



Mathammas-A Sociological Study in B.N Kandriga Mandal Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract: In India, religious practice deemed incompatible with liberal governance are often legally curtailed in the name of morality health or public order these secular laws are historically backed by significant orts to reform former practitioners in manner compatible with legitimate religious practice and belief among practitioners of the legally prohibited Devadasi Customs constitutes the starting point for a form of legal procedure that ensure the preservation of the custom event as draws on the idioms of secular state law

Key words: Customs constitutes, century brings, a status symbol

Introduction

Every turn of the century brings along with it a lot change. Society is also –undergoing a lot of change over the centre, but certain barbaric cultural and practice want to stay as such without any change. It is worth noting that the victims of such continued superstitious practices and beliefs are always women. The age old tradition of prostitution and Devadasi system are standing examples of such social evils. Through women are marching forward in many fields it is worth examining their conditions who are cough in the vicious cycle of the Devadasi System.

It is a common practice for parents to think about marring of girls when they become eligible for marriage after puberty so that they can dedicate them to gods and goddess of temples. The existing social evil of Devadasi system is an example of this.

One of the reasons for the perpetuation of the system of Devadasi

is the urge among the religious leaders to initiate the royal families especially in having a “Harem for them. This becomes a status symbol for the king who was respected when he had a large contingent of women around them. Using the women’s religious in culmination and fear of god they lured innocent people saying that serving god by offering a virgin to the temple is more religious and it promoted the idea of dedicating girls to Gods/Goddesses in the temples.

Original, the term Devadasi meaning a servant of God was something like a priestess who sacrificed her physical pleasures and family like and chose to serve god by being a saint. She was respected in the society and her blessing was sought before any auspicious ceremonies and functions. The religious leaders convened these noble women into virtual prostitutes who had no other way out of it the general public were brain washed that religious practices as prescribed by the leaders were the only means of emanation for women kind.



The women who are called by different names like. Mathammas, Jogins, Basavins, Mathis in the three different regions of Andhra Pradesh. Namely coastal Andhra, Rayalaseema and Telangana are ultimately one type destitute women belonging to the Madiga a sub caste of scheduled castes who have very low standard of living. Even though they are have called by different names their life style is the same.

Origin of Mathammas: The Madigas are the great leather working caste of the Telugu country and correspond to the Chakkiliyans of the Tamil area they were first studied at Hospet in Ballary District.

The Madigas Mr.N.G Chetty writes, belong to the left hand caste and often quarrel with Malas (right-hand). In 1871 a Madiga having contrived to obtain are cloth as are ward from the police super dent, wore it on his head and went in procession on horseback by the main bazaar street this resulted in a disturbance, in which a European inspector was severally hurt by a mala who had mistaken him for the superintendent the two factions fixed by mutual understanding

The street by each was to proceed and no quarrels have since occurred during the celebration of village festivals unmarried Madiga women called for the occurred Mathangi (a favourite Deity) abuses and spits upon the people assembled and they do not take this as an insult because they think her spite removes the pollution.

History of Mathammas: The prevalence of the system of jogins/ Mathammas which is a part of Devadasi system has been noticed in several part of Andhra Pradesh in Chittoor District of

Rayalaseema these women are known as Mathammas. The Following are the genesis of the Devadasi system.

The Devadasi system is prevalent all over India albeit know by different names such as Devaradiyal in Tamilnadu Maithrees in Kerala, in Assam, moralis in Maharashtra, Basavins and Muralis in Andhra Pradesh and Jagatis and Basivins in Karnataka.

Who are Mathammas: A culture exists in the scheduled caste for long if a female child of a family suffers from ill health she is named as Mathammas even a new born. They practically take the baby to the temple the naming ceremony is done.

The child is given a special care from then onward normally children belonging to the age group 0-5 years are compelled to undergo the ceremony, at an average of 70% from the age group below year the newel named Mathammas are under special care and will be considered as sex objects through and by the society.

Concept of Devadasi: Devadasi means women enslaved for the service of some deity or sacred object. The term is the feminine from of Devadasi a man who is enslaved for the service of a deity though the term has its origin in Sanskrit word which means Gods or Deities mentioned in Sanskrit literature, especially the trinity. Today, however, there is not a temple have more than one Devadasi attached to them to render several types services to the deities and sacred objects.

Several other factors are said to be responsible for the origin and existence of the Devadasi custom in India. One among them is that the devotees themselves offered men and women to a deity for the service expecting something in return.



Gandhi and Devadasi system

Though much has been said about Gandhiji his view on the liberation of Devadasi has not been given due importance in the social History of India. In his enthusiasm to purify women hood of its evil the Devadasi system also came for his outright condemnation. Started probably from 1921 his involvement in the process of its abolition was significant influenced by his enthusiasm social reforms came forward to work to bring its ultimate.

Gandhi observed that the word Devadasi is a euphemism for prostitutes during his visit to Tamilnadu, while he was in Chettinad he equated the tradition of assigning girls of tender age to shame of religion as the hideous immoral custom the money lenders of Chettinad were chided for their encouragement of this wretched profession under the garb of religion.

Gandhi there are many temples in this country which are no better than brothels instead of for fostering pity and devotion the temples encouraged moral faith and accumulated wealth. The deplorable conditions that prevailed in those temples bear ample evidence to prove the maxim where wealth accumulates men decay.

Duties of Devadasi: Their official duty consisted in dancing and singing with in the temple twice a day morning and evening and also at public ceremonies their duties were not however confined to religious ceremonies ordinary penitence required that when persons of any distinction made formal visits to each other they were to be accompanied by a certain numbers of these women. This

was also present at marriage and other family gatherings.

Who are Mathammas: A cultural exists in the scheduled castes for long. If a female child of a family suffers from ill health, she is dedicated to the deity and named as Mathammas even a new born baby may be offered to god in the same name. They practically take the baby to the temple the naming ceremony is done. The Child is given a special care from then onwards normally children belonging to the age group 0-5 years are compelled to undergo the ceremony at an average of 70 percent from the age group below year the newly named Mathammas are under special care and will be considered as sexual objects throughout her life and by the society and the people if they have to face to regardless in that society too, due to the above reasons these Mathammas stay illiterates. She will be turned and considered as a social property. Ever April these people stage themselves for dancing in a godless Mathammas Kolupu which is a compulsion one these is no way for them to escape from exposing them. In the present society the dancing and exposing they are no more existing.

Aims and Objectives of the study:

Mathammas in Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh are socially and economically different from the other communities of the society they are extremely backward in all walks of life. They are extremely backward in all walks of life they are not many sociological studies a variable on Mathammas in Andhra Pradesh. Hence the present study has become imperative. It mainly deals with the social economical life of the Mathammas in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh it is purely a



sociological study both normative and empirical the main objectives of the study are as follows.

1. To study the origin and history of Mathamms
2. To study their social life which includes family marriage level of their literacy and education?
3. To study their economic conditions like occupation income in datedness.
4. To examine the rehabilitations extended to Mathammas.
5. To measure their literacy and education.
6. To examine their social condition like family marriage and housing condition and health condition.
7. To assess their economic status which in clues occupation level of income and standard occupation levels of income and standard of living and their in datedness?
8. To study the rehabilitations programmes of Mathammas.

Methodology:

The area of the study is confined to Chittoor District in the state of Andhra Pradesh .The region for taking Chittoor District for the study is that the investigator hails from this District. Further, the University is located in Tirupati which is in Chittoor District this proximity necessitated the study by casing the District.

For the purpose of the study the researcher has taken one Mandals altogether 25 families were selected

randomly from one Mandal. The data was collected from the Mathammas directly.

The data was collected from the Mathammas they included from the females on approaching them the Mathammas extended their fullest support and co-operation in furnishing necessary and relevant data for the study. The researcher first collected data from the families in Tirupati.

The researcher employed varies conventional techniques like interview-schedule and participant ++Observation to gather relevant in for motion from information .Apart from the use of these techniques the researchers relied on individuals as well as group interview to collect information pertaining to the social and economic aspects of the mathammas .

The collected data was processed and tabulated manually keeping the requirements of the study in view. This being a limited study, it invites the attention of sociologists, and social Anthropologists for future research in this field as there is an ample scope for social investigation.

Food habits: In the study it is found that there have been no significant changes in the food habits of Mathammas. The old practice of eating "Saddi Annam" (cooked rice reserved in water) is common. They eat Sangati in the afternoon .The Mathammas are non-vegetarians. They eat dead cattle, pork, mutton, and chicken. Majority of them prefer beef to other meat because of its availability for law price.

Health conditions: Mathammas are economically very backward they are the visiting of prostitution and



untouchability majority of the Mathammas generally suffer from Gyack problems such as stomach pain, bleeding white discharge, chest pain, back pain, fever and headache.

conditions deals with the activities associated with the fulfilment of material need of the people. Every community has its own way to meet the basic needs for the existence of its members.

In south India, especially in Andhra Pradesh these devadasis are called as Basavins in Adilabad. Jogins in Hyderabad, Mathammas in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh and they are identified by different names in different regions of the state.

Mathammas economy: he economy of Mathamms is backward they are segregated geographically they have little contacts with society. Now a days they do follow the traditional occupations and various new occupations and various new occupations like doing agricultural labour and business (petty shops) etc.

Economic conditions

The present chapter evaluates the economic conditions of Mathammas in respect of their changes in occupational pattern their practice of saving sources of income, there in deftness their practice of savings source of borrowing and soon. Economic Table -1: Family of the Respondents

Agricultural: agricultural is the most impartment activity of the Mathammas in Chittoor District. Frequently 75percent of Mathammas are depending on agricultural labour and the remaining 25 present upon business (petty shops) ect. And only one person has private job.

S.no	Type Of Family	No. Of. Respondents	Percentage
1	Nuclear Family	44	35.2
2	Joint Family	81	64.8
	Total	125	100.0

The above table shows that the two types of families were prevalent among Mathammas .Mostly however nuclear and joint families were nuclear families were found. It clearly shows that out of 125 families 44 were nuclear families and their percentage 35.2 81respondents belong to joint families and their percentage is 64.8.

Table -2: Sub –Caste Wise Distribution of the Respondents

S.no	Sub-Caste	No. Of Respondents	Percentage
1	Madiga	118	94.40
2	Mala	5	4.00
3	Dhobi	1	0.80
4	Yanadi	1	0.80
	Total	125	100.00

The sub-caste wise distribution of the Respondents is presented in the table-2. Two sub-caste named Malas and Madigas exist among scheduled Castes. Of the 123



respondents from the SC community, 118 respondents belong to Madiga and 5 respondents to Malas. The other two respondents belong to Dhobi and Yanadi Caste.

Table-3: Occupation of the Respondents:

S.no	Occupation	No.of Respondents	Percentage
1	Coolies	93	74.40
2	Business	8	6.40
3	Job	1	0.80
4	Unemployment	23	18.40
	Total	125	100.00

Coolies, Business and job are the main occupation of the Respondents the study shows that 93 respondents were labours 8 respondents business oriented and 1 respondents possessed a responsible job. Almost respondents were i. e unemployed.

Table -4

Annual income of the Respondents:

S.no	Annul Income	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	5000-10000	43	34.40
2	11000-15000	70	56.00
3	16000-20000	11	8.80
4	21000-30000	1	0.80
		125	100.00

The annual income of the respondents varies from Rs/-5000 to Rs/-30000 randomly. 43 respondents were earning an amount of Rs/-5000-10000 which corresponds to 34.40 percent whereas 70 respondents between Rs/-11000 and Rs/-15000 which represent at maximum percentage of 56.11 respondents were income of Rs/-16000-2000, whose presents is 8.8 only respondent was found in the income of Rs/-1000-30000

Table -5

S.no	Marital Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Unmarried	80	64.00
2	Married	44	35.20
3	Widowed	1	0.80
	Total	125	100.00



The above table shows that marital status of the Mathammas. It clearly shows that out of 125 respondents 80 were unmarried persons and their percentage is 64.0. 44 respondents are married persons. Only one respondent is widow and their percentage is 0.80. So it is clear evident that Mathammas are going for marriage.

Table -6: Practice of saving among the respondents

S.no	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Saving	45	36.00
2	No Saving	80	64.00
	Total	125	100.00

Regarding saving an over whelming majority of the mathammas that is 64.0 present revealed that they had none only 45 mathammas (36 present) saved money. Even this saving on their part was very little and not encouraging.

Table -7: Source of Borrowing of the Respondents

S.no	Source	No. of Respondents	Parentage
1	Moneylender	83	66.40
2	Banks	4	3.20
3	Under Beneficiary programme	16	12.80
4	others	22	17.60
	Total	125	100.00

The source of borrowing of the respondents. A grater of percentage of the respondents (66.4%) borrowed money from lenders, 22 respondents from of the respondents i. e Podupulakshmi Sakhi podupusangam ect and 3.2 present of the respondents borrowed money from the banks. Borrowing has become almost pattern of economic life. Borrowing may be for productive or unproductive purpose. The Mathammas in Chittoor District have borrowed for primary purposes such as for house construction marriage ceremonies and family. Maintained and other impartment social functions.

Case study: The case study of Renuka who belongs to Katuru Village B.NKandriga (mandal) brings out now innocent Children are made into Mathammas. Renuka is local School. When She was in the womb of her mother due to pre-nature complication, her parents took a vow before Mathammas of the child was born safely they would leave her to Mathammas. In which idol of Mathammas was washed. The child was born safely. Immediately her patients left her as Mathammas because of their vow.

Suggestions for Further Research: 1. The study was conducted in five Mandals of Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh. Similar studies could be conducted with



voided and large samples in other district and states as the Mathammas are status are under improvement.

2. A further study can be undertaken to compare the awareness, participation and attitude of Mathammas beneficiaries toward rehabilitation programmes.

3. Studies related to Mathammas rehabilitations can be undertaken to compare the knowledge and participation of beneficiaries between district and also between two regions.

4. An in-depth study regarding Mathammas attitude toward education and training can be studies can be taken up.

5. The working conditions and living conditions of Mathammas in the different strategies can be studied.

Summary and Conclusions

The present study is chiefly concerned with Mathammas in Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh. It deals with their socio-economic life Mathammas belong to all castes, not only S.C they bear different names in regions. In Tamilnadu Mathammas called as devadas, maithrees in Kerala, naties in Assam, Muralies in Maharashtra jogies, Basavies muralies in Andhra Pradesh.

The data was collected from the Mathammas directly research techniques like participant observation and interview schedule were employed in collecting the necessary data .Beside, censuses reports and Government records and non-Government records were also used for the primary data the following are the findings of the study.

With regard to their education in Chittoor District, it is found that out of 125 members 54 were illiterates and their percentage is 43.2.44 members had primary education and only one respondent intermediate lake of education is a stumbling block in their attaining a higher tanked of life. Though they have all facilities in respect of free education they refrain from sending their children to school for various and the main being their extreme poverty and backwardness.

Regarding the structure of their family two types of families was preventing among mathammas. Mostly however nuclear and joint families were found it clearly shows that out of 125 families 44 had nuclear families and their percentage is 35.2, 81 respondents belonged to joint families and their percentage is 64.8 as a whole their economic conditions are relatively poor mathammas seem to do all kinds of menial jobs to earn money and meet their minimum daily livelihood requirements.

As a whole their economic conditions are relatively poor. Mathammas seem to have a poor economic basis and seem to do all kinds of menial jobs to earn money and meet their minimum daily livelihood requirements.

Superstitions, tradition, strong beliefs in god as well as their poverty ignorance lead them to follow the available remedy for their illness .In turn they offer the child to the goddess. By Organising free medical camps in the remote areas the people can utilize these facilities for solving their health problems. Mathammas cult outwards appears to be a unique to Andhra



Pradesh but the naked truth is that it is common all over the world in one way or the other women are exploited and missed by patriotic society. By providing alternative measures we can bring home in their life style.

Culture, custom and tradition also provide a chance to utilise women as instrument to fulfil last. By bringing them out from the superstitions, we could provide a normal life to them on par with others. Superstitions, traditions, strong beliefs in god as well as their poverty, ignorance lead them to follow the available remedy for their illness. In turn they offer the child to the goddess. By organising free medical campus in the remote Ares the people can utilize these facilities for remote areas the people can utilize these facilities for their health problems. Poverty forces the parents to offer their child to Mathamma. By making available of basic needs, this cult can be eradicated.

The government and non-government organisation introduced many programmes for the rehabilitation of Mathammas, like animal husbandry (AH) Industrial service business (ISB) ect. To raise their social status these originations provide housing facility, education to those who are illiterates to serve a better livelihood presently the county is reduced and the Mathammas lead a responsible family hood by these rehabilitation programmes. In the near future these Mathammas will undergo medical check-up so to prevent themselves from different diseases.

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