

Patterns of Sacred Prostitution in Colonial Andhra

*Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
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Master of Philosophy

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Certificate

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled **Patterns of Sacred Prostitution in Colonial Andhra** submitted by **Ms. Priyadarshini Vijaisri K.** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of **Master of Philosophy** has not been previously submitted for a Degree of this or any other University. This is her original work.

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To
My Mother & Father

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Prostitution under the guise of religion as a highly organised and developed institution occurs in India, predominantly in southern India. Existing literature reveals the fact that the phenomenon of sacred prostitution manifested in the ancient world viz., West Asia, Far East, Central America, West Africa, Syria, Arabia, Egypt, Greece and Rome. The rationale for the evolution and widespread prevalence of religious prostitution was in the popular belief of, sex as symbolic of spiritual union and sexual intercourse as the means for attainment of salvation. What is of relevance to us is that, the institution of sacred prostitution is an existential reality, that has continued to survive and influence to a great extent the religious life of the Hindus.

The term 'religious/sacred prostitution' is to demarcate between prostitution in non-religious commercial context and in religious context. The characteristic feature of religious prostitution is that ^{it} forms ritual component to the cult of the goddesses. The sacred prostitutes were recognised as 'Mangala Nari', 'Sumangali', or 'Nityasumangali', i.e., embodiment of and harbingers of auspiciousness which is considered necessary condition for the creation, promotion and maintenance of life.

Their divine functions are confined to the temple. What is of crucial importance is that a large number of women continue to serve as "concubines of God" amidst superstition, illusion and ignorance. Another dimension is of its exploitative and oppressive nature, the reminiscence of a feudal and caste oriented society.

The most crucial factor of this phenomenon institution is its synchronic dimensions and multiple expressions at various socio-cultural contexts and levels. Thus an attempt is made to perceive the cultic sexual activity as manifest in colonial Andhra, in its synchronic dimensions and multiple expressions in Andhra society.

The subject of sacred prostitution^{tu} has attracted the attention of many scholars in the latter half of the twentieth century. The inspiration of the growing interest can be linked to two significant events. Firstly the scholarship of the Orientalists is decisive, in the sense that they enthusiastically undertook to investigate the metaphysics and practices of Hindu religion. During the nineteenth century there was a resurgence of religious literature either in the form of translation or interpretation in English. Tantricism evoked both curiosity and contempt. Scholaristic writings on Tantricism saw an impetus during the twentieth century, with

the works of John Woodroffe,¹ who defended shakti against the onslaught of such denunciation. He devoted his efforts to establish and prove that tantras had all pervading influence on the Indian life. He wrote extensively and authored several books on Tantricism, which were a source of inspiration to the first generation of Indian scholars, who produced valuable works on Tantricism and traced the intricate aspects of saktism in its historical development. Dr. D.C. Sircar's² Sakta Pitha (1948) basic text on the Mother Goddess, Professor Debi Prasad Chattopadhyaya's³ Lokayata Darshan (1959), Chintaharan Chakravarti's⁴ Tantras: Studies on their Religion and Literature (1963), N.N. Bhattacharya's⁵ "The Mother Goddess" (1971) are inevitable to locate the institution in a wider perspective and critical examination.

Another major event that generated scholarly interest in the growth of women's movement which necessitated a critique of male dominance in

¹ John Woodroffe, Shakti and Shakta, Ganesh and Co. Pvt. Ltd., Madras, 1918.

² D.C. Sircar, Sakta Pitha Journal of Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal (JRASB) 1948.

³ Debi Prasad Chattopadhyay, Lokayata Darshana, Delhi, 1959.

⁴ Chintaharan Chakravarti, Tantras, Studies on the Religion and History, Punthi Pustak, Calcutta, 1972.

⁵ N.N. Bhattacharya, The Mother Goddess, Indian Studies Past and Present, Calcutta, 1971.

religion in the later half of the twentieth century and the current focus on the theme of women and religion. We can categorise certain important books on the studies on women and religion, while it can be noted that initial efforts came from western scholars and anthropologists. For instance Susan. Wadley (ed.),⁶ 'The Powers of the Tamil Women'; Saskia C. Kersenboom Story⁷ 'Nityasumangali' (1987); Marglin Frederique Apffel,⁸ 'The Wives of the Godking' (1985); Lynn Gatwood,⁹ 'Devi and the Spouse Goddess', Jackie Agassay,¹⁰ 'Modern Devadasis: Devotees of Goddess Yellamma in Karnataka'.

The growing concern for studies on women in general and on women and religion in particular in recent years led to proliferation of books and articles on sacred prostitution. Almost all studies with the exceptions of Saskia Kersenboom Story focus on the Devadasis as manifest in the 'Greater

⁶ Susan. S. Wadley (ed.), The Powers of the Tamil Women, New York, 1980.

⁷ Saskia. C.Kersenboom Story, Nityasumangali, Devadasi Tradition in South India, Delhi, 1987.

⁸ Frederique Apffel Marglin, Wives of the God King; Rituals of the Devadasis of Puri, New York, 1985.

⁹ Lynn Gatwood, Devi and the Spouse Goddess: Women's Sexuality and Marriage in India, Delhi, 1985.

¹⁰ Jackie Agassay, "Modern Davadasis, devotes of Goddess Yellamma in Karnataka" in Gabriella Luzzi (ed.) Rites and Beliefs in Modern India, New Delhi 1990.

Tradition'. Saskia's perspective is pathbreaking as it focusses on the conjunction between women and their behaviour, ideology, religion and caste. Most scholars recognising the Devadasi system as the standard model of sacred prostitution fail to grasp the intricacies and multiple expressions of the phenomenon at different socio-cultural spheres. Thus they negate the most crucial factors of historical development, sociological complexities and conflicting religious entities which are organically related. This is not to undermine the significance of other works, which are equally important to derieve knowledge about the sacred prostitution in a more instututionalised form offering various dimensions to this area of research. Thus Kalpana Kannabiran writes,¹¹ "it is necessary to problematise women's movement with social structure and historical processes and to reckon not just with the fact of their victimisation by patriarchal processes but also with their agency and complicity insystem of dominance and power'.

Studies on the institution of religious prostitution in Andhra has not recieved enough attention. There are regional studies on the system. They give a detailed data about the social relations especially Karnataka and Tamilnadu. Important of them being Janaki Nair,¹² the Devadasi Dharma

¹¹ Kalpana Kannabiran, Temple Women in South India: A Study in the Political economy and Social History, JNU, Thesis, 1992, p.3.

¹² Janaki Nair's "Devadasis Dharma and the State" in Economic and Political Weekly, vol.xxix No.50, 1994

and the State, Jackie Aggasay's *Modern Devadasis on Karnataka*, recent efforts made by National Institute of Social Action,¹³ *Jogins of Andhra Pradesh*, is a survey in social and economic perspective of the jogins in the contemporary period. T.K.Vijaya Mohan,¹⁴ *the institution of Devadasis in Travancore* is about the system in Kerala which coincided with the development of feudalism. So also in the *Institution of Devadasis in Assam* by Dasgupta Rajatnandan¹⁵ examines the role of Devadasis in the socio-cultural context of Assam.

Most important works in this sphere are, Frederique Marglin's *Wives of the God King*. It is an indepth study of the rituals of the Devadasis of Puri in the Jagannatha Temple. She deals with the highly patterned and formalised temple structure and analyses the concepts of auspicious and inauspicious, functions and status of the temple women. She argues it is futile to attempt to categorise women's role in the Hindu world one dimensionally under certain circumstances and for certain purposes the hierarchical and patriarchal principle is at work. Under other purposes, a non-hierarchical principle is at work. It is difficult to say which principle is

¹³ V. Chandra Mowli, Jogins, New Delhi, 1992.

¹⁴ T.K. Vijaya Mohan, "The Institution of Devadasis in Travancore", Journal of Kerala Studies, vol.5, Nos 2-4, 1978.

¹⁵ Dasgupta Rajatnanda, "The institution of Devadasi in Assam" in Journal of Indian History, vol.XVIII 1965, pp.565-576.

predominant, both aspects (pure and impure, auspicious and inauspicious) are explicitly recognised in the culture. Marglin's research gives a new dimension to the studies in sacred prostitution as she conceives sacred prostitution from the traditional and cultural dimension in a concrete manner.

Saskia Kersenboom-Story in her *Nityasumangali* investigates the concept of Devadasi as found in south India especially Tamil Nadu in a broader framework. Her basic approach to the issue reveals the ever differing adaptation of one 'basic context' in the symbolic unity of the Hindu tradition. She focusses on three aspects and dimensions. Firstly the oral traditions that express the early prehistoric cults and manifest in village cults, secondly the Agamic temple tradition present between the seventh and the twentieth century along with the third i.e., of the court/patron culture as existed in the 'cankam'(sangam) as well as in the Hindu kingdom of the seventh and twentieth century. *Nityasumangali* is a stimulating work as it examines the notions of sacred femininity and of auspicious as having developed from oral traditions and embodied in the alternative model. The patterns that are examined in the following pages as Devadasi, Jogini, Matangi are taken from classification.

Lynn Gatwood's 'Devi and the Spouse Goddess,' discerns an

independent, fertile and unblushing erotic female principle within the historical and ethnographic complexity of Indian village and also that of male controlled, religiously marginal and morally ambiguous Goddess that has become the sole representation of the Hindu female principle it deals with the development and symbolism of the version of femininity and the Hindu Goddesses.

Prostitution in Madras: A Study in Historical perspective, M. Sundara Raj¹⁶ is about the phenomenal spread of prostitution in the colonial era. It analyses the efforts made to regulate the system of prostitution and measures undertaken for the suppression of prostitution on moral grounds. It deals extensively with various legislative measures undertaken by the colonial government to intervene into the practice of Devadasi in temples. Devadasi system in Ancient India, A Study of Temple Dancing girls of South India, by A.K. Prasad,¹⁷ emphasize the origin and development of the system along with regional distribution. He makes reference to its prevalence in Vijayawada, renowned as Dakshina Varanasi, (for its religious activities) Srikakulam in Krishna District, Atmakur, Udayagiri, Gudur in

¹⁶ M. Sundara Raj, Prostitution in Madras: A Study in Historical Perspective, Konark Publisher, Delhi, 1993.

¹⁷ A.K. Prasad, Devadasis System in Ancient India: A Study of Temple Dancing Girls of South India, H.K. Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 1991.

Nellore, district and Guntur district. Other important centres being Bhimavaram, Palakollu, Godavari district, Simhachalam and Duttada in the Vishakapatnam and Srikakulam in the Ganjam district.

V. Vaidehi Krishnamurthy¹⁸ in her *Social and Economic Condition in Eastern Deccan* throw light on the custom in Early Medieval Deccan. It looks into the various distinctive features in Andhra in different temple establishments, guilds etc.

V. Putli Krishnamoorthy,¹⁹ the changing condition of women in Andhra deals with the various problem, concerning women in Modern Andhra, as effected by the Social reform Movement and Indian National Movement. V. Ramakmtina²⁰ *Social reform in Andhra* is useful to situate the issue in a historical perspective. Other important research works that provide detailed account about the Devadasi system are, Jogan Sarkar²¹

¹⁸ Vaidehi Krishnamoorthy, *Social and Economic Condition in Eastern Deccan*, Kabear Printing Works, Madras, 1970.

¹⁹ V. Putli Krishnamurthi, *The Changing Conditions of Women in Andhra*, from the middle of the 19th Century to the middle of the 20th Century), Navayug. Publishers, Hyderabad, 1987.

²⁰ V. Ramakrishna, *Social Reform in Andhra*, op.cit.

²¹ Jogan Shankar, *Devadasi Cult: A Sociological Analysis*, Ashish Publishing Home, New Delhi, 1990.

Devadas Cult: A Sociological Analysis, K.C. Tarachand²² Devadasi Custom: Rural Social Structure and Flesh Markets. Books regional in scope are of immense use in constructing and locating the model of sacred prostitution as prevalent in a particular local context.

Other significant works that explore the dynamics in the religious sphere with new critical interpretations are as follows. David Kingsley's²³ 'Hindu Goddesses: Vision of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu religious Tradition' (1987) surveys the role of various goddesses in the Hindu pantheon. Aiming to be an essential source book for studies on women and religion, he focuses on the ways in which goddesses as women are perceived in religion and their status in religion. This book also explores the sexual roles and relationships as built in Hinduism Hindu tradition itself. He makes an interesting analysis of the practices and belief systems of the village communities which is one of the most neglected areas of research.

David Shulman's 'Tamil Temple Myth' is a basic text which is useful to construct the cultural history of south India and the crystallisation of a distinct

²² K.C. Tarachand, Devadasi Custom: Rural Social Structure and Flesh Market, Reliance Publishing House, New Delhi, 1992.

²³ David Kingsley, Hindu Goddesses: Vision of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religions Tradition, Archives Publishers, Distributors, New Delhi, 1987.

south India identity. He argues,²⁴ "The synthesis of Tamil indigenous culture and classical sanskrit culture is the dominant feature of religious culture in south India. Thus it is complex and multilayered.... On the village level of religion, there is impressive similarity of practices and concept over a wide area of south India. Village cults often seem to preserve features known from the oldest layer of Tamil civilisation. "He argues further that, Women and sacred power are basic to south India concepts. David Shulman brings forth the highly developed notions of independent and vigorous women Goddesses in local cults, "The local goddesses in local cults may claim with equal justice to represent the earth in its character of the Universal womb from which life issues and to which life returns, in violence to unite with the goddess is to merge with the dark and the life giving soul."²⁵ No limitations are imposed on the dangerous and powerful local goddess.²⁶

George Hart's²⁷ works on women in south India are also explorative basically about the position of women in South Indian religions. It is

²⁴ David Shulman, Tamil Temple Myths, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1980, p.3.

²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 139.

²⁶ *ibid.*, p.348.

²⁷ George Hart, The poems of Ancient Tamil, Berkely University of California press, 1975, also see, "Women and The Sacred in Ancient Tamil Nadu", in Journal of Asiatic Studies, 1973.

inevitable source book for further studies to study women in Indian society in a proper perspective.

Reverend Henry whitehead²⁸ the 'Village Gods of south India' (1921) is account of the rituals and ceremonies observed in the worship of the village duties. It is based on the observation primitive religious ideas and practices by Bishop of Madras. It is a landmark in this area being the first ever serious and systematic effort made to understand the religious life of village communities, particularly as the very antithesis of the 'Greater Tradition. Its rich details on the nature of village gods,, cults, modes of worship and the influence of the system are of immense importance for the students of history, sociology to widen the understanding of cultural pluralism in Indian society. This book has laid the basis on which more theoretical works were produced subsequently.

Edgar Thrustor's²⁹ 'Caste and Tribes of Southern India' (1909) is the first its kind in the first decades of the twentieth century. His survey is based largely on government judicial reports and census reports. He makes mention of the Devadasi, Basavis, Matangis, Sanis, Bogamwaru providing

²⁸ Henry whitehead, The Village Gods of South India, Calcutta 1st (ed), 1921, OUP.

²⁹ Edgar Thurston, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, 7.vols, Madras, 1904.

details on various aspects of the system. he describes extensively their ceremonies, ritual practices socio-cultural background. he is concerned about the practice as it prevailed in Andhra describing local oral myths with ethnographic details.

Other useful books for the study are, Stanley Price³⁰ 'Hindu Customs and their origin' (1937) M.N. Penzer³¹ (ed). 'The Ocean of story' (1923), Edward Moor's³² 'the Hindu pantheon' (1968); Edward Washburn Hopkins³³ 'The Religions of India', V. Subramaniam (ed.)³⁴ 'Mother Goddess and other Goddesses', D.A. Pal³⁵ 'religious sect in Ancient India', James J. Preston 'the cult of the Mother Goddess'.

³⁰ Stanley Rice, Hindu Custom and their Origin, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London (First Published in 1937).

³¹ M.N. Penzer. The Ocean of Story, H. Tawney's translation of Somadeva's Kathasarithasagara) vol. x, Motilal Banarsidas. Delhi, 1923.

³² Washburn Hopkins, The Religions of India, Munshiram Manohar Lal, New Delhi, 1970.

³³ V. Subramaniam, Mother Goddess and Other Goddess Ajanta Publication, Delhi 1993.

³⁴ D.A. Pal, Religious Sects in Ancient India, Eastern Book Linkers India, (first ed.), 1928.

³⁵ James J. Preston, Cult of Mother Goddess, Vikas, New Delhi, 1980.

Chapterization

First of all there is a question of placing the present research in its historical backdrop. This is because unless and until we enquire into the thought provoking research which laid the foundations as the areas of study will not be able to place the research in its historical perspective. The first chapter (Introduction) hence discusses the important and major research works, their limitation and lacunae.

In the second chapter an account of the origins and development of Saktism in Hinduism and the centrality of Goddess worship in popular religious tradition is made. It will be seen as to how women were transformed from the stage of sacred to impure. It is also seen as to why the institution is impure. It is also seen as to why the institution is peculiar to south India how it is reflected in other practices so also the state of various tantric belief and practices have been briefly discussed.

More often the Devadasi pattern has been projected as a sole representation of the system. Not denying its importance it is most important to note that other pattern i.e. the Jogini system and Matangi system have been overlooked in majority of research works. In an attempt to fill this lacuna, in this study tries to show the differences aspects and function placing them in a historical perspective.

In the next chapter (Chapter IV) the initiation of social reform movement and its influence on the institution of sacred prostitution, the attitudes of the colonial government policies and its consequences and the intervention and its limitations are analysed. Finally the V chapter is devoted to concluding remarks.

Chapter II

WOMEN IN RELIGION: FROM SACRED TO IMPURE

This chapter is an effort to present a systematic account of the origin and development of Saktism in Hindu religion and the centrality of the goddess worship in popular religious traditions. Firstly it is an attempt to understand as to why the Sakti cult is peculiar to South India in its synchronic dimensions and local manifestations. Secondly it undertakes to provide a brief note on the state of various tantric beliefs & practices during the colonial period.

The term 'Sakti' implies female energy. The idea of Shakti embodies a religious belief that, "The goddess endowed potency to her male counterpart, as it was thought that the God was inactive and immanent. With the spread of these ideas, Sexual symbolism and even sexual intercourse as a religious rite, were incorporated into the teachings of some schools of both Hinduism and Buddhism".¹ Consequently, the tantras assign

¹ Ronald Inden, Hinduism: the mind of India, Basil Blackwell. 1990 Pg.177-118. For details see, Charlotte Vanderville, "Krishna Gopala, Radha and the Great Goddess" in John Starlton Hawley and Donna Marie Wuff (eds., The Divine Consort: Radha and the Goddesses of India, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1984. She writes, the consort of the Supreme lord may be identified with the great cosmic sakti, the force or energy that sets the universe in motion. For more details on Sakti puja see pp.309-310.

an exalted position to the prostitute. In tantric literature, at a Devachakra-one kind of cycle connected with the worship of God-the leading part is played, as sakti or embodiment of the active power of the divinity by those five well known kinds of harlots: Rajyavesha (Harlot of King), Nagari (the city Harlot), Guptavesta (the secret Harlot), the women of family who secretly follows the calling) & Brahmaveshya or tirthaya (the harlot of the places of pilgrimage of Tirthas).²

ORIGIN

It is argued that tantric belief as manifested in the phenomenon of sacred prostitution were borrowed from Egypt & Mesopotamia & that the institution of Devadasis traces it in the contact of Greek Culture with that of India, after the invasion of Alexander of Macedonia.³ The earliest accounts of Babylonia mention prevalence of sacred prostitution in West Asia. Similar cults have also been traced in the Far East, Central America, West Africa, Syria, Phoenicia, Arabia, Egypt, Greece & Rome.⁴ It is

² A.K. Sur, Sex and Marriage in India, Allied Publisher, Calcutta 1973, P. 142.

³ A.R. Gupta, Women in Hindu India, Jyotsna Publications, New Delhi, 1976, p.118.

⁴ For detailed account see, Robert Briffault The Mothers: A Study of the Origin of Sentiments and Institutions, 3 vols. George Alln and Unwin, London. The Macmillan New York. 1967. (First published in 1927); also, Tapi Dharma Rao, "Devalayala Mida Boothu Boomalenduku" (why Sexual Pictures in the temples ?) Visalandra Publishing House,

significant to note that though, the notion of 'religious prostitution' was widespread throughout the ancient world, the idea of Sakti as peculiar to India can be traced to archetypal popular cult.

In this context it is imperative to delineate the aspect of 'divine feminine' in Hindu religious system and popular cults. This will enable to locate how Tantricism or Saktism developed in India independently of not only outside influence i.e. foreign influence, but also vedic thought.

The material mode of life of people provides the rationale for the type of diety and the manner of worship prevalent in a particular society. "The pastoral tribes require great courage and efficient leadership to ensure protection of the cattle wealth. The herder in his nomadic life has to live under the scorching heat of the sun, the dreadful thunders, the devastating storms, so his religion is mainly connected with the sky personified in secondary Gods. The supreme being of the pastoral religion is mainly and generally identified with the skylord who rules over other dieties like the headman of a patriachal joint family".⁵ The immigrant Aryans developed highly elaborate religious culture rooted in the archaic structure of human

Hyderabad, 1994 (First published in 1936).

⁵ N.N Bhattacharya, Indian Mother Goddess, R.K.Maitra at the R.D. Press, Calcutta, 1971. PP 1-5.

mind". In such a process it assimilated and integrated diverse beliefs and practices popular among the local inhabitants which subsequently were categorised as lower classes. It is due to an accretionary process that the Indian culture more or less projected a sense of homogeneity. Renou Louis writes,

The primitive foundation of Hinduism was in part of Indo-European origin...The Aryan tribes brought with them a body of religious beliefs which were already well organised and which survived in classical Hinduism at the cost of many modifications. This Aryan (i.e. Indo-European on Indian Soil) religion had already been sifted out during the so-called Indo-Iranian intermediary period. It was at the end of this period that a separation occurred between the original religion of Iran (pre-Zoroastrian) and what was to become the vedic religion in north-western India.

To this ancient foundation was added a succession of influences which made Hinduism a religion quite different from that of Aryan invaders. Most of these new developments took place during this historical period".⁶

⁶ Louis Renou (ed.) Hinduism Gorge Braziller inc. New York, 1961, pp. 16-17. Also see A.L. Bashan, The Wonder that was India, London 1953. Also see Hymns of the Atharvaveda, Extracts from the Ritual Book of the Commentaries Trans. by Maurice Bloomfield, Oxford. The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1897. The Sacred Books of the East (ed.) by Max Muller, Vol.XLV. Also, Atharvaveda Samhita by William Dwight Whitney, Vol.I&II, Motilal Bansari Das, Delhi, (first edition 1962), (second edition 1971). Also see N.J. Shende, The Religion Philosophy of the Atharvaveda, Bhandarkar Oriental Resaearch Institute, Munshi Manoharlal, Puna, 1952.

The Aryan Vedic religion was predominantly patriarchal. This dominance of male Gods is explained by David Kingsley,

...no Goddess of great popularity or prominence appear....This situation persists in the Hindu Tradition till after the epic period. Sometimes around the fifth or sixth century AD, however, several Goddess suddenly appear in iconographic and literary sources in situation of great importance, which indicates an acceptance (or resurgence) of Goddess worship in the Hindu tradition.⁷

The South Indian Culture was based largely on the neolithic cultures that developed in the area.⁸ Ritual based on fertility and magic play predominant role in the agricultural societies. It also is "characterised by extensive developed of magic"⁹, as it involves "work of tilling , sowing and reaping is slow, arduous and uncertain. It requires patience, foresight and faith, In ancient civilisation magic wa the monopoly of women.¹⁰ "Female dicties often enjoyed the highest place among Gods. This depends upon the

⁷ David Kingsley, Hindus Goddess-Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition, Archives Publishers, New Delhi, 1987, pp.2-3. Whitehead, Village Gods of South India Association Press, Calcutta, Oxford University Press, 1921, PP1-5.

⁸ Jacquetta Hawks and Sir Leonard Woolley, Prehistory and the Beginning of Civilization, UNESCO, New York, 1963, p.264.

⁹ E.O. James, Prehistoric Religion. New York, 1957, pp. . G. Thomson, Aeschylus of Athens, London, 1941, pp.21-22.

¹⁰ Robert Briffault, The Mother, Vol.III, op.cit, p.48.



nature of social organisation and the respect in which women are held."¹¹ The Rigvedic Aryans, "never took cultivation of the soil leaving it to the native inhabitants; and instead they like all pastoral warriors, profoundly despised agriculture as the occupation of the conquered races."¹² So also Manu forbids agricultural work to the members of the brahmanical and warrior castes.¹³

The religious life of Tamil civilisation in the Sangam age gives no evidence of a developed metaphysical speculation. It was oriented by veneration of earth, indigenous deities were worshipped in fields and hills reflecting the attributes of the people. There was no practice of erecting large structures to install deities, but worship was conducted in specific places like a field, hillocks bank of river etc. The early character of Tamil religion was basically celebrative and relatively democratic. The religious expression was expressed in terms of possession by the God or ecstasy. A striking phenomenon typical of religious concepts and beliefs of South India during this period was the village deities were exclusively female.¹⁴

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¹¹ Starbuck in Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, p.828 as quoted in N.N. Bhattacharya, Indian Mother Goddesses, op.cit., p.4.

¹² Robert Briffault, The Mothers, op.cit, vol III P.59.

¹³ N.N. Bhattacharya, Indian Mother Goddess, Op.cit P.

¹⁴ Henry Whitehead, The Village Gods of South India, Op.cit PP17-18.

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Emphasising this disparity between the two modes of practices, Shulman comments, "Tamil Nadu (here he mean South India) has recorded a local tradition of mythology extraordinary in its variety and imaginative range and differing in many respects from the classical northern tradition."¹⁵

The predominant feature of autochthonous cults is the prevalence of fertility cults ascribed to "proto-historic times"¹⁶ throughout India.¹⁷ During this period the principal forms of worship were Siva-pasupati cult, linga worship, the worship of trees, tanks, animals as well as the system of worship or puja with water, leaves, flowers etc.¹⁸ In South India religious beliefs developed more independent and distinct ideas. During this period. "A leading feature was the worship of female principle in nature...most of

¹⁵ David Shulman, Tamil Temple Myths, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1980, Introduction; Also see Stanley Rice, Hindu Customs and Their Origin, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1937, pp. 212-214.

¹⁶ D.C. Sircar, Studies in the Religious life of Ancient and Medieval India, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1971. PP 94-105. also see Fairservis A. Walter The Roots of Ancient India: The Archeology of Early Indian Civilization, Macmillan, New York, 1971.

¹⁷ Hodder M. Westropp and C, Stainland' wake, Phallism in Ancient worship in the Religions of Antiquity, New Delhi, 1970. He refers to certain customs which are widespread among primitive people associated with phallic worship in India, Greek, Roman, German etc.

¹⁸ Sudhakar Chattopadhyay, Evolution of Hindu Sects, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1970, P.11; Also see D.D. Kosambi, The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India in Historical Outline, Vikas, New Delhi, 1992 (reprint).

them have male attendants, who are supposed to guard the shrines and carry out the commands of the Goddess, but their place is distinctly subordinate & servile...they are almost universally worshipped with animal sacrifice. Buffalos, sheep, goats, pigs, fowl are freely offered to them in thousands".¹⁹ What is of more relevance to us in this context, is the complex notion of "independent, fertile & unblushing erotic female principle"²⁰, attributed to the Goddess. The roots of their specific religion notions can be traced to certain beliefs in the Dravidian culture. Women in the Dravidian culture were endowed with sacred power that was dangerous as well as divine.²¹ Women (particularly Washer woman) comes in context with sacred powers (due to menstruation) and the pulsiti by the dangerous Gods who possess her,²² sacrifice is thus symbolic of "death and of new life"; associated with the worship of the Goddess "embodies basic South Indian concept of women and sacred power".²³ This duality in the construction of "female divinity" along with "personification of with

¹⁹ Henry whitehead, Village Gods of South India, Op.cit. pp. 17-18.

²⁰ Lynn Gatwood, Devi and the Spouse Goddess, women, Sexuality and marriage in India, Manohar, New Delhi, 1985, Introduction.

²¹ For more details see George L. Hart, The Poems of Ancient Tamil, Berkely, 1975.

²² *ibid.* p. 123; also see for an extensive citations, Gail Omvedt, Dalit and the Democratic Revolution, Sage publications, 1995, New Delhi, PP 35-37.

²³ David Shulman, Tamil Temple Myths, Op. cit. p.9.

fecundity"²⁴ is cardinal to the Dravidians, who were agricultural communities, whitehead writes, "all over the world, the God of the war are mostly male, while the agricultural dieties are the most part female; and this naturally arises from the fact that war is the business of men, where as among primitive peoples the cultivation of the fields was largely left to women and also from the fact that the ideas of fertility naturally connected with the female".²⁵ The characters of the Goddess vary definitely. The villagers do not regard them as evil spirits but neither do they regard them as unmixed benefactories. They are looked upon as beings of very uncertain character."²⁶

This milieu witnessed the influx of growing number of communities from the north which exercised a great influence on the nature of the original Dravidian religion by the 3rd millineuim. BC. The attitude of the nomadic groups i.e. Aryan towards the inhabitants of the country non of

²⁴ E.O. James, The Cult of Mother Goddess, Basnes and Noble, New York, 1954, P. 228.

²⁵ Henry Whitehead, The Village Gods of South India, op. cit. p.. 17; Elmore in his, Dravidian Gods in Modern Hinduism, maker hyperbolic conclusions as he relates the dominance of female principle to the character of Dravidian women who "were especially quarrelsome, Vindictive and jealous and that their temper and curses made people feel that it was wise to propitiate." (as quoted in whitehead's Village Gods of South India, Preface.

²⁶ Ibid P.30.

hostility and contempt. Various references of contempt and disregard for the habits and practices of the non-Aryan inhabitant is evident in their religion literature, composed during the early vedic period. In reference to the worship of linga, the Rigveda acclaims,²⁷ "may the glorious India triumph over hostile beings; let not whose God is the Sisna (membrum virile) approach our sacred ceremony". The term vratya mentioned in the Ashrvaveda is scorned but simultaneous effects were made to incorporate them into Hinduism. Vyatya was "a priest of the non-vedic fertility cult which involved ritual flagellation. He travelled from place to place in a cart, with a women who prostituted and a musician, who performed for him at his rites".²⁸ The religion of Rigvedic Aryans was dominated by male dieties. Female dieties play no part in the pastoral and purely patriarchal religion

²⁷ Edgar Moor, The Hindu Pantheon, Indological Book House, New Delhi, 1968, p. 299.

²⁸ A.L. Basham , The Wonder that was India, for further details on Varatyas, Vratyees in Ancient India by Radhkrishan Choudhary, The Choukhamba Sanskrit Studies Vol XXXVIII, the Choukhamba Sanskrit Series office. Varanasi. 1964. He argues that, "the term Vratya" was Possibly a collective name given to a group of people whose way of life was different from those who claimed to be Aryans. As primitive people of India, they seem to have contributed much to the growth development of India culture. It was thus the pre-aryan people who later came to be despised an low-caste people that associated with this cult. He further explain, "To accept Shiva without Saktiis like expecting a harvest from seeds without the intermediary of earth. Sakti is inherent and conscious power of Shiva and as such creates the Universe... The indispensible and inseparable connection between Shiva and Sect from a fundamental dogma of the system." PP 64-65.

of the early vedic tribes.²⁹ Agni, Soma, Indra all male dieties are repeatedly mentioned along with other deities of considerable significance. The female dieties mentioned infrequently are of negligible importance. David kingsley³⁰ explains, "in these sources (vedic texts) no Goddess of great popularity or prominence appear. This situation persists in the Hindu literacy tradition till after the epic period. Sometime around fifth or sixth century AD, however several Goddesses suddenly appear in iconographic and literacy sources in situations of great significance, which indicates an acceptance (or resurgence) of goddess worship in the Hindu tradition". Agastya is symbolic of Aryans perculating down South and instrumental, in the fusion of local (Dravidian/South Indian) and Aryan elements. This synthesis and "orientation towards the north as a source of inspiration and prestige is quite characteristic of Tamil culture in its development after the Sanggon period.³¹ This merger of the indigenious religious system and Sanskritic Culture leads to the Hinduisation of South India and emergence of a new force in social, cultural and economic spheres.

From 500 AD³² onwards, Hinduism recognizes the feminine element and assimilates from popular tradition, the various manifestation of the

²⁹ A. Macdonell, vedic Mythology, Strarbury 1897. P. 124.

³⁰ David Kingsley, Hindu Goddesses, op.cit. Introduction.

³¹ David Shulman, Tamil Temple Myths, op.cit. P.6.

³² D.A. Pal, Religious sects in Ancient India, Easter Book Thinkers, New Delhi, 1928 p.78.

'sacred' and the 'dangerous' principle. What is notable is the fact that Shiva, "whose adherents were mostly Shudras and its priesthood selected from the pariah"³³ became an integral part of Hinduism with an elevated philosophy endowed by the Aryans. The linga the manifestation of the Regenerator, is generally represented in mystical conjunction with both the yonī and Argha,³⁴ in the pantheistic male dominated religion system Shiva is endowed with 'regenerative' as well as dangerous destructive potentiality. While the female goddess appropriated from non-Aryan sources are suppressed and lose their autonomous nature. Thus there is a decisive metamorphosis from, "unblushing erotic female principle" to a "male controlled, religious marginal and morally ambiguous goddess"³⁵ consequently, we come across certain models of female divinities that were theorized in accordance with Vedic philosophy, after their assimilation. These models vary from benign to malevolent forces, but find relevance and function as consorts of gods under their tutelage. For instance, Pritivi a strong and patient goddess linked with her maternal productive characteristic, is mentioned along with the male god Dyaus, though in the Arthaveda she emerges as an independent divinity. Lakshmi is an

³³ Edgar Moor, The Hindu Pantheon, op.cit P. 300.

³⁴ Ibid, p.305, Also see Stephen A. Tyler, India an Anthropological Perspective, Also see C.V. Narayana Ayyar. Origin and Early History of Saivism in South India. University of Madras, Madras, 1974 (First Published in 1939).

³⁵ Lynn Gatwood, Devi and This Spouse Goddess, op.cit Introduction.

embodiment of faithful, loving and obedient wife, while Parvati symbolized as the ideal of controlled sex, (namely married sex), and acts as an intermediary between the creator and the created. Sita emerges as the perfect model of wifely devotion. She refuses to use the power accumulated from her chastity to burn Ravana simply because she has not been given Rama's permission.³⁶ The vedic goddesses created were peripheral and remained marginal. While the goddesses whose origin could be traced to the prototype among the lower caste tribal groups were spousified and were slanted in the direction of the high caste brahmanical patriarchal values. Under this category fall goddess Durga, Bhudevi etc.³⁷

Brahmin ascendancy had to maintain the cooperation of the people they gained control. The Shudras and the lower castes³⁸, as they were designated were prohibited from practicing orthodox Hinduism. Certain proto-Tantric beliefs or tribal beliefs were incorporated into Hinduism around fifth century. Though the Tantras were not a body of philosophy but of practices, it laid the foundation of basic philosophies in Hinduism. The cardinal aspect of Tantricism is on the energy of a deity or saktism or beliefs in the Motherhood of God. The rituals center around symbolic or actual

³⁶ David Shulman, op.cit., Describes in detail the origin and development of the goddess in Hindu pantheon, Tamil Temple Myths.

³⁷ Lynn Gatwood, Devi and the Spouse Goddess, op cit., p.56.

³⁸ Bruce Foote, Collection of Indian Prehistoric and Protohistoric Antiquities Madras; 1916 p.20.

indulgence in sexual/sensory experiments.³⁹ Herbert V. Guenther explains its symbolic relevance in Buddhism and the rationale as, "the representation of Dhaniyabuddhas and the Sect symbolizes a principle that transcends the level of physical communication. It is called purified awareness-Suvisuddha-jnana, because by it the indefatigable and excellent yogis become free from the (fetters of) passions (which obstruct the way towards enlightenment) and the conceptual scaffolds (which veil the insight into the true nature of man) Klesajneyevratam ... Thus the Tantras try to restore to man and to group in its entirety, which is neither an indulgence in passions, or succumbing to all sorts of distractions, not a rejection and escape but a complete reconciliation to the hard facts of life by seeing them as they are -they are thoroughly outspoken against any definite system, whether it be brahmanical or buddhist which plainly show their unbaisedness and integrity of thought."⁴⁰ It is also believed that the worship of maiden or mother goddess drives away all evils and secures good for the worshipper.⁴¹

Thus there is a contradiction within the Hindu female principle. A conflict is discernible even between the nature of the non-Sanskritic goddess

³⁹ Chitaharan Chakravarti, Jantras: Studies on their religion and Literature. Punthi Pustak Calcutta 1972 pp.80-92. For further details see Max Webes, the Religion of India, Glencoe, Illinois, p.302.

⁴⁰ Herbert V. Guether, Yugandha: The Tantric view of life, Second edition 1969, Varansi, pp.188-190.

⁴¹ Chakravati, Tantras: op.cit., p.88.

and that of the Sanskrit goddess. The former is inherently both 'good' and 'bad' not subject to orthodox marital imperative within the low caste context. While the latter who is 'good' when controlled by sacramental marriage and 'bad' when not in the high caste, orthodox context.⁴² This symbolism of the spouse Goddess as in the orthodox circles and the Devi in the low caste circles is a reflection of the value system of respective cultural groups Lynn Gatwood puts forth this conflict⁴³, "like the spouse Goddess, the high caste woman is considered" potentially dangerous, sexually insatiable, inferior to her husband and in need of close masculine control. The low caste woman is traditionally, like the Devi an unambiguously powerful, sexually expressive and decidedly equal partner of her husband".

It is pertinent in this context to survey as to how the 'sacred' was transformed to 'impure and low' in the South Indian context specifically and in North India as a whole. In the early agricultural and herding hunting-fishing societies, a sense of social superiority was enjoyed by women "But as surplus grew and men and warriors gained predominance the link with sacred power was reversed. The dangerous became polluting and eventually 'impure' and low. This process that began with the Dravidian based Indus Civilization, climaxed with the gradual emergence of the brahmins as a group systematizing the notions of purity and pollution. And with the

⁴² Lynn Gatwood, Devi and the Spouse Goddess, op.cit., pp.71-72.

⁴³ Ibid.

construction of the caste system as the dominant social structure of feudal society during the 6th to 9th century after a complex tigt with competing religious-ideological traditions."⁴⁴ Hart also views that, "women were especially liable to polluting contact and that most of the extreme oppression of women, including women seclusion and sati as deriving from Dravidian tradition that attributed a sacred power to women that was dangerous if uncontrolled by patriarchal bondage".⁴⁵ Though, during this period the relatively democratic tradition and practices survived in the latter periods in the popular Cults, South Indian culture underwent, "the unifying, synthesising fertilizing force" that brahmanism represented. This orthodox orientation in the form of brahmanism affected the elite sections of society and a 'standard all Indian framework evolved to absorb local elements'.⁴⁶ Thus the so-called 'Greater Tradition' exercised a hegemonic influence by way of incorporating few themes and endowing them vedic sanction interwoving them with the basic vedic principles. So also the aspect of female divinity. It sought to legitimize the popular practices of the local groups and village communities by placing their divinities in the broader

⁴⁴ For more details see Gail Omvedt. Dalits and the Democratic Revolution, op.cit., Refer Morton Class, The Emergence of South Asian Caste System, Manohar Publication, New Delhi, 1980. Also See David Ludden, in his Peasant History in South India, Princeton, 1985, pp.204-205.

⁴⁵ George Hart. The Poem of Annet Tamil, University of California Press, Beskeley, 1975, pp.93-119.

⁴⁶ David Shulman, Tamil Temple Myths op.cit PP 6-9.

Hindu framework, but careful enough to strike a strict distinction between the 'high' divinities and the 'low' divinities. These parallel religious systems co-existed throughout South India from the ancient period and continued into the modern period. Vaidehi Krishnamoorthy refer to this religious dichotomy in ancient and medieval Andhra. The female Goddess Devi' are structured in highly developed hierarchical brahmanical temples and become manifest in various forms Viz Durga the spouse of Shiva is known by names such as Hramkara Devi, Sankari, 'poluri Sani' etc. Gifts of villages free of taxes to temples of Goddesses are mentioned. There existed the alternate mode of worship in the primitive form of religion and religious practices followed by the masses like the worship of village Goddesses. There is no mention of any distinguishing temples build for village dieties or generous donation made or patronage endowed.⁴⁷ H.L. Basham⁴⁸ also observes that, "Every village had its local god or goddess (Grama Devata) often a rude image or fetish, set up under a sacred tree, some of these village fertility deities, through a process of assimilation attained widespread popularity. Local goddess were often identified with Durga (a wife or consort of Shiva) but were never thoroughly incorporated into the mythological scheme or provided with husbands and they maintained as autonomous existence on the fringes of the orthodox pantheon." The

⁴⁷ A.L. Basham. The wonder that was India, op.cit., p.316.

⁴⁸ Vaidehi Krishnamoorthy, Social and Economic conditions in Eastern India, Madras, 1970 (First Edit) p.217-219.

assimilated elements or grafted elements were endowed with metaphysical basis and patronised by the ruling class and the elite, while the other practices followed by masses and non-Aryan were severely condemned.⁴⁹

SACRED PROSTITUTION

It is necessary to distinguish between 'sacred prostitution' as different from the commercial meaning of prostitution. What does the practice of sex in religious premises signify ? As in other parts of the ancient world, India has considerable number of women to serve in temples as priestess and engage in other temple duties.⁵⁰ Substantial literary evidence show that sacred prostitution was fully established and referred to in the literature and mythology. Under the male deity, the sacred prostitute play part of concubine, while under the female deity she plays the part of a standby or substitute always ready to symbolize by her action the purpose of fertility and Mother goddess. Most of the puranas like the Upanishads considers as a symbol of spiritual union in devotion.⁵¹ The sexual symbolism became manifest in the hindu temple worship with the integration of tantric and vedic forms of worship. Maithuna or sexual union with women is the most important feature of Tantric rituals. According to the Mahanirvanatantra,

⁴⁹ N.N. Bhattacharya, History of Tantric Religion, op.cit., p.34.

⁵⁰ Fernando Henriques, Stews and Strumpets, vol.1, London, 1961, p.21.

⁵¹ Pratima Bowes, The Hindu Religious Tradition: A Philosophical Approach, Allied Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi, 1976. P. 154.

God Shankara declared fivetattavas-wine, flesh, fish, mudra (cereal, hand or finger poses or the women helper of the aspirant) and sexual intercourse as the means for the attainment of salvation/Vira.⁵² According to the Kaulavalinirnaya, sexual intercourse is the only mean by which the aspirant can become a Siddha.⁵³ This trend gave scope for various repulsive representation of the sexual union in the tantric works. For instance at the Chakrapuja, or worship in a circle, "an equal number of men and women, without distinction of caste and even of blood secretly meet at night and sit in a circle. The goddess is represented by a Yantra or a diagram. The women cast their bodices in a receptacle and each of those contained in the receptacle.⁵⁴ The logic of such tantric practices was that "the union of a perceiver and a perceived; of an enjoyer and the enjoyed, of passive and an active principle, of a male and female organ is essential for creation to take place. The union of the Supreme Man and Nature is represented in the copulation (maithuna) of the lord of sleep (Shiva) and faithfulness (Sati) that is Energy (Sakti).⁵⁵ By the seventh century AD the institution of Temple women became firmly rooted in India and certain temples became very

⁵² Kaulavalinirnaya, Mahanirvana, Kularanava texts as quoted in N.N. Bhattacharya, Origin of Tantric Religion, op.cit., pp.24-9.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid. P. 120.

⁵⁵ Alain Danielou. Hindu Polytheism, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1964, p.224.

famous for eroticism. The non-Aryan principles/practices provided the origin ideas for the development of sacred prostitution. But significantly these grafted elements became integral part of Hinduism, at the loss of their archetypal identity and led to the creation of beliefs original in nature but secondary in function. The secondary role was performed both by the spouse Goddesses and the women employed in temples to the Gods and the priests, consequently. This did not radically infuse change in the autochthonous beliefs which tended to remain popular among the local people or village communities preserved in the form of mythology, tradition, folklore. Shiva Vishnu and other elite Gods tend to be looked upon as 'more dignified' and integral to certain vague conception of cosmic order and dharma than their everyday existence.⁵⁶

INSTITUTION SPECIFIC TO SOUTH INDIA

It is vital to reflect as to why the phenomenon of sacred sex or institution of religious prostitution is unique to southern part of India, (also in eastern India) as against North India. Several patterns of sacred prostitution are manifest in South India, while no such practice with the same vigor and intensity is recorded in the North. It is relevant to examine this unusual phenomenon to understand a few issues. Firstly to locate the position of women in South Indian Socio-religious framework, during the

⁵⁶ David Shulman, Tamil Temple Myths, op.cit., Introduction
Whitehead, The Village Gods of South India, op.cit., p.17.

colonial period; secondly to identify the peculiar problem that posed a challenge to Andhra Reform Movement; thirdly to take cognisance of the intricate relationship between women and religion.

The Sangam literature abound in innumerable passages on the power that dwells in the female body. The literature handles a wide range of themes in context, significantly the Akam (inside mind, house or sexual pleasure). The theme of female breasts as the seats of divine power prevails throughout the literature produced during this period. The connection between sexual maturity and the use of the term *anaku* i.e. sacred power, which is considered dangerous, could be manifest, invoked or driven away. It is not necessarily malevolent, is central to the notion on female divinity.⁵⁷ such attribution of sacred power to women, finds its basis in the beliefs and practices of indigenous people, most vehemently in the Dravidian culture. Beck and E.F. Brenda investigate into the central role of female in Tamilian kin structure specifically.⁵⁸ Women are invested with critical role to perform in the ritual to 'both gain and control *sakti*.'⁵⁹ Women are

⁵⁷ A.K. Sur, Sex and Marriage in India, 1990, pp.117-118.

⁵⁸ Saskia Kersenboom Story, Nityasumangali: Devadasi Tradition in South India. Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1987, p.6.

⁵⁹ Brenda-E.F. Beck, "The Kin Nuclean in Tamil Folklore", In Thomas R. Traumann Ann Arbone (eds.), Kinship and the History in South Asia (ed.) Michigan Papers on South and South East Asia, 1974, pp.1-27.

goddesses are feared, and must like the goddess, be kept under male control. Through male control and her own chastity, the Hindu woman controls her dangerous powers and is able to use them for the benefit of her family. The rites performed at different stages of life puberty rites, menstrual taboos and widow restriction, are evident of the recognized need for "controlling and containing female powers than do the Indo-Arya linguistic region of the north".⁶⁰ Such notions of need for controlled power are inherent more in the Hindu religious ideas which expounds a 'control free and unblushing erotic, ferocious female divinity'. The controlled powers can be directed to gain well being and prosperity for the male members of the family. As Beck observes,⁶¹ that father brother, husband and son i.e. these four males must guard in order to direct her energies towards constructive needs. But her relationship to these is always ambivalent. Her power will be generally respected by these if well controlled, but it will also be feared. The female is the material or source of productive energy on which the kinship system is built, but she is also a kind of watchdog who ensures of its proper functioning." The dangerous potential⁶², she also embodies is implicit, as her curse is believed to bring bad luck or destruction. Thus the

⁶⁰ Susan S. Wadley (ed.) The Power of Tamil Women, op.cit., Introduction.

⁶¹ Brenda E., The Kin Nucleus in Tamil Folklore, Beck op.cit., p.7.

⁶² H.R. Hayes, The Dangerous Sex : Myth of Feminine Evil, Pocket Books, New York, 1972.

duality is inherent in the perception of sacred power and women.⁶³ Thus the principle of female sacredness in the Tamil brahmanical scripture is founded on the ideal of 'self-control' and chastity.

The identification of red vermilion with the aspects of productivity is another symbol of female productive potentiality. G. Thomson explains about its significance in the following words,⁶⁴ "In marriage ceremonies the brides forehead is painted red... a sign that she is forbidden to all men save her husband and guarantee that she will bear him children.. Red is the renewal of life. That is why the bones from the upper paleolithic neolithic internments are painted red." The relationship between the red vermilion, red orche and the productive aspect of nature has been exhaustively illustrated by Rober Briffault.⁶⁵ This belief has become indispensable in the religious and cultural beliefs of Southern part of India. Girls in South India apply vermilion since a very young age, while in the north it becomes significant only after the marriage. This conveys that young girls in South India are regarded as possessing the potential to produce and embody benign power on their own independent of any external force, which becomes evident in north India only after the marriage ceremony. The rites

⁶³ Hoch-Smith and Anita Springs (ed.) Women in Ritual and Symbolic Roles, Plenum Press, New York, 1978.

⁶⁴ Quoted in N.N. Bhattacharya, History of Tantric Religion, op.cit. p.134.

⁶⁵ Robert Briffault, The Mothers, Op.cit P. 412.

that are periodically held explain that, "when directed her powers as a virgin girl bring prosperity to her father and brother, that is to her natal lineage. Her powers as a married women can bring health, prosperity and sons to her husband's family and lineage."⁶⁶ Further the position of daughter in the family and kin structure in the South and north vary. As against North India, in the South Indian Society, the daughter is reorganized as the Source of family prosperity.⁶⁷ "Their play fullness and unconscious sexuality are viewed as a kind of power that can be transferred to brother and father in the family in the form of increased prosperity."⁶⁸ Reynolds describes the Auvaiyar nonpu to ensure the prosperity of her brother family.⁶⁹ In the north, women seek the protection of their brother's, as "insurance against the (legendary) pitfall of life in the inlaws houses", the festive occasions like Raksha Bandhan and Bhaiya Duj make this clear, puberty rites are occasions celebrated by the South Indians, while they are in the north hidden. Susan relates the importance of puberty rites in south Indias to the socio-cultural complex of economic roles, kinship rules and conception of female powers. Puberty rites, are "directed towards containing

⁶⁶ Susan Wadley, The Paradoxical Power of Tamil Women op.cit., p.153.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.156.

⁶⁸ Brenda E.F. Beck., The Kin Nuclean in Tamil Tolkllore, op.cit., pp.1-27.

⁶⁹ Holly Baker Reynolds, To Keep the Tali Strong : Women's Ritual in Tamil Nadu Ph. D. Dissertation. The University of Wisconsin, 1980. As quoted in Susan Wadleys', The power Tamil Women.

and controlling emergent female sexuality and by implication, potential female powers with their associated significance for the prosperity of natal and affinal families".⁷⁰ This can be explained in the matrimonial system. While the South Indian women are married into families they already know, more often cross-cousin marriages, the north Indian women are married to men men who live at greater distance than those of the South.⁷¹ Unlike in the north, daughters are more welcome in the south.⁷² The women in South India are bestowed with a dualist image as can be concluded succinctly by Hochsmith and spring's analysis.⁷³

"Women draw sacred attention primarily in connection with their reproductive status as : Virgins and brides, women may serve as pure, untainted vessels who can be filled with divine energy.. sexually mature women receive the most attention in symbol, myths and ritual for society sees their "reproductive" potential as both highly positive and highly negative and in need of such control."

⁷⁰ Susan Wadley, The Powers of Tamil Women, op.cit., p.162.

⁷¹ Michael J. Libbee and David E. Sopher, "Marriage Migration in Rural India", in People on the move Studies on Migration Leszek. A. Kesinski and R.Mansell Prothero (ed.) Methuen and Company Ltd. London, pp.347-359.

⁷² For details, Barbara D Miller Sexual Discrimination and Populations Dynamics in Rural India, Ph.D., Dissertation, Syracuse University, 1978.

⁷³ Judith Hoch-Smith and Anita springs, In women in Ritual Roles Plenum press, New York 1978, Introduction.

The firm foundation of this institution or tradition in South India is due to political and social conditions peculiar to south and north India. The nature of political situation that generated a strong need for preserving and perpetrating traditional Hindu (brahmanical) customs was absent in the north. During the period preceding the arrival of Britishers while the north was dominated by the Muslim rules there was a strong undercurrent of Hindu revival in its pristine form in the south, Kersenboom story writes.⁷⁴

.... the Vijayanagara rulers as defenders of Hindu culture versus Muslim culture was a renewed north south polarization. Previously the Dravidian south had evidently existed in contrast to the Aryan north until as almost complete fission had been accomplished in the post-kalabhra period. This new polarization opposed the south against the Muslim north, the Vijayanagar empire did inherit not only the various local culture of the South, including of Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra and Tamil Nadu, of but also inherited the wealth of the cholas and their maritime contacts. These two factors were a solid base for the material wealth and cultural amalgamation which enabled the Vijayanagar empire to form and maintain a distinct South Indian identity especially in the field of music and dance it is impossible to discern to the formulation of a well-defined South India tradition which is referred as 'Karnatic tradition'.

⁷⁴ Saskia Kersenboom-Story, 'Nityasumangali', op.cit., pp.34-35, for further details on South Indian Socio-Cultural history under the Vijayanagar rule and Medieval Period See, K.A. Nilakantashastri, A History of South India, Oxford University Press, Madras, 1955, T.V. Mahalingam, Administration and Social life Under Vijayanagar Empire, University of Madras, 1975 and R.Sewell, A forgotten Empire, New Delhi, 1980.

The phenomenon of Religious prostitution is a result of the culmination of a distinct Hindu identity, hegemonic over other cultural groups. This explains the ritual meaning of women in South India and helps take cognisance as to why on the one hand the female aspect is predominant and widely existing in south India and absent, suppressed and exists in an entirely different context in north India.

COLONIAL PERIOD

During the 19th Century there was ^{an} emergence of religious literature either in the form of translation or interpretation in English in the wake of colonial domination in India. More significantly Tantricism evoked both curiosity and contempt. It would be of immense significance to examine the attitude of the western world as well as the enlightened section of Indian society. Hinduism according to white head, a bishop of Madras is ^{that} ~~that~~ it is⁷⁵ "is a strange medley of the most diverse forms of religion ranging from the most subtle and abstruser systems of philosophy to primitive forms of animism." This most common perception of Western writers and scholars was a reflection of the various system of beliefs prevalent during the colonial period. The scholarship of the Orientalist, to a great extent was responsible for rediscovering Hindu scriptures J. Muir explains his basic aim

⁷⁵ Henry Whitehead, The Village Gods of South India, op.cit., p.12.

in persuing research on Hindu religion in the following words⁷⁶.... to produce a work which may assist the research of those Hindus who desire to investigate critically the origin and history of their nation and of their national literature, religion and institution, and may facilitate, the operations of those European teachers whose business it is to communicate to the Hindu the results of modern enquiry on the various subjects here examined". Utilitarian consideration were largely symptomic of the colonial rule who desired to introduce reforms in hinduism and prosetylising aspiration of the missionaries, which necessitated a thorough knowledge of the metaphysics and practices of Hindu religion.⁷⁷

Several western scholars and colonial records have left their impression on Tantric form of religion Trantric cults were condemned as degraded form of Hinduism which consisted of most perverse and abominable elements. Tantricism as the most barbarous and repulsive cult found its way into the records of various writers on religion. The rites was described by H.H. Wilson in his account of the religious life of the Hindus in 1861,⁷⁸ "The rule of animal food and spirituuous liquors, indulged is in

⁷⁶ Original Sanskrit Text. Preface to the first Edition Vol IX, Amsterdam, Oriental Press 1967.

⁷⁷ J.N. Faruquhar, Modern Religious Movements in India, Munshiram Manoharlal (First Ed.) 1967, pp.14-15.

⁷⁸ H.H. Wilson, Sketch on the Religious life of the Hindus, Cosmo Publications, (first published in 1881) Reprinted 1977, pp.248-257.

excess is the rule of those strange ceremonies, in which shakti is worshiped in the person of a naked woman and the proceedings terminate with the carnal copulation of the initiated, each couple representing Bhairava and Bhairavi, (Shiva and Devi) and becoming thus for the movement identified with them. This is Sricakra, "the holy circle" or the Purnabhisheka, "the complete consecration", the essential act or rather forerunner of Salvation, the highest rite of this delirious mysticism.. in fact a sakta of the left hand is almost always a hypocrite and superstitious debauchee". The observation of a French Missionary Abbe Dubois which have been received with 'Universal approval and eulogy' (as remarked by Henry K. Beauchamp in the preface) can be quoted below,⁷⁹

people of all castes from the Brahmin to the pariah are invited to attend... when all the meat has been consumed; intoxicating liquors are passed around... opium and other drugs disappear in a similar fashion... when they are all completely intoxicated, men and women no longer keep apart, but they pass the rest of the night together giving themselves up without restraint to the grossest immorality without any risk of disagreeable consequences... Under certain circumstances the principal objects which form the sacrifice to Sect are large full of native rum and a full grown girl. The latter stark naked, remains standing in a most indecent attitude. The goddess Sect, is evoked and is supposed to respond to invitation to come and take up her abode in the vessel full of rum and also in the girls body.

At the same time the Hindus accustomed as they are to carry everything to extremes, appear to have surpassed all the other nations of the world both ancient and modern in the

⁷⁹ Abbe J.A Dubois, Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies, The Clarendon Press Oxford, 1906, pp.286-289.

unconscionable depravity with which so many of their religious rites are impregnated."

Wilkins in his *Modern Hinduism* castigates the sakti ceremony as followed by "drunken and Sexual orgies" and , "the object of worship at the ceremony must be a dancing girl, a female devotee, a harlot, a washer woman, a barber's wife, a female of the brahmanical or Dudra caste, a flower girl or mild maid".⁸⁰ It sanctioned excess in lust and encouraged incest.⁸¹ Enlightened Indians also shared the general aversion and believed that, it encouraged obscenity in the guise of religion. Bankim Chatterjee viewed Tantra principle as 'misguiding'. While R.L. Mitra castigated them as, "the most revolting and horrible that human depravity could think of".⁸² Beyosh Battacharya cautioned, "the Hindu population is even today in the grip of this tantra in its daily life, customs and usages and is suffering from the disease which originated 1300 years ago..."⁸³

Such practices crept into huge temple establishments where Devadasis were recruited in large numbers. They were interwoven into the elaborate and complex temple rituals, the ideas (sect) found expression in most rites conducted by the priests through the Devadasis and other women (lower

⁸⁰ William J. Wilkins, *Modern Hinduism*. op.cit. pp.342-43.

⁸¹ E.W. Hopkins, *Religion of India*, Boston, 1885, pp.82.

⁸² Quoted in H.P. Shastris, *Buddha Dharma in Bengal*, p.82.

⁸³ B.T. Bhattacharya, *An Introduction to Buddhist Eroticism*, Oxford, 1932, preface.

caste). One of the most common duty of the temple women was to sing erotic songs, representing or alluding to sexual union; in the presence of the divine couple (Jaganatle and Lakshmi) thus setting the mood for the couples subsequent sexual activity.⁸⁴ Again in one of the great worship, Syama Puja Bidhi, described in the 'Wives of the God' king by Marglin, the pancama makara constituted the main puja. This worship involved a woman from either of the following classes i.e., the dancer, adopted girl, courtesan⁸⁵ washerman,⁸⁶ a barber woman. The woman sat naked cross legged baring her yoni which was purified with mantras and sand water by the officiant who subsequently engaged into sexual union.⁸⁷ Able Dubious makes reference to the dancing girls called Devadasis, servants or slaves of God known to the public by the coarser name of strumpets, whose profession require them to extend their favour for the gratification of not only the brahmans but all who solicit them.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Frederick Affel Marglin, The wives of the God King, The Rituals of the Devadasis of Puri, OUP, 1985, p.196.

⁸⁵ Mercea Elide, Yoga Immorality and Freedom, Princeton University Press, 1973, p.261.

⁸⁶ Edward Dimock, The Place of the Hidden Moon. Erotic Mysticism in the Vaishnava Sahjiya Cult of Bengal, University of Chicago Press, 1966, pp.101-102.

⁸⁷ Frederque Manglin, Wives of the Cod King, op.cit., p.222.

⁸⁸ Abbe Dubious, Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies, vol.II, op.cit., pp.387-89.

While among the 'lower caste' of Andhra, the Matangi system was in vogue' Edgar Thurston take note of a much different set of ^{cy}sayed woman who presided at the purificatory ceremonies and went into frequent possession. She was the high priests and prostituted. While the Matha or Matamma, Basavis and Matangis after a widespread custom of marriage ceremony became prostitutes.⁸⁹

Simultaneously there exist a stream of thought which realized the necessity to delineate the origin of the evils of this cult to locate in its pristine form. They held that the evils of the cult were the result of the accretionary process and were not integral to the pure and original form of religion. The progressive spirit of the cult was appreciated. As in the words of Sir Charles Elliot, "... the general principles of Tantra breathe a liberal and intelligent spirit. The caste restriction are minimized; travelling is permitted, women are honoured; they can act as teachers; the burning of widows is forbidden; girl widow may remarry and the murder of women is peculiarly heinous prostitution is denounce".⁹⁰ The Tantras provided not only an autonomous but also alternative space of expression, for women.

⁸⁹ Edgar Thurston, Castes & Tribes of Southern India, op.cit., pp.293-299.

⁹⁰ C. Elliot, Hinduism & Buddhism, London, 1921, (Reprint), vol.1, p.285.

This was disintegrated in the greater tradition but survived in the alternative and Little Tradition.

Scholastic writings on Tantricism saw an impetus during the 20th century with the works of John Woodruff who defended sakti against the onslaught of such denunciation, wrote, "It (sect puja) includes worship with flesh foods, intoxicants and sex, because it recognizes that there are inherent in a certain stage of human development and because it believe that they are more certain to be transcended through being associated with the religious idea, than through being left alone, or in antagonistic relationship to religion".⁹¹ He also emphasized on its all pervading influence on Indian life, "the tantras are concerned with science, law, medicine and a variety of subject other than spiritual doctrine or worship. Thus Indian medicine and chemistry are largely indebted to Tantrikas".⁹² Woodruffe worked extensively and wrote several books on tantricism, viz "The Serpent Power", "The Great liberation and principles of Tantra", to this category belong scholars like Sibchandra Vidyavnara, Panchanan Tarkarata, Gopnath Kaviraj, Thus cropped up many theoretical studies on Tantricism.

⁹¹ John Woodroffe, Sakti & Sakta Ganesh and Co., Madras, (Fifth Edition), 1956, p.462.

⁹² Ibid, p.39.

Another most important source that furnishes details of such practices are the Government sources, private sources such as biographies, autobiographies, private papers, various government Reports and to a certain extent Madras Administrative Reports and debates of the Madras Legislative Council and Assembly and parliamentary debate though in a very limited manner. It helps us to glean from such sources the level of consciousness among the general population, the government as well as the enlightened section of society, subsequently providing us proof of the very limited and unsatisfactory approach of the respective agencies to the concerned problem.

Edgar Thurston's caste and Tribes of South India is based largely on the census Reports and judicial sakti proceedings. He explicitly describes various patterns of sakti worship, in the form of prostitution in Madras presidency and the Telegu speaking areas respectively. He provides data on the caste background, geographical space, religion which are inevitable for a proper perspective. Reverend Henry Whitehead a Bishop of Madras, has left behind a noteworthy account of the religious life of the masses or 'lower castes' in villages of south India, which will be dealt in the next chapter. It will also be seen as to how this element of sakti or tantricism became manifest with subtle distinction in the various socio-cultural levels in Andhra Society.

Chapter III

PATTERNS OF RELIGIOUS PROSTITUTION

This chapter attempts to investigate the cultic sexual activity as manifested in Andhra during the colonial period. Religious prostitution in Colonial Andhra provides an interesting pattern. The terms Devadasis, Basavis, Joginis, Bogamwaru, Sanis and Matangis are generally perceived as synonymous, but there are synchronic dimensions' with distinct identities. The chapter thus deals with three important aspects. Firstly, to locate multiple expressions of sacred prostitution at various levels in Andhra society, Secondly to analyse the nature, functions and patronage and thirdly to examine how the sacred women operate in the 'autonomous space' afforded to them in a patriarchal and feudal society and in village communities. This holistic perspective gives a coherent vision in a pluralistic traditions and society, while identifying the similarities and dissimilarities existing during the colonial period. Consequently reflecting upon the larger issues of social and religious hierarchy.

The primordial belief in the Mother Goddess and the identification of the feminine with the nature, fertility, reproduction and prosperity is a phenomenon shared in common by the ancient civilizations. The veneration

of the female power is related to the conditions arising in a primitive society, whose religious beliefs are rooted in magic, as E.O. James suggests. It is linked to the fundamental urge to assure an, "adequate supply of offspring and food a necessary condition of human existence, the promotion and conversion of life".¹ Female power thus becomes the, "personification of fecundity."² In Indian culture women were assigned divine qualities D.D. Kosambi notes that priestesses performed ritual duties and was considered the incarnation of goddess herself.³ The existence of a "highly eruptive, dynamic power, that is hard to control" but "can be applied for the welfare, fertility, health and justice of human society, but also it may break loose and result in epidemic diseases and other calamities,"⁴ is relevant to understand the cultural expression of sacred prostitution in South India. The Devadasis are called the 'auspicious women' (Mangala Nari, Sumangali) and they are the one who sing 'auspicious song' i.e. Mangala Gita Women are the harbingers of auspiciousness, a state which unlike purity does not speak of status or moral uprightness but of well being and health or more generally

¹ E.O. James, The Cult of the Mother Goddess, Barnes & Noble Inc., New York, 1959, p.13.

² Ibid, p.228.

³ D.D. Kosambi, Ancient India: A History of its Culture and Civilization, Random House, New York, 1965, p.68.

⁴ Sasika C. Kersenboom Story, Nityasumangali: Devadasi Tradition in South India, Motlal Banarsidas, Delhi, (First edition) 1987, p.15.

of all that creates, promotes and maintains life⁵. The connection between sex and auspiciousness is made implicit in the erotic sculpture in the temples and recognition of Sexual union as, 'Mangala'⁶. Thus,"the concept of the necessary harmony of male and female sexuality to ensure happiness, fertility and prosperity is one of the most basic motivation for the origin of the phenomenon of nityasumangali".⁷ Hindu scriptures deal immensely with the aspect of the union of the God and the mortals. Women in epics are found identifying themselves as the brides of God, thereby ensuring of rapid spiritual progress. As Mirabai claimed her lord to be Krishna, so also the Tamil Saint poetess Andal regarded herself as married to God.⁸

Commercial and Sacred Prostitution

Sacred prostitution is distinct from profane or exclusively commercial prostitution. Temples were staffed by women who prostituted and, 'their actions were ritual components of the cult of the goddesses,.... In ancient Greece, the word for sacred prostitute was 'hierodoule' or 'Sacred Servant',

⁵ Frederique Apffel Manglin, Wives of the God-King: Rituals of the Devadasis of Puri, Oxford University Press, New York, 1985, p.19.

⁶ Ibid. p.98.

⁷ Saskia S., Kersenboom story, Nitya Sumangali, op.cit. p.8.

⁸ A.R. Gupta, Women in Hindu India, Jyotsna Publications, New Delhi, 1976, p.116.

the term hierodoule' or sacred servant referred to the ritual itself.⁹ Many regulations were imposed on the conduct and duties of the temple women, to differentiate them from ordinary prostitutes.¹⁰ This group of women were required to undergo a ceremony of dedication to the diety¹¹, or specific objects of worship through an appropriate ceremony before performing the duties enjoined upon them. They were deprived of marrying mortal husbands.¹² The female servants cum sacred women were forbidden to walk in the streets frequented by common prostitutes.¹³ Their services were limited to a certain extent. While such limitations imposed varied for different patterns depending on caste and subsequently notions

⁹ Frederique A., Marglin, "marglin, "Hierodouleia", in Mircea Eliade (ed.), The Encyclopaedia of Religion, vol.6, Macmillan, New York, 1987, pp.309-311.

¹⁰ W.Crooke, "Prostitution in James Hasting (ed), Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, vol.X, New York, 1967 (First Published in 1918), pp.406-408.

¹¹ K.C. Tarachand, Devadasi Custom: Rural Social Structure and Flesh Market, Reliance Publishing House, New Delhi, pp.1-3.

¹² Alfred B., Ellis, The Eve Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, London, 1890, p.140. Refer to similar situations in Africa, where the chief business of the female kosi is prostitution and in every town there is atleast one institution in which the best looking goal between ten to twelve years, teams the chant and dances, peculiar to the worship of the Gods and prostituted themselves to the priests and inmates of the male seminaries. They become public prostitutes, they are considered to be married to the God, and the excesses are supposed to be caused and directed by him.

¹³ Frederique A. Marglin, "Hierodouleia", op.cit. p.309.

of purity and pollution. While the Devadasis who were recruited from clean shudra castes were to restrict their services to the upper castes and the shudras, thus untouchables were deprived of any such divine favours. Matangis catered to the men of the lower castes'. While among the Basavis and joginis they served everybody except those who ranked below them in the hierarchy, the Muslims and outsiders etc.

Another distinguishing factor is that, there was 'no involvement of middlemen or pimps in the jogini System and the women need not go out of her way to entice customers'¹⁴.

The sacred women were embodiments of prosperity, divinity, ever-auspiciousness, 'nityasumangali' and fertility. They were bestowed divine sanction and recognized as an integral part of the societal structure. There was no immorality, or sin tagged to it, nor were they ostracised as common prostitutes who existed simultaneously.

Historical Backdrop

The Cult of dedicating girls to the temples as women servants or bonded slaves of the dieties was prevalent all over India in different forms

¹⁴ C. Chakrapani and C.D. Deshmukh. "The Jogini of Telengana" in the Eastern Anthropologist, vol.45 (3), 1992, (July-Sept), pp.285-286.

and names such as, natis, Deodhanis in Assam, Muralis or Aradins or Vaghyas in Maharashtra. Mahirs, the Deveratiyar, Reyar Acci, Kuttattical, Tevaticcikal or Kalantigal in Kerala, Jogtis or Basavi in Karnataka, Bhagtani or Bhagtan (wife of a holyman i.e. Bhagat) in Marwar, the Vardiyar or Devaratial in Tamil Nadu and Bogam, Jogini, Kalavanthulu, Sani in Andhra.

During the latter Ancient period, mention is made of the seven classes of Dasis¹⁵, viz;.....

- 1) Datta or one who gave herself an a gift to the temple,
- 2) Vikrita or one who had been sold for the same purpose,
- 3) Bhrityu or one who offers herself as a temple servant for the prosperity of the family,
- 4) Bhakta, one who joined a temple out of devotion,
- 5) Hrita or one who was enticed away and presented to a temple,
- 6) Alankara, or one who being fully trained in her profession and profusely decorated was presented to a temple by kings and noblemen, to add to the magnificence and the charm of temple.
- 7) Rudraganika or Gopika who received regular wages from a temple being employed to sing and dance.

¹⁵ Vaidehi Krishnamoorthy, Social and Economic conditons in Eastern Deccan, From AD 1000 to AD 1250, Kaberi Printing Works, Madras 1970, p.59.

In South India the phenomenon of sacred prostitution has solid foundation. Innumerable sources, religious and secular inscriptions, compound the fact that the institution was widespread. It is necessary to briefly note its origin and development in Andhra Society to understand in what form it continued to exist during the modern period.

In the primitive form of religious beliefs which is associated with the masses, the worship of village goddesses is predominant. The theme of 'Divine Feminine as one of the most vigorous and predominant Prevails in the myths, Cults and worship. Popularly called as the Amma, meaning 'Mother' 'Mistress", the local goddess protects the village, she is an independent, fertile and unblushing erotic female' entity specific to village communities or popular religious system. The goddess is feared for her dangerous potentiality as well as worshipped for assuring security to the village against evils forces. In conducting ceremonies and rituals women occupy the central role. This theme has sustained in the oral tradition of the 'little tradition' to the modern period and has substantially lent to the development of similar yet buttressed female erotic femaleinity of the feminine divine in Hinduism. The theme finds expression in the 'greater Tradition' and a class of women emerge within temple organization to perform specific duties, as a parallel to the priestess in the popular village cults and the sacred women. This can be dated to the sixth or seventh

century during the latter ancient period, when references to similar female entities are made.

The Sanis as they are commonly known were referred in the inscription as Vilasinis, Nartikis, Bhogamvaru, Ganikas, Patras, Manikyam etc. In the Telegu work Bhimeswara Purna, the girls in the service of the temples were referred to as Veshyas and Sanikutrus.¹⁶ The ritual of dancing is also traced to the popular practice, later having been incorporated into the brahmanical pantheon and mythology. A.K. Prasad elaborating upon it explains that "the origin of the custom (dancing) is traceable to the practice of ritual dancing which formed an integral part of ritual services of gods and goddesses. A dance performed with the intention of moving the deity was considered to be the real form of prayer..... The Kulfu (dance) was popular among the lower classes of society. Another type of dance called Kalanilaikkuttre was of, a higher order and popular among the nobles and chieftain. Besides these two there was another form of ritual dance known as atal sutra, 60 of the purattinaiyal refers to Velanveviyatal. The chief feature of this dance was the offering of bali or animal sacrifices to god Murugan. In the course of such worship, the devotee fell under trance and began to dance.... Ritual dancing is prominently mentioned in other sangam

¹⁶ M. Krishnakumari, *Social and Economic History of Andhra Pradesh*, (7th and 13th C) Agamkala prakashan, Delhi, 1991, p.145.

works also. It was separately connected with the primitive mode of worship".¹⁷ He refers to another kind of ritual dance, performed by the hunting community in connection with the worship of the goddess of victory Aiyai (or Korravai), "The priestess of the community worshipped the goddess. Salini, born in the family of Marawars, danced before the goddess Siyal with appropriate gestures and fell into trance. She was taken in procession to the temple of their guardian diety and worshipped in front of the shrine where the goddess was said to appear and approve what the damsel spoke"¹⁸. The continuation of this primitive dancing ritual was recorded during the early 20th century among the 'lower castes' of Andhra. Soon, such rites were appropriated and a theological base was built, around the early medieval period, the efforts of the priests to invent gainful rituals cannot be discounted.¹⁹ "Tantricism was seized by members of leisured upper classes and distorted to provide them sexual gratification. The erotic sculpture at Khajuraho and Konark, a very costly affair and could be afforded only by priests, chiefs and Landlords Tantricism therefore was the ultimate product of the brahmanical colonisation of the --areas through the

¹⁷ A.K. Prasad, Devadasi system in Ancient India: A Study of Temple Dancing Groups in South India, op.cit. p.32.

¹⁸ Ibid, pp.31-2.

¹⁹ R.S. Sharma, Indian Society: Historical Probings. In Memeory of D.D. Kosambi. Indian Council of Historical Research People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1974, p.188.

process of Land grants,²⁰ around the 6th centuries.

The archetypal models of sacred sexual rites continued to exist in tribal belts which were basically matrilineal belts, adhered to the cult of Mother Goddess. O.R. Ethrenfels notes that, matriarchal tribes and castes still exist in large numbers in Andhra Pradesh along with Tamil Nadu and Kerala.²¹

The Devadasi system emerged as the representation of the Sakti Cult in highly systematized religious system, structured into the hierarchical temple organization and became integral to the patriarchal and feudal societal system. It necessarily assumed a role model that was peripheral and

²⁰ Ibid, 189.

²¹ T.R. Singh "The Hierarchy of Dieties in An Andhra Village" in L.P. Vidgarti, (ed.), Aspects of Religion in Indian Society, Kedarnath Ramanath, Meerut, 1961, pp.166-171. Makes mention of different female deities worshipped hierarchically in a semi-tribal socio-cultural and religious structure. Some of them are Gramini, Maisamma, Ellamma, Durgamma, Poshamma, Ningammayya, Kolatamma are prominent, pp.166-178. Also see Mekim Marsolt, "Little Communities in an Indigenous Civilisations" in Village India, Chicago, 1955, E.D. Ehrenfels, Mother Rights in India, Hyderabad 1941, pp.18-35. Lynn Gatwood, locates differences in economic, social and religious spheres between women belonging to the 'high caste' and 'low caste' which are of relevance in understanding the religious duties assigned to sacred women. For details see Lynn E. Gatwood, Devi and the spouse Goddess: Womens sexuality and marriage in India, Manohar publications, 1985, Delhi, pp.75-118.

marginal in a male dominated religion and society.

Along with these forms also existed a pattern followed by the 'lower castes' and 'untouchables' who did not live in isolation like the matriarchal tribes from the dominant sections. Their religious integration in the society, dictated by norms of purity and pollution and strong ties of labour did not radically overhaul their belief system. Women continued to play a prominent role in the religious rites and such cultic sexual practices were institutionalized as Matangi system.

The other form of sacred sexual practices originated in the course of further development of rigid feudalised polity and strengthened caste ideology. They came to be categorized as Basavi system or Jogini system. It is possible that such forms emerged during the latter medieval period when the phenomenon of sacred prostitution was at its zenith and the temple played a potent role in the life of the rural mass with the monopoly of the priesthood.

Three patterns developed independently and within their specific institutional structures. The Matangi system and the tribal Cults continued their primitive beliefs without significant modifications and their sanction

persisted in the oral traditions²². These societies were relatively based on equality of sexes and continued veneration of female power. The Devadasi system on the contrary functioned in a narrow space i.e. within the temple under the authority of the priests. Their roles were defined and did not radically differ from the duties performed by a housewife or assigned to family women.²³ But many factors which will be discussed in the following pages prove that she enjoyed a high position at least during the medieval period.

In Medieval Andhra, temples played a vital role in promoting social, cultural and economic function in addition to its chief function of promoting devotion and worship.²⁴ The growth of massive Hindu temples and religious establishments, coincides with the increasing popularity of donating lands and other objects, without which their maintenance would

²² For detailed account on Folk Culture and Oral Traditions See, Benoy Kumar Sarkar, The Folk Element in Hindu Culture: A Contribution to Socio-Religious Studies in Hindu Folk Institutions, New Delhi, 1972.

²³ Kalpana Kannabiran, "Judiciary, Social Reform and debate on 'Religious Prostitution' in Colonial India", Economic and Political Weekly, vol, xxx no.43, 1995, pp.59-69.

²⁴ B. Hemalata, Life in Medieval Northern Andhra, Navaranga, New Delhi, 1991, p.38.

have been impossible.²⁵ It was during this period in Andhra, there prevailed much activity in building temples for different deities under different dynasties. During this period the cult of Devadasi began to flourish. It began to flourish during the Pallavas, Cholas dynasties and reached its zenith during the Vijayanagara period. We come across fifty eight epigraphs in Andhra belonging to Krishna district, Guntur district and Nellore district. An examination of epigraphic records prove that the custom flourished during the eighth century and reached its climax during the eleventh and the twelfth centuries. Literary evidence establishes the fact that the custom was gaining ground in Tamil Nadu in the seventh century. While, in Andhra, the earliest epigraphic evidence to the Devadasis relates to the reign of the Pallava King Nandivarman Palavamalla who ruled from 731 to 796 A.D.²⁶

The temple developed an independent administrative pattern.²⁷ The large sums received from the temple property necessitated the employment of large number of individuals called the Kovilaparivaram

²⁵ D.N. Jha, "Temples as landed Magnets in Medieval South India" (AD. 700-1300) in R.S. Sharma (ed.) Indian Society: Historical Probing, op.cit., p.202.

²⁶ T.V. Mahalingam, Kanchipuram in Early South Indian History, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1969, p.137.

²⁷ For details, D.N. Jha, Temples as Landed Magnates, op.cit.

(temple family/staff), to look after the various needs of the temple. The temple staff may be classified into three categories engaged in the spiritual service for conducting worship, chanting mantras, reciting verses and hymns, those employed to look after the administration with supervisory function and lastly the servants of the lower orders. The servants of the lower order included Devadasis, dancers, musicians, garland makers, cleaners, door keepers, gardeners etc. Devadasis were employed in the temple to perform fine arts such as dancing and music.²⁸ Many of the inscription found at Simhachalam and Srikakulam speak of this category. In one of the inscriptions found in Srikakulam, they are referred to as sampradaya Sanulu²⁹. A Simhachalam inscription dated AD 1299 describes the Vara Naris of the temple as lavanya-guna-sampurna-purnachandra-anana-sriya and vilasa rasa Kalayanayah.³⁰

The cult was prevalent in almost all parts of Andhra. The sacred women served both the God and the representative of the God on earth i.e. the ruler. They seemed to have been quite influential than the priests during this period. The word bhogam that today carries with it derogatory meaning

²⁸ For more details see M.Sumathy "Social Status of Courtesan in Early Medieval Kerala", Pltte. 1978.

²⁹ B. Hemalata, Life in Medeival Northern Andhra, op.cit. p.38-39.

³⁰ N.K. Reddy, Social History of Andhra Pradesh, (7th and 13th C) Agama Prakashan, Delhi, 1991, pp.145-7.

can be traced to this phase. It was common that the king and the rich used to have Devadasis as their concubines who were referred to as bhogamahishi and bhogostri.³¹ The mention of guilds of Sanis is also made in various literary sources and inscriptions. The guilds of Sanis used to administer the endowments kept in their trust by the donors and played an important role in propagating the Bhakti ideology among the devotees through their dance performances.³²

The temples played a crucial role in all spheres of life in the Southern part of India and were more secure than in the north. As an institution, "the Hindu temple from even the pre-Mauryas times occupied a different place for South Indian Muslims than for the north Indian Muslim".³³ They "reflect and infact influence, the totality of relationship within local societies of South India."³⁴ Until the recent past, despite political confusion in the south on the entry of the muslims no hostile atmosphere was created so as to threaten the custom. It flourished in the same vigour as in the pre-muslim

³¹ Ibid, p.62; N.M. Penzer (ed) The Ocean of Story, Gives details of the Bogam (the Corrupt form of Bhogamahishi) in Hyderabad, op.cit.,

³² M. Krishnakumari, Social and Economic History of Andhra Pradesh, op.cit. p.51.

³³ Bintoo Stein (ed.) South Indian Temples: An Analytical Reconsideration Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, 1978. Introduction.

³⁴ Ibid, p.3.

period. But degeneration did gradually set in. A few changes occurred and new developments crept in to a certain extent and they tended to become an essential part of the social life of the muslim kingdom of Golconda. In this part of the muslim country they were called as Bogamwaru.³⁵ Peter Mundy distinguishes sacred women i.e. Bogamwaru, from the common prostitutes of Agra.³⁶ According to the Muslim law, Prostitution was a sin. But this did not prevent the Muslim kings of South India from encouraging the customs, consequently the brahmins flourished during the period due to generous endowments made on the temples comprising of the Devadasis.³⁷ They Simultaneously worked in the royal palace and the temple.³⁸ These girls were skilled dancers and singers,³⁹ and many of

³⁵ Rosamund Seymours, Stews and Strumpets: A Study of Prostitution, Primitive, classical and oriental, vol.1, MacGibbon & Kee, London, 1961, p.185.

³⁶ The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-67, vol.II, Travels in Asia, 1628-34. Hakluyat Society Second Series, No.XXXV, London, 1914, p.216. Cited in Rosomund Seymours, *ibid*.

³⁷ For further details, see M.D. Shortt, The Bayadere or Dancing Girls of Southern India, Memorandums Read before the Anthropological Society of London, 1867-9, London, 1870, Vol.III. The Muslim rulers of Hyderabad, Golconda and Mysore Patronised this Custom and Numbers of the Women multiplied during their periods, Zulfaqar Mubed's Dabistan-i-Mazahib (School of Manners) 1670 AD, (Tr. by David Shea and Antony Troyer) 1993 (Second Impression).

³⁸ Abdul Razak reports that every temple had its crowd of Devadasi or handmaid of the God and the prostituts quarter are one of the sights of the capital. Quoted in P.Thomas, Indian Women Through the Ages, Asia Publishing House, New York, 1964, p.237.

populist religious prostitution could be, the shift of political and economic power to the colonizer and supreme authority of the local landed elite the percolation of sakti ideas as embodied in the Devadasi system; to the rural masses and attempts to assimilate them, encouraged by temple authorities on the onset of declining custom by the shudras castes and lower castes, patronised by the dominant section functioned as sacred women provide some plausible answers. Being lower castes their presence in the temple is forbidden.⁴² As mentioned in various reports and census, they are categorised as a community of women and their customs are drawn from the lower mostly impure castes are widely recognised during the colonial period.

Matangi or Mathamma, are referred by Edgar Thurston as a class of prostitutes who were held in much respect.⁴³ Matangi in a way appears to be a parallel to the elitist model of sacred prostitution or symbolic of divine femininity. As a ritual practice periodical continuation from the post-sangam ages to the present times. Matangi means - consort of Siva, Songstress and Singing dancers.⁴⁴ It retains an 'autonomous space' for women and also the primitive notion of supreme divine, intermediary.

⁴² C. Chakrapani and C.D. Deshmukh, "The Jogins of Telengana", Eastern Anthropologist, Vol.45 (3) 1992, July-Sept. p.286.

⁴³ Edgar Thurston, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, op.cit., p.296.

⁴⁴ Saskia, C. Kersenbosen Story, Nityanemangali, op.cit, p.57.

The sanction of this system is derived from oral myths, tradition and legends, as narrated by wandering singers who attend the festivals and assist in the worship. This form of female divinity is expression of the 'lower-castes' of Andhra Pradesh. Girls dedicated are from Madiga community.⁴⁵ To this day their custom maintains an independent space for women. She function as a supreme religious medium between the forces of good/evil and human beings. Sacrifices still retain a symbolic meaning and the mode of worship is both expressing for some gain from the deity and celebrative. As against other auspicious women, she is ambivalent in nature i.e. sacred as well as retain dangerous potentially. She is independent of any earthly divine authority and is supreme presiding during religion ceremonies. More than any other pattern, the Matangi institution is closer to the original idea of divine femininity. It was original and vigorous in its expression.

Initiation Ceremony and the Role of Caste

Traditionally, the young Devadasis underwent as ceremony of 'Diksha'⁴⁶ or initiation, to the deity of the local temple which resemble in

⁴⁵ Madigas are the untouchable communities of Andhra, who are below the Malas in Caste Hierarchy, while Madigas work with leather hides, the Malas are basically agricultural labourers.

⁴⁶ Saskia Kersenboom Story, Nityasumangali, op.cit. p.186. She discusses in detail the rites of passage that transform an ordinary girl into Davadasi.

its ceremonial pattern any South India brahmanical marriage i.e. 'Sadhi bandhana'.⁴⁷ For enrolling a girl as a dasi, certain condition had to be fulfilled. This ceremony during the middle ages required the consent of the king.⁴⁸ While during the early nineteenth and twentieth centuries the authority of the priest was final with the patronage of the feudal lords. The girl had to be normally aged six to eight years or should not have reached puberty. Some paddy and cash was given to the family of the girl from the temple funds to meet the expenses of the ceremony.⁴⁹ Very often the cost of the temple dedication ritual was met by a man who wished gain a particular Devadasi favour after she had attained puberty.⁵⁰ On the morning of the day of dedication the girl was brought to the temple with two new sets of cloths, betel leaves and nuts. The temple priest would keep the tali at the feet of the idol. The girl would be seated facing the idol, while in the inner sanctuary the priest performed the marriage rituals. Then the priest would tie the tali on behalf of the God around the girls neck. After that the girl would be instructed in the art of dance and music.⁵¹ Once the

⁴⁷ F.A. Marglin, Wives of the God King, op.cit. p.67.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ M. Sundara Raj, Prostitution in Madras: A Study in Historical Perspective, Konark Publication, Delhi, 1993, p.117.

⁵⁰ Amrit Srinivasan, "Reform & Revival: The Devadasi and Her Dance" op.cit.,pp.1869-1876.

⁵¹ A.K. Prasad, Devadasi System in Ancient India, op.cit. pp.86-89.

marriage ceremony is over the girl would be brought to her house where there would be feast and other celebrations. This would continue for two or three days depending on the financial status of the family,⁵² or her patron. When the girl attained puberty, the formal ceremony of initiation took place at home or at the temple where she was dedicated.⁵³ The parents found a suitable man possibly, a higher bidder for their daughter to cohabit with. It was either the king or a feudal lord that was privileged to cohabit with the girl. On this occasion the procreation and nuptial rites were performed and auspicious wedding songs celebrating sexual union were sung before the 'couple'. From then on wards, the Devadasi is considered a 'Nityasumangali' a woman eternally free from the adversity of widowhood and an ever auspicious woman.⁵⁴

The Devadasis were recruited from the Sudra caste. It is one of the reasons that bars them from having access to the inner sanctum of the temple.⁵⁵ In Visakapatnam most of the sanis and Bogam belong to the Nagavasulu and Palli castes, and their male children are often called as

² Edgar Thunton, Castes of Tribes of Southern India, op.cit., Vol.II, p.143.

³ S.D. Punlekar and Kamala Rao, A Study of Prostitute in Bombay, Lahrani Publishing House, Bombay, 1967, p.74.

⁴ Saskia Kersenboom Story, Nityasumangali, op.cit. p.xv.

⁵ F.A. Marglin, Wives of the God King, op.cit. p.246.

Nagavasulu. But in Nellore, Kurnool and Bellary they were often from Baliija and Yerakula castes.⁵⁶ Thus women were manned from the shudra castes to serve in temples of South India. Fuller also records that women who were dedicated came from lower castes.⁵⁷

In Kurnool district, dedication of girls as Basavis was practised. The girl is wedded on an auspicious day, is tied by means of a garland of flowers to the ganida Kanbham (lamp) of Baliija Dasan,⁵⁸ or to some object,⁵⁹ idols till late.⁶⁰ She is released either by the man who is to receive the first favour or by her maternal uncle. A simple feast is held and a string of black beads tied around the girls neck. She becomes a Basavi and her children do not marry into respectable families.⁶¹ They were at liberty to

⁵⁶ Edgar Thurston, Castes and Tribes in South India, vol.II, op.cit., p.129.

⁵⁷ Fuller, quoting the Minakshi Temple he observes that, the devadasis were received from the vellalar Mudaliyan caste, who effectively formed a distinct and partly endogamous caste, in Servants of the Goddess: The Priests of a South Indian Temple, Cambridge University Press, 1984, London, p.40.

⁵⁸ Edgar Thurston, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, op.cit. p.137.

⁵⁹ B.R. Patil, "The Devadasis" in Indian Journal of Social Work, Vol. XXXV, No.V, 1975.

⁶⁰ R.O. Avtal, "Basavis in peninsulōv India", The Journal of Anthropological Society of Bombay.

⁶¹ For More Details, Edgar Thurston, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, op.cit.

have intercourses with men at their pleasure. Her children became hires of her father and kept up his family line. The Basavis nieces were made Basavis and her heirs.

Certain practices distinguish them from the class of Devadasis. While the Devadasis do not belong to the untouchable castes, but mainly the Shudra castes as noted before, the Basavis and joginis are drawn from the untouchable castes in bulk, majority of them belong to Malas, Madigas⁶² and Boyas.⁶³

The rites and ceremonies of dedication of Joginis vary from the Devadasis, while the latter initiation ceremony of 'Diksha' within the temples, that of the joginis are bereft of any such brahmanical rites. Simple garlanding or trying tali in front of the village temples or any idol or thing is considered sufficient.

Matamma is the special goddess of the Madigas. All castes have fear of her and contribute to her worship, caste distinction prevent any but the madigas from taking an active part in the ceremonies. Mathamma has

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Edgar Thurston, Ethnographic Account of Southern India, Part-I, Cosmo Publication, Delhi, 1975, pp.29-31, also 40-41.

another form which is far more important and this is as a Matangi. A Matangi is a Madiga woman who is supposed to be possessed with the spirit of Mathamma. The selection of a new matangi is an important ceremony. The Matangi holds her position for life and her successor is usually not chosen until after her death. The ceremony of initiation into Matangihood is fully described.⁶⁴ The Center of Matangi worship is a village called Malinthapadu, near Cumban in the Kurnood district. Every Madiga girl to become a Matangi had to undergo ceremony. The expenses were heavy and it is to be noted that the Brahmans performed the initiation. The ceremonies continue for five days and a sacrifice is made. Another ceremony is also performed in the village of the Madangi. In some form of marriage she is married to tree, "when she finally confirmed in her honours, she enjoys the privilege of adorning her face with a profusion of turmeric and red powder, and of carrying margosa (*Melia Azadirachta*) leaves about her. She is not bound by vow of celibacy.

Functions: The Alternative 'Autonomous' Space

The functional sphere of the sacred prostitutes constituted an alternative sphere of activity for women who were otherwise entitled to direct her energies and devotion for the well being of the family and husband. But the alternative scope is almost buttressed and non-existent in

⁶⁴ Saskia Kensemboom Story, Nityasumangali, op.cit, mention it and so also Edgar Thurston.

- a) Devadasis acting for the Gods enjoyment who were attached to the piriya-ara.
- b) Devadasis attached to the steward of dancing girls.
- c) Devadasis at the column of the right left sides.
- d) Fan-bearing Devadasis of the right and the left sides.
- e) Dancers.
- f) Devadasis in use.

There was no strict model for such gradation and changes were made according to the requirements, primarily on the affluence of the temple establishments.

In the Kodanandaramaswami temple the four divisions mentioned are, i) hartaki (dancer), ii) gayaki (singer), iii) camarikaya (chain bearer) and seva Vilasini.⁶⁷ The highest grade while the fan bearing Devadasis appeared to be the lowest in the hierarchy.⁶⁸ It was a taboo on them to deal with the 'lower caste' men and violation of this law into ex-communication from the community and temple services.⁶⁹ In the eleventh

⁶⁷ EI, 15 np, 6F, as quoted in A.K. Prasad, op.cit. p.76.

⁶⁸ Vaidehi Krishnamoorthy, Social and Economic Condition in Eastern Andhra, op.cit. pp.59-60. Also see Amrit Srivanasan, "Reform and Revival: The Devadasi and Her Dance", In Economic Political Weekly, Vol. 20 NO.44, 1985, p.1869.

⁶⁹ Edgar Thurston, Caste and Tribes in Southern India, Vol.III, op.cit. p.128.

centuries the women serving in the temple were recognised and sanctioned hereditary rights in their services, they came to be known as 'Sampraday Sanulu'.⁷⁰

During this period the Devadasis enjoyed a high position. They could enter the palace easily even in the presence of the wives of the king. They were permitted to stay with them and eat betel which others could not do. Devadasis were kept as concubines by captains in the army and other higher ranks.⁷¹

They formed guilds to avoid professional competition, known by the number of devadasis for example, referred to as Sani Munnuru (Three hundred Sanis).⁷² Such guild organisation among the Devadasis suggest that they were wealthy and influential, capable of forming guild like other competent professional groups like the merchants, artisans etc.⁷³ This also suggests their numerical strength. They were the only category of women

⁷⁰ Vaidehi Krishnamurthy, Social and Economic Conditions in Eastern Deccan, op.cit. p.60.

⁷¹ Robert Sewell, Forgotten Empire, London, 1960, (First Printed in 1900).

⁷² B. Hemalata, Life In Medieval Northern Andhra, op.cit., p.116.

⁷³ For more details on management of grants and endowments by various feudal lords and elite see, A.K. Prasad, Devadasi System in Ancient India, op.cit, pp.79-83.

who had the privilege of learning to read, to dance, to sing and against the rest who were confined to drudgery. They were exponent of classical dance i.e. Bharatanatyam, which was traditionally inherited by the successive devadasis who served in the temples. They resided in quarters close to the temple.⁷⁴

By the eighteenth century, their services were recognised by the colonial rulers. British appreciated performances (dance and song) by the Devadasis and were invited on all occasions to perform at the processions. Dubious, observes that "their official duties consist in dancing and singing within the temple twice a day, morning and evening and also at all public occasions. First they execute with sufficient grace, though their attitudes are lascivious and their gestures indecorous. As regards their singing it is always almost confined to obscene songs describing some licentious episodes in the history of their gods. Their duties are not confined to religious ceremonies.⁷⁵ Though it would be partial to completely rely on the observation and impressions of the French Missionary, the simultaneous disgust and contempt expressed by enlightened sections of society prove the notoriety the custom had gained and the evils associated with it.

⁷⁴ Ibid, pp.85-86.

⁷⁵ Dubious, Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies, op.cit. 1906, pp.585-87.

By this time the number of Devadasis had increased so much so that by the end of the nineteenth century, the women involved in this vritti⁷⁶ were categorised as a separate community by the colonial agencies.

Table showing statistical variation of the⁷⁷ low community in Madras presidency -1901-1921,

Year	Male	Female
1901	1568	5294
1911	1691	3290
1912	5050	5970

By the turn of the twentieth century their prestige and power began to degenerate. The temple priests and the trustees began to exploit them sexually. The women then became the handmaids of the priestly class and the feudal gentry, instead of the gods. In order to attain a better and secure position in the temple they had to please the priests. The majority of the

⁷⁶ Saskia Kersenboomstory, Nityasumangali, op.cit., pp.179-181. She hold that it is a basic error to refer to the devadasi and the member as 'devadasi caste'. According to the devadasi informants, there exists of devadasi Uritti (profession) or a devadasi murai (way of life) but not a devadasi caste.

⁷⁷ W. Francis, Census of India, 1901 Vol.XII, pp.2 Madras, 1902:158; Malony J.C. Census of India, 1911-Vol.XII, pp.2 Madras 1912, 112-113, Bug G.T. Census of India, 1921, Vol.XIII, pp.2, Madras 1922, p.14, as quoted in Jogan Shankar Devadasi Cult of Sociological Analysis, Ashish Publishing House, New Delhi, 1990, p.59.

brahmin priests and officials kept Devadasis as concubines,⁷⁸ temple trustees were equally responsible for the degradation of the temple women. The permission of temple women was essential for a girl to be evolved as a devadasi, and their continuity in service depended on the will and pleasure of the trustees. In order to please the trustees, the girl relented to their abominable demands. Old Devadasis to regain their position in the temple and hold on their grants and other facilities, dedicated their daughters, or adopted or even purchased girls for dedication. That could not be done unless the trustees approved, which was tantamount to loss of their grants and expulsion from the temple, on alleged grounds of immorality and misbehavior.⁷⁹ The fact that by the end of the medieval period, the devadasi community lost its traditional favour and glamour and almost regarded as a common prostitute⁸⁰ is attested by numerous

⁷⁸ Quoted in M. Sundara Raj, Prostitution in Madras, op.cit. p.119, Also see C.J. Fuller, Servants of the Goddesses: The Priests of a South Indian Temple, op.cit, p.40.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ The words Sanis, Bogam became synonymous to prostitute, where in the common spoken language of Telugu. Mr. F.R. Hemingway writes on the Sanis of the Godavari district, "In this district, dancing girls and prostitutes are made up of 6 perfectly distinct castes, which are in danger of being confused. These are the Sanis proper, Bogams, Dommara Sanis, Turaka Sanis, Mangala Bogams and Madiga Bogams. Of these the Bogam claim to be superior, and will not dance in the presence of or after a performance by any of the others. The Sanis do not admit this claim but they do not mind dancing after the Bogams, or in their presence. All the other classes are admittedly inferior to the Sanis and the Bogams. The Sanis would scorn to eat with any of

monographs historical writings, foreign accounts. C.B. Namoria dealing with various social problems, mention Andhra Basavi, as one type of prostitute who knew dancing and singing while under religion sanction. He mentions Basavi, Bhawin, Devali Naikin in Telengana.⁸¹ There is no mention of their association with the temple . It explain the existence of a number of Devadasis who continued to exist, albeit they had nothing characteristic of their prototype. The causes of dedication also underwent great hanges. They continued to exist on common prostitutes with religious sanction and the law conforming them as such. Their sources of income were many like, attending all auspicious function, participating in cultural activities income from temple endowments, lands etc. allocated by the temple trustees, the priests and the musicians demanded their share and gradually appropriated all their income.

the other dancing castes. The Sanis women are not exclusively devoted to their traditional profession. Some of the marry male members of the caste and live respectively with them. The men do not as among the dancing castes of the South assist in the dancing or playing accompaniments or forming a choras but are cultivators and petty traders like the dancing girls of the south, the sanis keep up their numbers by the adoption of girls of other castes. They do service the temples, but they are not formally dedicated or married to the God, as in the Tamil country. Those of who are to become prostitutes are usually married a sword on attaining puberty". As quoted in E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, op.cit. pp.292-293.

⁸¹ C.B. Namoria, Social Problems and social Disorganisation in India, Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, 1965. Also see J.K. Vijaya Mohan, "The Institution of Devadasis in Tranvancore" The Journal of Kerala Studies, Vol.5, Nos 2-4, 1978.

In addition to these factors, there were specific political and social factors which contributed towards a change in the institution of devadasi. The British did not involve themselves in the religious life of the Hindu Community directly after 1857 and the following decades. Earlier they were patronised by zamindars, local elite, but their position declined due to change in the administration.⁸²

This effected the position of the Devadasi directly and their land grants. Later on British authorities, directly or indirectly imposed restriction on the practice of dedicating girls to deities or purchasing female children for prostituting in the guise of religion. It was at this juncture that the social reformers of Andhra played a crucial role and sought legislative intervention to eradicate the exploitative system.

While the jogini phenomenon is popular in village communities and integral to the village social structure the Devadasi phenomenon is central to the developed economies and larger temple establishments. Joginis also do not share the illustrious career in fine arts as the Devadasis.

⁸² K.C. Tarachand, gives in his Devadasi Custom, op.cit. a causes for the degeneration of the customs during the modern period. They are sanskritisation, ban of such women in worship by the Sanskrit Tradition, the Muslim destruction of religious places, economic degenerated and the Performist Movement.

Instead they are eligible to dance in funeral profession before the corpse.⁸³

Chakrapani perceives it as a more discriminating form of bondage than the jogini system,⁸⁴ "the money earned by the joginis through prostitution serves as a supplement to the below subsistence level of existence of the landless labours family. Hence thus is an apparent exception and support by the family of the jogini for the practices. Another interesting factor related to social security of parents is also responsible for the system, if a couple does not have any male child then one of the girl child is made a jogini so that she can take care of the parents in their old age. The three factors that involved religion, social and economic, are interlinked. The system is part and parcel of the extra' economic coercion

⁸³ C. Chakrapani, "The Jogins of Telengana", op.cit, p.286.

⁸⁴ Ibid, p.285, In a survey conducted in 1988, In Andhra Pradesh, religion prostitutions presented and differentiated between Basavis who amounted to 200 and Devadasi 48. But during this period, it was typical feature that most of the Devadasi were from SC & ST Castes. Also see Jackie Assayag "Women Goddess Women Distress" Man in India, 69 (4) Dec.1989. For significant details on the contemporary period see, V. Chandra Mouli, Jogin, Child Labour, Studies Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1992, "According to present estimates, there are some 5,000 figures in Nizamabad district and a total of 30,000 elsewhere. They include both the forms, the red and all there are condemned for life. This system is prevalent of concentrated in the background rural areas of Bodas, Bansiwada, Yellareddy and Madnur, These girls are not married to potharaju 'the village God, and continue to be 'Punjastree' throughout their lives".pp.6-7.

that exists in the relationship between the dominant sections and the exploited two. It does not have a direct manufacture, but has a basis in the feudal set up. Some notable places where the practice is immensely widespread are Telengana, Nizamabad, Mahabubnagar. And also adjoining areas of Godavari river like Mahlol, Normal Kahrapur, Samithis, Kaasar, Edbid, Vasur, Varigaon, Kararo, Jahaampur, Borigaar and Chinkagunta areas.

Her business is to preside at the purificatory ceremonies that precedes all festivals. When Mahalakshimi Poleramma or ankamma or any other village deity is to have a festival the nearest Matangi is applied to. her necklace of work shells (Cypraa Moneta) is deposited in the well for three days, before. She is allowed to put it in for the ceremony. She dons the necklace and marches behind the master of ceremonies, who carries a knife, wooden shoes and trident, which have been similarly placed for a time at the bottom of the well. The master of ceremonies, his male and female relation than stand in line and the Matangi runs round and round them; in what appears to be 'meaningless' exclamations, spitting upon all of them and touching them with her stick. Her touch and Saliva are believed to purge all uncleanness of body and soul and are invited by men who would scorn at her approach, and it passes one's comprehension how she should be honoured with the task of purifying the soul of the high caste Reddi and

pure proud Komtis. It is said that only few brahmin females keep up their mysterious ceremony of homage to the Matangis.⁸⁵

Matangi embodies the dangerous and sacred potential. Her curse is believed to bring badluck and destruction.⁸⁶ This strong belief is to an extent even shared by the 'upper caste', who condone this practice indirectly and suffer the humiliation she smacks of during one of her ritualistic rounds to their houses.⁸⁷ The Vermillion and Turmeric she anoints with is symbolic of her female productive potentiality. What could possibly point to the archetypal nature of this custom is that during, the Cankam period, before synthesis, of two culture, is the 'Greater Tradition' of the 'Smaller Tradition', the notion of sacred power existing in women was firmly rooted. An additional factor could be that, as the main duty of the Madigas is the curring and tanning of hides and a belief they are rendered dangerous by the sacred power with which they come into contact in their occupation. The

⁸⁵ Edgar Thurston, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, op.cit, pp.296-297.

⁸⁶ Keisenboom Story, Nityamangali, op.cit., see also W. Th. Elmos Dravidian Gods in Modern Hinduism, the Christian literature society, Madras 1925, p.DX also see Cf. Balan Nambiar, Gods and Ghosts-teyyam and Bhutarituals, in Mong. Vol. XXXIV, No.3, pp.62-73.

⁸⁷ Thurston, Castes and Tribes in Southern India, vol.II, op.cit., pp.387.

leather work is infected by the soul of the cow whose skin he/she works.⁸⁸ It can be analysed as to how this position of 'sacred's saw a transformation to the polluting and dangerous.

Similar to many tribal societies, notion of sacred power in nature which are potentially dangerous and a conceptual linkage of these with certain occupation and activities and with women. Such factors may well have given a vital social superiority to women and to those groups in early agricultural and herding hunting societies. But as surplus accommodation grew and men and warriors gained dominance, the link with saved power was reversed; the 'dangerous' became polluting and eventually 'impure', and 'low'. We do come across such dilemma in confronting powers that are at once considered both sacred/dangerous and low, impure.⁸⁹ While the Matangi ceremony is elaborately explained by Thurston, it is also mentioned that, "her Saliva and touch are believed to purge all uncleanness of body and soul" but later on it is mentioned, "the man (brahmin) with strange inconsistency doff of their sacred thread and replace them by new ones after a both",⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Ibid, p.309, also see for more details see Hoch Smith and Anita Spring (ed.) Women in Ritual and Symbolic Roles, Plenum Press, New York, 1978, Introduction.

⁸⁹ Gail Omvedt, Dalits and the Democratic Revolution, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 1994, p.37-39.

⁹⁰ Thurston, Castes and Tribes in Southern India, op.cit., p.297.

Similarly, in accordance with the relatively egalitarian relation between sexes in 'lower castes' communities, and tribal belts, women display a strong notion of autonomy in performing rituals. No highly developed hierarchical structure, institution or authority exists to guide her activities. She expresses displeasure, contempt at the 'higher castes' and humbles them and breaks into wild exulting songs telling of the humiliation to which she has subjected the proud caste people.⁹¹

The pattern refers to the original and popular variant of sacred femininity as against elitist Devadasi system and the feudal of patriarchal Jogini system.

These 'synchronic dimensions' are manifestation of a deeprooted belief and widely expressed among the Dravidian people particularly. All the form continued to exist in various degrees during the colonial period. While the Devadasi system became the model for historical research, apathy and ignorance of similar forms proved an impediment to a comprehensive undertaking of a social malaise that loomed large during this period. Ultimately, this resulted in the failure to provide as holistic solution to eradicate the system. This aspect will be dealt in the next chapter.

⁹¹ Ibid.

Chapter IV

SOCIAL REFORM AND LEGISLATIVE INTERVENTION

As stated in the earlier chapter, the servants of God i.e. Devadasis were recognised by the colonial rulers. European officers were fond of nautch parties, who as, "performers came exercise their professional skill^{as} dancers in accordance with the customs of the country."¹ Dance parties used to be arranged for them by the girls of the neighbouring pagodas. The soldiers also enjoyed dance performances organised in military camps.² The position of the Devadasis and the system of sacred prostitution as an evil, became the immediate concern of the enlightened section of the society and subsequently that of the british government. In this context an attempt has been made to analyse, firstly the efforts made by different social reform agencies to build consciousness,s and mobilise

¹ Viceroy's Private Secretary to the Secretary, Hindu Reform Association, Madras, 23-9-1893, cited in Kenneth Balhatchet, Race, Sex and Class Under the Raj: Imperial Attitude and Policies and their Critics, 1793-1905, New Delhi, 1979, p. 157. He further mentions that throughout the nineteenth century a prestigious but expensive form of hospitality was still to provide a nautch or performance of traditional dancing for one's guests, was provided in the honour of the visit of the prince of Wales in 1857 and of his son Prince Albert Victor in 1890.

² T.G.R. Spear, Nabobs: A Study of the Social Life of the English in the Eighteenth Century, London, 1932, p. 35.

public opinion to abolish the vicious 'evil' practice that had carpet up in the custom. Secondly to critically examine the role of the colonial government, in a larger perspective and its understanding of the custom of sacred prostitution and their policies to elevate the moral standards of the 'natives'. Thirdly perhaps more importantly, is to understand weather such efforts engineered simultaneously by the colonial government and Indian reformers introduce substantial changes in the institution and lives of the sacred prostitutes in colonial Andhra.

British Attitude Towards Sacred Prostitution

With the arrival of the British the Devadasis came to be redefined within the colonial schema. The first challenge to her religious identity and 'sophisticated, professional and artistic activity',³ came from the British. The projection of 'native' women as oppressed in uncivilised society and as entities of a 'pre-capitalist categories',⁴ legitimised the imperial enterprise. Patricia Uberoi notes, "the image of the oppressed non-western woman, the willing victim of inhuman practices... has served

³ Amrit Srinivasan, "Reform or Conformity? Temple 'Prostitution' and the Community in the Madras Presidency", in Biga Agarwal (ed.), Structures of Patriarchy: State, Community and Household in Modern Asia, New Delhi, 1988, p. 192.

⁴ Kalpana Kannabiran, "Judiciary, Social Reform and Debate on 'Religious Prostitution' in Colonial India", Economic and Political Weekly, vol.xxx, no. 43, 1995, p. 60.

a larger political function as a affirmation of European superiority and justification of imperial enterprise".⁵ Thus the significance of projection and consolidation of British race as superior culture and as offering to the backward culture of Indians",⁶ an observable, functioning and successful alternative to her native system' was realised by the colonial government. This was successfully internalised among the educated and enlightened section of colonial Andhra.⁷

For an understanding of the issue of British policy towards the sacred prostitution it is necessary to delineate the attitude of the colonial government not only to religious institution but also prostitutes who came within the purview of the British legal administration much earlier. This approach will help in locating the inherent contradiction the coloniser faced with non-western challenges and which consequently were determinants of its policies.

⁵ Patricia Uberoi, "Introduction: Problematizing Social reform, engaging Sexuality, interrogating the State" in Patricia Uberoi (ed.), Social Reform, Sexuality and the State, New Delhi, 1996, p. xii.

⁶ Charles H. Heimsath, Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social reform, Princeton, 1964, p. 34; Also see Durjati Prasad Mukherjee, Modern Indian Culture, Bombay, 1948 (second edition).

⁷ See the Correspondance from Dr. S. Muthulakshmi Reddy to Mrs. Caton, dated 23-2-1930.

The colonial rhetoric towards prostitution was the product of the ethnocentric observations and notes of the western travellers, Christian Missionaries along with a strong belief in their civilising potential, racial and moral superiority. The observations of Abbe Dubois⁸ a french Missionary which is received with "Universal approval and euology" (in the words of Beauchamp) represents the typical colonial response to the institution. Written in the late eighteenth century Devadasis were depicted as, 'loose females', exhibiting 'lascivious attitudes and motions' as bred to pursue 'a profligate life' and as having been trained, "instructed in the various modes of kindling the fire of voluptuousness in the coldest hearts... whom they wish to seduce". Significantly these categories were reflected not only in the Social Purity Movement but also the Abolitionist Movement which reiterated them.

They very term 'nautch' was used and popularised by the Britishers to describe the dance performance of the Devadasis. The Social Purity Movement in the late nineteenth century led by educated Indian section which articulated the moral superiority of the west and christianity was popularly known as the anti-nautch Movement.⁹ It can be noted that

⁸ Abbe J.A. Dubious, Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies, Oxford, 1906 (3rd edition), pp. 286-289, 387-389 and 405.

⁹ The Madras Mail, 17-3-1894.

with the colonial presence, the Devadasis dance performances were extended beyond the religious premises,¹⁰ and the activities were becoming increasingly secular in context and content.

The ultimate aim, of the Christian Missionaries and a section of colonial bureaucracy, the British enterprises in India was believed to be proselytization of the 'uncivilised' and 'barbaric natives' by effective means of undermining their religious beliefs.¹¹ As christianity itself was a result against the superstitious and cultic practices. Frederique Marglin writes,¹² "apostasy in the Bible is considered to be the worst of the sins, hence term referring to cultic sexual activity - prostitute, harlotry and whoredom took an extremely negative connotation... Authors of the Hebrew Scriptures mentions the existence and activity of sacred prostitutes, both male (qodesh) and female (quesdushah) even in temples at Jerusalem (586 BCE) and the Babylonian exile. The eventual triumph of a monotheist environment radically different in its religious orientation". As a result, the Missionaries vehemently castigated the

¹⁰ Kenneth Balhatchet, Race, Sex and Class Under the Raj, op.cit. p. 158.

¹¹ Rosalind O' Hanlon, Caste, Conflict and Ideology: Mahatma Jotirao Phule and the Low Caste Protest in Nineteenth Century Western India, Hyderabad, 1985, pp. 52-53.

¹² Frederique Apffel Marglin, "Hierodouleia" in Mircea Eliade (ed.), The Encyclopaedia of Religion, vol. 6, New York, 1987, pp. 308-309.

morals of 'natives' as more prone to immoral and lascivious behaviour and their customs as having degenerated into something objectionable.¹³

The British were confronted by two antagonistic issues. Firstly, it realised the necessity to follow a policy of non interference in religious affairs of the 'natives' to strongly mark in the minds of the people the happy distinction between, British generosity and justice, and Mohammeden rapacity and sacrilege.¹⁴ On the other hand it had to yield to the pressure of the missionaries¹⁵ and the Social Purity Association in England to mitigate the evils related to prostitution. Most importantly perhaps was confounding the immense trust the Andhra social reformist section held in the progressive and welfare oriented nature of the colonial government. While the latter aspect will be examined in relation to their attitude towards the reformist and abolitionist section, it would be relevant to perceive the changes brought about in the lives of the Devadasis in a changed scenario with the colonial settlement in India.

¹³ Government of Madras, G.O. no. 400, Law (Legislature) Department, Dated 19-9-1928.

¹⁴ Government of Madras, Board of Revenue Consultations, Dated 28-2-1802, vol. 311, p. 2094.

¹⁵ Arthur Meyhew, Christianity and the Government of India, London, 1929, p. 150.

Significantly, the colonial period reiterated the servile status of the Devadasis. In 1833 the administration of temple revenue which was taken by the company was delegated to the poojari in case of small village pagodas, panchayats or committee incase of larger temples. Thus the Tirupati temple was handed over to the Mahants/Dharmacurtahs; Wester who were a committee of influential local people.¹⁶ On the replacement of the king, by the priests and influential people, the company at varying phases brought the temple within the control of numerous patrons. The withdrawal of the government created a vacuum in the absence of a machinery. this resulted into increase¹⁷ of corrupt practices: strong temptations to embezzle temple funds and misappropriation of Temple Sources. By the Religious Endowment Act of 1927 the Temple Trustee Committee gained full control of recruiting, transferring officers and servants, fining, suspending and dismissing them. Thus the existence of the Devadasis and temple women came to be determined by the interests of the trustees and were reduced to the position of menials of the temples,

¹⁶ Chandra Mudaliar, State and the Religious Endowments in Madras, Madras, 1976, pp. 39-40.

¹⁷ The Brahmins frequently mortgaged the properties of the temples for their own privatge use. See The Board of Revenue Consultations, dated 12 January, 1889, vol. 24, p.70.

and concubines of the priest and the landed caste-Hindu men.¹⁸ The Devadasis were alleged to have been responsible,¹⁹ for the vice associated with them for they became greedy and their liaisons with many men. It was reported that many of them were infected by venereal diseases.²⁰

The policy of the colonial government on prostitution in the sense of commoditised sex differed. The Devadasis were kept out of the Cantonment rules and contagious Diseases Act in Madras, and out of the purview of the rules passed to control legislation, out of fear of reaction by the 'native' classes as it was deemed a religious institution in its earlier stages.²¹ This attitude continued throughout the colonial period until the 1947 Act was passed after Independence.

¹⁸ Government of Madras, G.O.no. 400, Law (Legislature) Department, Dated, 19-9-1928; Francis Bluchanan, Journey From Madras Through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, Malabar Performed Under the Orders of the Most Noble, The Marques of Wellesley, vol. II, 1807, p. 267; Also see the Board of Revenue Proceedings, vol. 1136, dated 31-1-1828, p. 1282.

¹⁹ The Board of Revenue Proceedings, vol. 1136, Dated 31-1-1828, pp. 2956-2960.

²⁰ K.S. Venkataramana, Administration and Social Life Under Maratha Rulers of Tanjore, Tanjore, 1984, p. 325.

²¹ Government of Madras, G.O.no. 76 and 77, Military Department, Dated, 27-6-1876.

The British, regarded the prostitutes as responsible for the pollution of morals in India,. Such attitude was extended to the 'sacred women' also. This helps us to examine as to how the ideals of the colonial government on issues of morality, immorality influenced the Indian educated section and in turn their understanding and interpretation of prostitutes in societal context.²² Everything about them (i.e. lower classes of Christians and natives in the metropolis of India) bears the stamp of a total absence of every moral, religious and social feeling... who infect our principal through fares polluting the atmosphere of our neighbourhood and who by their indecent conduct scandalise the morals of the population which they are permitted to live". This condemnation was reflected among the Indian educated sections who articulated principles of social purity and confirmed the status of the Devadasi as a prostitute.

It was increasingly accepted in official circles that, prostitution in India for the Britishers was an inevitable evil'. Under the necessary conditions created by the sexual needs of the colonial army and to a certain extent of bureaucracy, prostitution come to be regularised. The prostitutes became the source of strength on which the discipline and

²² Kenneth Balhatchet, Race, Sex and Class Under the Raj, op.cit., p. 43.

safety of the imperial army depended. it had decisive military, economic and political implications. Balhatchet observes,²³ Indian prostitutes were therefore seen in a positive role as necessary to the satisfaction of the soldiers physical needs. If there needs were denied satisfaction, dire consequences were envisaged, the soldiers masculinity would be at risk, the prospect of homosexuality was revealed in guarded terms whenever, there was a task of excluding prostitutes form the cantonments.

Thus, the problem of the redefinition of the Devadasi within the colonial scheme was solved by categorising her as prostitute. She was engaged in 'multiple sexual relationship'²⁴ outside familial and domestic space. In their categorisation of the 'sacred prostitutes' the British strictly meant the Devadasis. Though British judicial reports, census reports confirm that the other patterns of sacred prostitution was widespread in the form of Jogini, Basavi, Matangi no mention about them is made. They do not figure in the policies towards Devadasis. It is most probable that all of them were merely known as prostitutes and their unusual identity was overshadowed. The category of women who were widespread in large numbers under the authority of the Temple trustees

²³ Ibid. Epilogue.

²⁴ Kalpana Kannabiran, "Judiciary, Social Reform and Debate on 'Religious Prostitution' in Colonial India", op. cit. p. 60.

who were basically comprised of the feudal lords; and temples functioning in smaller villages did not become problematic in their enthusiasm to effect, "a shift from the purview of religious law into that of secular law necessarily entailed a shift from proof of the offence to a speculation as to the motives of the accused. Proof there by came to be constituted by the painstaking orientalist discourse on Hindu society rather than by the facts of the case".²⁵ For instance Edgar Thurston²⁶ opines that the Basavis, could have been, 'camp followers and nurses of the wounded in the battle', it is probable that these women formed a considerable number who catered to the sexual needs of the imperial government.²⁷ All it did was to reiterate its social distance of racial superiority was resorting to a compromise, by restricting sexual relations²⁸ to "upper caste Prostitutes", which also meant 'respected prostitutes'.

THE SOCIAL REFORM AND SOCIAL PURITY MOVEMENT

In the nineteenth century Andhra society was decadent, several evils sanctified by religion had debilitating effect especially on women and

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Edgar Thurston, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Madras, 1909, vol. II, p. 137.

²⁷ Indian Law Reports, Madras Series, XXiii, 1900, vol.v, pp. 1869-1870.

²⁸ Kenneth Balhatchet, Race, Sex and Class Under the Raj, op.cit., p. 13.

the outcasts. "Hinduism had become a compound of magic animism and superstition".... while innumerable other practices were marked by, 'constraint, credulity, authority bigotry and blind fatalism'.²⁹ It was increasingly perceived that "religion as an ideology had embraced almost every sphere of existence. Thereby masking the socio, cultural and political reality therefore if people are to be made to face reality, the illusion that marks the reality is to be removed. Developing a critique of religion therefore became an immediate political task."³⁰ Institutional form of violence was widespread in colonial Andhra. Along with the evils of Sati, Child marriage, sacred prostitution popularised as 'nautch' became central to the Social Reform Movement.

Concerted efforts during the latter half of the nineteenth Century and early twentieth century were exclusively focussed on women. It was realised that women who were victim of degenerate traditions and customs were impediments not only to progress but also political advancement.³¹ Thus the Social Reform Movement was basically an

²⁹ K.N. Panikkar, "Socio-Religious Reform and the National Awakening" in Bipan Chandra et.al. India's Struggle for Independence, Penguin Books, 1989, pp. 84-85.

³⁰ K.N. Panikkar, "Culture and Consciousness in Modern India", Social Scientist, vol. xviii, no. 4, 1990, pp. 4-5.

³¹ Ibid.

attempt to redefine the cultural personality of the 'natives'. It sought to resurrect pristine religious practices by purging off the evils believed to have been crept into Hinduism as a part of the accretionary process. Consequently the Social Reform Movement undertook two fold purposes, firstly to counter hegemonic influences of the coloniser simultaneously to resurrect 'true' Hindu Tradition.³²

Efforts at reform that began in Andhra in 1870's got organised under Veeresalingam and gained momentum under Venkataratnam Naidu. During the first phase of the movement evils like sati, child marriage and widowhood were overriding concern of the reformers. In the latter half i.e. in the last decades of the nineteenth century there was a major shift in the nature and agenda of reformist propaganda and it was during this phase that 'nautch' became predominant.

The reformers were drawn from, English educated Indian influenced by enlightened ideas of the west and Christian religion and faith in the British sense of justice. They advertised the moral grotesqueness of the subject population³³ and regarded that the sacred

³² Ibid.; Also see Patricio Uberoi, "Introduction..." op.cit.

³³ Amrit Srinivasan, "Reform or Conformity?" op.cit. p. 198.

women were reduced to prostitutes. There is a striking similarity of the articulation of the demand for reform with the English moral condemnation of this custom. The nautch parties were reported to have demoralising effect on men and women.³⁴ Their songs were alleged to be obscene.³⁵ This was similar to the charges made by the British Government sources noting that, "in case of young men present, such performances were followed by acts of sin within a few hours after exhibition."³⁶

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Veeresalingam Panthulu crusaded against the moral question of the community.³⁷ He delivered a number of speeches at public meetings and wrote a number of articles in the journals, Vivekavardhini, Chintamani, Satyavardhini in order to mobilise public opinion against corrupt practices in Hinduism.³⁸ Apart from these journals, he also

³⁴ Putli N. Krishnamurty, The Changing Conditions of Women in Andhra, Hyderabad, 1987, pp. 200-204.

³⁵ J.N.Farqhar, Modern Religious Movements in India, Delhi, 1967, p. 048.

³⁶ Sentinel, February, 1893, cited in Kenneth Balhatchet, Race, Sex and Class Under the Raj, op.cit. p. 158.

³⁷ Kalpana Kannabiran, Temple Women in South India: A Study in Political Economy and Social History, Doctoral Dissertation, J.N.U., New Delhi, 1992, p. 191.

³⁸ Putli N. Krishnamurty, The Changing Conditions of Women in Andhra, op.cit. p. 204.

contributed enormously in Sahitibodhini(1883), Telugu Zenana (1893), Savitri (1904) etc, which worked exclusively for women's cause on several aspects.³⁹ Written in simple vernacular language, i.e., Telugu, it was a common conviction shared by the intellectuals of the nineteenth century that it would prove effective medium through which knowledge could be desciminated.⁴⁰

There journals provided scope for mobilising public opinion by their reform endeavour lectures and depicting the evils the system had caused to the healthy life of the society. As a response to the alleged inherent vice in Hinduism, Veeresalingam probed into the origin of the Devadasi in pristine Hinduism. Tracing its 'historical roots' he declared that originally its aim was to patronise fine arts but ultimately ended in prostitution.⁴¹ In his satire Veshapriya Prahasana, he criticizes the opponents of the anti-nautch movement,⁴² while condemning the

³⁹ V. Ramakrishna, "Women's Journals in Andhra During the Nineteenth Century", Social Scientist, vol. 19, nos. -56, 1991, pp. 80-87.

⁴⁰ For details see K.N.Panikkar, "Presidential Address", Indian History Congress, 36th Section, Aligarh, 29th December, 1975, p.2.

⁴¹ For more information on Veeresalingam and his social reform activities see, V. Ramakrishna, Social Reform in Andhra, op.cit., pp. 87-133; also see D.Anjaneyulu, Kandukuri Veeresalingam Panthulu: Samagra Pariseelana, Vijayawada, 1972.

⁴² V. Ramakrishna, Social Reform in Andhra, op.cit. p. 139.

corrupt and immoral practices associated with it.

Venkataratnam Naidu whose efforts at the anti nautch Movement gained momentum in the early years of twentieth century also was of the same view. He expressed strong faith in the glory of the ancient religion and held that such evil practices were 'outer abatements' which were to be purged off by him.⁴³ So, the spectacle of public and temple nautch dancing by women (Devadasis) of doubtful chastity and liquor consumption by cultivated men were disgraceful blemishes on Indian society. With religious fervour Venkataratnam preached the gospel of purity challenged the black sliders to renounce their dissolute ways". His critique of the sexual liscenciousness, that sanctioned sin,⁴⁴ became the basis of the programme in the Social Purity Movement. His cause was linked to main concern for improving morale in society and removing the stigma that came to be associated with fine arts like dance and music.⁴⁵ Most significantly social purity for his was 'chastity in body and chastity in mind... unrelenting opposition to every habit or custom, regulation or

⁴³ C.Y. Chintamani (ed.), Indian Social Reform, Madras, 1901, p. 258.

⁴⁴ Ibid. pp.258-264.

⁴⁵ V. Ramakrishna, Social Reform in Andhra, p. 135; Also see R. Venkataratnam Naidu, "Social Purity and Anti-Nautch Movement" in C.Y. Chintamani (ed.), Indian Social Reform, op.cit., p. 255.

institution that defeats or tends to condone carnal longing as venial.⁴⁶ Thus in his framework of social purity, the Devadasi was immorality. He followed Veeresalingam Pantulu in recognising the contradiction in the custom of Devadasis as constituting 'outer abasements' which once removed would reveal the native grandeur of the nation. The Madras Hindu Mahasabha,⁴⁷ aimed at eradicating practices and customs which were regarded to be responsible for the backwardness of India society. The social purity movement started at Masulipatnam undertook to watch or improve the moral character of its members and others.⁴⁸

For Muthulakshmi Reddy, the Devadasis were⁴⁹ "a set of prostitutes... and most objectionable class of people in society." And reform in temple was necessary to, "remove stigma on the temple as well as the Hindu public of Madras:"⁵⁰

In articulation of the Social Purity Movement, while Venkatratnam Naidu's views were moulded by wide range of influences ranging from

⁴⁶ R. Venkataratnam Naidu, "Social Purity and Anti-Nautch Movement" op.cit., pp. 259-264.

⁴⁷ The Madras Mail, 17-3-1894.

⁴⁸ For details of his life and activities see, V. Ramakrishna rao, (ed.), Message and Ministrations of Diwan Bahadur R. Venkataratnam Naidu, 3vols., Kakinada, 1923.

⁴⁹ Correspondance from Dr.(Mrs.) S. Muthulakshmi Reddi to Syt.Kaleswara Rai, dated 21-10-1938.

⁵⁰ The Hindu, 14-8-1931.

Ram Mohan Roy, Bentinck,⁵¹ Carlye to Emerson.⁵² Muthulakshmi Reddy was extremely influenced by Josephine Butler.⁵³ Their critique against the custom was tempered by influences of christianity, reformist and civilizing zeal of the Britishers.⁵⁴

MOVEMENT LEADING TO REFORM

The anti-nautch movement as the social purity movement gained prominence with Venkataratnam Naidu. The question of morality in the beginning constituted part of the Social Reform Movement led by Madras Hindu Social Ref. Association. It espoused female education, marriage reform, domestic reform and reform in customs and manners. It was conditional upon the member 'not to invite a nautch comes or other fallen woman for dancing or other purposes.'⁵⁵ The Devadasis came to be looked upon as prostitutes, isolated cases reveal that the government recognised the services of Devadasis as prostitution, immoral, cautiously

⁵¹ V. Ramakrishna, Social Reform in Andhra, op.cit., pp. 136-144.

⁵² Kalpana Kannabiran, "Judiciary, Social Reform and Debate..." op.cit., p. 63.

⁵³ See Muthulakshmi Reddi, Awakening: Demand for Devadasi Legislation, op.cit.; also Madras Legislative Council Proceedings, 1947; R. Venkataratnam Naidu, "Social Purity Movement..." op.cit. p. 260.

⁵⁴ The Madhura Mail, 13-1-1894.

⁵⁵ The Madras Mail 2-6-1894.

maintaining its non-interference in religious matters. It was the social purity movement led by Naidu that offered solution to outdo the evils of system. Firstly a proven record for any future temple assignments, and secondly to generate a sense of consciousness, dignity and self respect among the male members of the community who existed like 'drones' or 'parasites'.⁵⁶ Muthulakshmi urged the Kalavanthulu community to give up their immoral profession and assume instead positive role of 'loyal wives, loving mothers and useful citizens'.⁵⁷

The anti-nautch supporters who were drawn from the educated middle class Hindu, resorted to two methods of social protest. First they marked their dissent with the immoral habits by using their 'declamatory and journalistic skills'.⁵⁸ Dasu Lakshminarayan in his verse form an Varakanthapranavanthans explicitly depicts the manner in which the nautch girls lived.⁵⁹ Another general form of evincing public opinion was to conduct protest marches to official residences, undertake signature

⁵⁶ R. Venkataratnam Naidu, "Social Purity Movement..." op.cit., p. 272.

⁵⁷ See Muthulakshmi Reddi Papers, Subject File no.11, Part.II, pp. 349-351.

⁵⁸ Amrit Srinivasan, "Reform or Conformity?..." op.cit., p. 192.

⁵⁹ V. Ramakrishna, Social Reform in Andhra, op.cit., p.135.

protests, boycott the parties including nautch girl at private celebration.⁶⁰

The movement gained recognition among the public of Andhra when people expressed their dissent against the evil seeking some measures to curtail the immoral activities of the Devadasis.⁶¹ In response, all that the government could do was to pass minor acts to curb dedication by banning adoption,⁶² raising age of dedication.⁶³ The government was apprehensive that any radical stand on the issue of abolition could alienate the orthodox Brahman community that had considerable support in the presidency. This stand was not determined by any interest to provide avenue and scope of expression and democratic space for the anti-abolitionists among the devadasis vociferously championed by Andhradesa Kalavanthulu Sangam.

Before proceeding to look at the phase when Muthulakshmi Reddi depended on constitutional methods to seek change, certain societal changes were apparent in colonial Andhra as a result of the Social

⁶⁰ Amrit Srinivasan, "Reform or Revival..." op.cit., p.92.

⁶¹ Krishna Patrika, 7 July, 1911.

⁶² Krishna Patrika, 15 May 1911.

⁶³ Krishna Patrika, 17 July, 1914.

Reform Movement and the Social Purity Movement. As a result of the vigorous propaganda there was apparent changes in the consciousness of the people. The Raja of Pithapur,⁶⁴ declared his resolution of not arranging nautch parties or programmes during any function in the future. Such examples began to be emulated by the officials the educated section.⁶⁵ Even British opinion was in favour and accord with the anti-nautch movement and it was unanimously decided in 1905 by the executive committee of the prince and princess of Wale's reception fund, that there would be no performance by nautch girls at the entertainment to be given to their Royal Highness at Madras.⁶⁶

The Social Purity Movement though built up a base for future changes and abolitionist movement, was not successful in elevating the moral and social standards of the nautch community. Its failure lay in the perception of the nautch girls as agents of immorality, vice and not as victim of an exploitative societal order. It charged the temple women for spreading obscenity but did not refer to the wider questions of corrupt lives of the Temple Trustees and the priests. Its projection of women as

⁶⁴ V. Ramakrishna, Social Reform in Andhra, op.cit. pp. 143-144.

⁶⁵ Amrit Srinivasan, "Reform or Conformity?..." op.cit., p. 192.

⁶⁶ Edgar Thurston, Castes and Tribes in Southern India, vol. II, op.cit., p. 133.

nautch women as responsible for the degeneration and vice of the pure and highly sublime mode of worship internalised specific consciousness among the public, which in turn resulted in the social boycott of the 'Mangala Nari' and Nityasumangali. She was categorised with the other models of women as against the ideal brahmanical Hindu women i.e. loose, immoral and impure women. This basic contradiction was rooted in the framework of reform attributed to models of orientalist and Indian enlightened discourses on the issue. Kalpana Kannabiran while analysing the shift in reform models notes about it,⁶⁷ "to begin with the focus of colonialist/orientalist discourse was on exploitation and oppression of women...in which they were mere victim acted upon by orthodoxy on the one hand and activities of reform on the other. The ideal was to establish an apparently harmonious and equal conjugal relationship - itself a victorian feminist ideal. "Then about the major shift is reformist thinking, "in the last decade of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, there were changes taking place within western societies. Notions of conjugality and its underbelly prostitution, were changing and being redefined. This was also a shift from the perception of women as victim of degenerate customs to its agents". This witnessed as a corollary to their perspective in the redefinition of ideal Hindu womanhood by

⁶⁷ Kalpana Kannabiran, Temple Women in South India, op.cit., pp. 189-190.

"documenting native religion practices in a manner that would bring it close to the brahminic textual tradition which upheld the essential morality of the brahmanical ideal as defined by the colonial state". It was retrogressive in the sense that the ideal was the vedic aryan woman who in the pre-colonial past was marginalised and secluded within the confines of domestic social space and articulated dominant patriarchal values. As a result, "all the women in the colonial India who did not lay claim to the genealogy of the Aryan woman...chaste, monogamous, high caste, pure were also pushed out".⁶⁸ In Andhra such a perspective was enthusiastically shared by the reformers and colonial government. This evidently ignored a large section of lower caste women who were parallel to Devadasis at various socio-cultural levels. In this case the religious reformers failed to integrate different structural patterns in a pluralistic society. Thus the issue of the sacred prostitution was confined to Devadasis alone and could not be co-related to the wider social evil of religious prostitution in totality.

The social reformers failed to evolve a wider consensus on the issue. The association of lower castes women who practised in a large

⁶⁸ Ratnabai Chatterjee, "Prostitution in the Nineteenth Century Bengal: Construction of Caste and Gender", Social Scientist, vol. xxi, nos. 9-11, 1993, p. 159.

scale the dedication of girls to god who later prostituted is not referred to. This points that they could not transcend the upper middle class perspective adopted by the enlightened section of society to bring about reforms in the lives of women in general.

It would be significant to note facts as to how the Jogini and Matangi can be perceived under the exploitative structure of sacred prostitution, "the brahman priests were not only confined to temples but also to rituals and ceremonies at villages; oral traditions. The driving motive of the brahmins in the reception of accommodation process was in part quite grossly material. They wished to protect the many prebend and incidental fees which were available if expected the services of these ineradicable folk deities"⁶⁹ explains Max Weber. Even Thurston⁷⁰ notes that brahmanical priests presided the ceremony of dedication of lower caste girls into Mantangis and Joginis at Kurnool. The cost of ceremony was reported to be very expensive. The number of girls dedicated as Jogini and Matangi showed an increase over the years.

⁶⁹ Max Weber, The Religion of India: The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism, op.cit., pp. 295-296.

⁷⁰ For more details see Edgar Thurston, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, vol. II op.cit.

Thus the critique of the custom was not extended to perceive the institutional imbalances and contradiction but rather in simplistic assumption and 'proof by motives', instead of facts.

The Jogini system came to be attacked and criticised by latter lower caste Social Reform Movements. This shows that a clear line of division along caste and class lines was already in built during the Social Reform Movement. The Manya Sangam formed by a group of educated and reform oriented untouchable of Hyderabad led by Bhagyareddy Verma in 1906, renamed as Adi Andhra Mahasabha in 1922. One of the aims and objectives of the Sabha was to abolish the Devadasi custom known as 'Jogini' prevalent in the untouchable Community.⁷¹ It was due to his efforts that the Jogini system was abolished in the Nizam's dominions.⁷²

It would be necessary to examine as to how the other pattern of sacred prostitution were more exploitative than the Devadasi system, as with the given understanding on the status of the Devadasi, there is general apathy towards parallel patterns. The other patterns could not

⁷¹ M.B. Gautam, Bhagyodayam: Maadari Bhagyareddy Verma Life Skethes and Mission, Hyderabad, 1991, p.3.

⁷² Ibid. p. 11.

be construed as similar in nature to the 'standard model' of sacred prostitution as in they were not functioning in a purely sanskritised form. Edgar Thurston makes mention of the Joginis, Basavis, Matangis as indulging in prostitution due to the religious sanction they carried.⁷³ He makes no mention of their association to any temple establishments, nor their proficiency and skills in arts of dance and singing. Thus they were solely prostituting as a religious duty. Janaki Nair, makes reference to this distinction between the patterns, "her (i.e. Devadasi) sexual services were embedded within the wider cultural sphere of symbolic and material exchanges in the temple, the Devadasis enjoyed a position quite distinct from those of the proletarianised sex worker and even Basavis."⁷⁴

Government source (census, judicial reports, citation in Edgar Thruston) reveal that, they were drawn from the lower castes and functioned in villages within small local temples (temple was not necessary many times) after a ceremony of dedication without the expensive and ritual paraphernalia that marked the dedication of the Devadasi, Explaining on their social background A.Iyer writes, they

⁷³ Edgar Thurston, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, vol. II op.cit. pp. 136-138.

⁷⁴ Janaki Nair, "The Devadasi, Dharma and the State", Economic Political Weekly, vol. xxix, no. 50, 1994, p. 3161.

comprised mostly of the beadars, holeyas, madigas, kilakkyatas and vaddas.⁷⁵ So also among the untouchable communities Matangi custom was prevalent.

THE ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT

The Abolition Movement pioneered by Muthulakshmi Reddy was characteristically different in its nature and programme from the reformists. Taking inspiration and agenda of reform as basis for future programme she had strong faith in the efficacy of constitutional method to eradicate the evil. During this period, the aim for abolishment acquired a clear sharper political and social content. This Movement can be perceived as an alternative to the reformist Movement which had not much scope for change in the lives of the Devadasis. The sacred women continued to be recruited by large temples and their example was blindly followed by the smaller temples, "Temple priests and trustees continued to encourage it even in defiance of the penal code provisions, which say the dedication of girls under 18 is punishable with imprisonment fine."⁷⁶ So also large number of girls and women were dedicated in

⁷⁵ L.K. Anantakrishna Iyer, The Mysore Tribes and Castes, vol. iv, 1929.

⁷⁶ The Hindu, 14-8-1931.

temple though they did not render any service in the temples.⁷⁷

The orthodox section in the presidency was voiced by S.Satyamurty, who conceived the abolition of the custom as tantamount to descimation of the glorious national culture (Specifically Hindu). It was expression of apprehension by a substantial section of the orthodox conservative section of insecurity over loss of authority and power as sanctional be strictly religious precepts. Out of such insecurity they severely protested, "If we abolish the institution today, tommorow a few non-brahman may want the priests should go."⁷⁸

It was this conservative wing of the nationalists that Muthulakshmi had to contend. For her Devadasi Custom was "detrimental to the progress and interest of the Hindu society".⁷⁹ While

⁷⁷ Correspondence from Dr. (Mrs.) S. Muthulakshmi Reddi, President of Indian Women's Association to Gandhi, dated 27-9-1937, Muthulakshmi Reddi Papers; part. ii, p. 6; also see her correspondence to A. Kaleswara Rao, Chief Parliamentary Secretary, Madras, dated 22-7-1938.

⁷⁸ S. Muthulakshmi Reddi letter to the Editor, dated 20-11-1927, see Muthulakshmi Reddi Papers, Subject file no. 11, part.II, p. 344.

⁷⁹ Muthulakshmi Reddi letter to V. Govinda Rajulu Naidu, Secretary of the Legislative Council, Madras, Dated, 7-4-1930, *ibid*.

she regarded the Devadasi legislation as 'Child Saving Measure',⁸⁰ and "the honour of an innocent girl - saving her from an inevitable life as shame and immorality even above Swaraj."⁸¹

One lucrative inducement for the continuation of the Devdasi system was the inam lands enjoyed by the Devadasi for the services rendered to temples from times immemorial, as a hereditary right. The Devadasi used to have their own girls, or they adopted and dedicated them who in turn became inheritors of property. By custom and law those who could not longer render services in the Temple due to sickness or old age, their income would be stopped and lands they enjoyed hereditarily would be taken back by the temple. So that they could be permanently settled upon them without giving up their custom. For enfranchising their lands permanently. Bill was introduced on 5th September 1928 in the Madras Legislative Council to amend the Hindu Religious Endowment Act. It was welcomed by a majority of the people in general and members of the Devadasi community too. A number of Kalavanthulu Sangham

⁸⁰ The Madras Mail, 4-11-1929; also see her Presidential address of Andhra Women Conference held at Bezawada, *ibid.* vol.II, part.II.

⁸¹ Muthulakshmi Reddi letter to M.K. Gandhi, dated 27-9-1937, *ibid.* p. 6.

organised meetings in different parts of Andhra in support of the Act,⁸² the passing of the Act was delayed due to the objections raised by the conservative section and also by anti-abolition section of Devadasis.⁸³

Though the Act gave a death blow to the position of the trustees of the temples hold on the Devadasis, the Act could not stop the practice of dedication of girls on which the Act was silent. The Act was limited in its scope.⁸⁴ Again in 1930 there were some attempts made by the Government of India and the Secretary of State to undertake legislative enactment to abolish the system. In 1930 Mr. M.R. Jayakar,⁸⁵ and in 1930-31 by R.K. Shanmugan Shetty a non-official Member of the Legislative Assembly.⁸⁶ Attempts to put an end to this system failed. Inducement to action came from external sources, the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, London. On 28 May the association asked the

⁸² M.P. Narasamma's Presidential Address of the Repalle Taluk Kalavanthula Conference at Chodayapalem on 13-12-1929, *ibid.* p. 454.

⁸³ Correspondence from S. Venkatachalam Chelty to Muthulakshmi Reddi, dated, 27-10-1927.

⁸⁴ Muthulakshmi Reddi Speeches and Writings, vol. II, Part II, p. 479.

⁸⁵ Proceedings of Government of India, Home Department, (Judicial) no. 718/1934.

⁸⁶ Proceedings of Government of India, Home Department, (Judicial), File no. 97/1930.

Government of India to enquire what action had been taken.⁸⁷ The Government of India shifted the task to the Government of Madras. Hence Madras Devadasi Prevention Bill was introduced in the assembly by Mrs. Ammann Raya on 7 December, 1938,⁸⁸ but it could not be passed.⁸⁹ The Bill could only be passed into a law after Independence.

During this period Muthulakshmi Reddi was embittered due to the the policy of neutrality followed by the British Government which could have otherwise successfully piloted the Abolition Bill. In one of her letters she expresses that the Government ought to take responsibility of Devadasi legislation,⁹⁰

the way to redeem the community from their present backward condition and from their vicious surroundings is by providing facilities for the spread of education amongst them as in the case of Harijans and by engaging them in healthy occupation as in the case of criminal tribes....this is ought to be immediately enforced by this Government interested in social and moral welfare. As enforcement of the Act for Suppression of Immoral traffic was brought to light

⁸⁷ Proceedings of Government of India, Home Department,(Judicial), File no. 5/1931.

⁸⁸ Government of India, Proceedings of the Home Department (Judicial), File no. 718/1934.

⁸⁹ Madras Legislative Assembly Debates, Government of Madras, Vol. VIII, p. 531.

⁹⁰ Papers and Correspondence regarding abolition of Devadasi system in Hindu temples see Muthulakshmi Reddi Papers, vol. II, part. iii; also see her 'Article on Devadasi' in The Hindu, dated 18-9-1937.

the existence of the Devadasis, brothels which are now on the increase, it is imperative that they should be immediate legislation as in Travancore, Cochin and Bombay to penalize dedication of girls at any age, so that the name of Devadasis which denotes only a prostitute now a days may become a thing of the part in Hindu society. We expect the present national Government to undertake this humane legislation'. This was in the faith of civilising potential of the "European officials (christian by birth) coming form a cultured and civilized country".⁹¹

She held the "Unwillingness of the government to interfere in the pernicious custom has been allowed to continue in British India".⁹² The British maintained ambiguous stand as it 'found itself unable to make this assumption became its own design was inextricably linked with and supported by the Hindu religious orthodoxy right from the start. As Brahmin opposition to abolition would mean alienating Brahmin support and providing an impetus to the Tamil Nationalists who were extremely vociferous in their demand for abolition.⁹³

For critically examining Muthulakshmi Reddi efforts at abolition a look into efforts at self help by the Kalavanthulu Sangam of Andhra is inevitable the need for reform among the Kalavanthulu was on the

⁹¹ S. Muthulakshmi Reddi letter to Mrs. Caton, Dated, 23-2-1930.

⁹² S. Muthulakshmi Reddi letter to Miss Niville Rolfe, dated, 29-9-1927.

⁹³ Kalpana Kannabiran, Temple Women in South India, op.cit. p. 203.

realisation of how degrading their profession was, on the exploited condemned status. The Kalavanthulu Association was formed at many places such as Guntur, Narsapur etc. They organised annual conferences in order to discuss the matters concerning the welfare of the community and to secure public support and relief measures. The First Andhra Provincial Kalavanthulu Social reform Conference was held at Guntur in 1921 under the Presidentship of S. Anjaneyulu in 1924. In the following annual conference a number of resolutions were passed. For instance in the 11th conference at Gudivada it was resolved to conduct vigorous propaganda to make the public boycott the nautch parties. Steps were taken to get a suitable bridegroom and a Marriage Board⁹⁴ was established in 1925 for girls who wished to give up Devadasi way of life and lead a decent life. Among the marriage organised by the Board were those of Seetharamamma, Venkata Laxmi and Annapurna.⁹⁵

In 1926 they started an association known as Kalavanthulu Social Reform propaganda committee to carry out a campaign against Devdasi System by arranging public meeting in towns and villages where the evil was rampant and to canvas from door to door to induce girls to give up

⁹⁴ Krishna Patrika, 3 February, 1920.

⁹⁵ Krishna Patrika, 23 June, 1934.

their immoral life. In many places like Rajahmundry, Masulipatnam etc. they had good response. Distinguishing women from this community became devoted to emancipate women from this vicious custom One such outstanding woman was Yamini Purna Tilakam she was influenced by Darasi Chenchaiyah a freedom fighter and advocated of society reform and member of the Arya Vyasa Association.⁹⁶ A gifted speaker she pleaded in public the right to marriage for their community.⁹⁷

She spread her ideas through a fortnightly journal known as Hindu Yuvati and established an orphanage for women who aspired to lead a decent life known as Hindu Yuvati Saranalayam at Madras. She attempted to rehabilitate them by helping them become independent. Training in Spinning, weaving, basket making, tailoring etc. was provided. She was assisted to manage her activities by male members of her community for instance Syama Rao, P.J. Venkayya Bhaskara Eswarudi.⁹⁸ Her pioneering work and message set a Precedent for the Devadasi, seeking for self reform. Such self help efforts were also reflected in a more dynamic and radical manner by Ramamirthal

⁹⁶ V. Ramakrishna, Social Reform in Andhra, op.cit., p. 141.

⁹⁷ Putli Krishnamurti, The Changing Conditions of Women in Andhra, op.cit., p. 208.

⁹⁸ Ibid. pp. 208-209.

Ammalayar. In her novel 'Dasial Mosavalai' she makes a scathing attack on the entire societal system that was responsible for the disrespectful status of the Devadasis. She castigates in totality the institutional form of exploitation of women and does not restrict to the issue of Devadasis. In her understanding she holds the brahmanical religion and zamindari system responsible for the evil, she provides a rational and holistic perspective.

The vigorous campaigns against the custom did not bring substantial change in societal attitude to Devadasi or in their status. The Devadasi was referred to as a prostitute and it was increasingly difficult to lead a normal life even after renouncing the profession. It set a certain sense of distrust and agony among the women and men who aimed in protest. In a letter addressed to Gandhi by a male member of the Kalavanthlu Community (name not specified) in 1934, this agony and pain is expressed, "I am legally married and religiously married to a girl of my own community and I am father of two daughters. My wife is as pious to me in my eyes as any other hindu wife. Still society looks down upon us. The sins of our ancestors are wreaking upon us. The stigma of prostitution is attached to us though both of us are free from vice".⁹⁹

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⁹⁹ M.K. Gandhi, Women and Social Justice, Ahmadabad, 1962, p. 144.



There was a lack of interaction of a strong Devadasi element in the reformist movement led by educated and enlightened leaders. They suffered including Muthulakshmi Reddi from a feeling of intolerant authority, in articulating the demand of the demand for reforms. For instance their expression of dissent in the abolition movement is 'described by 'Muthulakshmi Reddi,as¹⁰⁰ a set of prostitutes who have been set by their keepers. How can they take cognisance of such a protest... I would request you not to pay heed to such protest form a most objectionable class of people in the society".

Neither did she have much faith in eliciting public opinion.¹⁰¹ "as far as eliciting the public opinion, we have been doing it for the last 60 yrs. and we have wide public support behind us. If people could be so easily educated in these matters as to take the law in their own hands where is the necessity for any government or parliament?. Then without legislation we have to wait till the doomsday for getting rid of there social evils. The function of the good government is to help the just cause of the weak and the depressed at any cost and to strengthen the hands of those

¹⁰⁰ Muthulakshmi Reddi Speeches and Writings, vol. II, part.ii, pp. 825-827.

¹⁰¹ Muthulakshmi Reddi letter to Syt. Kaleswara Rao, dated 21-10-1938.

enlightened representatives of the people who stand for progress and who are for good and healthy agitation'.

THE ACT AND ITS LIMITATIONS

The Act of 1947 as the Madras Act no. XXXI of 1947 declared the Act of dedication unlawful,¹⁰² i.e. the Devadasi (prevention of Dedication) Act 1947. It was extended to the whole of the Madras province. It defined the term dedication, specified women who were deemed to come under its purview, punishment in violation of any of its provision.

In the Act, the term dedication meant 'performance of any ceremony, indulging in Pottukudu, Gajja Pooja, Mudri and dancing by Kumbharti" the female of any age dedicated in the specified manner was categorised as Devadasi.

Secondly taking part in any "melam (nautch) dancing or music performance in the course of any procession... is thereby regarded on having adopted a life of prostitution... and hereby declared unlawful and void".

¹⁰² Government of Madras, Legal Department Act XXXI of 1947, (First published in St. George Gazette, 27-1-1948.

Thirdly, dancing by a women with or without a Kumbaharti in any temple, institution, ceremony, festival declared unlawful.

Finally any person who took part or permit or abiets the performance of any ceremony of dedication having attained the age of 18 is liable to be punished.

The definition of dedication, performance (function) within specific premises either temple, institution, malans etc. excluded out of its purview the large number of women viz Jogini, Basavi, Matangi who did not undergo the elaborate ritual procedure in temple like the Devadasi.

As it specifies the names of the Devadasi, i.e. Bogam, Kalavanthlu Sani, Nagavasulu, Devadasi and Kurma Purvals Communities. This was solely meant for the elitist pattern, which shows it was temple reformist in its scope. So also the dancing was defined as within certain premises involving religious context.

The Joginis could not figure in the Act even though the Adi Andhra Sabha was quite vigorous in Andhra during the early 20th century, demanding for social reform in the community. It could not be brought to the notice even under the clauses it specified to prevent dancing.

Contrary to the Devadasi they were not, involved in any artistic and highly sophisticated dance form. In the other hand it assumed a more vulgar and degrading form viz dancing in front of a corpse usually by a Jogini during funeral processions.

Eventually the counterparts of the Devadasis continued to exist in villages and small towns continuing their divine function and activities amidst superstitious beliefs and primitive practices. The upheaval in Societal religious institutions and idea had no impact on they status as they were not reached out to. They continued to practice prostitution with religious sanctioned by a local priest induced by the dominant feudal section. These marginalised women had to wait (Jogini - drawn from Madigm and Mala Castes) until 1988¹⁰³ when Act was passed making definite improvement form the 1947 Act.

Finally the Act of 1947 confirmed that it was women who were agents of immorality and as having cleansed the polluting atmosphere of the temple. It in no way dared to effect a change in the status of Temple Trustees or Priests.

¹⁰³ Details of the Act see in Appendix. ¹¹

Chapter V

CONCLUSION

Sacred prostitution is a universal phenomenon widespread throughout the ancient world. But the idea of Sakti as peculiar to India can be traced to archetypal cults. It is imperative to delineate the aspect of 'divine feminine' in Hindu religious system and popular cults. This will enable us to understand how sacred prostitution developed in India independently of not only outside influence (i.e. foreign influence) but also vedic thought. For this analysis the material mode of life of people provides the rationale for the type of deity and the manner of worship prevalent in a particular society.

While the supreme being of the pastoral religion of the Vedic Aryan was predominantly patriarchal, the south Indian culture mainly based on agricultural economy held women in high respect. The latter societies were characterized by veneration of earth, indigenous deities were worshipped in fields and hills affecting the attributes of the people. A striking phenomenon typical of religious concepts and belief of south India during this period was the village deities were exclusively female ambiguous in nature. The roots of their specific religion notion can be traced to certain belief in the Devdasi culture, where women were endowed with sacred power.

The influx of the increasing number of communities from the north exercised a great influence on the nature of the original Dravidian religion by the third millennium B.C. This movement initiated metamorphosis in South Indian Culture, as reoriented by hegemonic caste and patriarchal ideology. Agastya is symbolic of Aryan ideas percolating down south and instrumental in the fusion of local (Dravidian) and Aryan elements. This merger of the indigenous religious system and Sanskrit culture lead to the Hinduisation of south India and emergence of a new force in socio-cultural and economic sphere. Thus around five hundred AD Hinduism recognises the feminine element and assimilates from popular tradition the various manifestations of the sacred and the dangerous principle. This historical perspective enables us to comprehend the extension and subsequent modification of the belief among various cultural entities in their specific socio-economic and political context.

White women emerge as repressed in religious and cultural tradition of the so called 'Greater Tradition', they emerge as creative, vigorous and dynamic in the "little Tradition". The analysis of transformation of the sacred into the impure is inevitable to not only take cognisance of the position of women in South Indian socio-religious framework, but more actually to identify the peculiar problem of sacred prostitution that posed a challenge to the Andhra Reform Movement and so also to perceive the indicate link between women and religion.

In ritual context while women in south India are predominant, in north India they are in a suppressed form. This can be explained by the popularity and centrality of certain religion celebration in south India viz puberty rites, Auvaiyar non pel (a ceremony to ensure prosperity of father's and brother's house) and their matrimonial system as against Raksha Bandhan and Bhaiya Dhuj in the North. A sense of superiority enjoyed by women was reversed and this climaxed with the gradual emergence of the brahman as a group systematising the notion of purity and pollution. It led to the constitution of caste system as the dominant social structure of a feudal society towards the end of the ancient period. Thus the so-called 'Greater Tradition' exercised a hegemonic influence by incorporating popular and non -Aryan themes and interweaving themes with basic vedic principles and endowing them vedic sanction. It sought the legitimise the popular practices of the local groups and village communities by placing their divinities in the broader Hindu framework and cautions enough to strike a distinction between the high divinities and the 'low' divinities.

Thus parallel religious system co-existed throughout south India from the ancient period and continued into the modern period. The non -Aryan practices provided the base for the notion of sacred prostitution, but there grafted elements became integral part of Hinduism, at the loss of their archetypal identity and led to the creation of belief original in nature but

secondary in function. The secondary role was performed both by the spouse Goddess and the women (Devadasis) employed in temples to the Gods and the priests, consequently. This did not radically infuse change in the autonomous belief which tended to remain popular among the village communities preserved in the form of folklore, mythology and tradition. The Matangi continued to exercise divine powers in an autonomous space as against elitist counterpart in a greatly restricted space. The centrality of women in performing rituals and conducting ceremonies has sustained in the oral tradition of the 'little tradition'. With this expression in the 'Greater Tradition', a class of women emerge within temple organisation to perform specific duties as a parallel to the priestess in the popular village cults and sacred women. It is this phenomenon that has been overlooked by most scholars and researchers. In Andhra Society the Dravidian also known as Sanis, Veshyas were structured into the patriarchal feudal societal system, subsequently assumed a role model that was peripheral and marginal in a male dominated religion and society.

With further development of rigid feudalised polity and strengthened caste ideology there came into existence a category of 'sacred women' known as Basavis and jogins. The archetypal model continued in the form of Matangi system among the lower castes. their religious integration into the society overhaul their belief system. Women continued to play a predominant role in the religious sites.

The three patterns developed independently and within their specific institutionalised structures. By the turn of the twentieth century this power and prestige began to degenerate. They became the handmaids of the priestly class and the feudal gentry instead of Gods. This change is attested by numerous monographs, historical writings and foreign accounts. Andhra Dasi, Basavi came to be classified as one type of prostitute who knew dancing and singing under religious sanction. The causes of dedication and duties underwent changes as their services were gradually extended to the secular plane. Matangi's remained unaffected to some extent, except that a priestly class was seen as necessary to formalise and initiate the women into Matangihood. This system was characterized by sexual exploitation and economic coercion. It also involves issues of caste and cultural hierarchy.

The colonial government during the modern period reiterated the subordinate and immoral status of the degenerated women. On the replacement of the royal patron by the priest and the influential people, the company by its Religious Endowments Acts brought the sacred prostitutes with the control of numerous patrons at varying phases. They were subsequently reduced to the position of menials of temples. They were charged by all sections and by the colonial government for spreading vice, disease and immorality. The policy of the colonial government towards the sacred women was determined by their imperial interests and considerations.

During the modern period, sacred prostitution strictly meaning the Devadasis was recognised as an evil. The issue became the immediate concern of the enlightened sections of society. For the social reform section, reform of the Devadasi was a part of the agenda to resurrect true Hindu Tradition and Counter hegemonic cultural influences. The redefinition of the Ideal Hindu womanhood defined the prostitute and also the sacred prostitutes as agents of degenerate culture. The reformist section of the Andhra Society did not succeed in elevating the moral standards of the nautch community. Failure lay in the perception of the nautch girl as agents of immorality and not as victim of a exploitative religious and societal structure. They failed to locate their cause within the wider question connected with the corrupt lives of the temple trustees feudal lords and the priestly class. The projection of nautch women as responsible for degeneration and vice of the pure and highly sublime mode of worship, internalised certain specific consciousness among the people that resulted in the social boycott of the 'Nityasumangali'.

The social reformers ignored and failed to identify a large section of lower caste women who were parallel to the Devadasis i.e. Jogins, Basavis, Matangi. Thus failed to integrate and co-relate the issue of Devadasi to a wider evil of religious prostitution. Thus they could not transcend the upper middle class and caste perspective to bring change in the lives of these women as a whole.

It was only in the early decades of the twentieth century that, the Manya Sangam, a social reform organisation of the untouchable castes of Andhra had one of its aims to abolish the Jogini custom prevalent in the community. It was finally ~~estab-~~^{abo-}lished due to his efforts in the Nizam's territories.

Thus among the social reform movement, a clear line of division along caste and class lines was built.

Muthulakshmi Reddy's efforts were instrumental in passing of the Act of Prevention of Dedication, 1947. The movement led by Muthulakshmi Reddy saw a lack of integration of strong Devadasi element in the reformist movement led by the educational and enlightened leaders and their articulation of reform undermined the nature of change brought in the lives of the prostitutes and their position in society.

A radical perspective was in its embryonic stage in Andhra among the Kalavanthulu Community. Yamini Purna Tilka established an orphanage and attempted to rehabilitate them by helping them become independent by training them in various crafts for alternative sources of livelihood. More dynamic and radical critique was produced by Ramamirtha Ammalayar a Devadasi of Tamil Nadu.

Finally the Act of 1947 was greatly limited in its scope. It excluded out of its purview a large section of women viz. Joginis, Basavis and Matangs. Being exclusively meant for Devadasis it, by its nature emerge temple reformist. The more marginal and oppressed women had to wait until 1988 until a more comprehensive legal protection was provided. It points to the serious problems in overlooking women as heterogenous body within specific cultural entities. Though the present study has serious limitations it is hoped that it reflects the lack of any concrete work on the pattern of religious prostitution. Thus theme which has been constantly overlooked is a virgin area which provides immense scope for fresh ventures and important work.

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APPENDICES

Appendix - I

Government of Madras
Legal Department
Madras Act. No. XXXI of 1947.

[Received the assent of the Governor-General on the 17th January 1948, first published in the "Fort St. George Gazette" on the 27th January 1948.]

An act to prevent the dedication of women as devadasis in the Province of Madras.

Whereas the practice still prevails in certain parts of the Province of Madras of dedicating women as "devadasis" to Hindu deities, idols, objects of worship, temples and other religious institutions;

And whereas such practice, however ancient and pure in its origin, leads many of the women so dedicated to a life of prostitution;

And whereas it is necessary to put an end to the practice;
It is hereby enacted as follows:-

1. (1) This Act may be called the Madras Devadasis (Prevention of Dedication) Act, 1947.
(2) It extends to the whole of the Province of Madras.
2. In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context;_
 - (a) "dedication" means the performance of any ceremony, by whatever name called, by which a woman is dedicated to the service of a Hindu deity, idol, object of worship, temple or other religious institution, and includes 'pottukattu', 'gajjepuja', 'mudri', and dancing by 'kumbhaharathy';
 - (b) "devadasi" means any woman so dedicated; (c) "woman" means a female of any age.
3. (1) The dedication of a woman as a devadasi, whether before or after the commencement of this Act and whether she has consented to such dedication or not, is hereby declared unlawful and void; and any woman so dedicated shall not thereby be deemed to have become incapable of entering into a valid marriage.

Nothing contained in this sub-section shall be deemed to affect the operation of section 44-A of the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act, 1926, or the rights to which devadasi is entitled under that section.

- (2) Any custom or usage prevailing in any Hindu community such as the Bogum, Kalavanthula, Sani, Nagavasulu, Devadasi and Kurmapulu, that a woman of that community who gives or takes part in any melam (nautch), dancing or music performance in the course of any procession or otherwise is thereby regarded as having adopted a life of prostitution and becomes incapable of entering into a valid marriage, and the performance of any ceremony or act in accordance with any such custom or usage, whether before or after the commencement of this Act and whether the woman concerned has consented to such performance or not, are hereby declared unlawful and void.
- (3) Dancing by a woman, with or without kumbhaharathy, in the precincts of any temple or other religious institution, or in any procession of a Hindu deity, idol or object of worship installed in any such temple or institution or at any festival or ceremony held in respect of such a deity, idol or object of worship, is hereby declared unlawful.
4. (1) Any person having attained the age of sixteen years who after the commencement of this Act performs, permits, takes part in, or abets the performance of any ceremony or act for dedicating a woman as a devadasi or any ceremony or act of the nature referred to in section 3, sub-section(2), shall be punishable with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months or with fine which may extend to five hundred rupees or with both.

Explanation:- The person referred to in this section shall include the woman in respect of whom such ceremony or act is performed.

(2) Any person having attained the age of sixteen years who dances in contravention of this provisions of section 3, sub-section(3), or who abets dancing in contravention of the said provisions, shall be punishable with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months or with fine which may extend to five hundred rupees or with both.

5. No Court inferior to that of a Presidency Magistrate or a Magistrate of the First Class shall inquire into or try any offence punishable under section 4.

Appendix 2

The Andhra Pradesh Gazette
Part I-Extraordinary
Published by Authority
No.207 Hyderabad, Thursday, June 30, 1988

NOTIFICATIONS BY GOVERNMENT Social Welfare Department (K-I.)

THE ANDHRA PRADESH DEVADASIS (PROHIBITION OF DEDICATION) ACT, 1988-IMPLEMENTATION OF ACT.

[G.O. Ms. No 107, Social Welfare (KI), 8th June, 1988]

In exercise of the powers conferred by the proviso to subsection (3) of section of the Andhra Pradesh Devadasis (Prohibition of Dedication) Act, 1988 (Act No.10 of 1988) the Governor of Andhra Pradesh hereby appoints the 15th August 1988, as the date on which the said Act shall come into force.

(By order and in the Name of the Governor of Andhra Pradesh)

The Andhra Pradesh Gazette
Part IV-B Extraordinary
Published By Authority
No.16 Hyderabad, Thursday, March, 31, 1988

ANDHRA PRADESH ACTS, ORDINANCES AND REGULATIONS, ETC.

The following Act of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly which was reserved by the Governor on the 24th April, 1987, for the consideration and assent of the President received the assent of the President on the 25th March, 1988 and the said assent is hereby published on the 31st of March, 1988, in the Andhra Pradesh Gazette for general information:

ACT NO. 10 OF 1988

An act to prohibit the dedication of Women as Devadasis in the State of Andhra Pradesh.

Whereas the practice of dedicating women as Devadasis to Hindu deities, idols, objects of worship exists in certain parts of the state of Andhra Pradesh; and

Whereas such practice, however ancient and pure in its origin, leads many of the women so dedicated to degradation and to evils like prostitution; and

Whereas it is necessary to put an end to the practice.

Be it enacted by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Andhra Pradesh in the thirty-ninth Year of the Republic of India as follows:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----|-----|--|
| Short title, extent and commencement | 1. | (1) | This Act may be called the (Prohibition of Dedication) Act, 1988. |
| Andhra Pradesh | | (2) | It extends to the whole of the State of Andhra Pradesh. |
| | | (3) | It shall come into force on such date as the Government may, by notification in the Andhra Pradesh Gazette, appoint. |

Definitions 2.

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,

(a) 'Dedication' means the performance of any act or ceremony by whatever a woman is dedicated to the service of a Hindu deity, idol, object of worship, temple or other religious institution or place of worship and includes tying 'tali with jakini' to a woman or tying a woman by a garland to a Garuda Khambham, dhaarana and deeksha;

(b) "Devadasi" means any woman so dedicated by whatever name called and includes Basavi, Jogini, Parvathi, Mathamma and Thyamma;

(c) "Government" means the State Government;

(d) "notification" published in the Andhra Pradesh Gazette and the word "notified" shall be construed accordingly.

(e) "Woman" means female of any age. Dedication as Devadasi to be unlawful.

3. (1) The dedication of a women as Devadasi, whether before or after the commencement of this Act and whether she has consented to such dedication or not, is hereby declared unlawful and void; and any woman so dedicated shall not thereby be deemed to have become incapable of entering into a valid marriage.

(2) Any custom or usage, prevailing in any Hindu community such as the Bogum Kalavanthula, Sani, Nagavasulu, Devadasi, Kurmapulu, Basavi, Jogini and Parvathi and the like that a woman of that community who gives or takes part in any melam (nautch), dancing or music performance in the course of any procession or otherwise is thereby regarded as having adopted a life of prostitution and becomes incapable of entering into a valid ceremony or act in accordance with any such custom or usage, whether before or after the commencement of this Act and whether the woman concerned has consented to such performance or not, are hereby declared unlawful and void.

Marriage of Devadasis Penalties

(4) No marriage contracted by a woman in accordance with any law, custom or usage shall be invalid and no child of such marriage shall be considered as illegitimate by reason only of such woman being a "Devadasi".

(5) Any person who performs, promotes, takes part in or abets the performance of any ceremony or act for dedicating a woman as Devadasi or any ceremony or act connected therewith shall on conviction be punishable with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years and with fine which may extend to rupees three thousand but which shall not be less than rupees two thousand.

Provided that where the person referred to in this section is a parent or guardian or relative of a woman so dedicated, he shall on conviction be punishable with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to five years but which shall not be less than two years and with fine which may extend to rupees five thousand but which shall not be less than rupees three thousand;

Provided further that the woman who is dedicated in such ceremony or act or in respect of whom such ceremony or act is performed shall not be punishable.

Punishment for propagation

(6) Whoever propagated the practice of dedication of woman as Devadasi shall on conviction be punishable with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years but which shall not be less than one year and with a fine which may extend to rupees five thousand but which shall not be less than rupees two thousand.

Powers to be conferred on officers

7. The Government may confer powers and impose such duties, on the Collector or any other officer of the Revenue Department not below the rank of Mandal Revenue Officer, as may be necessary to ensure that the provisions of this Act, are properly carried out and may specify the local limits within which such powers or duties shall be carried out by such officers.

Duties of Collector and other officers

8. It shall be the duty of every collector and other officers specified under section 7 to inquire whether after the commencement of this Act, the system of Devadasi, is being practiced and if as a result of such enquiry, any such practice is found to exist, he shall forthwith take such action as may be necessary to put an end to such practice.

Offences to be tried by Executive Magistrates (Act 2 of 1974)

9. The Government may confer, on an Executive Magistrate, the powers of a Judicial Magistrate of First Class or of the Second Class for the trial of offences under this Act; and on such conferment of powers the Executive Magistrate, shall be deemed for the purposes of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 to be a Judicial Magistrate of the First Class, or of the Second Class as the case may be.

Offences under the Act to be cognizable and non-bailable

10. Every offence under this Act shall be cognizable and non-bailable.

Power to make rules

11. (i) The Government may, by notification, make rules for carrying out all

or any of the purposes of this Act.

(ii) Every rule made under this Act shall immediately after it is made, be laid before the Legislative Assembly of the States of it is in session immediately following for a total period of fourteen days which may be comprised in one session or in two successive sessions and if, below the expiration of the session in which it is so laid or the session immediately following the Legislative Assembly agrees in making any modification in the rule or in the annulment of the rule, the rule or in the annulment of the rule, the rule shall, from the date on which the modification of annulment is notified form or shall stand annulled as the case may be howsoever that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity or anything previously done under that rule.

Repeal and Saving Act XXXI O 1947.

12. (i) The Andhra Pradesh (Andhra Area) Devadasis (Prevention of Dedication) Act, 1947, is hereby repealed.

(2) On such repeal the provisions of sections 8 and 18 of the Andhra Pradesh General Clauses Act, 1891, shall apply.

P.V. VIDYA SAGAR,
Secretary to Government,
Law and Legislative Affairs,
Law Department.