

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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Table 1 : Distribution of the respondents by their socio-personal, economical and cultural characteristics

S. No.	Characteristics	No. of respondents	Percentage
A	Personal Characteristics		
i)	Age		
1.	Young age (up to 27 years)	44	22.00
2.	Middle age (28 to 54 years)	107	53.50
3.	Old age (55 and above years)	49	24.50
ii)	Education	92	46.00
	Illiterate	26	13.00
	Can Read only	49	24.50
	Can read and write	25	12.50
	Primary school level	6	3.00
	Middle school level	2	1.00
	High school level	--	--
	Junior college	--	--
	Graduate level	--	--
	Post graduate level	--	--
iii)	Marital Status	81	40.50
	Unmarried	24	12.00
	Married	95	47.50
	Remain unmarried but bear children		
	Destitute	--	--
	Divorced	--	--
	Widow	--	--
iv)	Family size	143	71.50
	Up to 2 members	55	27.50
	3 to 4 members	02	1.00
	5 and above members		
v)	Farming experience		
	Low (up to 6 years)	44	22.00
	Medium (7 to 28 years)	112	66.00
	High (29 years and above)	44	22.00
vi)	Level of cosmopolitaness		
	Low (up to 2 scores)	69	34.50
	Medium (2 to 5 scores)	114	57.00
	High (6 and above scores)	17	8.50
vii)	Level of social participation		
	No social participation	124	62.00
	Low (up to 2 scores)	69	34.50
	Medium (3 to 4 scores)	07	3.50
	High (5 and above scores)	--	--
Viii)	Level of sources of information		
	No source of information	22	11.00
	Low (up to 5 scores)	148	74.00
	Medium (6 to 12 scores)	23	11.50
	High (13 and above scores)	7	3.50
B	Economic Characteristics		
ix)	Land holding		

Contd.... Table 1....

S. No.	Characteristics	No. of respondents	Percentage
	Marginal (Upto 1.0 ha.)	86	43.00
	Small (1.01 to 2.0 ha.)	113	56.50
	Medium (2.01 to 4.0 ha.)	1	00.50
	Large (4.01 and above ha.)	--	--
x)	Livestock Possession		
	Cow	25	12.50
	Bullock	4	2.00
	Goat	91	45.50
	Sheep	22	11.00
	Poultry birds	58	29.00
xi)	Occupation		
	Agriculture	200	100.00
	Agricultural labourer	200	100.00
	Small scale industrial labour (Decorting of cashew)	48	24.00
	Dairy	11	5.50
	Goat keeping	91	45.50
	Sheep rearing	12	6.00
	Self-employment (Fruit and Vegetable vending)	43	21.50
	Business	--	--
	Service	--	--
xii)	Annual income		
	Low (upto Rs.4,750/-)	27	13.50
	Medium (Rs.4,751/- to 15,270/-)	157	78.50
	High (Rs.15,271/-and above)	16	8.00
C	Psychological and cultural characteristics		
xiii)	Value orientation		
	Low (up to 13 scores)	32	16.00
	Medium (14 to 18 scores)	158	79.00
	High (19 and above scores)	10	5.00

from 3 to 4 members. Two-third (66.00 per cent) of the respondents had medium farming experience i.e. from 7 to 28 years. More than half (57.00 per cent) of the respondents who had medium level of cosmopolitaness. In case of social participation, it is observed that near about two-third (62.00 per cent) of the respondents did not have any social participation followed by 34.50 per cent respondents who had low level of social participation.

Regarding level of sources of information, it was observed that 74.00 per cent of the respondents had low sources of information. In case of land holding, it was observed that 56.50 per cent of the respondents had small land holding followed by the respondents who had marginal land holding.

Majority (45.50 per cent) of the respondents had Goat as a livestock followed by 29.00 per cent respondents who had poultry birds. Further, it was observed that all the respondents (100.00 per cent) had agriculture and

agril. labour as an occupation, these is in conformity with the findings of Kamble(1998). While near about that (45.50 per cent) of the respondents had occupation as Goat Keeping and followed by 24.00 per cent and 21.50 per cent respondents who were small scale industrial labour i.e. engaged in decorting of cashew and self employed i.e. engaged in vegetable and fruit vending.

More than three-fourth (78.50 per cent) of the respondents who had medium annual income ranging between Rs. 4,751 to 15,270/- followed by low (up to Rs. 4,750/-) income group who accounts 13.50 per cent of the respondents.

Regarding value orientation, it was observed that more than three-fourth (79.00 per cent) of the respondents followed by 16.00 per cent and 5.00 per cent of the respondents who had low and high value orientation respectively.

Table 2 : Distribution of the respondents by their level of aspirations.

S. No.	Particulars	Aspiration level	
		No. of respondents	Percentage
A)	Food (N=200)		
1.	To get sufficient food twice a day.	167	83.50
2.	Should get nutritive food.	33	16.50
B)	Clothing (N=200)		
3.	Enough clothing for living.	200	100.00
C)	Earning (N=200)		
4.	Earning should be more.	200	100.00
D)	Health status (N=200)		
5.	Everyone should have good health status.	200	100.00
E)	Agriculture (N=200)		
6.	Land possession should be more.	113	56.50
7.	Should have knowledge of improved agriculture practices.	78	39.00
8.	Improved agriculture practices should be used.	78	39.00
9.	Crop yields should be increased.	200	100.00
10.	Should have knowledge of rearing practices of live-stocks.	104	52.00
F)	Education and Employment of children (N=119)		
11.	Male child should have that education so he can get a job.	43	36.14
12.	Male child should have education upto D.Ed. or B.Ed.	70	58.82
13.	Male child should have education upto M.B.B.S.	6	5.04
14.	Female child should be such educated so that she can read and write.	97	81.51
15.	Female child should be such educated so that she can get a job	14	11.76
G)	Social status (N=200)		
16.	Society should give an equal status as like other women in the village.	157	78.50

Level of Aspirations :

It refers to a goal; an individual sets for her to wish and raise the level of achievements and is realistic estimate of one's ability. Thus, it becomes an essential aspect in relation to their profile. So the information on their level of aspirations was collected and analyzed. The findings are presented in the Table 2.

Table 2 reveals that most (83.50 per cent) of the respondents aspired for sufficient food twice a day, where as 16.50 per cent aspired to get nutritive food. Regarding clothing, all the respondents (100.00 per cent) aspired that they should have enough clothing to wear and bodily protection for more earning and good health status. In case of land, 56.50 per cent 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 to increase crop yield. A little more than half (52.00 per cent) of the respondents expressed that they should have knowledge about livestock rearing education, more than one-fourth (36.14 per cent) of the respondents aspired that male child should have that education, so that he can get a good Salaried job, while more than half (58.82 per cent) of the respondents aspired that their male child should have education up to D.Ed. or B.Ed. With regard to female child though most (81.50 per cent) of the respondents aspired that their female child should be such educated so that she can read and write. Whereas, 11.76 per cent of the respondents also aspired that their female

child should be such educated so that she can get a permanent job in Government sector. More than three-fourth (78.50 per cent) of the respondents aspired for an equal status in the society like other women in their locality by the village people.

CONCLUSION

The present investigation indicates that the respondent Devdasi farm women that a majority of them were from middle age group illiterates, remain unmarried but bear children and had family size up to 2 members medium farming experience, medium cosmopolitaness, low social participation, having low sources of information, medium value orientation, small size of Land holding having goat as a livestock, agril. labour as major occupation in addition to their own farming and medium annual income.

While studying this variable, in general it was observed that the respondent Devdasi farm women had

very low aspirations. To be aspirant, it needs 2 important things i.e. willingness life goal and creative ability to perform. If anyone of these lacks, no aspiration can emerge and get it stimulated to achieve the goal. The same might have happened in this case of the respondent Devdasi farm women for their low aspirate thinking.

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