

Devadasi children – south asia regional study” covered



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

It involves lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole. Social exclusion “Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children – South Asia Regional Study” covered India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Relevant excerpts from the reports specifically emphasize caste discrimination in the region. Girls in rural areas, particularly those from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India also have higher rates of exclusion. Particular social groups in India are more vulnerable, school exclusion is considerably more prevalent among Muslim children, and among older children from socially disadvantaged groups.

The average rate of exclusion for primary school-age children from Scheduled Castes is 5.6 per cent and among Scheduled Tribes 5.3 per cent compared to the national average of 3.6 per cent.

Girls from Scheduled Castes have the highest rates of exclusion at 6.1 per cent (CounterView.org, 2015). Educational Aspirations among Dalits Kamen & Ellen (2004) study on “The Status, Survival and Current Dilemma of a Female Cobbler in India” observed that Dalit women are oppressed by the structure of the Indian society. Women from the lower strata have traditionally borne the ascribed oppression generated by the Indian social structure. This study highlights that, only one woman was found as studied in the cobbler community (Dalit). Women in Dalit community always need to explore the ability to negotiate and fight against multiple levels of oppression and succeed in sustaining herself, her family, and her community. In spite of constitutional protection and assurances, till now their status is found to be lower than not only that of women in the general population and the Scheduled Caste women, but is also lower than the status of tribal men. Study conducted by Chandrashekar and Akash (2011) in their paper highlighted that education plays a predominant role in changing socio-economic status of the people of society.

Every section of society aspires to obtain good position and status with the help of education. This may not be possible for all people, as they live in backward socio-economic conditions. It means the socio-economic condition of people of society influences in developing overall personality of individual obtaining through sound education. The study covered 225

scheduled caste students studying in Degree College students studying in <https://assignbuster.com/devadasi-children-south-asia-regional-study-covered/>

different colleges of Raichur district. The study revealed that most of the scheduled caste students aspired to become teachers and lecturers rather than join bureaucracy like KAS or IAS officers. Lower aspirations, of not planning for state or central bureaucracy in favour of teaching occupations, maybe due to their backward economic conditions. However, scheduled caste students have talent they should aspire at high level and work hard. It may help to improve their socio-economic status and also to lead the better life.

Objectives of the study: 1. To know the socio-economic condition of the Devadasi women 2. To know the impact of social exclusion on the educational aspirations of the Devadasi children

Methods and material used

The current study was conducted in Mariyammahalli Bellary district. Because, Devadasi practice is more prevalent in northern Karnataka particularly in the districts of Dharwad, Belagavi, Bagalkot, Bijapur, Bellary, Bidar, Gulabarga (Bharathi & Madava, 2016). The study is focused on Bellary district, Mariyamanahalli which has the highest Devadasi population. Case study method was adopted to analyze the individual assessment.

These case studies were documented through a series of visits to their village. Two case studies are discussed in this paper. Both cases refer to the Devadasi system. To assess the socioeconomic condition of the case, researcher has used SES scale developed by Gaur. The researcher used interview and observation techniques to know the aspiration of higher education among them. The study used a blend of both primary and secondary sources data collection in the study. Case studies Case.

1 Bhagyamma 18 years old, and her mother is a Devadasi.

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Being an elder daughter of the family she has to shoulder family responsibility and take care of two younger brothers. 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 family score for socio-economic condition is lower class (score between 10 to 19).

Even they also wish to have higher education. Uncertain unemployment opportunities are not letting her to go ahead to reach her dream. It is not enough to complete their graduation and pursue higher education. Two young brothers who are pursuing schooling education, but also work occasionally to supplement the family income goes for mining work for two days a week. They are excluded from the social ceremonies, and have less interaction with other communities. They are often humiliated by other children and staff of the school, by asking their father's name and their caste. They ridicule mentioning their caste name.

Finally it made them to leave the school. Now she says there is nothing to fear in revealing that they are children of a Devadasi, because they have nothing more to lose after leaving the school already. Bhagyamma says their situation would have been better if the government prevented humiliation in the name of Devadasi system, and also demands governmental facilities for the children oppressed and discriminated like her. Because of the intervention of a few NGOs in the area, there is gradual transformation among the younger generation. As a result of it educational aspirations of these children are growing. Bhagyamma actually wanted to become a lecturer, which is now crushed due to lack of support from the family members, financial aid and stigmatized life. Later because of the <https://assignbuster.com/devadasi-children-south-asia-regional-study-covered/>

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, whosteped 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 to socio-economic status (Gaur, <https://assignbuster.com/devadasi-children-south-asia-regional-study-covered/>

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 harassmnet 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