? Even otherwise, Animal Welfare Laws are observed more in breach rather than in compliance.

Many years ago the Expert Committee for the Promotion of the Meat Industry had suggested to stakeholders in its report that beef should be marked for export as "buffalo meat" which means that bull/cow/calf meat was exported. In all probability this has been going on happening. No where in the report did the Committee recommend accurate labeling of meat for export although it kept stressing that the meat of male buffaloes should only be exported. In which case, the Committee ought to have added that the meat be marked as internationally called "carabeef" or "buffalo meat" and nothing else. (The word "meat" is vague. "Beef" is meat of cattle/bovines, including meat of buffaloes, cows and bulls. "Veal" is meat of buffalo or cow calves. Under India's Export Policy 2012 "beef of cows, oxen and calf" is prohibited but "meat of buffalo (both male and female)" is allowed as "bovine animals".

The Committee's recommendation also encourages the breeding, raising and killing (factory farming) of cattle for export of meat. It is therefore certain that

not only will male buffaloes be bred and raised (there can not be selective breeding of any one sex) with the sole purpose of being killed, but all the animals so reared will also be slaughtered.

This is the worst recommendation made by the Committee and goes contrary to the very purpose of the petition which seeks a ban on export of meat.

13. Adulteration of milk is a direct symptom of inadequate supply of pure milk and increasing prices which have their origin in the reducing buffalo population. Adequate supply of pure milk at reasonable prices would make adulterated milk as commercially unviable. The Committee has been apprised that amendment to the Foreign Trade Policy is done on a five yearly basis, however keeping in view the distressing picture and indications on a ground level. The Committee strongly recommends for complete ban on slaughter of female buffaloes for export purposes. **(para 10.7 of the Report)**

Comments:

The observations in respect of para 10.6 above hold good for this recommendation also. The Committee has recommended ban on slaughter of female buffaloes only for export. Does it subtly indicate that slaughter of female buffaloes for meat consumption within the country is not objectionable?

14. The Committee therefore recommends that the Authority should have scientific panels, which may be given the responsibility of evolving standards for all animal products including quantity of steroids and antibiotics, which is acceptable, to be used for animals. It has also been reported that diseased buffaloes are being blatantly slaughtered and their meat is entering the food chain creating possibilities of drug resistant zoonotic diseases. FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) may regularly monitor the conditions of abattoirs/slaughter houses to prevent such practices.

(para 10.8 of the Report)

Comments:

In India till now cattle has not been specially reared for slaughter. The animals are reared for milk, draught, and transport services. It is unfortunate that they are dubbed "useless" once they stop giving milk or providing draught and transport services, and are sent for slaughter. It is strange that the Committee is now recommending rearing of buffaloes for slaughter (in para 10.6) which will give further boost to slaughter and the Committee wants FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) to involve a protocol. As stated earlier, this is the worst recommendation by the Committee.

15. The Committee recommends that stunning or any other globally accepted practice which makes the process of slaughtering pain free may be made mandatory for all abattoirs. Chemical stunning being painless may be adopted for smaller animals like goat and sheep. The Committee therefore strongly recommends that all APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) recognized export houses should adopt the best humane form of slaughtering in sync with the best international practices.

(para 10.9 of the Report)

Comments:

The Committee thinks that stunning of animals is a globally accepted practice and recommends its observance in all slaughter houses. The Committee sees nothing wrong in advising butchers how to kill. Is it the job of the Government to teach people how to kill animals in our country – India, the land of 'ahimsa'?

It is obvious that the Committee is unaware that stunning is not accepted in Islam and export is mainly to countries where halal meat is demanded. Even zatka is not acceptable. Most of the importing countries and exporters are Muslim and in the interest of their business abide by their religious beliefs of halal slaughter. See <http://halalcertification.ie/halal/why-stunning-is-not-accepted/>. Whether it is mechanical or chemical, more often than not, it fails as a result of which the animals suffer twice.

Even abroad where stunning is legally mandated, it is no good. The system itself fails. When a stun-gun is used the animal moves its head and is hit slightly off the mark and so it is ineffective. In chemical stunning the dose required varies from animal to animal depending on its weight, etc. and thus the animals suffer twice – both in stunning process and in the killing process. Method of slaughter is not humane or in-humane because slaughter itself is in-humane. Death in itself is painful and slaughter can never ever be pain free as is made out by Western nations. They want to eat flesh and salve their consciences into believing that the animals were killed painlessly – some thing that's impossible because pain and suffering prior and at the time of death can never ever be avoided.

16. The Committee recommends that food grade surface disinfectants should be made mandatory for sanitizing all contact surfaces of abattoirs. As of now the sanitization process is being done through non food grade disinfectants or chlorine. The Committee notes that most of the pathogens exist in the form of free floating bacteria and a vast number of pathogens get grouped into biofilms. These bacterial colonies are protected by a self produced polymer matrix which these bacteria build to cover and protect the entire colony. These bacteria in the form of biofilms adhere to aqueous environments and anchor themselves to

human and animal tissue. The Committee therefore strongly recommends that surface based disinfectants which are harmless to human beings and adjoining atmosphere like stabilized chlorine dioxide with long term residual antimicrobial sanitization benefits and which produce no harmful by-products for the environment should be made mandatory by APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) for sanitation purposes by export houses.

(para 10.10 of the Report)

Comments:

How does this help animals that are now meat (flesh and bones, not living)? The petition was for seeking a ban on the export of meat, not to sanitize abattoirs from which it was exported!

17. The Committee recommends that all abattoirs specifically the ones recognized by APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) should have zero effluent release beyond the abattoir premises. In case there are abattoirs located in the vicinity of residential areas every effort should be made to shift these abattoirs to areas on the outskirts of towns so that there is no health hazard.

(para 10.11 of the Report)

Comments:

This recommendation, if properly implemented, would take care of water and land pollution. What about air pollution? Further, if abattoirs are shifted on the outskirts of the towns, then the poor villagers of the area suffer! This is like throwing your dirt at someone else's door.

18. The Committee strongly recommends that sourcing of all APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) recognized abattoirs be monitored on a regular basis to check such malpractices to avoid sourcing of products from dubious sources. The Committee has noted that the meat export industry has very less payback time and is one of the most lucrative industries in the country yet tax holiday benefits under section 80 –IB (11-A) have been extended to this industry. Besides the total direct and indirect employment actually generated by all the APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) recognized meat export houses is extremely less. The Committee also feels that there is no need to provide any sort of incentive to the industry keeping in view its monopolistic character and profitability.

(para 10.12 of the Report)

Comments:

It is a very positive recommendation so all subsidies should be forthwith withdrawn. Action on other recommendations can wait.

Not only the subsidies should be withdrawn, the Committee could have recommended imposition of some sort of additional tax.

19. The Committee strongly recommends that Ministry of Home Affairs should set in a clear mechanism and issue necessary directions to our paramilitary forces that such activity shall be taken as a violation and shall be punishable. The Committee recommends for suitable deterrent action to prevent smuggling of live animals mainly cows through our borders. **(para 10.13 of the Report)**

Comments:

This is another positive recommendation, but what about the rampant corruption in Border Security Force? Also, the smuggling mafia has become very powerful over the years and has extended its net over the Administrative machinery in India. To bring an end to cattle smuggling along the Indo-Bangladesh border, inter-state movement should be stopped. Cattle are transported to Uttar Pradesh from Rajasthan, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. And from Uttar Pradesh they proceed to Bihar and on to West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura.

20. The Committee recommends for random supervision by APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) and laboratory testing of the products being exported so as to prevent any such violation. In case of detection of cow meat in export consignments the Committee recommends for strict and time bound action including cancellation of APEDA registration. **(para 10.14 of the Report)**

Comments:

This again is a positive recommendation, but corruption even at the laboratory level is a big problem.

21. The Committee strongly recommends that the entire Meat Export Policy be again reviewed by the Department of Commerce in a time bound manner within three months by involving all stake holders including members of the public. The Ministry of Commerce may take into consideration the findings/observations/recommendations of this Committee including long term implications of the meat export policy before finalizing the review. The Committee recommends that

pending this review no new abattoirs should be registered by APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority).

(para 10.15 of the Report)

Comments:

The Committee is throwing back the entire matter in the court of Commerce Ministry. The Ministry has already done this exercise in response to the Supreme Court directions and has justified continuation of the Policy. In all probability it will again justify the policy given the sway of the meat export industry on it. After all, their priority is commerce and that's their purpose. Thus the whole exercise, the good intentions of the Petitioners and the Committee will come to naught!

The Petitioners had approached this Committee for its unequivocal recommendation for banning meat export. However, now the Petitioners are back to square one.

Asking the Department of Commerce to review is as good as asking a butcher. They can only think of the money that they can make by killing animals to export meat. It is a mockery of the Petition and good intentions of those who wish to save the cattle of our country.

Unfortunately, nothing concrete has emerged from this report and there is no indication that export of meat will be banned. In fact, there is good reason to fear that due to a few of the recommendations made by the Committee, more animals will be slaughtered.

Having commented on the report, let us consider how it is being interpreted by the Petitioners and other persons. There are various views on the scenario post above report. Some even hold the view that meat export is banned! However, this is not so, as it would be clear from the above analysis.

The Petitions Committee of Rajya Sabha has formulated Rules of its functioning and one of them is regarding post-recommendation work which is reproduced hereunder from the website of Rajya Sabha Secretariat concerning the Petition Committee.

“Post-recommendation work

The Chairman, Rajya Sabha, issued a direction in 1976 to the Committee enabling it to frame rules for its internal working. The Committee has since adopted a set of rules for its internal working. Under these rules, the Committee pursues with the Government the recommendations made in its Reports presented to the House from time to time in order to ensure their effective implementation. The Ministries/Departments of the Government are asked to

inform the Committee within six months from the date of presentation of the Report about the action taken or proposed to be taken by them on the Reports. Where the Ministries/Departments find difficulty in implementing any recommendations they are required to state the nature of the problem giving convincing reasons for the satisfaction of the Committee.

The Committee is empowered, wherever necessary, to present further Reports on the petitions considered by it earlier.”

Comments:

The Committee will now probably pursue its recommendations contained in their Report No.151. The most important aspect is that the Committee has asked the Department of Commerce to once again review the Meat Export Policy – although no document entitled Meat Export Policy actually exists!

Nevertheless, this exercise was undertaken in 2006 and the Department had placed on record an Office Memorandum stating that the policy needs no change. Aggrieved by this stand, the Petitioners had submitted the Petition to Rajya Sabha Petitions Committee and see what happened.

The Committee has now thrown the ball back into the court of Department of Commerce and it does not need much intelligence to fathom the next outcome. Vested interests in the meat export trade are bound to take good care of the Authorities involved. Hence, nothing positive can be expected from the Department of Commerce and Government of India. As things stand, there will be no recommendation for a ban on the export of meat unless a miracle occurs.

Meanwhile, the value of the country's meat export is expected to grow by at least 5%. Rs 17,400 crore worth of meat was exported last fiscal and the quantity was 11,07,506 MT. Meat yield from an average adult buffalo is 110 kgs therefore at least 1,00,68,236 buffaloes were killed. If male calves were also slaughtered (and of course they were) this figure would be much higher.

April 2014
