

Historical Background of Beautiful Immortal Brides- DEVADASIS

Dr. Rajwinder Kaur



Historical Background of Beautiful Immortal Brides- DEVADASIS



**India | UAE | Nigeria | Uzbekistan | Montenegro | Iraq |
Egypt | Thailand | Uganda | Philippines | Indonesia**
www.parabpublications.com

Historical Background of Beautiful Immortal Brides- DEVADASIS

Authored By:

Dr. Rajwinder Kaur

Assistant Professor

Government Rajindra College, Bathinda Punjab

Copyright 2024 by Dr. Rajwinder Kaur

First Impression: 2024

**Historical Background of Beautiful Immortal Brides-
DEVADASIS**

ISBN: 978-81-19585-71-7

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10558964>

Rs. 600/- (\$80)

No part of the book may be printed, copied, stored, retrieved, duplicated and reproduced in any form without the written permission of the editor/publisher.

DISCLAIMER

Information contained in this book has been published by Parab Publications and has been obtained by the author from sources believed to be reliable and correct to the best of their knowledge. The author is solely responsible for the contents of the articles compiled in this book. Responsibility of authenticity of the work or the concepts/views presented by the author through this book shall lie with the author and the publisher has no role or claim or any responsibility in this regard. Errors, if any, are purely unintentional and readers are requested to communicate such error to the author to avoid discrepancies in future.

Published by:
Parab Publications

Foreword

In the prologue of this insightful book, we embark on a journey through the historical tapestry of India, exploring the intricate layers of the Devdasi system. Authored by Dr. Rajwinder Kaur, a diligent student of our great educational institution G.N. College, Killianwali, this work endeavours to unravel the rich cultural heritage and contemporary implications of a practice deeply embedded in the nation's history.

As we delve into the pages that follow, readers will traverse the corridors of time, witnessing the evolution and societal nuances surrounding the Devdasi tradition. From its origins, intricately woven into ancient rituals and temple ceremonies, to the transformations it underwent over centuries, this narrative aims to present a comprehensive understanding of the system's roots.

The author, driven by a passion for historical inquiry, meticulously examines the socio-cultural context that shaped the Devdasi system. With scholarly precision, the narrative navigates through the intersections of religion, art, and societal norms, providing readers with a nuanced perspective on the complex interplay that defined the lives of Devdasis through different epochs.

The work opens a portal into the past, examining the ritualistic dimensions of the Devadasi tradition. It illuminates the sacred duties and revered status bestowed upon women who dedicated their lives to serving deities through art and devotion. As we traverse through the chapters, the author skilfully navigates the historical epochs, providing a nuanced understanding of how the Devadasi system evolved, adapting to cultural shifts, and often entwining with socio-political dynamics. The narrative is not merely a historical account; it is an exploration of the intricate interplay between tradition, religion, and societal norms. The author navigates this terrain with sensitivity, unravelling the layers that often obscure the true essence of the Devadasi system.

With a keen eye for detail, the book sheds light on the transformation of this ancient practice into a complex and sometimes controversial phenomenon in modern India. It examines the intersections of tradition and modernity,

shedding light on the challenges faced by the women involved, the societal perceptions, and the ongoing debates surrounding the system.

Furthermore, this book does not merely dwell on the past; it seeks to bring the Devdasi system into the contemporary spotlight. The author undertakes a rigorous exploration of its present status, shedding light on the challenges faced by those associated with this ancient practice in the modern era. Through research and a compassionate lens, the text aims to bridge the temporal gap, fostering an informed discourse on the continued relevance and repercussions of the Devdasi system.

Amidst the historical narrative and contemporary analysis, the author invites readers to ponder the societal dynamics that perpetuate or challenge the Devdasi tradition. This preface serves as an invitation, beckoning readers to embark on a journey of enlightenment, prompting critical reflection on cultural practices that have shaped and, in turn, been shaped by the ebb and flow of time. As the pages unfold, it is our hope that this work sparks not only intellectual curiosity but also a sense of empathy for the individuals whose lives are intertwined with the Devdasi system.

In conclusion, this writing serves as a gateway to a narrative that transcends epochs, weaving together threads of history, culture, and contemporary discourse. As readers embark on this literary expedition, they are encouraged to engage critically, empathetically, and thoughtfully with the complexities surrounding the Devdasi system in India. In a world where cultural practices are subject to evolving interpretations, this book emerges as a beacon of scholarship, offering a timely and profound exploration of the Devdasi system. This composition sets the stage for a compelling narrative, inviting readers to engage with the complexities, contradictions, and enduring significance of this age-old tradition in the tapestry of Indian history and culture.

Amit Behal

Member of Three Boards of Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh

Associate Professor & HoD

Department of Political Science

Guru Nanak College, Killianwali

My words

There has been significant discussion and research on the "devadasi" system. In the past, some authors have associated the "devadasi" with prestige and power; in more modern times, others have associated them with prostitution and vice.

Personally, I thought that, very first beginning of this tradition, purely based on the religious belief that when pure virgin young girls were the hand maidens of the God, before their puberty. Temple representatives thought that the only way to create their interest in temples and good deeds, they have to learn other skilful works, like dance and singing, that's why the new classical race emerged in Indian society, and Sadir, a dance form created by natural, which is converted in Bharatnatyam in present times. But with the passage of time many other things added in this tradition which converted this tradition in a evil and the life of devadasis became worse day by day.

Abstract

Sociologists and historians have widely analyzed the treatment of women under the caste system and it has been witnessed in the history of India that the caste system not only talks about the social division of peoples but also includes its sexual division as well. The concept of endogamy has been seen as a mechanism of recruiting and retaining control over the labour and the sexuality of women. On the other hand, the concept of “Purity” and “Pollution” separate groups and also regulate the mobility of women. In this context it cannot be ignored that for the centuries females were exploited on the basis of their caste and gender for social evils such as dowry practice, child marriage, Devadasi etc. Among these, Devadasi is a social stigma, to a greater extent which is mostly adopted among lower castes in India. Devadasi has also become an important part, when the socioeconomic, religious and emotional reasons which are associated with female prostitution, are explored. The topic of female exploitation gives rise to contemporary discourse about Devadasi girls and young women in India.

The objective of the research work is to give an overview of the history of Devadasi System, background behind the system in many ancient civilizations of World and its origin in India through the ages, which has been remained the matter of controversy. The main focus of the research is to emphasize the legal activities and thinking of the society in contemporary times towards the system. So, in the research work focus on to study the place of devadasis in ancient and medieval Indian societies and changing images during different periods after colonial era in country. However, many reform and revival movements were started against this evil system and many acts were passed in various states, where the system is very active now a days, but there are number of reasons behind not to abolish the system. Beliefs and faiths of society with religious sanction, the system flourished in the society day by day and presently the system becomes curse for the young girls and poor women, who are dedicated as devadasis. Sometimes they are compelled to live a life of forced prostitutes in various states. The researcher's goal in this study has been to identify both positive and negative beliefs associated with the system, as well as to characterize the challenging existence of the devadasis, complete with obstacles and difficulties. This

study describes the role of Indian judicial system and Governments of respective States in regard to abolish the system and try to find out the ways to ban the system and rehabilitate the devadasis by protecting the young girls from dedicating their lives as devadasis.

*Dedicated To
My Mother*



Preface

Welcome to "**Historical background of beautiful immortal brides-Devadasis.**" This is my Ph.D. research work of first 2 chapters of my thesis, that is now before all of you in the form of my debut book. My journey was very tough during this whole process of research and writing the thesis and after this, to convert it in book form. My interest in women empowerment inspired me to do something for the women. In my post-graduation, I studied a subject based on the Indian religious traditions, where I first time read about this System, and I felt very bad for them, but I like the name of this tradition, Devadasi.

When I started my Ph.D. & chose this topic for research, I faced many problems. Whenever I tried to talk to the persons, who had already worked on this topic, most of them told me that this is a topic of controversy, you are not capable of doing research on it. I can't forget that day, because my confidence was zero and I was feeling very low to pursue it.

But keeping aside all these opinions, I ultimately prepared my mind and started my work. During research I found another bottleneck that the information about the origin of this system like primary sources, they were majorly available in Sanskrit and it was very difficult for me to understand them. The documents which provide concrete information about the origin of this system were very much limited. At that time, I felt perhaps this was my big mistake to choose such a topic as research. I thought that I should quit my research work.

But soon I realised that all these odds are my examination, and finally I came back in my zone with strong determination.

May these narratives unveil the resilient spirits of Devdasis, echoing through centuries. Let their voices, silenced by tradition and resounding in rebellion, weave a tapestry of strength, resilience, and the quest for identity. In traversing these pages, may you witness not only the struggles but also the triumphs of those deemed vessels of devotion. With every word, may a spotlight be cast on the shadows of history, illuminating the stories of these women who dared to redefine their destinies. Step forth into this chronicle,

and let the legacy of Devdasis endure, reborn in the echoes of each turned page.

In concluding this preface, let us embark on a poignant odyssey through the hallowed corridors of tradition and the resilience of the human spirit. As we unravel the intricate tale of Devdasis in India, let it serve as a mirror reflecting both the shadows of history and the radiance of change. May this exploration ignite conversations, spark awareness, and foster compassion for those whose stories are etched in cultural complexities. For within these pages, the silenced voices echo, urging us to witness the transformative power of enlightenment and advocate for a future where every soul is free to script its own destiny.

Dr. Rajwinder Kaur

Acknowledgement

I express my heartfelt gratitude to all those who have supported and inspired me throughout the journey of writing of my first book. First and foremost, I would like to thank my family specially my husband Mr. Devinder Singh and friends for their unwavering encouragement and understanding during the long hours I spent researching and writing. Their belief in me kept me going, and I am profoundly grateful for their love and support. I extend our sincere appreciation to everyone who provided me with insightful information which made this book possible. My words of appreciation goes to my affectionate son Master Namit, for his love and indirect emotional support in form of patience during my research work.

The research work of mine is a standing testimony to the competent and seasoned guidance given to me by my experienced and learned Supervisor, Dr. Seema Parihar (Department of History), CT University, Ludhiana, for her adorable efforts which she very kindly made for me. She has helped me a lot in guiding and inculcating a sense of self-assurance to work consistently on this subject and to present it in the present form. During the course of my research work she showed patience and for this I shall always remember her human nature and sincerely feel be holden to her.

I am very thankful to my teacher Prof. Amit Behal, Associate Professor Guru Nanak College, Killianwali, Punjab, also member of 3 Board of Studies, Panjab University Chandigarh, Panjab, who always support and advise me like father and Adv. Paramveer Singh, BA. LLB, practising in civil and criminal, who are very supportive in my endeavour and offered emotional support during a time of stress.

Finally, Special thanks to our editor and the publishing team for their guidance, co-operation, and expertise. Their feedback and suggestions have been instrumental in refining this handbook and making it accessible to beginners. Last but not least, I am grateful to the readers,

whose curiosity and enthusiasm for learning have inspired me to write this book. It is my sincere hope that this handbook serves as a helpful guide and information source for the history and status of Devadasi System and Devadasis.

About the Author



Dr. Rajwinder Kaur is working as Assistant Professor in Government Rajindra College, Bathinda Punjab. She is MA and Ph.D in History and MA in English. Besides this she has also done B.Ed. and qualified TET exams. She has done her Ph.D in ‘A Historical Study of Devadasi System in India and Changing Scenario of the Society towards the System.’ She is very hard working and keen interested in research, special in the questions and problems related to women, she takes very seriously. She has very good command on research and published four research papers about the devadasi system. On personal level she is also trying to work on the matters of solving women’s issue and trying to work for raising their voice against domestic violence and make them aware about the security. In her present work she has written about the emergence and evolution of the devadasi system and changes in it with the passage of the time.

As we know that the devadasi system has remained a burning topic and important matter of debate through the ages. In present day the topic of female exploitation gives rise to contemporary discourse about Devadasi girls and young women in India.

Dr. Rajwinder Kaur has raised the issues how Devadasi system took birth as religious phenomena and become a social evil with the time passed.

The objective of this work is to give an overview of the history of Devadasi System, background behind the system in many ancient civilizations of world and its origin in India through the ages, which has

been remained the matter of controversy. The main focus of her work is to emphasize the legal activities and thinking of the society in contemporary times towards the system. Beliefs and faiths of society with religious sanction, the system flourished in the society day by day and presently the system curse for the young girls and poor women, who are dedicated as devadasis. Sometimes they are compelled to live a life of forced prostitutes in various states. In this study the researcher has tried to find the good and bad beliefs related to the system and tried to define the difficult life of devadasis with their problems and challenges. This study describes significant ceremonies that mark the passage of a common girl along with the path to becoming a devadasi and how the system became a social phenomena.

Dr. Seema Parihar

Associate Professor

CT University, Ludhiana, Punjab

Table of Contents

Foreword	IV - V
My words	VI
Abstract	VII - VIII
Dedication	IX
Preface	X - XI
Acknowledgement	XII - XIII
About the Author	XIV - XV
Table of Contents	XVI - XVII

Title of Chapters	Page No.
INTRODUCTION	1 – 10
<i>CHAPTER - 1</i>	
<i>DEVDAASI SYSTEM; ORIGIN, EVOLUTION AND MYTHOLOGICAL BELIEFS IN THE SOCIETY</i>	11 – 33
<i>CHAPTER - 2</i>	
<i>DEVADASIS IN MEDIEVAL PERIOD</i>	34 – 49
<i>CHAPTER - 3</i>	
<i>DEVADASIS DURING MUGHAL EMPIRE</i>	50 – 54
<i>CHAPTER - 4</i>	
<i>THE DEVDAASI SYSTEM DEVELOPED IN SOUTH INDIA</i>	55 – 61

<i>CHAPTER - 5</i>	62 – 72
<i>EARLY COLONIAL PERIOD</i>	
<i>CONCLUSION</i>	73 – 79
BIBLIOGRAPHY	80
BOOKS	81 – 84
REPORT	85
RESEARCH ARTICLES	86 – 94
WEBSITES	95 – 96

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr. Rajwinder Kaur

Assistant Professor

Government Rajindra College, Bathinda Punjab

ABOUT THE BOOK

In my debut book, I embark on a compelling exploration of the Devdasi system in India, unravelling the intricacies of a tradition deeply rooted in history yet fraught with controversy and social implications.

The Devdasi system, historically linked to temple rituals, has evolved over centuries, and my book delves into its origins, tracing the cultural, religious, and socio-economic forces that shaped this unique practice. Through meticulous research and first-hand accounts, I aim to shed light on the nuances of a tradition that has been both revered and condemned.

The narrative unfolds against the backdrop of Indian society, where the Devdasi system has undergone significant changes. From being dedicated to temples and serving as dancers and musicians, Devdasis have faced marginalization and exploitation over the years. My book strives to capture these shifts, examining the impact of societal changes, legal interventions, and advocacy efforts on the lives of Devdasis.

Throughout the narrative, I weave a tapestry of historical context, sociological analysis, and personal narratives to provide readers with a comprehensive understanding of the Devdasi system. The complexities of tradition versus modernity, spirituality versus exploitation, and cultural heritage versus human rights are carefully examined, inviting readers to ponder the intricate balance between preserving cultural heritage and safeguarding human dignity.

My book explores the challenges faced by Devdasis, the stigmas attached to their identity, and the broader implications on the status of women in Indian society. It is my sincere hope that this book contributes to a more informed and compassionate discourse surrounding the Devdasi System in India, paving the way for a future where tradition and human rights can coexist harmoniously.

I want to express my profound thanks for the significant contribution and role different people played in making my debut book a reality.

Dr. Rajwinder Kaur

Email: drrajwindergharu@gmail.com



India | UAE | Nigeria | Malaysia | Montenegro | Iraq | Egypt | Thailand | Uganda | Philippines | Indonesia

Parab Publications || www.parabpublications.com || info@parabpublications.com