

The Hindu

Devadasi women seek govt support in self employment

Devadasi women staged a demonstration outside the office of the Deputy Commissioner here on Tuesday, seeking that they be granted five acres of cultivable land and that their monthly pension be hiked to Rs. 2,000.

The agitation was organised by the Karnataka Rajya Devadasi Mahileyara Vimochana Sangha. The women alleged that neither the State government nor the Centre had seriously considered the Devadasi system a social evil and taken steps to eradicate it.

“Even 70 years after independence, inhuman atrocities on Dalit women in the name of the Devadasi system continue to persist in remote and backward areas. Devadasi women are oppressed and lead a wretched life at the lowest rung of social hierarchy. Successive government have not taken any steps to eradicate the system and rehabilitate the victims,” said H. Padma, a leader of the association.

She called for a government survey to ascertain the exact number of women victimised by the Devadasi system.

Another protester said, “We too want to come out of this vicious circle and lead a normal life. But it is not possible without active assistance and support from the government. We don’t want to see our children being victimised by the system.”

Fair share

She demanded that the government take measures to ensure that children of Devadasis get a share in the properties of their biological fathers.

A memorandum with a list of demands was later submitted to the DC’s office. Their demands include providing financial assistance for self-employment, jobs for men who get married Devadasi women, internal reservation in education and employment, unemployment pension to educated youth and setting up old-age homes for Dalits in every district.