

## Applying Life Skills Education as humanitarian Logistics: Special Focus on Devadasi/Jogini Women in the State of Telangana

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### ABSTRACT

The practice of Jogini system is a feudal remnant of exploitation of Dalit women in the name of religion and social custom and practices. In the Telangana region the practice of Jogini system is rampant which is causing severe stress and strains for the development of Dalit women. They were exploited in the name of religion by the upper caste and rich sections of the society. They are called with different names in different regions. In some of the Dalit families in Mahaboobnagar and Nizamabad districts of Telangana state the girls are dedicated to the services of the local deities such as Yellamma, Poleramma, and Renukamba etc. By dedicating to the Gods and goddesses they get the stigma of untouchables and Prostitutes. They lead a deplorable life in the society facing a lot of challenges to combat the untouchable practices, atrocities and other forms of discrimination in the society. The present study is an attempt to understand and comprehend how life skills education will promote and help the development of the Dalit women to face the present and future challenges in the society and promote their human capital through Life Skills Education. The World health Organization has emphasized the importance of the life skills education for the protection of the health conditions of vulnerable groups and to save them from HIV/AIDS etc.

**Key Words:** Life Skills, Depressed Classes, Dalit Women, Devadasi/jogini System, Peer group education, Reformation and rehabilitation, social discrimination and Humanitarian Logistics.

### 1. Background of the Study:

The social and religious sanction of prostitution was known as the 'Devadasi/Jogini' system. It comprised of two words, "deva" meaning God and "dasi" meaning slave or servant-woman. This system is a traditional religious practice, which is followed mainly in the southern part of India. According to these custom, small girls are dedicated to gods and goddesses, by their parents. In this decadent system of dedicating girls to god and goddesses is married to a deity and considered as the servant of god. She is not allowed to marry a mortal and lead a normal family life. However, the traditional religious custom was misused and abused by generations of those who were in charge of temples. They exploited these girls sexually and since then, this term is synonymous with prostitution and commercial sexual exploitation. Such inhuman treatment amounts to human rights violations.

At present, the Devadasi system is used to promote prostitution in the name of religion. Often the very same girls are sold off to pimps, touts and bidders, by their family members, in the name of Devadasi custom. Resistance and protests, against prostitution and human rights violations stands very dim chances, due to the persistent of presence of such social evils in the social customs and traditions. Most of the Devadasis carry out prostitution, in the disguise of religion. This is the reason that they are not covered under the jurisdiction of the Suppression of Immoral Traffic (in women and girls) Amendment Bill, 1986. The government has passed the Prevention of Devadasis Act, 1935 and the Devadasis Samarpan Nishedhan Act, 1982 to curb this evil practice. However, no fruitful result has been obtained till date, as law alone cannot bring social changes.

## 2. Introduction

The System of dedicating girls in the name religion is prevalent in South India. The practice of dedicating Girls as brides to the Gods and Goddess is known as *Devadasi* system. Devadasis who are dedicated to the Goddess Renuka is popularly known as *Joginis* and those who are dedicated to God Venkateshwar/Hanuman are called as *Basavis*. They are debarred from the normal married life. They are expected to serve the deity. The obsession to make girls as Joginis is very much prevalent since times immemorial. Even for petty causes the girls are made as Jogins. Unlike prostitution, there was no involvement of middleman or pimps here, nor do the women go out of their way to entice the customers. In the Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh the practice of Jogini system is rampant. This is causing severe stress and strains for the development of women among the dalit families. Women among the dalits were exploited in the name of religion by the upper caste people and rich sections of the society. By dedicating the women to the gods and goddesses they get the stigma of untouchability and Prostitution. They lead a deplorable life in the society. They are facing lot of challenges to combat the untouchable practices, atrocities and other forms of discrimination on them in the society. This study is an attempt to understand, analyze and comprehend the practice of the Jogini system and to highlight how life skills education will go a long way to promote and help the development of the dalit women to face the present and future challenges in the society and in turn promote their human capital through Life Skills Education. The World health Organization in its report has emphasized the importance of the life skills education for the protection and promotion of the health conditions of vulnerable groups such as SC/STs and to save them from HIV/AIDS menace.

Even after two decades of the enactment of Devadasi Prohibition Act in 1988, in the State of Andhra Pradesh, there are still 16,000 Joginis or Basavis are identified. They are living under miserable and deplorable life conditions. Among these people, the most vulnerable are the adults whose age groups are 6-18 years particularly the girls of Schedule Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Communities. The focus of the present study is on the improvement of the life conditions of the Scheduled Caste girls and women in five selected mandals in Mahaboobnagar nad Nizambad Districts of Telangana. The study is based on the survey conducted in Narayanpet, Utkur, Varni, Balanagar, Chinta kunta Mandals, which are the bordering areas of Karnataka state. These districts have the highest concentration of Jogini girls. Even after seventy-five years of Independence, they are living without shelter and social security. It is hoped and also perceived that if life skills training is provided for the girls in these mandals it makes a strong case to protect them from all maladies and help them to curb the practice. Life skills Education promote confidence building among them. Life Skills Education helps them to encounter the discriminative practices on the dalits through a comprehensive human chart of life skills program. Life skills will promote the life competencies particularly among the Dalits women. A criticism has been built up in the state today towards the government legislative policy on State Prohibition Act of 1988, its nature of lacking the implementation process and mechanism. Therefore, the welfare of these innocent Scheduled Caste Girls largely depended on Life Skills Education and awareness.

The specific aims and objectives of the present study is (i) to emphasize the socio-economic profile of the Jogin/Basavis, their daily routine life, income, health status, their social habits and to improve their conditions through Life Skills education and training, (ii) to study and emphasize the importance and need for training of Dalit women through Life Skills Education by adopting the lab area approach, (iii) to promote human capital through life skills education through a strategy of Peer educators among the Dalit women (iv) to promote the awareness campaigns to eradicate the problem through the strategy of Life Skills Education (v) to impart life skills training for the peer groups through interaction and brainstorming methods in their localities where the practices are rampant based on the strategies and techniques of life skill education, and finally (vi) to develop the life skills and capital of the weaker sections of the society to make them lead a better life and improved life conditions and protect themselves from the health hazards.

The present study is an attempt to understand their problems from life skills education and human rights perspectives, such as discrimination, untouchable practices, ill-health, issues and concerns of atrocities against Devadasi women. The present study is based on the fieldwork and field survey conducted from Telangana and the interactions made with young jogini girls and women who are the victims under the practice of Devadasi system. Presently they are treated as sex workers. This is leading to child prostitution; sex racket and a large number of women and minor girl children are affected to this kind of heinous practice. The present paper makes

an attempt to find certain remedies and solutions to resolve the problems of the Dalit women through Life Skills Education with Peer group educators through a lab area approach. Data pertaining to socialization, political economic, human capital, HIV/AIDS, and challenges in the Devadasi tradition are collected through participant observation. The data was suitably coded, analyzed, using SPSS software by adopting appropriate research techniques in the present research work.

**2.1 Role of a Religion in dedicating young girls to God and Goddess:** Religion is a very complex issue in India. Religion pervades many human activities. The purpose of religion is to help people and to lead a peaceful and harmonious life. Indian Constitution provides freedom of religion on secular lines. Everybody, irrespective of caste, class, creed and religion, high or low, should use religion to serve millions of people and liberate them from all sorts of ills and dangers. In Hinduism there is blot on the traditional hereditary practice among Scheduled Caste girls, and their dedication towards the Hindu Deities. The fractured models of the young prostitution pervade the contemporary discourse about Devadasi girls and young women in Telangana. The temple servants, artists and priests must serve as Devadasis and practice sex work either in their houses or in small lodges for their livelihood (Blanchard et al., 2005). There is a duality in the rise and fall of the Devadasi/Jogini tradition and the temple attendant's moral degeneration of women. Devadasis were transformed from the temple servants to cheap prostitutes (Vimochana, 1985). Within this discourse, young girls have to represent multiple roles in the society, as innocent victims of engrained cultural practice. With the advent of HIV/AIDS they have been identified as central players in a complex cobweb of contagion as both the cause of, and cure for, disease spread within the vicinity (Sinha, 1999). More recently, O'Connell Davidson (2005) examines the global political and economic inequalities that endanger child prostitution, while also challenging dominant notions childhood and sexuality. However, child prostitution and the lives of the young people who sell sex are not yet widely understood as a complex socio-political phenomenon in their own right. This study focus on with an overview of the Devadasi system, it's past and present. The sections are also followed by an outline of the research methodology adopted for the conduct of the present study. In the next two sections deal with socio-economic profile of the respondents, and primary data on how daily routine, income, habits and health status of the Jogini, and the subsection will explain how the Life skills education was important in order to resolve the problems of day-to-day life. The ensuing section brings together the main tenets of my new understand of Young Joginis and importance of Life skills through Peer Education in this cultural context. Lastly, the paper concludes with a critical discussion of how the example of young Joginis and Basivis contributes to new theoretical understandings of child prostitution, particularly with respect to the social construction of this phenomenon and the perspectives of the girls themselves.

### **3. Historical Background**

India is a land of mystery and occult. The culture has been the main reason and origin of this cult. In the villages of the country, many still follow centuries-old customs and rituals. One such place that showcases the dark mystic side of the Indian culture is the famous Yellamma Devi Temple of Saundatti. Those who study ethnicity, gender and sexuality, know that this place is a fantasy land. The deep colours of culture here takes you back to the time when puranas were written, to a time when Renuka married saint Jamadagni - who later settled in Ranshrung Mountains, which is the present day Savadatti in Belgaum district of Karnataka.

Renuka Devi (Yellamma), daughter of Renuka Raja married Sage Jamadagni (son of Ruchik Muni and Satyavath) and lived in the 'ramshrung' Mountains. Jamadagni, well known sage for his anger had obtained the blessings of the anger gods by performing severe penance. Renuka Devi was helping her husband Jamdagni muni in all his tasks of performing various rituals and Pooja. She gave birth to five sons Vasu, Viswa Vasu, Brihudyanu, Brutwakanwa and Ram Bhadra. Ram Bhadra got the mercy of lord shiva and parvathi he was also blessed with "Ambikashtra" from Lord Shiva and Parvathi and hence he was called Parushrama.

Renuka Devi used to go to the River Malapahari (Malaprabha) daily to have bath and after having her bath in the holy river, with total attentiveness and devotion she used to fill the pot with river water which she used to make out of the sand which is available on the bank of the river. Then she would catch the snake which was around there and turn it into a convolution and place it on head as support for the pot. This shows her devotion and concentration towards the Pativrata. She uses to bring water daily like this to Jamdagni for performance of rituals. Once Renuka devi went to River Malapahari to take her bath and get the river water for her husband. She saw the Gandharvas playing in the river. At that instance she lost her concentration as well as devotion and imagined that

herself playing with her husband in the river. After some time came out of her imagination and took her bath in the river and start making the pot using the sand but she was not able to do. Even the snake was disappearing if she tried to catch the snake. Renuka Devi returned to the ashram with great grief and disappointment about her sage life.

Sage Jamadagni came to know about this and got angry and cursed her. He ordered her to get away. Jamadagni ordered his sons to punish their mother. No one agreed except Parashurama. Jamadagni cursed his sons who did not agree to punish their mother. Parashuma using his axe, cut his mothers head. Renuka devis's head multiplied by tens and hundreds and moved to different regions and she was back as a whole too. This miracle inspired her sons and others to become her followers and started worshipping her head as goddess especially by the rural mass.

This is Renuka's story, who is also known as Yellama in many communities. But, certain communities believe that Renuka and Yellama are two different people. Some tales state that when Prasurama came to kill his mother, she fled to a low caste community and Yellama was the woman who tried to help her. In his rage, Parasurama had beheaded both, but when he brought them back to life, he misplaced their heads with their bodies. Later, Jamadagni took the woman with Renuka's body as his wife and the other one is still continued to be worshiped as Yellama, the goddess of power and strength. At present, the famous temple witnesses a Yellamma Devi fair which is held on many occasions between October and February. The biggest celebration takes place on the full moon day of Margasira. On this auspicious day, millions throng to the temple to celebrate "Neeramanavi Yellammajatra", where the goddess is worshipped for her strength and power and rituals are conducted in the same way as it had been centuries ago.

What adds to the dark mysticism is the association of "Devdasi" (servants of God) system with it. Although it is banned in the country, the controversial system continues to be followed in all its vigour and charm at this temple. The "Devdasi" system began around the 10<sup>th</sup> century in India. Devadasis were infact a muse to the kings and rulers of the land, who resided in the temple and mastered the forms of dance and music. However, like nothing is permanent in this world, life of a "Devdasi" also changed. They lost their status as the servants of God and eventually became courtesans and then prostitutes.

The most surprising and intriguing fact is that thousands flog to the Yellama Temple to offer themselves to the age-old "Devdasi" system. The fair is organised five times between November and February, where jogathis (female) and jogappas (male) are taken in for God's service. Wearing glass bangles, garlands and smearing red and yellow "kumkuma" on their foreheads, young girls embark their "Muttukattuvudu", which says she is a servant of God and this is marked by tying beads from the goddess' necklace around the girl's neck. The girls must then express their commitment to the deity by parading in total nudity or covering their bodies with leaves of neem.

After government orders and due to the presence of public who throng to the temple town to catch a glimpse of nude and semi-nude human bodies, the rituals now take place behind closed doors, only attended by temple authorities, families of those who are dedicated to the temples. This centuries-old trance tradition is viewed by social activist and government as major human rights violation. Governments have condemned these cult situations as a major reason for child prostitution as young girls, aged around eight years, are dedicated to the temples. The unfortunate aspect of these rituals is that these young girls are deprived of education or any other facility and often but end up as prostitute and later as beggars at the Yellama Temple doors. In a country that is known for its fight against rape, violence, forced child marriages, a custom like this surely remains as the biggest contradiction. However, Yellamma Temple festival is too interwoven with tradition, culture, mystic belief system and any question or answer concerning it remains incomplete.

**3.1 Belief in Religious Rituals and Theogamy:** The word Devadasi is derived from the Sanskrit words 'Deva' (God) and 'Dasi' (Servant), Devadasis were women and young girls dedicated through marriage to different Gods and goddess. It is a system that originated in south India around 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D. (Dasgupta and Tarachand; 2000). After the young women dedicated to the God they became the wives of the deities. They have to perform various temple duties, activities including cleaning the temples, devotional activities, dancing for deities in festivals and delivering prayers, narrating god's stories in the form of *harikathas* and *burra -kathas*, which were in the scared

form of worship (Orr, 2000). As wives of deities, the Devadasis never attained the social status. They are socially and morally stigmatized. Their status is very low in the society. They never get the status of widowhood and this was the primary reason for them in auspiciousness. Another role performed by Devadasis is the provision of sexual services to male temple attendants, priests, and men who could be regarded as patrons or clients. While sex work was not their sole profession and most of the Devadasi women had one or two patrons for their patrons during their life time. The religious and political developments over several centuries produced a situation where most of these women were engaged in this type of pseudo ritual service.

In south India today, there is a tendency that the Devadasi system remains a culturally and economically valued form of sex work. Approximately 1000-10,000 young girls are inducted into this system annually. It can be observed during 'Soudatthi Renuka Jatara' (Fair) being held in the months of February in Karnataka (Chakraborty, 2000). In the contemporary society the Devadasis are leading a deplorable life and their working conditions had remarkably changed. Their position is entirely different from that of the past. With the advent of legislation, the tradition was banned with the active support of the autocracy, and constitutional norms (1988) the socio-religious status of the past of the Devadasis is lost. Most of the Devadasis in Mahaboobnagar and Nizamabad districts live within their traditional communities, which are defined by their low-caste status (Harijan or Untouchables) engaged in different occupations, professions. Thus, they are formed as separate communities within the urban towns and cities. The Devadasi women and girls work out of their homes. Some travel to larger rural centers to earn wages for their survival. (O'Neil et al., 2004).

A girl among some Dalit communities become a Devadasi through a dedication rite. This is referred in Telugu as 'devudiki Vadhalatam' (to leave/give to the God) or 'Bottu Kattatam' (tying the beads). The dedication ceremony typically occurs between the ages of 5 and 10 years; however, some become Devadasis after attaining the puberty. This is due to unwanted pregnancies or other familial circumstances. But the present revealed that the conversions happened before puberty and they deflowering immediately after attaining puberty by the person those who tied 'mangalasuthram' (Thalibottu) in dedication ceremony. The reasons for dedication vary and include: the unwritten rule that one girl per Devadasi family enter the system; poverty; an absence of male heir to provide support to the family; to appease deities in terms of sickness or drought; or as a boon to a God/Goddess for a specific family prayer; and due to any family members health problem. In the face of legal prosecution most dedications are done in the underground settings and conducted by the priests, who extract considerable fees for the service and sometimes deflowering the girl (Tarachand 1991). Girls do not begin until they attain the menstruation period, which is the cause of celebration because it signals the onset of fertility and attendant earning potential. Depending on the family situation, it may be 1-3 years after their first period and during that period girls begin sex, which is marked by a '*first client ceremony*'. The male clients exchange material goods (money, gold and jewellery) to the girl's family for the honour of deflowering the newly matured Devadasis/Joginis/Basavi (O'Neil et al., 2004).

**3.2 Empirical Observations from the study area:** The primary data culled from ethnographic accounts, field survey and primary sources collated from the families of the Devadasis. The sex work in Mahaboobnagar and Nizamabad district of Telangana is focused with the Devadasi system. The field investigation involved two research scholars with a local team of five NGO workers who are working for their health. The NGOs has facilitated HIV/AIDS, education and awareness training programmes in the region since 2000. We took the help from the NGOs (Aashray) to train the NGO workers and 10 Joginis from 5 mandals in Mahaboobnagar and Nizamabad districts. Workshops were held with the Devadasis to discuss the objectives, methods, and projected outcomes of the study which were geared towards helping them develop awareness and act as social support forums for the community activities, micro finance groups, legal action, and political solidarity across Joginis throughout the state.

Research activities were conducted in the five selected mandals of Mahaboobnagar and Nizamabad districts namely, Dhanwada, Utkoor, Narayanpet, Devarakadra and Varni regions. Presently these regions have largest number of Joginis. The local team consists of two research scholars and one NGO worker and one Jogini peer educator. They were trained the Life skills Education through workshops in our earlier pilot studies. Over the course of 3 field visits or phases of the study (July 2023 to May 2024), 60 interviews were conducted with the families of the Joginis in many villages and towns in the above five mandals. The individuals' interviews were directed to a girl or woman (age 12-35) Interviews were carried out with the help of a lady research scholar (First Author). Additional data and case studies carried out in the presence of several Joginis and Basavis, who provide

emotional support activities are conducted. In some specific cases additional data was gathered. The reach work is supported by the Semi-structured interview schedules, Group discussions were conducted in the local language (Telugu language). The same had been translated into English. The paper is carried out with extensive field survey, prepared field notes, which were compared at the end of each field visit for accuracy and completeness.

It is very difficult to access young Joginis because they were shy and community concerns. They are afraid regarding leaks of the information to the media or increased police surveillance stemming from the identification of girls under the age group of 18 practicing sex work. Our aim is to discern how young devadasis/Joginis experience their profession, their feelings about their activities, and how these facets of life have been impacted by the advent of HIV and changing nature of the system. These inquiries were made us design to get a better sense of the girls' sexual culture and to capture both the complexity of their lives as well as their everyday activities, facets of adolescent sexuality literature generally, and adolescent sex worker in particular. In the end, we were only able to speak 50 members out of 80 and 10 interviews were not completed due to the factors such as girls not being available to meet at original time and place. We traced them through NGO workers in their homes. The interviews were taken in the day time and purposive sampling was relied upon for recruiting interviewees. Peer educators affiliated with NGO helped select candidates based on the basic age criteria decided upon by the participants: young (early teens 20) and older (mid 20s -35) and majority are from Hindu religion and belongs to Schedule caste girls, followed by OBC and ST girls. They are familiar with two three languages such as Kannada and Hindi apart from native telugu language, being a border of Karnataka state and migrated as a construction labour they are familiar in the above languages. Majority of elder daughters were made joginis because they have belief that the first born baby is more healthy compare to other children in family. Most of the single girl families they dedicated their daughter to yellamma so that in the old age she will be a help hand for them. This study would like to highlight many superstitious feelings, in which joginis are not interested to visit the hospitals for disease cure; they apply only 'Bandar' (Goddess Yellamma- Kum Kum and Turmaric mixture).

The participants were between 12 and 35 years, and most entered the sex trade when they were 13-15. Their low social status, lack of education, and the sanction against marriage within the Jogini/Basavi system (because they are already in union with deities), make doing sex work essential to finance their many responsibilities (and all family members are dependents on her income). Majority they were not interested to out from this tradition, because they have the notion of dismantling the traditional practice and economically viable –patron system, and the trend of non-devadasi family dedicating their daughters to reap economic benefits. Majority of were dedicated by the age of 7 years to goddess Yellamma. They replied for the question of reasons to convert as a Jogini are very simple (28%) belong to Jogini family, and (28%) are single girl child to the family, (16%) are related to health problem and (10%) were had health problems in the family. Around (42%) of the initiation rites were conducted by announcing in the village, followed by (36%) in temples secretly, and 22% are forceful conversions. The dedications taken place (74%) before attaining puberty and remaining (26%) are done after puberty.

For livelihood (58%) are doing Beedi making work during day time, and (22%) are begging with basket and Janki instrument, and remaining 14% are agriculture labor in their village fields. Some villager's are not allowed to work Joginis in their fields; with the stigma that is she is goddess and it is a mistake to make her work in their farms. Majority is not aware about the HIV/AIDS and around (36%) were infected with HIV and (22%) says they are not infected, and the remaining respondents were replied they don't know about HIV/AIDS. But the District Health Head quarters has given a report majority are infected with HIV/AIDS and they were not accepting the fact, even if they knows about it. Apart from HIV/AIDS, the Jogini women has skin diseases related to harassment during sex and the spread of skin diseases from clients to them and vice-versa. The young Joginis were aborted twice in a year (34%) and followed by once in a year and once in two years. Around 3/4<sup>th</sup> of the respondents have anemic problem and 88% of their clients never use condoms during sexual intercourse. Many Joginis are facing harassment during sex, in which 28% are forcing them for sex during menstrual periods, some beating (8%) and some are biting (20%), and (22%) are replied Oral sex, and the rest have no complaints. Though they have health complaints and skin diseases, they have the habit of alcoholism (Toddy, Bear, wine etc), gutka and tobacco smoking (chutta). After adoption of LSE, Joginis started thinking about their lives and future of their children. Majority of the Joginis are becoming self-aware (16%), communicating well (10%), expecting interpersonal relationships (30%) and empathy. They were interested to know how to overcome the stress they had and problem solving (12%) techniques. It is an attempt we made in order to introduce Life skills concept through peer educators by training and workshops. Regarding rehabilitation from Government they are expecting the land for livelihood

and education for their children and free housing and self –employment loans. There is a demand for permanent pension, legal fatherhood certificate on mother’s name for their children admission into the schools and funeral charges from government. Now, the peer groups are working among the Joginis, Basavi and NGOs to work regarding HIV/AIDS awareness and health checkups and visits to hospital. From two months, they themselves forming groups and discussing various issues such as condom usage, and preventive measures in the arrest of HIV/AIDS and how to treat HIV infected people. The Mahaboobnagar government hospitals also conduct health camps to make them aware about the STDs and STIs.

The girls and women are not aware about HIV/AIDS, and they are very superstitious regarding God and Goddess, religion and customs, majority never undergone either blood test or urine test to know what kind of health problems they have. For all diseases they use ‘Bandar’ they drink with water, they rub on the skin, if they got any eye problem the lady priest/ senior jogini will sprinkle this Bandar into eyes. They have belief that neem leaf and Goddess will touch in the sleep and the next day they get cure of many diseases. Another important aspect to convert girls into Jogini is a ‘Trance’ the senior will go into the trance and name one girl to make jogini for the prosperity of family and village.

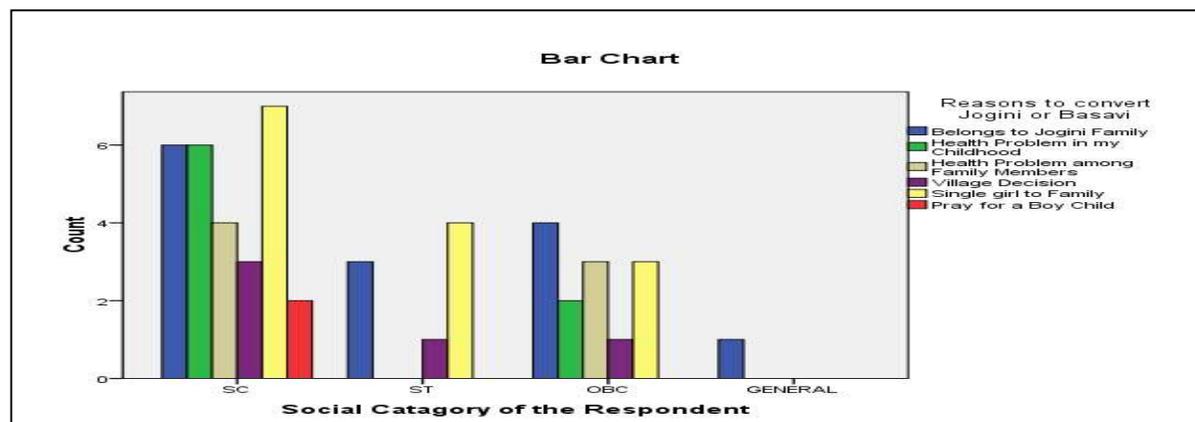
#### 4. Data Analysis and Discussion

Table: 4.1

Social Category of the Respondent \* Reasons to convert Devadasi/Jogini/Basivi

Social category	Reasons to convert as Devadasi/Jogini/Basivi						Total
	Belongs to Jogini Family	Health Problem in my Childhood	Health Problem among Family Members	Village Decision and Trance	Single girl to Family	Pray for a Boy Child	
SC	6	6	4	3	7	2	28
	21.4%	21.4%	14.3%	10.7%	25.0%	7.1%	100.0%
ST	3	0	0	1	4	0	8
	37.5%	.0%	.0%	12.5%	50.0%	.0%	100.0%
OBC	4	2	3	1	3	0	13
	30.8%	15.4%	23.1%	7.7%	23.1%	.0%	100.0%
GENERAL	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
Total	14	8	7	5	14	2	50
	28.0%	16.0%	14.0%	10.0%	28.0%	4.0%	100.0%

\*Source: Primary Data



The above table and graph shows the reflection of a very important observation what we made in the field study. The Social Category of the respondent and reasons to convert or dedication of Jogini or Basavi. Among SC, the

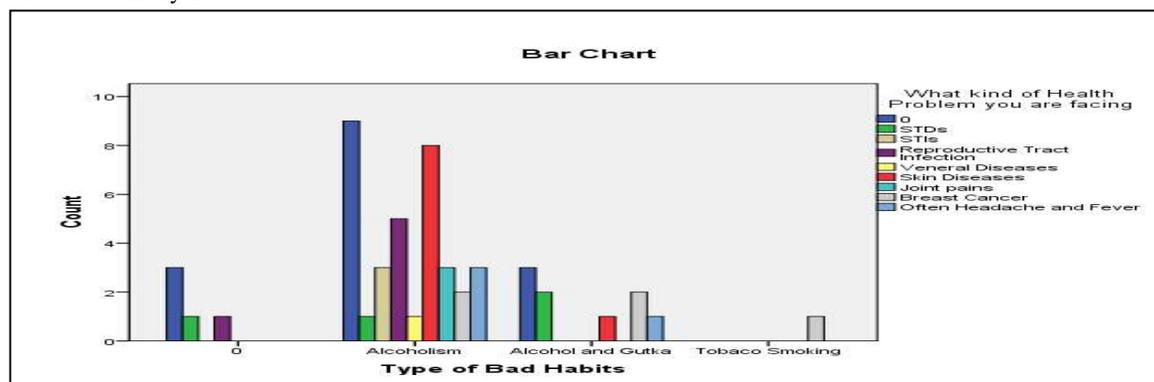
girls were converted into Joginis with the relation of 21% belong to Jogini family and 21% had sickness in their childhood such as chickenpox and fever, 14% conversions based on their family members health problem, 13 % are village decision and trance, as well as pray for a male heir, majority of 25% are dedicated to yellamma being a single girl child to the family, parents themselves decided to make jogini either by announcing or secretly in temples in order to take care of them in future. The total of 13% of OBC girl's dedication also done based on the above prejudices, followed by ST with 8% and very minimal of 1% from general category due to the poverty problem.

**Table: 4.2**

Type of Habits \* Kind of Health Problems respondents are facing

Type of Habits	Kind of Health Problems respondents are facing									Total
	Not applicable	STDs	STIs	RTI	Venereal Diseases	Skin Diseases	Joint pains	Breast Cancer	Often Headache and Fever	
N.A	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
	60.0%	20.0%	.0%	20.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
Alcoholism	9	1	3	5	1	8	3	2	3	35
	25.7%	2.9%	8.6%	14.3%	2.9%	22.9%	8.6%	5.7%	8.6%	100.0%
Alcohol and Gutka	3	2	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	9
	33.3%	22.2%	.0%	.0%	.0%	11.1%	.0%	22.2%	11.1%	100.0%
Tobacco Smoking	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
Total	15	4	3	6	1	9	3	5	4	50
	30.0%	8.0%	6.0%	12.0%	2.0%	18.0%	6.0%	10.0%	8.0%	100.0%

\*Source: Primary Data



The table explains the type of habits they have and health problem facing by jogini and Basavi girls and women. Majority of 98% are having the habit of alcoholism, and they are suffering from STDs, STIs, Reproductive tract infection, venereal diseases and Skin diseases. Those who have both alcoholism and tobacco smoking are facing the breast cancer. In order to reduce the joint pains these girls and women drinking local toddy this is chemical content. Due to dehydration problems they are facing headache and frequent fever as well as drowsiness.

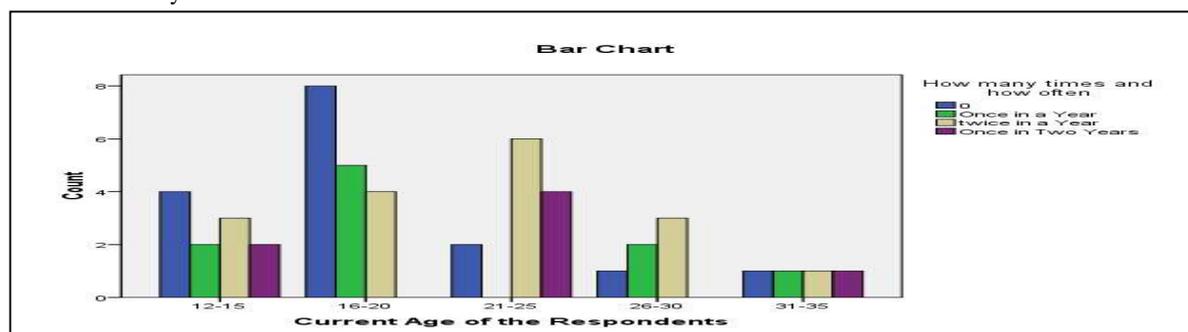
**Table: 4.3**

Current Age of the Respondents \* How often the respondents aborted

Current Age of the Respondents	How often the respondents aborted				Total
	N.A	Once in a Year	twice in a Year	Once in Two Years	
12-15	4	2	3	2	11
	36.4%	18.2%	27.3%	18.2%	100.0%
16-20	8	5	4	0	17
	47.1%	29.4%	23.5%	.0%	100.0%

21-25	2	0	6	4	12
	16.7%	.0%	50.0%	33.3%	100.0%
26-30	1	2	3	0	6
	16.7%	33.3%	50.0%	.0%	100.0%
31-35	1	1	1	1	4
	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%	100.0%
Total	16	10	17	7	50
	32.0%	20.0%	34.0%	14.0%	100.0%

\*Source: Primary Data



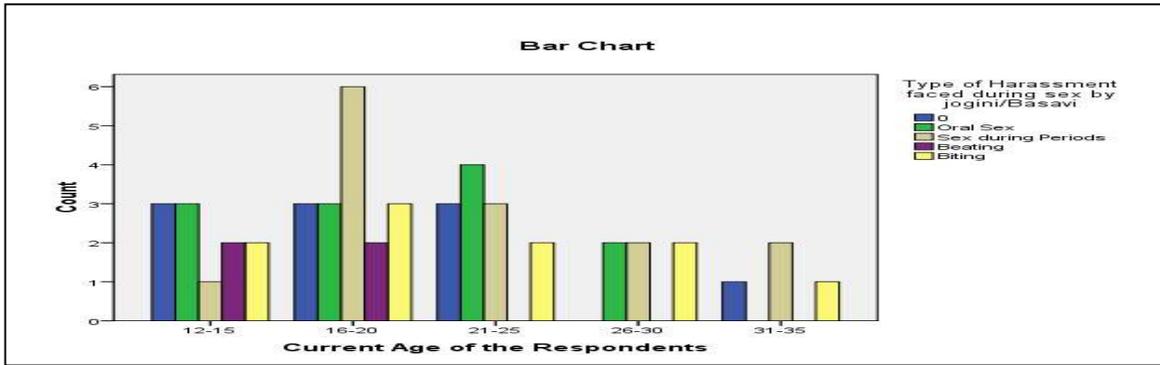
It is really surprised to know about the frequency of abortion has taken place among Young Joginis and Basavis. Abotions once in a year is high among all age groups, the abortions twice in a year are double in number among 21-25 age group followed by 16-20 years and in equal prevalence of abortions taking place among 12-15 and 26-30years girls and women. The middle age group women of 21-25 years are aborted once in two years followed by 12-15 years. This is especially happening due to lack of awareness about preventive steps and they never even attended any health camps in their locality, the rate of frequency of abortions among these young women leads to severe health problem such as reproductive tract infection, STIs and venereal diseases noted among the sufferers.

**Table: 4.4**

Current Age of the Respondents \* Type of Harassment faced during sex by Jogini/Basivi

Age	Type of Harassment faced during sex by Jogini/Basivi					Total
	Not applicable	Oral Sex	Sex during menstruation Periods	Beating	Biting	
12-15	3	3	1	2	2	11
	27.3%	27.3%	9.1%	18.2%	18.2%	100.0%
16-20	3	3	6	2	3	17
	17.6%	17.6%	35.3%	11.8%	17.6%	100.0%
21-25	3	4	3	0	2	12
	25.0%	33.3%	25.0%	.0%	16.7%	100.0%
26-30	0	2	2	0	2	6
	.0%	33.3%	33.3%	.0%	33.3%	100.0%
31-35	1	0	2	0	1	4
	25.0%	.0%	50.0%	.0%	25.0%	100.0%
Total	10	12	14	4	10	50
	20.0%	24.0%	28.0%	8.0%	20.0%	100.0%

\*Source: Primary Data



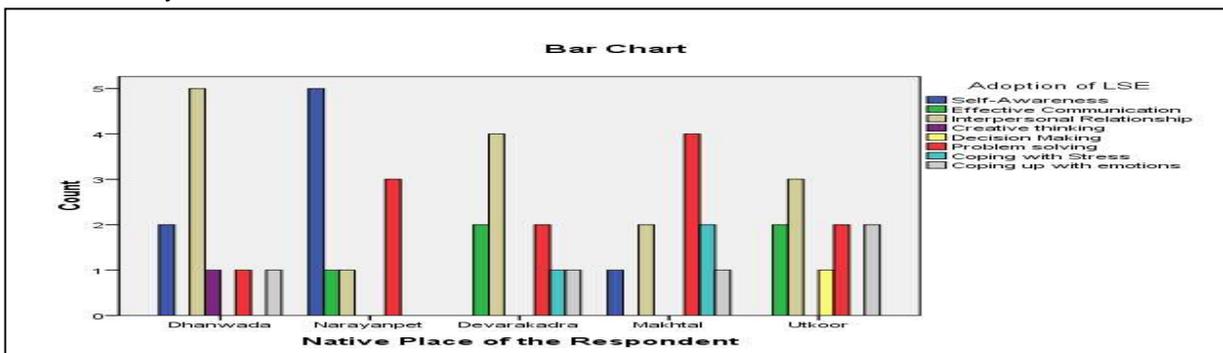
The above tables illustrates the current age of the respondents and type of harassment they are facing during sex from their clients. Majority (17%) of the respondents are facing harassment during sex are (age 16-20) and 12% harassment are facing by the age group of 21-25. Around 11% are facing from 12-15 years of age girls. The serious issue of sex during menstrual periods, and forceful sex joginis/Basavis are very important towards the exploitation of human rights in general and women rights in particular.

**Table: 4.5**

Native Place of the Respondent \* Adoption of LSE

Native	Adoption of Life Skills Education								Total
	Self-Awareness	Effective Communication	Interpersonal Relationship	Creative thinking	Decision Making	Problem solving	Coping with Stress	Coping up with emotions	
Dhanwada	2	0	5	1	0	1	0	1	10
	20.0%	.0%	50.0%	10.0%	.0%	10.0%	.0%	10.0%	100.0%
Narayanpet	5	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	10
	50.0%	10.0%	10.0%	.0%	.0%	30.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
Devarakadra	0	2	4	0	0	2	1	1	10
	.0%	20.0%	40.0%	.0%	.0%	20.0%	10.0%	10.0%	100.0%
Makhtal	1	0	2	0	0	4	2	1	10
	10.0%	.0%	20.0%	.0%	.0%	40.0%	20.0%	10.0%	100.0%
Utkoor	0	2	3	0	1	2	0	2	10
	.0%	20.0%	30.0%	.0%	10.0%	20.0%	.0%	20.0%	100.0%
Total	8	5	15	1	1	12	3	5	50
	16.0%	10.0%	30.0%	2.0%	2.0%	24.0%	6.0%	10.0%	100.0%

\*Source: Primary Data



We took much time in the interaction and make them friends to form peer groups within Joginis and Basavis. Researchers posed many questions before introducing the Life skills, several girls replied to majority of questions they indicated that sex work entry is what makes them adults, which may be connected with the fact that they have just began 'wearing saree' and doing sex work and do not yet have children. Most of the girls and women asked what the importance to learn these skills? We explained them regarding coping up with stress, problem

solving, to know their rights especially health and education, to improve interpersonal skills and communication skills. They are vulnerable among vulnerable being Schedule caste and being a girl of Jogini community.

Another important issue of interest was gender identity formation, and how this process is impacted by their participation in sex work, and on their children. The leisure time they spent on talking about clients; watching television, gossip; spend time with children; look after siblings; learning dance. They have offered interesting explanations on their quality-of-life future perceptions. In terms of what is best, 30% replied to take care of their parents, 30% said their children's education and jobs, 15% said siblings and self care, and one forth replied to marry and settle in a family life, but they are unfortunate that once they get married with deities the custom will not allow to marry a man.

Presently they started taking care of themselves and family members apart from sex work. It was difficult for us in the starting days to make them gather and listen this Life skills concept. But the NGO and Peer educators make our work easy in order to spread the values of life and Life Skills to adapt to a quality life. Now, my respondents are aware what is HIV/AIDS, what kind of precautions they should take during sex, and they are realized that is not spreading disease, and they have a notion that they should not supposed to discriminate or insult them.

Majority of my respondents adopted Self-awareness, Interpersonal skills and problem solving for themselves. They are interested to learn the communication skills to talk to higher officials; presently they submitted their memorandum on legal fatherhood certification on mother's name in order to get admission in schools to their children. They started raising their voice about their rights being a schedule caste and women. Majority of Joginis and Basavi are adopting interpersonal skills and creative thinking in order to enhance human capital through Life skills.

**4.6 Socio-economic Profile:** The socio-economic conditions of Joginis and Basavis, and socio-cultural, sexual attitude of the Joginis of Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh, and to demonstrate the many complex ties between these girls' lives and the working of their families, communities, and society at large. We tested last one week of our field study about the Life skills usage and its importance. Majority of these young Joginis started adopting and forming their peer groups to make aware about their health status and to improve human capital among themselves. Among women, 40% decided not to make their daughter as jogini they have an important issue of dowry problem to get marry their daughters. The older women are expecting the rehabilitation from government so that they can marry their daughters and ready to die after their fulfillment of this responsibility.

**4.7 Impact of Life Skills Education on Young Joginis:** This study has been examined the impact of life skills education and their importance in day to day life. We have remarked that there is nothing ambiguous about the behavior of the Joginis, whom we have talked as girls and women of this community. Indeed, it has been suggested here that the ritual status of these people is better understood in terms of a transformation, rather than as an instance of ambiguity. Many officials seem to be unaware of the number women and girls involved and their continuing problems and believe that the existing laws and benefits should have solved the problem. This ignores the broader inequities and problems of discrimination in society- against schedule castes, STs and OBCs in general and against Devadasis in particular. Therefore, there is an urgent need for awareness rising among teachers, local officials and police to ensure that Devadasi woman and their children are not subjected to discrimination or denial of services.

Greater engagement and commitment from state and local authorities, along with the media and relevant NGOs, to reducing discrimination and changing attitudes Jogini, Mathamma and Basavi women would greatly help in enlisting societal support in ensuring Devadasi women access their rights and entitlements. We have come across one serious issue regarding the discrimination against Jogini children in the school admission and insults among their peer groups. The boys from Jogini community and children of Jogini mother are expecting jobs from the government in the form of monetary help/loan or scheme to start business or small industry. They replied the question for their educational status, many completed graduation and no one is doing job are all dependent on their mothers, if they have a statement that if government will not consider their demands again they want to start open conversions of their sisters. The State government appointed one man Commission V. Raghunatha Rao to work on Jogini's children discrimination during their admission and in peer group interaction. Majority children replied they faced the problem of legal fatherhood and bias towards them within class and school.

In our first attempt we introduced Life skills to study the behavior of Young Devadasis and women. We are planning to teach the children of jogini in order to cope up their stress in their life. Most of the jogini's realized their status and children born out of illegal relations have no future. The advent of Life skills education in their

life plays an important role to think about future of their children and to start a new life through interpersonal skills to enhance their human capital of life.

**5. Conclusion:** The study concludes with the brief historical background for the existence of Davadasi/Jogini system in the Telangana region. Being a Karnataka state border and influence of yellamma cult these villagers are dedicating the young girls to God and Goddess to get blessings from God with both belief and superstitions. The senior Jogini and Villagers play an important role in making single girl child as Jogini. If parents are not willing to do and made them to accept by trapping them into religious ‘trance’ drama will begin and the name of schedule caste girl will be announced. Senior joginis never took the name of upper caste girl in her trance, when we spoke to her, she replied, that is goddess yellamma wish and my role in this is very minimal. Only beautiful girls chosen from the deprived sections and some physically challenged girls also dedicated with the fear of marriage. In the study area majority of girls were dedicated through trance activity, followed by prayer for a boy child in a family, health reason etc. If girl was attained puberty during the dedication time, immediately they will arrange for deflowering process by paying money and material by the village head (in both Joginis/Basavis), Baidla priest (Joginis), Dasari priest (Basavis) and now a day’s maternal uncle tying thali and deflowered the girl. There are few cases, that maternal grandfather deflowered the young girls in this heinous system. There is a significant change noted from the young jogini girls and women are aware about the importance of education, few legal rights, right to education act for their child school admission, health issues and usage of condom, and avoid sex work and join in self help groups for their livelihood. They try to apply ten life skills as humanitarian logistics to enhance their living style.

### 5.1 Major Findings of the Study

- Major findings we observed, the Jogini mothers they are dedicating their girls secretly due to the lack of awareness, ignorance, being illiterate and innocent.
- The Senior Jogini and male priests of Baidla caste, Pothuraju caste, and Dasari caste of Schedule Category are playing major role in these dedications
- ‘Trance’ plays an important role in choosing the girls from a particular family of deprived communities
- Their habits such as alcoholism, smoking, and dancing on the roads make them more access for sex for little money in which they were clutched with poverty and lack of livelihood
- Mahaboobnagar district is a dry region and backward region of Telangana and border to Karnataka have the influence of the cult of yellamma, on these young joginis and basavis are remarkable.
- The feudal attitude and dominant caste influence and power structure is rampant among the districts of telangana region. This leads to notion spread among the scheduled caste people that this yellamma tradition is meant for them, and they have the stigma to protect this particular custom by dedicating their girls to Goddess.
- One important observation researcher carried out that Young Joginis are forming their own peer groups to discuss on various aspects of health, problem solving techniques, interpersonal relations to build friendship among them, using condoms during sex, demanding their clients to use condoms, undergoing health checkups from the primary health centers despite using ‘Bandar’ (Turmeric Powder) after adopting Life skills Education in their lives.
- Life Skills Education and its adoption had led to some changes in their lives and improves their standard of living.

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