The Beef Ban.

Eating beef is banned in Maharashtra. It has become a law in that state that, eating, selling and having possession of beef are also punishable offences. The punishment for these is imprisonment up to 5 years, with an additional fine of Rs.10,000/-. “The Maharashtra Animal Preservation (Amendment) Act, which stipulates the above, has come into force.

The bill for this Act was originally passed in 1995, by the Shiv Sena - BJP government, which was ruling Maharashtra at that time. It was sent for approval on 31-01-1996, and was awaiting the assent of the President of India ever since then. “Our dream of ban on cow - slaughter becomes a reality now”, victoriously announced Davendra Fadnavis, the BJP Chief Minister of Maharashtra, soon after the bill obtained the Presidential assent.

The slaughter of cow is already banned in the state, under the Maharashtra Animal Preservation Act 1976. As per the new Act, slaughter of bulls and bullocks are also banned. However, the so called “Animal Preservation Act” has not banned the slaughter of buffaloes.

It has to be understood, why eating beef is banned in Maharashtra? Naturally, the question arises whether the ban is related to health reasons? No. Beef is the main non vegetarian food in the European and in the American countries. In fact, Beef is eaten in almost all the countries outside India, whether Developed or Under Developed, or in the East or in the West.

Then, why it is banned in Maharashtra? It is banned purely based on the religious faith of one section of the people. It is true that a good section of the people in India are eating beef for centuries. Moreover, beef is considered to be the poor man’s meat, since it’s price is almost one third of the price of mutton. Now, the sections of the poor people of Maharashtra will be deprived of this food. They cannot afford to buy other costlier meats. Then, where will they go?

It must be understood that India is a vast country, having people with a lot of religious faiths and a lot of food habits. What one section of people eat, may not be liked or approved by another section of people, based on religious faith or based on food habit. In such a scenario, if one section starts banning the food of another section, where will it ultimately lead to? Will it not devide the people further, and will it not bring unrest? Further, what right the government can have, to tell it’s citizens what they should eat and what they should not? As the people of a democratic country, we have to think about this. We are already having a lot of issues which devide the people, especially the working class. Is it wise to bring in more issues which are going to make the division wider?

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