

3rd Survey of Devadasi System

***Prelims** - Current events of national and international importance history of India and Indian national movement*

Why in News?

Recently, the Karnataka State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) directed the government to complete the Devadasi system survey and submit recommendations by October.

- **Devadasi system** - It involves a ritual in which young girls, usually before puberty, are married off or dedicated to deities.
- **Ban** - It has been **banned** in the State since 1982 under Karnataka Devadasis (Prohibition of Dedication) Act.
- **Previous survey** - In 1993-1994 and 2007-2008, when 22,873 and 46,660 Devadasis, respectively, were identified.
- **Age limit** - In the previous two surveys the age limit has been observed as **45 and above to** qualify to register, so far circulars have been silent on the age.

Proposed Survey

- **Announced in** - 2024-2025 Budget.
- **Plan to be conducted by** - Offices of taluk-level child development officers.
- **Social Stigma** - It discouraged many individuals from publicly identifying as Devadasis, and authorities often intimidated them with the threat of legal consequences due to the practice being outlawed in 1982.
- Despite the ban, the tradition continued across many big temples during annual fairs in North Karnataka.
- **Need for comprehensive data** - Activists believe a house-to-house survey involving former Devadasis would help identify all Devadasis, including those initiated after the practice was banned.
- **Concerns** - There are allegations that individuals who are not Devadasis have been included in previous lists and are receiving rehabilitation benefits.
- **Lack of awareness** - Women in North Karnataka also migrate for livelihood. There was a lack of awareness about the survey.
- **Facilitating rehabilitation and support** - A thorough survey is considered crucial for effective and equitable implementation of rehabilitation programs, including pensions and other forms of support.

Devadasi rehabilitation program in Karnataka

- **Aim** - To provide ***financial and social support*** to women formerly dedicated to the Devadasi system.
- These measures are designed to ***empower former Devadasis and their families*** by offering financial assistance and promoting social integration.
- **Key Aspects**
- **Pension for Ex-Devadasis** -
 - The scheme provides a monthly pension of Rs. 30,000 to ex-Devadasis, directly transferred to their bank accounts.
- **Incentives for Marriage** - The state government offers incentives to the children of Devadasis upon marriage, particularly if they belong to the ***Scheduled Caste (SC) community*** and apply within 18 months of marriage.
- **Income Generation Support** - The program also supports ex-Devadasis in establishing income-generating activities through various initiatives, including financial assistance and skill development training.
- **Eligibility** - The program is primarily for women who were dedicated to the Devadasi system and is managed by the Social Welfare Department of the Government of Karnataka.
- **Verification and Allotment** - The Social Welfare Department conducts spot verification of the submitted details, and upon successful verification.

Reference

[The Hindu| Third Survey of Devadasi System](#)