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A HISTORICAL STUDY ON SOCIO-CULTURE AND ECONOMIC LIFE IN DEVADURGA TALUKA IN RAICHUR DISTRICT

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Abstract:

Devadurga taluka is located in Raichur district in Karnataka. The social culture revealed that majority of the people were engaged in agriculture and practice of slavery, especially from lower castes was in practice. There were also caste based occupations such as potters, goldsmiths, etc by people of those communities. Many of the land grants were also made by the rulers to the religious and holy places such as temples, Mathas and mosques. Veerashaivism was also prevailed in the area. The position of women and lower castes such as untouchables was vulnerable. They are deprived from education. The untouchability was in practice and the untouchables were restricted to enter into the temples and holy places. The women were exploited by different practices such as Devadasi, prostitution, etc. Poverty was common among all the people of Devadurga during those days.

INTRODUCTION

Devadurga is a taluka place in Raichur district of Karnataka. It is located 56 Kilometres away from Raichur city and district headquarters on the west. It is assumed that the term 'Devadurga' is derived from Kannada word 'fortress of gods'. The area of Devadurga is covered with hills and temples and many of the historians believe that due to such temples, the name is derived as Devadurga. The total area of Devadurga is 1523 Sq. Kilometres. Total 4 hoblies and 188 villages are covered under Devadurga Taluka. There are one town (taluka) panchayat, 28 Gram Panchayat, 21 Taluka Panchayat Members' constituencies and 6 Zilla Panchayat constituencies in Devadurga taluka.

As per the Census of India 2001, the Devadurga taluka inhabited by total population of 2,22,457 people and of which 112245 are males and 110212 are females. Compared to other communities, there is more populations of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in Devadurga taluka. The taluka have dry climate and it is covered with hilly areas. Devadurga taluka is source for many mineral ores such as gold, uranium, Granite stone, etc. Krishna River is flowing in the taluka. Agriculture is the main occupation of many of the people in Devadurga. Apart from agriculture, the people are engaged in animal husbandry, mines workers, etc.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CULTURE IN DEVADURGA TALUKA:

The development and security of population always depends on the economic state of the people of that region or state. The economic status of the people is dependent on the natural resources and occupations of the people of that region. In Devadurga, the majority of the people were engaged in agriculture and labour. Majority of the farmers were engaged in dry land agriculture and as such, they were dependent on rains for agriculture. Thus, it was difficult for the farmers to bear losses due to frequent drought and flood. Many of the people were working 'free' in their lands of their lords called 'Goudas' or 'Dhanis' or 'Zamindars'. It was prestige of Zamindars to get the work from the people free rather than doing

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themselves. In this way, they used to get labour from animals and people for agriculture freely. There was also a practice of Jeeta (Bonded Labour) in Devadurga and generally the people of lower castes such as Holeyas, Madigas, Bhovis, etc were used to work under Jeeta. These workers along with their wives and children used to work in the farms and houses of Zamindars and their position was very low.

Many of the inscriptions were also mentioned the irrigation in Devadurga taluka. The means of irrigations include (1) ponds (2) canals (rivers) and (3) wells. There are many wells in Devadurga taluka since historical age. Earlier the farmers were used to grow Jowar, Wheat, Rice, Onion, Mango, Peanuts, Cotton, etc in Devadurga. There were also many of the occupations, which were art based and many of them are caste-based. They include Potters, Cobblers, Barbers, Washer Men, Weavers, Goldsmiths, etc. Apart from these occupations, there was another occupation, which was popular include animal husbandry. The people used to look after the animals such as cow, buffalow, horse, donkey, ox, etc, which were used to convey their goods from place to place, or for non-vegetarian food. Cows were looked after for getting dairy products.

The collection of revenue in Devadurga was based on the Raja Todarmalla. The revenue was decided on the basis of seeds sown and land cultivated and also on the output from agriculture. The land revenues were collected by Kulkarni, Shanbhoga and Patels in the villages and sending to the State treasury¹. But in particular, there are no sources of tax revenue of those days. There were also taxes on weaving, oils, washermen, entrance fee for carts, octroi, taxes on animals, tax on irrigated lands, penalty against crimes, excise duties collected on the drinks extracted from trees, forests taxes used to collect for getting fodder for animals from forests, salt tax, house taxes and trade fair taxes².

Such tax revenue was used to built ponds, temples, roads and such other public welfare services. It is noted from an inscription near Iranna Devara Hill, that in 1690 there is proof that a pond was built, Gopalkrishna temple was constructed and built market in Devadurga³. Such revenue was also used to maintain the army, constructions of fortress, arms, ammunitions, etc. Hence, the financial position of the state was good during those days.

Many of the temples and Mathas were maintained during those days. These holy centres were guiding the people in religious and social affairs of the family. The records revealed that the Nizam was granted 40 acre land to Budi Basaveshwar Matha of Gabbur⁴, Surpur kings were donated 250 acre land to Manasagal Ranganatha Swamy⁵, Kyadiggeri kings were donated 58 acres of lands to Marutheshwar temple in Alkod⁶, the Nizam granted lands to the Brihanmatha of Nilagal⁷. Many of such religious centres were used to perform Dasoha (providing food to the devotees) and guiding the people to improve and develop their religious and social life. The property donated was used to get lamps, milk, flowers, sandal, festivals, maintenance of building, etc of the temples and Mathas. It is highlighted that these temples and Mathas were maintained only for the forward castes and the Shudras were prohibited to enter the temples and Mathas. Further, the Shudras were involved in the construction of temples, but after the construction of temples they were prohibited to enter the temples and Mathas. They are allowed to pray the god outside the temples.

Even though the social equality was observed, internally there was inequality among the people of different castes in Devadurga taluka. The Devadurga rulers were Bedas (hunting tribe) and depending on the Vaishnavism. They used to pray Manasagal Ranganathaswamy. Gopaldas, Ramadas, Naraharidas and such other philosophers and saints were also organized the religious reform movements in this area. The rulers were also given cooperation to the holy places of Muslims as they were assisted for the construction of mosques and granted lands to the mosques. Even though all the religions were getting equal status in the society, Shudras were treated as inferior and untouchability was in practice. The Shudras were exploited like animals. Even though there were Veerashaiva Mathas, the Veerashaivism was not popular during those days.

Even though there were no inscriptions about the Shivasharana movement, the literature revealed that Mosarakallu was place of Muktayakka and Vachanakara Bibbi Bacharasa is from Gabburu in Devadurga taluka. In Karnataka, many of the people were converted from Jainism and Hinduism to Veerashaivism and Devadurga is not exception to the same. There are evidences of Budi Basaveshwar Matha of Gabbur, Siddharameshwar Matha of Devadurga, Channabasaveshwar Matha of Gejjebhavi, Nilagal, etc, which were Veerashaiva centres during those days⁸.

Poverty was more during those days in Devadurga as the people were used to work hard for their daily food needs. They used to eat rice, Jowar Roti, vegetable, etc in their food. Generally, people used to celebrate religious fairs of the female goddesses in their villages. The main temples during those days include of Sri Anjaneya swami, Maramma, Durugamma, Huligemma, Tayamma, Polakamma and such other female goddesses were devoted by the people. Dedicating the animals to the deities was also in practice.

Manu, the Hindu law giver, defined the status of women “a woman has to be under her father during childhood, under her husband during youth and under her son during old age. At no stage shall she deserve freedom”. This was followed by people for giving secondary status to women in society. During 12th century due to the Shivasharana movement, the women's status was improved but due to the Muslim administration in the region their status was declined⁹. There were the practices of child marriage and polygamy, among all the people. The education of the women was neglected. Even though the women belongs to the rulers, queens, or anybody, the education was not given to them. The labour women were used to live in the houses of riches as slaves. The status of widows and infertile women was vulnerable. The widows or infertile women, they were exploited like untouchables during those days. They were not allowed to participate in any of the family functions and religious ceremonies. They were used to spend their life in the four walls of their houses. They were considered as social stigma. Devadasi practice was also in practice. Generally, the women of lower castes such as Holeyas, Madigas, Dombas, Bedar, shepherds, etc were used to dedicate their females to temples as Devadasis. There were also prostitutes in the Devadurga and they belongs to the lower castes. Poverty was the main reason for Devadasi and prostitution in this area.

Dalit women were vulnerable group in the society. There is no social and legal security for these women. Many of these women were used to practice Devadasi and engaged in prostitution. Education is not at all given to these women. Before independence, 50 to 100 Dalit women in every village were practicing the Devadasi practice. Further, in many of the villages such as Jalahalli, Chinchodi, Ganadhal, Masarakal, Guntral, Nagoli, Matapalli, Mundragi, etc the Dalit women were Devadasis¹⁰.

It shows that to suppress and exploit women in the society, these practices were forcibly imposed in society by the rulers and upper castes. Hence, there was not gender equality in Devadurga taluka before independence. To sum up, when it is observed from the history, the Dalits, backward castes and women most deprived sections of the society in Devadurga taluka.

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

When the historical records were analyzed, there are sufficient evidences that there is exploitation of poor people, people of lower castes and women. The higher taxes, lower agricultural output, practice of Jeeta, Bitti practice, and such others were depicted that there was slavery, especially from the poor and backward castes. Even though, there were many religions, the people were not stucked to their religions and used to visit to the religious place only during festivals and religious fairs. The status of women, especially widows, infertile women, prostitutes and Devadasis was vulnerable. The women were exploited, and discriminated by the rich people and people of forward castes. Hence, it may be concluded that the lives of common people was very difficult throughout the history of Devadurga taluka in Raichur district.

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