

MEMORANDUM PRESENTED BY  
**THE PRESIDENT, RASHTRA SURYA BALIJA SANGHAM, A.P., HYDERABAD.**

to

Hon`ble **Justice Y.K. Sabharwal**, Executive Chairman,  
National Legal Services Authority, New Delhi,

Hon`ble **Chief Justice Bilal Nazki**, Chairman,  
Andhra Pradesh Legal Services Authority, Hyderabad,

And other **Esteemed Members of the judiciary.**

at the

August seminar conducted by the " **Hon`ble Legal Services Authorities** " on the Welfare of  
Devadasi Sections in five Southern States, at the holy Temple city Tirupati.

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**ESTEEMED SIRs,**

At the outset, we are grateful to your gracious selves, for giving this opportunity to us to represent our grievances for the first time in the history, that too, at a historic convention organised by the **Hon`ble Legal Services Authorities**, to find out the welfare of the **Devadasi functionaries**, and we hope that this session will go along way in providing protection to the cursed sections of the society.

I am the President of **Rashtra Surya BaliJa Sangham** which is an association formed for the welfare of the **victims of Devadasi systems** and I am rightly placed to represent the struggles of these families

However ancient and pure we { **DEVADASIS** } are in our origin, we are the worst victims of the Society in any era. There is no other community / caste as a class in any society on this land or in the entire universe, where the women folk were subjected to a systematic and stategic exploitation resulting in dehumanisation making them as objects of indignity during their whole life. The evil society and its systems drifted the women who were dedicated as **Devadasis** to Hindu Deities, idols, objects of worship to an indignified exploitation, degradation and to an evil like prostitution in a drastic manner.

Immediately after Independence, the social reformers like **Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Muthu Lakshmi Reddy** etc., have made their efforts to eradicate the system of dedication of women as **Devadasis** by bringing Act XXXI of 1947 - "Madras Devadasi { Prevention of Dedication } Act". As the obnoxious practice of exploitation of women was found still prevalent even after a period of 41 years of effective prevention implementing Act XXXI of 1947, the A.P. State Govt have brought Prohibition Act 10 of 1988 called the "A.P. Devadasis { Prohibition of Dedication } Act 1988" i.e., Prevention to Prohibition. But, the Governments have not considered any relief measures to these Sections who were subjected to man made circumstantial exploitation, providing them any living conditions with an alternative employment with dignity of labour. After prevention of dedication of women as **Devadasis** abolishing their services in Temples, initially they have taken up the activities giving programmes like Dramas, Hari Kathas, Fine arts, Cinematography and those who have had no skills have been converted as prostitutes. **It is our ill-fate to be the generations of this de-graded and indignified sections of this community with continued and endless social humiliation and mental agony .**

However pure and ethical we are with our present living conditions in varied occupations right from farm labourer to industrial worker, petty artisans to traders, we are lagging far and far in socio and economic conditions, as we continue to be under humiliation. Though we are carrying on in

various professions, the very caste names were tempting the general public to recollect the age old unsocial customs and conditions and our people, particularly working women and school going girls are put to mental agony on account of the blemished social stigma attached to the caste names. Many of our caste people, particularly who are elevated to positions in the society have been accustomed themselves to hide in the names of other castes like Naidu, Balija, Kapu, Munnur Kapu, Telaga, etc. In order to avert the said run-away by our caste people, our ancestors and ourselves struggled for about 60 years of glorious and precious time to have a stigma-free-caste names from Devadasl to Kalavanthula and Ganika and now as " SURYA BALIJA ". Presently we are able to come out and assemble together in the name of " SURYA BALIJA ".

But a change in name has not changed our fates. The economists observed that though the name has changed, their socio economic conditions and the ill-fate attached to the caste has not been eordicated { **Deccan Chronicle City Edition, dt : 24-11-1996, Hyderabad** }. Similarly the enactments made enfranchising the Inam lands in favour of Devadasis are not rightly implemented in all the places.

1. **Devadasis** are seen tenants in their own lands. 35 families at Srikakulam village in krishna dist., who were paying Kists to the Govt. in their names for the Inam lands in their possession and enjoyment are converted as tenants from 1986 onwards. We request the Hon`ble Legal Services Authorities to kindly checkup this injustice and protect the poor families struggling for their rights for their own lands.

2. In the circumstances of undue imbalances to survive, our socio and economic conditions are required to be protected by way of reliefs like preferential opportunities in education and employment than any other listed backward class or scheduled caste. The social humiliation is much worse and beyond imagination than any other socially and economically backward sections including Adivasis or Tribes.

We therefore need an exclusive reservation in securing education and employment opportunities with out any share with other castes for a secured socio and economic conditions as the opportunities available to us presently in Group - D of the state list or OBC list at the National level are not reaching our sections as we are unable to compete with the other sections in the said lists. It is not out of place to state here that our caste people in other states are enjoying reservations in Scheduled Castes and tribes categories, which facility is required to be extended to us also.

3. A seperate Finance Corporation on the lines formed for the Scheduled castes, Scheduled tribes, Rajakas, Nai Brahmins and other minorites etc., may be setup as our people are not in a position to avall the opportunities from the existing backward classes finance corporation with the continued stigma attached to us.

4. There are several artistes and able personalities engaged in Fine arts as we represent the races of renowned personalities like " Bharatha Rathna, M.S.SUBBU LAKHSMI, Padma Bhushan, Dr.BHANUMATHI," and other Devadasis at large. We request the Hon`ble Authorities to kindly help our people engaged in the fine arts to enjoy a preferential treatment in the employment opportunities particularly in Music Colleges, AIR, TV. etc., than every other participant.

We once again express our gratitude to the Hon`ble and august body of Judiciary, who have provided us this opportunity to focus our grievences and we look farward for your esteemed considerations in promoting our socio and economic conditions in the society and to improve our living conditions with diginity on par with other sections.

Your kind considerations and help will give a new lease of life to the socially oppressed and economically impoverished section of the Society.

Thanking you Sirs,

TIRUPATI,  
Dt:10-09-2005.

**R.S.B.S**

President