

Executive Summary

The term “Devadasi” is a Sanskrit word which means – one who dedicates oneself to the deity for eternal service. Dedication of girls is done prior to their attaining puberty. Initially the system had religious sanctity, with societal acceptance, and had wider respect. With the passage of time Caste, class and gender together become the source of oppression as most of the Devadasis hail from poor Dalit families. The mode of dedication took a commercial turn, when persons with vested interest, especially from the rich and/or dominant castes began encouraging the continuation of dedication of girls for their personal pleasures. In addition, people who were running brothels or prostitution houses from big cities also started sponsoring the dedication of girls.

the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD), Government of Karnataka, has formulated Rehabilitation of Devadasi Program which is implemented through Karnataka Mahila Abhivrudhi Yojane (KMAY) for empowerment and rehabilitation of Devadasis. The schemes intend to help Devadasis who want to come out of their rather difficult profession and empower them to become self- reliant and live life with dignity.

The present study is an initiative to evaluate and analyze the performance of the government sponsored schemes, identification of implementation gap and come up with possible recommendations for the improvement of the scheme. Various initiatives are undertaken through Devadasi Rehabilitation Program.

- **Monthly Pension Scheme**
- **Economic Improvement through Income Generating Activities**
- **Housing Benefit Scheme**
- **Legal and Social Awareness Program and Right to Health**

This study includes all 46660 Devadasis from 14 districts of the State who are alive and surveyed in 1993-94 and 2007-08, given registration number and are availing various rehabilitation measures provided by Karnataka Women’s Development Corporation. The study will take into consideration of the physical and financial progress from 2010-11 to 2014-15 under Pension, Self-Employment & Housing Schemes. Apart from the above mentioned schemes, the evaluation study also takes into account of conditions of the former Devadasis children and also made reflections on the working conditions of the staff working under Devadasi rehabilitation project.

Objectives of the study:

- 1) *To evaluate whether the dedication of girls has totally ceased.*
- 2) *To assess the social, economic, educational and cultural practices of ex-devadasis before and after implementing the program.*
- 3) *To assess the impact of rehabilitation provided by the Women Development Corporation program such as monthly pension, Self-Employment Program and Housing schemes.*
- 4) *To make policy suggestions for effective implementation of the program and its continuation with modification if any.*

Evaluation Methodology:

*The evaluation Study will follow methodological **triangulation** to maintain balance between qualitative and quantitative data. Total 575 samples have been selected from 9 sampled districts of Vijayapura, Bagalkote, Ballari, Belgaum, Raichur, Dharwad, Koppal, Chitradurga and Davangere through purposive sampling method. For the collection of qualitative as well as quantitative data following tools and techniques have been used.*

1. *Interview Schedule*
2. *Focus Group Discussion (FGD)*
3. *Structured Interviews with Key Officials from the field*
4. *Observations from the field*

Major Findings:

Biographical Background

- *95.3% respondents are from dalit background and 4.3% of them are from tribal background.*
- *More than 47% respondents are above 50 years and suffering from various ailments due to poverty, stressful life poor access to nutrition, exposure to violence and drinking habits.*
- *94.3% of them are illiterate.*
- *96.7% respondents' annual income is below 40,000/pa. For 68.2% major source of income is coolie work*
- *97.9% of the beneficiaries are not legally married but 90.1% of them are having children.*

Pension Scheme:

- *Beneficiaries receive pension once in three months (94.7%) and around 5.3% receive once in 6 months. Since most of them live in abject poverty there is demand for monthly disbursement of pension benefits.*
- *94% of the surveyed beneficiaries demand for the enhancement of pension from existing Rs1000. 23.3% of the respondents want it to be increased up to Rs 2000 while 62.7% believe Rs 3000 will be sufficient amount.*
- *But along with this demand the most important demand arising out from FGDs is the creation of separate pension slabs based on age. With 60 years of age pension must increase.*

Housing Scheme:

- *Around 45.71% house only constructed on the beneficiary owned sites of dimensions prescribed (15X20 feet) most of the cases they have far exceeded the dimension.*
- *Only 54.29% house includes a hall, kitchen and toilet. Access to toilet is still a major issue. In many places where houses were more than 10 years old, those houses have either collapsed or in a dilapidated conditions due poor building materials and inability to maintain.*
- *According to the respondents less than a year (25.1%), 1yr to 2yrs (69.7%), more than 2years (5.1%) is the average time taken for a house to be completely constructed computed from the date of disbursement of financial assistance.*
- *Electrification is done in 85.1% houses while 64.0% houses are provided with Water Supply connection.*

Income Generation Activities and Self Help Groups:

- *Under the reviewed scheme one time grant (Rs20, 000/-) is disbursed to the beneficiaries where no repayment clause is mentioned.*
- *On previous scheme 10,000 loans and 10,000 subsidies used to be provided. Beneficiaries were supposed to repay the loan to the Bank in 3 years' time. On enquiry it was learnt that beneficiaries' repayment performance is very positive in almost all districts (more than 90%). Since loan and pension accounts mostly are in the same bank, often Bank recovers the default loan repayment from pension amount.*
- *Prominent income generating activities taken by the beneficiaries includes Dairying (34.4%), Goat/ Sheep rearing (12.8%), Fruit business (11.6%), Vegetable business*

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(13.6%), Petty business / Kirana shop (10%), Paan Shop (5.2%), timber/wood (3.2%), Clothes/tailoring (2.8%), Hotel (1.2%), Ration shop (1.6%).

- Most of the time activities are at the subsistence level, supported by incomes from other activities / other family members.
- 76.6% of respondents formed SHG's under DRP program while 9.6% are members of other SHGs formed by other dept and 13.7% are members of both the SHGs.
- DRP SHG's apart from small savings and loan at personal level nothing significant is happening towards economic empowerment but no doubt it creates common platform for awareness and interaction.
- Former Devadasis are often overlooked in the initiatives of the departments in formation of SHGs.

Awareness Program:

- 97.6 % beneficiaries participated in Legal awareness on prevention of Devadasis dedication while 97% beneficiaries Participated in awareness program on Cleanliness 85.6% beneficiaries have participated in Anti Superstition drive.
- 95.8% beneficiaries attended Health camp and 45.4% of them have attended more than three program. 42.5% beneficiaries have received referral card and those who has received the card only 36.8% used that for follow up action.
- 42.3% attended health camp once in three months while 43.8% have attended health camp once in six months.
- 71.8% of the total surveyed beneficiaries have been issued with health insurance but only 12.1 % have used it so far.

General Perception:

The process of dedication has more or less stopped. But there are few instances of recent reported cases from Raichur and Ballari where DRP officials could prevent dedication. But few personalized dedication of Physically challenged children, children of Devadasis are surreptitiously taking place within four wall. In such cases dedication is a part of wider network trafficking and victims are sent out of their locality immediately after dedication. Almost all the beneficiaries believe that the economic and social condition of the Ex-devadasis has improved after all the interventions of DRP. 78.8% of the respondents believe DRP interventions have helped them to lead a life of dignity. It has increased their status and social acceptability to a great extent. 19.6% respondents felt happy as through DRP interventions they can make their children happy and provide them better life. The scheme has yet to achieve its objectives. Therefore, with modifications scheme must continue till it reaches its desired goal.

Recommendations:

Pension Scheme:

1. *Introduction of separate Higher pension slab for senior citizens who has crossed 60 years of age at the rate of 2500/pm*
2. *Compulsory Adhar linking of Pension benefits.*
3. *Monthly disbursement of pension facilities*

Housing Scheme:

1. *Proper implementation of mandatory construction of toilet for the beneficiaries of Housing Scheme and in earlier cases where toilets were not constructed it need to be constructed. Wherever scarcity of land is there Panchayat must take initiatives of construction of Public toilets. In public toilets accessibility of people from all the caste need to be ensured.*
2. *Vertical growth in construction of housing need to be promoted:*
3. *Deplorable condition of the old non-RCC mud houses requires grants for maintenance and reconstruction of dilapidated, collapsed houses.*
4. *Reduction of corruption at the Panchayat level at different stages and more power to the DRP officials in disbursing loan amount.*

Income Generation Scheme:

1. *Cooperative, skill based, market linked projects need to be promoted to empower the relatively young beneficiaries.*
2. *Emphasis should be shifted from individual beneficiaries to the collective cooperative initiative as individual fund is too meagre to do anything beyond subsistence level.*

On Former Devadasis' Children:

1. *Temporary Pension benefits need to be introduced for former Devadasis children who has lost their mother till they turn 20 years of age.*
2. *Full tuition and hostel fee reimbursement of beneficiary's children pursuing higher and professional education (even if they could secure a seat in private institution).*
3. *Some skill based job oriented training for educated unemployed and loans for entrepreneurial activities.*

Make existing legislation, The Karnataka Devadasi (Prohibition of Dedication) more stringent

By increasing the fine up to 1, 00,000/- and rigorous imprisonment up to 10 years. Better enforcement demands power to make rules under section 7, subsection-2 clause (a)/(b) regarding:

a) Manner of investigation etc. &

b) care/protection etc. of Devadasis

elucidating the respective role of various administrative, welfare and Law enforcement departments of the government.

Long Term Recommendations:

- 1. Scheme should shift focus from the former Devadasis to the girl children of the Devadasis in particular and poor dalit girls of the region who are vulnerable to trafficking and sex work.*
- 2. Since majority of the former Devadasis (95.3%) are from Dalit community, a social movement against caste based sex work, child marriage, and drinking habits need to be initiated to address larger social issues. Dalit organizations can be involved*
- 3. Large scale capital Intensive industries need to promote in the region to increase employment opportunities.*
- 4. Proper Implementation of birth registration of girls and child tracking system under Hegge Gurithu.*
- 5. Another final survey is required to include Devadasis who are left out on previous surveys due to age criteria. Details about them are already there with district DRP office.*
- 6. Construction of residential schools for the children of female sex workers in District headquarters and old age home for the FSW's themselves.*