

# JALLIKATTU Through the Ages- A Study

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**Abstract** - Jallikattu is a traditional sport that embodies the transition and courage of the Tamil people. Its uniqueness lies in the brave act of confronting and subduing a fierce bull. It symbolizes the Tamil heroic tradition in southern regions, such as Madurai. In Jallikattu competitions, participants are assessed based on their agricultural heritage. This courageous game occurs in various cities and at multiple levels. Historically, many kings, landlords, and zamindars rewarded gallant men who successfully tamed the bull with gifts of gold and land. As an ancient sport, Jallikattu is illustrated on the seals of the Indus Valley Civilization, indicating that it was practiced 5000 years ago. Information from standard texts on the Indus Civilization supports this claim. Ancient Tamil poetry, recognized as Sangam Literature (2nd BCE-2nd CE), contains numerous detailed mentions of this sport. It was known as Eruthazhuvuthal, meaning "hugging the bull". There is considerable evidence related to Jallikattu, including Stone Seals, numismatic findings, paintings, Hero Stones, and various literary references. References to Jallikattu can be found in literary works such as Kalithogai, Perumpanarupatai, Paripadal, Natrinai, Silappadikaram, Patupattu, Malaipadukadam, and Pattinapalai, all of which are significant Tamil epics from the Sangam period. In Tamil culture, cattle are always considered a symbol of wealth and cultural laurel.

**Keywords:** Jallikattu, Bull, Eruthazhuvuthal, Manjuvirattu, Culture

## I. INTRODUCTION

The harvest festival Pongal in Tamil Nadu, a southern state in India, features various social and cultural activities. One such event is a sport that involves holding onto a bull while it runs through an arena. This event has faced criticism from groups that highlight examples of animal cruelty. Nonetheless, since it has been practiced for centuries and involves traditional breeds of bulls that are held in high regard, proponents argue that it is an important aspect of cultural heritage.

Jallikattu is a traditional sport that embodies the transition and courage of the Tamil people. Its uniqueness lies in the brave act of confronting and subduing a fierce bull. It symbolizes the Tamil heroic tradition in southern regions, such as Madurai. In Jallikattu competitions, participants are assessed based on their agricultural heritage. This courageous game occurs in various cities and at multiple levels. Historically, many kings, landlords, and zamindars rewarded gallant men who successfully tamed the bull with gifts of gold and land. Any young man of appropriate age can participate in this event. Success in the competition is marked by grasping the bull's tail within about 50 feet without falling off when the bull charges out of the gate. If the participants fail to seize the bull, it triumphs. This traditional sport also reflects the integrity of Tamil society, which values both man and beast equally. This longstanding custom continues today, particularly in places like Madurai,

where men who tame bulls are still honored with marriage proposals.

The atmosphere is filled with the scent of climbing plants. A notable practice involves the aroma that calms the bull. Agatha has presented Laikuru with a woman. It is common for young men to ascend and embrace their surroundings beforehand. They will announce and prepare to tame the bull, while the warriors head out adorned with flower garlands such as Pitavam, Kodal, Giir, Vetshi, Talavam, and Kullai. The women associated with the bulls participate in the procession, and the girl chosen is recognized as belonging to the bull-tamer. There are numerous accounts linking Jallikattu events from ancient times to the present.

## II. METHODOLOGY AND SOURCE MATERIALS

The present study attempts to identify, describe, and analyze the origin and evolution of Jallikattu through the ages. The data gathered from fieldwork and the available literary sources are subjected to intensive examination to criticize the aspects that pertain to the topic. The researcher followed the narrative and descriptive methodology. The sources for the study could be broadly classified into primary and secondary sources. The primary source consists of inscriptions, archival records, and fieldwork. The secondary sources include published works, magazines, website data, and the like.

## Aims and Objectives

“Jallikattu through the Ages- A Study” forms the topic of the study. The basic aim of the study is to understand the history of the Temple, art and architecture, pujas, and festivals of the Temple.

- i. The study aims to provide the origin of Jallikattu.
- ii. The study attempts to trace the cultural aspects of Jallikattu.
- iii. The study intends to focus on the impact of Jallikattu in Tamil Society.

## Origin of Jallikattu:

The Sangam era in Tamil Nadu was characterized by themes of heroism. Everyday activities of the people became a showcase of bravery. There was an element of excellence tied to this courage. The concept of "Valar" became essential for the lives of bull-taming warriors. Tamil history is abundant with rich cultural heritage and literature. The Sangam Tamils coexisted harmoniously with nature and other living beings. Jallikattu is among the traditional games played by the Mithras. A notable aspect is the challenge of bravely facing and overcoming a raging bull. In southern regions, including Madurai, Jallikattu events are organized as a representation of Tamil traditional heroic sports. In these events, the player who successfully tames the bull is declared the winner. These competitions are viewed as a continuation of the agricultural lifestyle. This heroic sport takes place in various towns and on different levels.

Jallikattu has its roots in the Tamil Classical Era (400-100 BC) and was prevalent among the 'Ayar' tribes who inhabited the 'Mullai' region of ancient Tamil Nadu. This traditional sport is a source of pride within Tamil heritage. Jallikattu takes place during the Pongal festivities as part of Mattu Pongal. It is also referred to by other names such as Manjuvirattu, Eru Thazhuvathal, Kolleru Thazhuvathal, Wadivasal Jallikattu, and Vadam Jallikattu. The term Jallikattu comes from the words 'Salli' (coins) and 'Kattu' (tie), referring to bundles of coins tied to the horns of bulls.

As an ancient sport, Jallikattu is illustrated on the seals of the Indus Valley Civilization, indicating that it was practiced 5000 years ago. Information from standard texts on the Indus Civilization supports this claim. Ancient Tamil poetry, recognized as Sangam Literature (2nd BCE-2nd CE), contains numerous detailed mentions of this sport. It was known as Eru Thazhuvathal, meaning "hugging the bull." The ancient Tamil text Tiukkural (circa 0 CE) equates education with wealth, describing it as Madu, which translates to cattle. This signifies that cattle hold a socio-cultural significance, reflecting the intertwined existence of lives and livestock, along with the cultural practices formed around them.

Jallikattu is an ancient sport involving bulls, with origins that

trace back over 2,500 years. This thrilling event is held during the Pongal festival and takes place in the villages surrounding Madurai, where it carries great cultural and traditional importance. The sport demands exceptional strength, agility, and quick reflexes. Jallikattu serves as a testament to bravery and courage, highlighting the relationship between humans and animals while also celebrating the agricultural lifestyle that is deeply embedded in Tamil Nadu's heritage.

## Historical References of Jallikattu

The evolving nature of the sport, its depiction in popular discourse, and the status of the bull within this hierarchy can be explored through various Tamil literary works. Historical mentions of bull-fighting during festivals trace back to the Tamil classical era, known as the Sangam period (400 BC–AD 200). The earliest detailed account of this sport, referred to as eruthazhuvuthal (embrace the bull), can be found in Kalithogai, a collection of 150 poems from the Sangam period, composed around 200 BC.

In Kalithogai, the festival is depicted in a rural pastoral backdrop and is favored by warriors, as it embodies bravery and violence. Lines 15–35 of section 102 narrate a festival scene: 'A crowd gathers. One man seizes the bull by its hump, moving to its neck and then its head. The bull initially charges with great fury but is eventually subdued. In the end, all the villagers express their joy.' Historically, Jallikattu, also known as Yeru Thazhuvuthal (meaning embracing the bull), appears to have been used to test a man's courage and strength, and it was seen as a means to earn a woman's affection. Another poem in Kalithogai portrays the bull as a woman's confidant, aiding her in choosing the most suitable partner.

Besides being mentioned in Sangam literature, the Jallikattu festival has been significantly featured in contemporary Tamil literary works. For example, B.R. Rajam Aiyar's Kamalambal Charithiram, published in 1893, illustrates the festivities surrounding the sport by drawing large gatherings of both men and women. Aiyar's narrative also showcases the evolution of the language related to the sport, highlighting its connection with rural power dynamics in the regions of Madurai and Tirunelveli, where the story unfolds. In the 1930s, Kothamangalam Subbu authored a short story titled 'Manji Virattu', which also references a variant of Jallikattu.

The Tamil Literature said that five types of Thinaikal (Nilangal), Kurinji, Mullai, Martham, Neithal, and Paalai. Mullai Thinaikal refers to forests and forested areas. Mullai land is called Sembulum due to its spread of red soil. The Mullai land people's main occupation of the. It is named after the fragrant Mullai flower. Tolkappiyam mentions that “மாயோன் மெய காடுறை உலகமும்”. The people of Mullai land participate in the Eruthazhuvathal custom, especially the Ayar race people who have only

participated. Jallikattu is considered to be a heroic game in which not only the people of Ayar but also the people of many races participate.

There are many types of Palanthamil Literature references to Jallikattu like Kalithokai, Perumpanaruppatai but some of these references

**"கொல்வேறு சாட இருந்தார்க்கெம் பல்லிருங்**

**கூந்த வணை கொடுப்போம் யாம்"**

"கொல்வேற்றுக் கோடஞ்சு வாளை மறுமையும்

புல்லாளே ஆம் மகள்".

"ஓ ஓ இவள், பொருபுகல் பல்வேறு கொள்ளல் ரல்லால்

திருமாமெய் தீண்டல யென்று கருமமா

எல்லாருங் கேட்ப அறைதறைந் தெப்பொழுதுரு

சொல்லாற் றரப்பட்டவள்"

"தூநிற வெள்ளை அடர்த்தாற் சூரியளிப்

பூவைப் புதுமை ராள்:

ஆங்கு,

தொழுவிடை ஏறு குறித்து வளர்த்தார்

எழுவரிளங் கோதை யார்".

"தொழுவினுள் புரிபு புரிபு புக்க பொதுவரைத்

தெரிபு தெரிவு குத்தின ஏறு".

**"எழுந்தது துகள்**

**ஏற்றனர் மார்பு**

**கவிழ்ந்து மருப்புக்**

**கலங்கினர் பலர்**

**அவருள், மலர்மலி புகலெழ**

**அலர்மலிர் மணிபுரை நிமிர் தோள் பிணைஇ**

**யெருத்தோ டிமிலிடைத் தோன்றினன்".**

Jallikattu is predominantly celebrated in the southern districts of Madurai, Sivagangai, Pudukkottai, Tiruchy, Dindigul, as well as certain areas in Ariyalur, Thanjavur, Salem, and Theni districts. These events are always associated with the yearly village temple or church celebrations. Numerous communities participate in this

sport. While Madurai is renowned for various festivals, the Jallikattu festival stands out. It takes place during the Tamil month of Thai. Although many locations in Tamil Nadu host Jallikattu, the Madurai region holds events in Palamedu, Avaniapuram, and Alanganallur. Among these, the Jallikattu in Alanganallur is internationally recognized. Many tourists come to witness the Alanganallur Jallikattu. Plans are currently underway to construct a new, expansive Alanganallur Jallikattu Stadium. This stadium is set to reopen in the upcoming month of Thai.

There are five types of bulls used to Jallikattu in the ancient period, which was represented in the lines of Kalithogai Literature. The lines are,

**"உருவம் பல் கொண்முகக் குழீஇயவை போல**

**புரிபு புரிந்து புகுந்தனர் தொழுஉ"**

The **five bulls** are listed below,

- White - White Bull
- Sey - Red Bull
- Kural - Maila Kalai
- Pukar - Pulli Bull
- Kari - Balck Bull

**Earliest Culture**

Since the inception of the Jallikattu Ceremony, only the bull-taming champion is chosen by women for marriage. The young man planning to participate will notify his family about his arrival ahead of time. The women associated with the bulls will parade alongside them. The Jallikattu events, spanning from ancient times to the present, are connected to numerous sources. The Tamil community has different manifestations of the Jallikattu culture, which includes various forms.

**Erudhuvidum Vizha**

In this format, goodies hamper with dhotis, towels, sarees, gold, coins, silver items etc., are tied between the horns of the bull. Here the bulls are set loose in an enclosure fenced with bamboo. A pre-determined distance of 100 or 200 meters would be fenced by its organizers. The players will try to unite the goodies tied to the horns of the bull crossing it. A prize will be awarded to the owner of the bull that crosses the target distances in the shortest time. It is noteworthy that bulls let into this fenced area are sent with ropes and muzzles in. It is played in different forms and names across the villages.

**Eruthaattam**

Strong ropes about twenty feet long are tied to either side of a bull's neck and left in the middle of a field. Many youngsters would hold the other end of the rope on either side. An image of a puppet made of cloth or a long bamboo stick tied with colored ropes is shown to taunt the bull. The enraged bulls are driven around the temple their times in a



frenzy. The bull has to gouge the doll and tear it to pieces before circumambulating the temple three times. Bulls that do so are celebrated. After the rituals in the temple, many youths would try to catch the bull's hump and celebrate during the event.

### **Eruthukattu**

Eruthukattu is a part of the horse riding festival at Ayyanar temples. On the eve of the festival, a strong rope of about 30 m in length would be woven from palm and straw for the bulls. On the day of the festival, one end of the rope is tied around the neck of the bull, and its other end is attached to a stone pillar. When the bulls pull the rope and try to pounce on the players, they move away cheering.

### **Salangai Eruthaattam**

Salangai Eruthaattam, Salakkeruthaattam, Salangai Madaattam, Salakaraattam are the various names given to this event with bulls. During the Pongal festival, temple bull decorated with garlands, bells and painted horns will be brought to the temple accompanied by peppy beats from te percussion instrument Urumi. The men from the village adorned with Salangai on their hands will dance in front of the bull with two long bamboo poles in their hands to the beats, this event is observed in various formats and names across villages.

### **Veli Manjuvirattu**

Veli Manjuvirattu is enclosing an area where bulls are slaughtered. These bulls are young ones eager to experience life without any violent intent.

### **Manjuvirattu**

In Tamil Nadu, men pull the bull on both sides of the bull with a rope 20 feet long called Manjuvirattu. Only a few people have the horn the person trying to take it is holding the nose rope and running with it in the open unchained. This stood differently in each area is standing. The capture of the bulls set loose from the stables or paddocks by men is known as 'Velivirattu' or 'Tozhuvirattu'. More than one player can team up to tame a bull, players will try to take the girdle, silver chains, garlands, and gold coins tied around the bull's neck and horns. If the bell tied around the bull's neck is removed, it will be returned to the bull and the owner of the bull and the respective player will receive an amount for that.

### **Vaativassal Jallikattu**

Vaativassal Jallikattu is already know about, like this places are followed Alanganallur, Palamedu and Avaniapuram. Nowadays Vaativassal Jallikattu world famous. The youth drive away the bulls that came out through the Vaativassal and hang on its thimble. The method by which the players catch the bulls sent from the entrance 'Vaadivaasal' to the game arena is called Jallikattu. Vaativassal entrance must hold onto its hump for a distance of 50 feet to be declared winner. Sometimes the bull stands still and sways to get rid

of the player from its hump. In that case, the player's success or failure is determined based on this. The bull that escapes without being caught by the players is a decelerated winner. Jallikattu events take place annually on specific days in certain towns, while in other towns, they are conducted sporadically instead of on a consistent schedule.

### **Vadam Jallikattu**

Vadam Jallikattu is a bull tied with a rope twenty feet long and youths on either side "only a similar to hold it". Vadam Jallikattu stands in front of it money tied to the horn and collects. The word 'Vadam' means a strong long rope. In this format of bull-taming, one end of a twenty-foot rope is tied to a study pestle and buried in the soil in the center of the game arena. The other end of the rope is tied around the neck of the bull. This is called 'Vadam Manjuvirattu', 'Vadam Jallikattu' or 'Vadamadu Pidithal'. A bull is given twenty minutes inside the game arena. By then, a team of nine payers has to tame the bull. Prizes will be given to the Bulls if they remain untamed during the time frame and to the players if they are successful in their attempts.

### **Oormaadu Avizthal**

Maadu means cow and Oormaadu Avizthal is celebrated on Mattu Pongal in Madurai and other districts of Tamil Nadu. All the cattle animals are bathed, decorated, garlanded, and worshipped on that day along with agricultural implements. The Pongal offered to the sun god on the day of Mattu Pongal is first fed to the cattle of the Village. Then all the bulls, cows, and calves in each village are driven to a common area. Some villagers try to catch the bulls let loose there as a sport. This gathering of cattle in a common place is called Oormadu Avizthal. This celebration is observed in various villages in Tamil Nadu with slight variations.

### **Jallikattu as a Social Festival**

Jallikattu primarily takes place in the southern regions, including Madurai, Sivagangai, Pudukkottai, Tiruchy, Dindigul, and occasionally in parts of Ariyalur, Thanjavur, Salem, and Theni. These events are closely associated with the yearly temple or church festivals in the villages. Although various communities participate in this sport, it originally belonged to the cattle-rearing Konar community. Currently, the herds are still cared for by individuals from this community, with owners purchasing male calves to raise as breeding bulls.

### **Community based Jallikattu**

The caste-based segregation may still be present in smaller hamlets, but in the larger villages where events take place, caste does not play a role. There is a rivalry to capture bulls owned by individuals from different communities, but there are no restrictions on participation in the event. Notably, while the festival is mainly celebrated by intermediary castes like Thevars, the works referenced earlier were all authored by Brahmins. This indicates the cultural importance of

Jallikattu, as it appears to resonate with the Tamil modern psyche across caste boundaries. Contemporary Tamil literature portrays Jallikattu in its various social and political aspects, including the evolving environment around it, caste tensions associated with it, and the interaction between humans and animals.

Since the mid-20th century, cinema has frequently depicted the theme of the rural hero taming the bull during the festival. It tells a story of conflict between two caste groups against the backdrop of this sport, and for the first time, it depicts the festival as a celebration embraced by all Tamils. Additionally, a novel titled Rao Bahadur Singaram was published in the popular Tamil weekly Ananda Vikatan, focusing on a romantic tale involving a girl who raises a bull and a young man trying to capture it. However, it was C.S. Chellapa's 1959 novella, Vaadivaasal, that emerged as the 'locus classic' of Jallikattu, highlighting the changing dynamics of the sport, both among people and in their relationships with animals.

In areas like Alanganallur, Jallikattu is organized by the Thevar community, yet Thevars and Dalits have historically been rivals. Palamedu Jallikattu is conducted by the Nadar community, while the Avanipuram event was originally organized by the early Thevar community, though tensions with Dalits have persisted over time. The Tamil Nadu government organizes Jallikattu events, which are designated by various organizations and Panchayat Committees. This resembles a government-managed event, with presence from local law enforcement and district officials, making caste irrelevant in these settings. At events in Coimbatore, it is difficult to determine community affiliations. In numerous villages, certain rituals must be performed by members of Dalit communities before holding the village festival. Post-Jallikattu protests and the subsequent lifting of the ban have also led to increased ownership of cattle among Dalit communities. Elango Kallanai, a natural farmer and social activist, notes that "every issue—whether economics, women's issues, or community dynamics in Tamil Nadu—is perceived through a caste lens." This perspective of villages as being feudal, caste-based, and regressive, particularly concerning women, is primarily an urban and elitist viewpoint. Developments like land reforms, education, grassroots empowerment, and service delivery have fostered a unique environment where people can navigate both urban and rural contexts effectively.

### The Intermediate Castes

Under the rule of the Dravidian parties since the 1960s, the combination of affirmative action and a new sense of Tamil identity worked to empower lower castes, particularly the intermediate caste groups, which benefited the most from the overhauling of the system. Education and land offered mobility to those who possessed a certain 'social capability',

and minimum resources which enabled them to avail new opportunities created by this political mobilization.

When the land was transferred from the elite to these caste groups, the surplus generated in agriculture and other sectors made its way into real estate and construction, liquor production and educational institutions.

### Women Play an important role in the raising of the bulls

Every issue is viewed in a generic manner. In the case of Jallikattu, my advantage comes from being part of the Jallikattu region, where I understand the community dynamics and their coexistence. The depiction of Tamil Nadu as a feudal society collapses when we examine the data. Here, the average land holding is 2.5 acres, indicating a life focused on survival rather than the romanticized notion of feudalism. When presenting this data, there is often no rebuttal from opposing sides. Women are crucial in the care of the bulls; tasks like feeding and providing water are primarily seen as their responsibilities. Men are typically tasked with training the bulls and taking them to events. However, many women personally bring their bulls to these events, and there has also been an increase in teenaged girls participating in this. Just this year, multiple events awarded the best bull title to a bull owned and trained by Anuradha, a woman sub-inspector of police from Nemmelipatti in Pudukottai district.

### Impact of Jallikattu in Tamil Society

Jallikattu takes place at various locations annually. These are the significant venues for Jallikattu, but many more events occur throughout Tamil Nadu, particularly in southern districts like Madurai, Pudukkottai, Trichy, and Sivagangai. A study conducted by the Animal Welfare Board of India found that Jallikattu is fundamentally cruel to animals. Animal welfare groups like the Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organizations (FIAPO) and PETA India have expressed their opposition to this practice. PETA is a global nonprofit charitable organization.

Since Jallikattu is a contentious sport, numerous individuals and groups have made attempts to have it prohibited multiple times. Below is a timeline of the instances when this sport faced a ban in India:

- On March 29, 2006, the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court imposed a ban on Jallikattu.
- On January 10, 2007, organizers submitted an appeal against the prohibition.
- On July 27, 2007, the Supreme Court issued a stay on the Madras High Court's ban on Jallikattu.
- On July 21, 2009, legislation regulating Jallikattu was enacted by the ruling DMK party.
- On April 8, 2011, PETA challenged this legislation.

- On May 7, 2014, the Supreme Court officially enforced a ban on Jallikattu.
- On January 23, 2017, following numerous pro-Jallikattu protests and petitions, the Supreme Court passed the Jallikattu Bill. On Jan 23, 2017, the protest ended when the Tamil Nadu Government passed an ordinance to amend the PCA Act to revoke the ban on Jallikattu.

### **The Kalaiganar Century Jallikattu Arena at Alanganallur**

The Jallikattu event is conducted in Alanganallur, located in the Madurai district, and is renowned around the globe. Tourists from abroad also visit to experience this competition. At the lower region of the river, situated at the base of Perumal Hill, a large stadium covering 66 acres has been constructed with modern amenities specifically for hosting the Jallikattu event. The stadium is equipped to conduct medical tests for participants and ensure the safe transportation of qualified bulls to Wadi Vasal after their examinations.

Accommodations have been designated on the ground floor for the players and owners of the bulls entering Jallikattu, with rooms available for up to 50 individuals. Important guests are provided with separate resting rooms at the first base of the field. Additionally, on the ground floor, there is a small theater featuring a digital screen with seating for 100 people. Displays include images of Jallikattu bulls and native breeds from Kerala, Karnataka, and Andhra, along with representations of the roles of women and girls in bull-rearing in Tamil Nadu, rural lifestyles, and the historical practice of Jallikattu. Native breeds like Pulikkulam and statues of Kangeyam-type bulls are also showcased.

The gallery for the Jallikattu Stadium is arranged similarly to a cricket ground. It can accommodate approximately 4,500 to 5,000 spectators to enjoy the event. Two seats have been made available for this purpose. A lift service is featured alongside the stairs. There is no entry fee for visitors. Up to three stalls will be arranged indoors for rodent control during the competition. The gallery is spacious enough for easy movement. It also includes accessible stairs throughout the gallery.

The intriguing Wadi vasal Bull Collection Center has been established to house as many as 500 bulls. Bulls entering through the second pass are sorted and held in this facility. Additionally, a gate has been constructed to enable step-by-step entry to the Wadi Vasal. More than 100 bulls can be dispatched in succession without causing congestion. The gallery features colorful paintings and impressive bull statues. The traditional bull counters, the rearing bull, and women supporting the oppressed are portrayed in vivid color paintings.

In the entrance, a statue of a warrior controlling a bull is displayed. Inside, statues of three bulls, including Pulikulam and Kangeyam, are also installed. Near the main entrance of the Jallikattu ground, there is a museum named Ascension, with another museum directly across from it. This space showcases significant events connected to Jallikattu, along with photographs and artifacts that reflect the traditional lifestyle of the Tamils. A small library is also available.

A mini theater has been created on the first floor of the Jallikattu Arena. It can accommodate 100 people for viewing comfort. Documentaries featuring key Jallikattu competitions, the heroic history of traditional Tamils, and the pride of the Tamil language will be screened. The first aid station is designed to provide immediate care for injured players and bulls. To support this, male and female restrooms have been constructed. Separate facilities are also available in the outfield and dormitory areas. The ground floor features rooms designed to house the players and bull owners participating in the Jallikattu event. During the competition, up to 50 individuals can rest in one room. In addition, four luxury rooms have been created for VIPs on the first floor, furnished with beds, mattresses, and amenities. Locked storage facilities will also be available to secure personal belongings.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

Jallikattu, a traditional game involving bulls, originated from more than 2,500 years. This thrilling event occurs during the Pongal festival and is held in the villages around Madurai, where it is of great cultural and traditional importance. The sport demands exceptional strength, agility, and rapid reflexes. Jallikattu is a testament to prowess and courage, highlighting the connection between humans and animals. It takes immense bravery to control a bull, especially when relying on bare hands against its horn as a weapon. We continue to celebrate such competitors today. Modern Jallikattu has undergone numerous modifications in its rules and regulations. In the past, men participating in Jallikattu would present women with gold gifts, whereas today's winners might receive a car. There is considerable evidence related to Jallikattu, including Stone Seals, numismatic findings, paintings, Hero Stones, and various literary references. References to Jallikattu can be found in literary works such as Kalithogai, Perumpanaruppatai, Paripadal, Natrinai, Silappadikaram, Patupattu, Malaipadukadam, and Pattinapalai, all of which are significant Tamil epics from the Sangam period. In Tamil culture, cattle are always considered a symbol of wealth and cultural laurel.

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