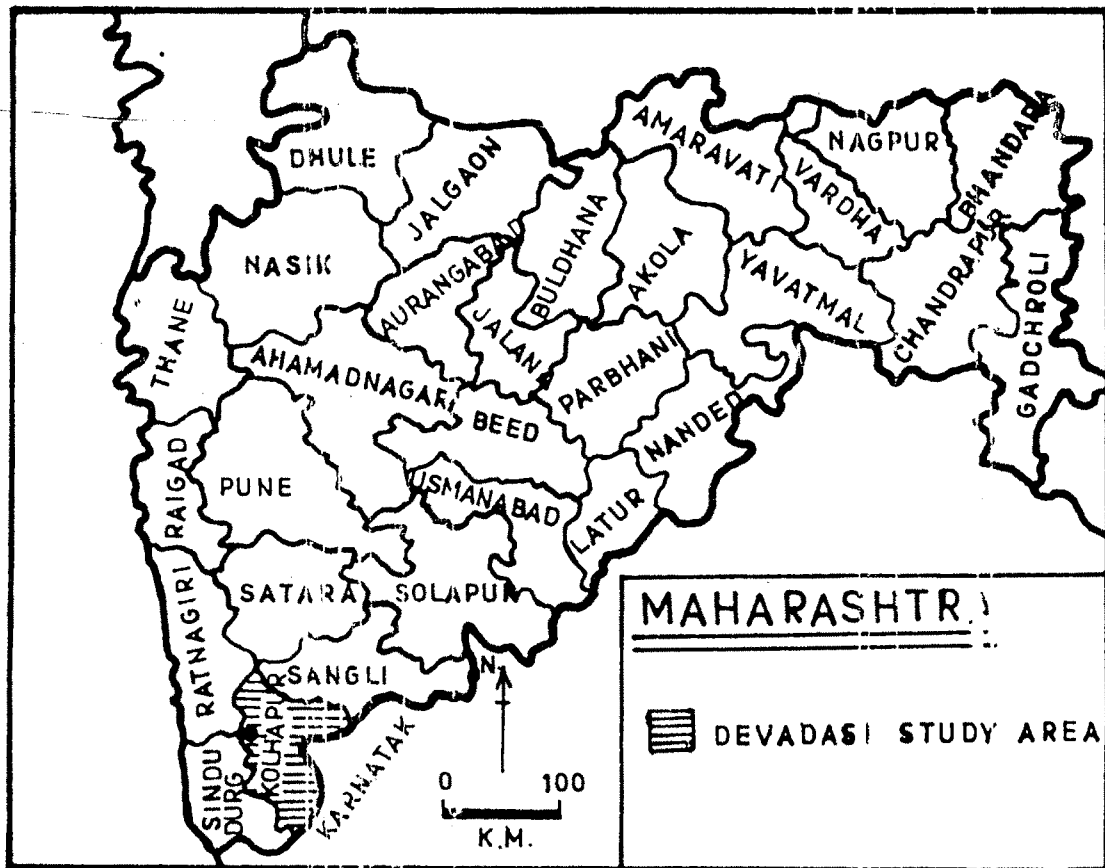


3.1 INTRODUCTION:

Devdasi tradition is a result of superstition, lack of education, economic deprivation and casteism. Long back in the antiquity, when the practice of dedicating young boys and girls to deities began, the society granted it a religious sanction. Since then, however, the tradition has degenerated into a social evil. It is a remarkable fact that while on the one hand, all efforts at its eradication since 17th century have been a consistent failure, on the other, its magnitude has increased many times over commensurate with the growth in population.

It is also noteworthy that only the young women mostly belonging to the backward and downtrodden classes fall victim to the Devdasi tradition. The tradition is particularly rampant in South Maharashtra and North Karnataka.

The Goddess Yallamma's temple situate at village Soundatti in Belgaum District of Karnataka State, where every year, hundreds of boys and girls are initiated into Devdasi tradition as 'Jogatyas' or 'Devdasis'. A significant number of these Devdasis end up in brothels. The tradition thus, under its religious banner, serves as an effective conduit for fresh flesh into the commercial sex trade.



3.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

In recent times, the Government of Maharashtra as well as some voluntary social organizations have started campaigning against the tradition, but not much success has been achieved. The Government is also aware of the suffering of the Devdasis and has initiated many schemes for the welfare and rehabilitation of the Devdasis. The present research work aims at taking an appraisory look at the implementation of these schemes and to offer such meaningful suggestions as may be appropriate. Accordingly, the work has been titled as "A STUDY OF WELFARE SCHEMES AS APPLIED TO DEVDASIS IN KOLHAPUR DISTRICT".

3.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The objectives of the present study have been set out as follows:

1. To ascertain the causative factors for the continuation of the Devdasi tradition in the contemporary socio-economic and socio-cultural atmosphere of Kolhapur District (the study area);
2. To conduct a critical appraisal of the Government Agencies' and voluntary social organization's effort towards the eradication of the Devdasi tradition in the study area;
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of the Devdasi welfare and rehabilitation schemes implemented by the Government and voluntary organizations in the study area;
4. To offer such meaningful suggestions as may be appropriate;

3.4 HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY:

Together with the objectives, the following hypotheses also were formulated for testing during the course of the present research work:

1. Majority of the Devdasis belong to the backward and down-trodden classes of the society;
2. Devdasi welfare schemes formulated by the Government and voluntary organizations help to abolish the Devdasi tradition;
3. Majority of the Devdasis have not received the benefits of the welfare schemes as implemented by the Government;
4. Voluntary organizations are doing effective work for the rehabilitation of the Devdasis in the study area.

3.5 SAMPLE DESIGN:

In order to fulfil the objectives set out and to test the hypotheses, a quota sample of 100 Devdasis from Bhudargad and Gadhinglaj talukas of Kolhapur was taken. The reason behind selecting only these two talukas (out of 12 talukas of Kolhapur District) was that according to the Devdasi Census carried out by a voluntary organization, there are maximum number of Devdasis in these two talukas because of their proximity to village Soundatti, where the main shrine of Goddess Yallamma is sitaute. The actual respondent Devdasis were selected by accident sample technique by visiting different villages of these two talukas.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION:

(A) Primary Data:

The primary data required for the purpose was collected through a comprehensive, pre-tested interview schedule that was personally administered to the respondents by the researcher. For collecting verbatim background information that would help in the analysis of the data collected through the interview schedule, the research conducted detailed interviews with the persons knowledgeable in the tradition, with government officers and the office-bearers of the voluntary organizations engaged in Devdasi welfare work.

(B) Secondary Data:

The secondary data mostly comprised the published and unpublished sources, for which records in Government offices and archives of the voluntary organizations were extensively used. For building up historical and theoretical background, published works in the libraries of the following institutions were highly useful:

1. Chh.Shahu Central Institute of Business Education and Research, Kolhapur;
2. Barr.Khardekar Library, Shivaji University, Kolhapur;
3. K.H.College, Gargoti, Dist.Kolhapur.
4. Personal Libraries of Dr.Vijayrao Nimbalkar and Dr.Jayant Kalake.

3.7 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA:

The primary data collected through the interview schedule was appropriately processed and tabulated and has been interpreted by juxtaposing it against the secondary data.

3.8 SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

The geographical scope of the study is confined to Kolhapur District of Maharashtra State. The topical scope covers an evaluation of the Devdasi welfare schemes as are being implemented in Kolhapur District. The analytical scope covers the fulfilment of the objectives set out for the study. The functional scope is confined to offering certain meaningful suggestions for improving the working of these Devdasi welfare schemes.

3.9 CHAPTER SCHEME:

The Dissertation is divided into Five Chapters as follows:

Chapter-1 : Background of Devdasi Tradition

Chapter-2 : Welfare of the Devdasis -
Past and Present

Chapter-3 : Research Design and Methodology

Chapter-4 : Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Chapter-5 : Conclusions and Suggestions.

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