

## Aspiration of Devdasi farm women in Western Maharashtra, India

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### ABSTRACT

Rural development can not be realized ignoring women who constitute 48 per cent rural population. But among women also there are some sects or classes of women who were far neglected all at levels like Devdasi farm women. It is observed from the study that a majority of the Devdasi farm women were from middle age group illiterate, remain unmarried but bear children (47.50 per cent) and had family size up to two members, medium farming experience, medium cosmopolitaness, low social participation, having low sources of information, medium value orientation, small land holding, having goat as livestock possession, agricultural labourer as major occupation in addition to their own farming and medium annual income. The Devdasi farm women were personally interviewed with the help of specially constructed and presented interview schedule. It is revealed from that most of the respondents aspired for sufficient food twice a day, all the respondents aspired that they should have enough clothing to wear and bodily protection, also aspired for more earning and good health status. In case of land, more than half of the respondents aspired that land possession should be more than existing one. But only 39.00 per cent of the respondents aspired that they should be given recommended knowledge on modern farm enterprises by the concerned agencies in time. All the respondents aspired that crop yield should be increased.

**Key words :** Devdasi, Aspiration, Social, Personal, Economics, Agricultural activities.

### INTRODUCTION

The custom of dedicating girl to the God and their lifelong attachment to the temples is neither a relatively recent practice, nor it is confined to India and Maharashtra state alone. Many social workers and Non-Governmental Organizations have taken efforts to abolish the devdasi system and to rehabilitate Devdasi before and after independence of our country. The Government of Maharashtra is making good efforts to bring Devdasi in the main stream. These efforts shows that many Devdasi, though belong to a Devdasi family are giving up devdasi life. But it is also an important factor that now what they are aspiring for. An investigation entitled "A study of Devdasi Farm Women in Western Maharashtra" was carried out during the year 2006 with following objectives:

1. To study the socio-personal, economic, psychological and cultural characteristics of the Devdasi farm women.
2. To study the aspirations of the Devdasi farm women in promoting agriculture and allied activities.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Kolhapur and Sangli districts of Western Maharashtra. Gadhinglaj and Bhudargad talukas of Kolhapur district and Jat and Kawthe Mahankal talukas of Sangli district being the predominant in devdasi farm women population were

purposively selected from the selected talukas, 50 devdasi farm women were selected to make the sample size of 200. The data were collected through structured personal interview schedule. The collected information was tabulated into primary and secondary tables. The findings are presented herewith as under the following heads.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### *Socio-personal, economic, psychological and cultural characteristics of the Devdasi farm women :*

Information pertaining to the socio-personal, economic, psychological and cultural Characteristics of the Devdasi farm women were collected and analyzed. The results are presented in Table 1.

It is observed from Table 1 that more than half (53.50 per cent) of the respondents belonged to middle age (28 to 54 years) group. While near about half (46.00 per cent) of the respondent were illiterate followed by a little less than one-fourth (24.50 percent) of the respondents who can read and write only and only 1.00 percent had high school level education. These findings are in line with findings of Ghatge (1986).

Near about half (47.50 per cent) of the respondents remained unmarried but bear children followed by 40.50 per cent respondents who were unmarried. Further, it is observed that more than two-third (71.50 per cent) of the respondents had family size up to 2 members, followed by 27.50 per cent of the respondents who had family size

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