

# [Devadasi children – south asia regional study” covered](https://assignbuster.com/devadasi-children-south-asia-regional-study-covered/)

Devadasisystem is not a cultural practice by any stretch of imagination, but a systemof child rape, sexual slavery, caste discrimination and gender-based violence. The importance of child protection laws to stop this practice cannot bestressed enough. Despite the practice having been banned in India almost 30years ago, a retired judge has estimated that there are still about 450, 000 Devadasis in the country. The governmenthas not taken any notice of his report, leaving the oppression of young girlsto continue – even become normalized – without any legal or punitiveconsequences (Preamchandar, 2017)Thechildren of Devadasi need specialcare than the normal children. Because of this practice, their children aremost vulnerable and oppressed. These children are socially excluded. Many ofthe sociologists have told that “ social exclusion is a complex andmulti-dimensional process.

It involves lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normalrelationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas. It affects both thequality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as awhole. Social exclusion            “ GlobalInitiative on Out-of-School Children – South Asia Regional Study” covered India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Relevant excerpts from the reportspecifically emphasize caste discrimination in the region. Girls in ruralareas, particularly those from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Indiaalso have higher rates of exclusion. Particular social groups in India are morevulnerable, school exclusion is considerably more prevalent among Muslimchildren, and among older children from socially disadvantaged groups.

Theaverage rate of exclusion for primary school-age children from Scheduled Castesis 5. 6 per cent and among Scheduled Tribes 5. 3 per cent compared to thenational average of 3. 6 per cent.

Girls from Scheduled Castes have the highestrates of exclusion at 6. 1 per cent (Counterview. org, 2015)Educational Aspirations among DalitsKamen & Ellen (2004) study on “ The Status, Survival and Current Dilemma of a Female Cobbler in India” observed that Dalit women are oppressed by structureof the Indian society. Women from the lower strata have traditionally borne theascribed oppression generated by the Indian social structure. This studyhighlights that, only one woman was found as studied in cobbler community (Dalit). Women in Dalit community always need to explore the ability to negotiate andfight against multiple levels of oppression and succeed in sustaining herself, her family, and her community. In spite of constitutional protection andassurances, till now their status is found to be lower than not only that ofwomen in the general population and the Scheduled Caste women, but is alsolower than the status of tribal men. Study conducted by Chandrashekar andAkash (2011) in their paper highlighted that education plays predominantrole in changing socio-economic status of the people of society.

Every sectionof society aspires to obtain good position and status with the help ofeducation. This may not be possible for all people, as they live inbackward socio-economic conditions. It means the socio-economic conditionof people of society influences in developing overall personality of individualobtaining through sound education. The study covered  225 scheduled caste students studying inDegree College students studying in different colleges of Raichurdistrict.  The study revealed that mostof the scheduled caste students aspired to become teachers and lecturers ratherthan join bureaucracy like KAS or IAS officers. Lower aspirations, of notplanning for state or central bureaucracy in favour teaching occupations, maybe due to their backward economic conditions. However, scheduled castestudents have talent they should aspire at high level and work hard. It mayhelp to improve their socio-economic status and also to lead the better life.

Objectives of the study: 1.      Toknow the socio-economic condition of the Devadasiwomen2.      Toknow the impact of social exclusion on the educational  aspirations of the Devadasi children Methods and material usedThecurrent study was conducted in Mariyammahalli Bellary district. Because, Devadasi practice is more prevalent innorthern Karnataka particularly in the districts of Dharwad, Belagavi Bagalkot, Bijapur  Bellary, Bidar, Gulabarga (Bharathi & Madava, 2016). The study is focused on Bellarydistrict, Mariyamanahalli  which has highestDevadasi population. Case studymethod was adopted to analyze the individual assessment.

These case studies was documented throughseries of visits to their village. Two case studies are discussed in thispaper. Both cases refer to the Devadasisystem. To assess the socioeconomic condition of the case, researcher has usedSES scale developed by Gaur. The researcher used interview and observationtechniques to know the aspiration of higher education among them. The studyused a blend of both primary and secondary sources data collection in thestudy. Case studiesCase. 1Bhagyamma1 18years old,  and her mother is a Devadasi.

Being an elder daughter of thefamily she has to shoulder family responsibility and take care of two youngerbrothers. Her mother is aged 42 years and she works as cooli for a wage of, only 140 rupees a day. According to socio-economic status (Gaur, 2013) scale the familyscore for socio-economic condition is lower class (score between 10 to19).

Even they also wish to have highereducation. Uncertain unemployment opportunities are not letting her to go aheadto reach her dream. It is not enough to complete their graduation and pursuehigher education. Two young brothers who are pursuing schooling education, butalso work occasionally to supplement the family income goes for mining work fortwo days a week. Theyare excluded from the social ceremonies, and have less interaction with othercommunities. They are often humiliated by other children and staff of theschool, by asking their father’s name  and their caste. They ridicule mentioningtheir caste name.

Finally it made them to leave the school. Now she says thereis nothing to fear in revealing that they are children of a Devadasi, becausethey have nothing more to lose after leaving the school already. Bhagyamma saystheir situation would have been better if the government prevented humiliationin the name of Devadasi system, and also. demands governmental facilities forthe children oppressed and discriminated like her. Because of the interventionof a few NGOs in the area, there is gradual transformation among the youngergeneration. As a result of it educational aspirations of these children aregrowing . Bhagyamma actually wanted to become a lecturer, which is now crushed dueto lack of support from the family members, financial aid and stigmatized life. Later because of the intervention of DalitFoundation in the form of  seriousworkshop and training, and opportunities given by this organization made her asserther own identity.

Currently she is working as a capacity building trainer andreceiving Rs 5000 as fellowship. Case 2Sudha, 19years old, completed her matriculation and is a daughter of Devadasi. Having three siblings who areschool going girls. They were living in a slum where they don’t have propersanitation and house.

Lack of proper income of the family and less interactionwith other communities made to feel isolated. They were not allowed to participate in any ceremonies celebrated bypeople from other communities in the neighborhood. She was always embarrassedby the people surrounded by them making fun of her Devadasi background.

She didnot enjoy normal opportunities to grow confidently. In each stage of her schoollife she was humiliated. She is the first generation girl in their family, whostepped out of home to acquire education, she wanted to create her own identityby becoming a teacher in society. Her dream was to study Bachelor of Educationcourse and wanted to become a teacher. She says, series of humiliating experiencesfrom teachers, suspicious looks of the peer group, poverty, and other deprivationsbecause of her social status forced her to give up her dreams.

It made her toleave the college at first pre university college level. She also disclosedthat getting a bridegroom to marry was difficult for them because she isdaughter of Devadasi. According tosocio-economic status (Gaur, 2013)scale the family score for socio-economic condition is lower class (scorebetween 10 to 19). With the intervention of Sakhi NGO, she is able enhance hercapacity.  Now she is working as a fieldofficer in a NGO.

ConclusionThesystem of education, which is an imperative way for bringing about equality, isin fact replicating social hierarchies. Multiple dimensional oppressions andsocial exclusion on all the sphere of their life make first generation schoolgoing children from Devadis background contribute to their vulnerabilityMajority of Dalit girls drop out ofschool due to harassment and economic pressures. The major cause for economicpressure is the social exclusion which has made them marginalized and limitedtheir chances of earning a livelihood. They are often unemployed, as many donot employ them. Now they are ready to reveal that they are daughter of Devadasi and demands to get entitlementof their rights and government provisions.

The study found Devadasi practice and being born in Dalit community are major cause for their social exclusion. Specific intervention programs should be made to bring them to socialinclusion. 1 Name changed to keep the identity anonymous