

Holy cows and unholy institutions: Analyzing the pattern of growth of cattle population in India

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The context

- i. The path from institutions to growth is not easy to understand, there are miracles/puzzles (Bangladesh growth miracles, social development miracles etc.)
- ii. This paper is an offshoot of another study on estimating returns from livestock farming in Bangladesh
- iii. In the absence of any national constitutional provision on cow slaughter, different states in India put different restrictions on slaughtering based on Article 48 of the Indian constitution.

Three types of states:

(i) **Complete-ban states:** Cattle slaughtering is banned irrespective of sex of the cattle - both male and female cattle cannot be slaughtered.

(ii) **Partial-ban states:** Slaughtering of bullocks is allowed upon some conditions that typically involve use of certificates from competent authorities. Cow slaughtering not allowed!

(iii) **No-ban states:** No restrictions.

There are other stricter laws related meat possession, trading in cattle, transporting, degree of penalty (life-prison in Punjab). Laws and customs are often brutally enforced by deeply rooted informal institutions/groups.

Indian states by slaughter status

Table 1: Slaughter status by states

Complete-ban (12 states)

Chandigarh (33)
Chhattisgarh (10)
Delhi (27)
Gujarat (9)
Haryana (19)
Himachal Pradesh (17)
Jammu & Kashmir (15)
Madhya Pradesh (1)
Punjab (16)
Rajasthan (5)
Uttar Pradesh (2)
Uttarakhand (18)

Partial-ban (13 states)

Andaman & Nicobar Islands (30)
Andhra Pradesh (11)
Assam (8)
Bihar (6)
Dadra & Nagar Haveli (31)
Daman & Diu (35)
Goa (29)
Jharkhand (14)
Karnataka (12)
Maharashtra (4)
Odisha (7)
Puducherry (28)
Tamil Nadu (13)

No-ban (10 states)

Arunachal Pradesh (23)
Kerala (20)
Lakshadweep (34)
Manipur (24)
Meghalaya (22)
Mizoram (32)
Nagaland (25)
Sikkim (26)
Tripura (21)
West Bengal (3)

Note: Number in parenthesis represent rank in terms of cattle population in 2012

How restrictions on slaughter may affect cattle population

- i. Slaughter ban makes replacement of current herd by younger ones extremely difficult and costly (upon seventh lactation the value of a cow reduces to a third of its original value)
- ii. Without permission to slaughter, the herd gets populated with older cows and those abandoned join the crowd of stray cattle.
- iii. Inability to sell cattle for slaughter deprives the farmers to part-exchange their older cattle for younger ones.
- iv. With an effective ban on slaughter, the sex ratio of the cattle population is least likely to be adverse (comparable male female ratio).

Implications of three types of states/institutions

(i) Complete-ban states:

- (a) Slower growth of cattle population.
- (b) More balanced sex ratio because of “natural” growth
- (c) Large stray cattle

(ii) Partial-ban states: Same as complete-ban states but to a lesser degree

(iii) No-ban states:

- (a) Higher growth of cattle population.
- (b) Sex ratio undetermined
- (c) Less stray cattle

Will try to answer three questions:

(i) Did slaughter ban and related restrictions hinder the growth of Indian cattle population in states with “unholy institutions”?

(ii) Did strong slaughter ban result in more favourable sex ratio in the cattle population (more male to female cattle)?

(iii) Has a strict ban on slaughter resulted in higher proportion of stray cattle?

Source of data

- (i) Indian livestock census data for the years 2003, 2007, 2012 (latest)
- (ii) Compared 2003 and 2012 when livestock population grew
- (iii) Compared 2007 and 2012 when livestock population declined

(i) Did slaughter ban hinder growth in states with “unholy institutions”?

Table 1: Distribution of Indian cattle population by slaughter status 2003 and 2012 (% of total cattle)

	2003	2012
Complete-ban	41	44
Limited-ban	46	45
No-ban	13	11

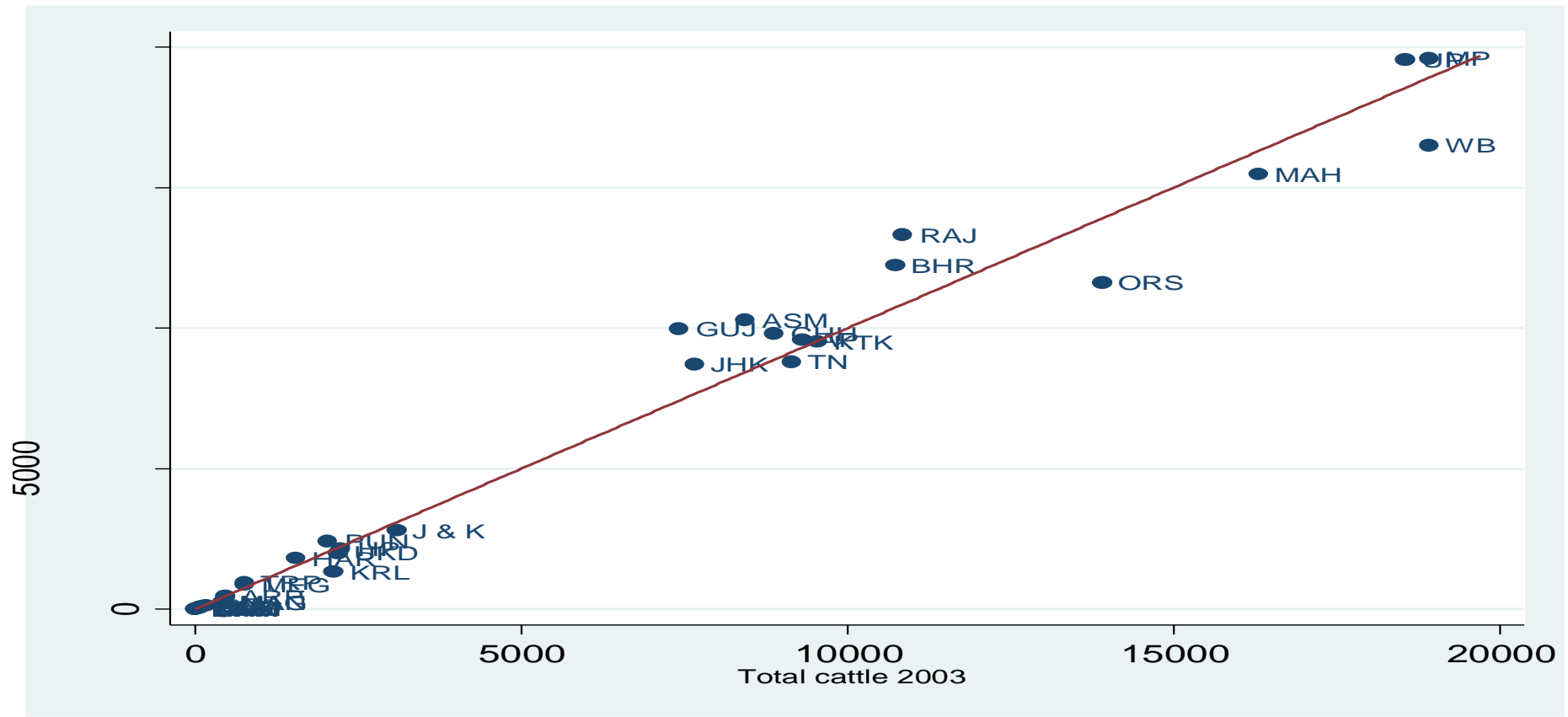
(i) Did slaughter ban hinder growth in states with “unholy institutions”? (contd.)

Table 2: Percentage change in cattle population 2003-2012

	Total Cattle	Cattle Male	Cattle Female
Complete ban	10.2	-17.3	31.8
Limited Ban	1.4	-14.5	15.1
No Ban	-13.6	-31.7	-1.4
All India	3.0	-17.6	19.7

(i) Did slaughter ban hinder growth in states with “unholy institutions”? (contd.)

Figure 1: Change in cattle population in Indian states (2003-2012)



(ii) Did strong slaughter ban result in more favourable sex ratio in the cattle population (more male to female cattle)?

Table 5: Male to female ratio (male as percentage of female cattle)

	2003 (%)	2012 (%)
Complete ban	78	49
Limited Ban	86	64
No Ban	67	47
All India	80	55

(iii) Did a strict ban on slaughter results in a higher proportion of stray cattle?

Table 6: Stray cattle as a percentage of cattle

	2012 (%)
Complete ban	3.7
Limited Ban	2.1
No Ban	1.8
All India	2.7

Summary of the answers:

- (i) livestock population increased most in the states where there are complete restrictions on slaughtering and actually declined in states where there is no ban
- (ii) Male to female sex ratio has worsened in highly restrictive states. This happened due to increase in the number of female cattle, in particular of crossbred type. Contrary to common belief, this has worsened more in the states where there is no restriction on cow slaughter.
- (iii) The extent of stray cattle is the highest in states where slaughtering is completely banned.

Sweeping remarks!

- (i) Scrutinize the factors that might have generated these results by controlling for factors such as availability of grazing grounds, livestock services etc.
- (ii) The poor households may find it difficult to purchase crossbred female cattle, duality may persist. This is happening also in Bangladesh.
- (iii) Bangladesh should focus on improving the dairy industry – more male cows indicate raising livestock for meat consumption.
- (iv) Quality of livestock data should be improved.

Thank you