

The Devadasi System and Intersectional Feminism

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ABSTRACT

The devadasi system, originating in medieval India, began to serve the temple in the form of dance and rituals. Eventually, they served as sacred sex workers for the deity's sexual needs. The Devadasi were typically Dalits (the lowest caste), and thereby face a unique struggle as both Dalits and women in a religiously rooted system. Due to the lack of published works detailing the implications of overlapping identities and feminism on the Indian reform movement legislation, this paper aimed to examine the extent to which the introduction of intersectional feminism influenced South Indian postcolonial legislation regarding the devadasi system. It found the hypothesis to be supported. Thematic analysis was conducted as part of the initial research. Then, the results were quantified, through individual connotation scores that considered separate thematic elements and an overall score. The overall intersectionality score, a weighted average of the elements, for all prohibition legislation was significantly different from the control Panel Code, based on error bar analysis. Therefore, it can be concluded that the influence of intersectional feminism on the acts quantitatively supports the conclusion that the development of intersectional feminism in post-colonial South India influenced Devadasi legislation significantly.

Introduction

The religiously exploitative devadasi system, originating between the fifth and sixth century C.E. in medieval India, arose from mythological stories of the abduction of Lord Krishna's thousands of wives who were forced to serve as prostitutes (Prasad 1999). In this system, Devadasis are married to Hindu deities (Srinivasan 1985; Sreenivas 2011). The responsibilities of the devadasis are established in Hindu scriptures, from having to "bathe and put on fresh clothes and adorn themselves with flowers ... wake up [the] deity with song and dance rituals, lighting the lamps" (Nair 1994, 3163). Additional Hindu temple rituals performed by devadasis are detailed in the work of Prasad (1984), such as the "pounding of rice and turmeric, preparing scented powder and burning incense" (193). Trained in the fine arts, the devadasi's livelihood was their performance and art, and they were prohibited from participating in domestic activities (Srinivasan 1985; Jeevanandam 2016).

The devadasis, initially dedicated to serving the temple in the form of dance and rituals, began to serve as sacred harlots as people began to believe the Hindu deities deserved a companion in bed (Arole 1990). This shift can be understood as an extension of the notion Prasad (1999) presents in that deities were treated as earthly beings, creating a need for pleasure that the devadasis were obligated to fulfill as 'slaves of the god', a rough translation of the word devadasi (Prasad 1999; Srinivasan 1985). The sacred prostitution of the devadasis became normalized, according to Nair (1994). The fulfillment of the sexual desires of god as noted by Nair (1994), is understood by Prasad (1999) to be "the desires of the priests, the sole interpreter of the god's wishes on earth". The shift towards sexual exploitation was mirrored in the motifs of temple sculptures as they began to display mithuna, or erotic themes (Prasad 1999). Further, the aesthetic value of the dances was deemed exploitative of the female body by temple visitors (Jeevanandam, 2016). Hence, the devadasis became glorified slaves and were seen as a vector of pleasure for wealthy landlords, as they had no physical husbands (Lalitha 1988). The devadasis were deemed prostitutes because they indulged in sexual activity outside of wedlock. Intimacy with the devadasi was a sign of public success for men (Srinivasan 1985).

It is important to note that the system is primarily based on the marriage of Dalit girls to a deity (Srinivasan 1985; Sreenivas 2011; Ratnam 2008). The Dalits are of the lowest caste, based on ancient scriptures' discussion of graded inequality at birth that restricts social mobility (Diwakar 2020; Arya 2020). However, in medieval India, devadasis were viewed with honor: visitors were barred from speaking with devadasi, and they received grand funerary processions (Srinivasan 1985). During the Vijayanagara Empire, devadasi were even allowed to accompany royal families during their temple visits (Prasad 1984). Yet, other Dalits were prevented from entering the temples (Arya 2020). Likewise, Dalits were also illiterate, but the devadasi were able to study fine arts (Arya 2020; Srinivasan 1985; Jeevanandam 2016). Furthermore, per Nair (1994) and Prasad (1984), the devadasis revised payment in the form of land, of fixed amounts, a right not extended to Dalits or women. Consequently, it can be understood that the dedication of Dalit girls provided a pathway to the accessibility of fundamental rights. The respect given to devadasi, as noted by Prasad (1884) and Srinivasan (1985), directly contrasts with the rigidity of the caste system detailed by Nadkarni (2003). This difference, therefore, indicates that the Devadasi system was seen as a vehicle for social movement in the scope of caste. Likewise, in Karnataka, the deity Yellama is hailed as the provider, and lack of offerings for the devadasis was believed to invoke her wrath (Ramberg 2011). In addition to social mobility, the establishment of the practice within Hinduism in that dedication of their young girls will provide spiritual protection and contribute to the continuation of the practice.

The British East India Company chartered in the early 1600s, came to conquer all of India, bringing it under English rule (Nair 1994). According to Kannabiran (1995) between 1860 and 1935, the "social reform movement, the nationalist movement, and the non-brahmin movement were at their peak" (59). These movements, with distinct trends, overlapped in their goal of "achieving political independence, asserting a national/cultural identity and purging society of all its evils" (Kannabiran 1995, 59). Deeming it one of these social evils, the social reform movement created a desire to work against the devadasi practice. The dedication of girls to gods was foreign to the British, leading to the rhetoric around devadasi being interchangeable with prostitution (Kannabiran 1995). Prasad (1983) concurs on the change in rhetoric noted by Kannabiran (1995), noting that the devadasi system was discussed as a sex trade rather than a concubinage relation with upper-caste men.

This seemingly unnatural ritual led to the protest for abolishing the devadasi system, solidifying a stigmatized public opinion (Jeevanandam 2016). The protest and stigmatization led to the Self-Respect movement, encouraging legislation denying devadasi of basic rights, such as "to adopt children and to transmit property" (Tambe 1984, as cited in Kannabiran 1995). Other legislative steps, beyond the abolishment of the devadasi system, included banning of widow immolation and female infanticide, legalizing of remarriage legal, and increasing of age of consent (Tanika 2000).

However, it is notable that the Self-Respect Movement that abolished the practice with aims of social reform was not successful to a full extent in the view of feminism. Feminism as a theory aims to expand to include equality and justice for all women (Arya 2020). The devadasi had property rights that other women lacked, and the abolishment removed these rights (Menon 2019). Thereby, feminism as an ideology working to improve the accessibility of rights to women did not share goals with the Self-Respect movement. The removal of the right to land indicates a decrease in the value the women possessed, as they are no longer in possession of power (land and religious protection), diminishing their societal privilege. Further, the aim to protect the devadasi from prostitution led to indulgence in prostitution, as there was no other livelihood for the dedicated women (Menon 2019). Concurring that prostitution is impeding feminist goals, Beloso (2012) details that prostitution is a key example of the reduction of women to their bodies in terms of identity. This reduction indicates that prostitution hinders feminist aims. However, it is also understood that sex work was a source of income solely for lower castes (Menon 2019). Therefore, the abolition of the practice inhibited the social mobility of the dedicated Dalit girls, thereby reducing the accessibility to a better quality life for the devadasi.

Therefore, this paper aims to examine the extent to which the introduction of intersectional feminism influenced South Indian postcolonial legislation that aimed to abolish the devadasi system. Intersectionality was incorporated as a form of feminism in the late 1980s to emphasize considering all components of social identity: race, class,

age, attractiveness, body type, caste, citizenship, education, ethnicity, income, religion, and gender (Cho et al. 2013; Gopaldas 2013). Within the already oppressive caste system, women possess fewer rights due solely to their role as females (Arya 2020). This phenomenon is prevalent in caste endogamy, the Hindu belief of obtaining virtue through marriage within the caste, repressing women's autonomy (Diwakar 2020; Arya 2020). Hence, the devadasi face a unique struggle as both Dalits and women in a religiously rooted system. Therefore, such intersectionality is exemplary of the conditions Cho et al. (2013) assert are needed for intersectional feminist analysis: unknown implications of overlapping identity factors, in conversation with all components of the feminist theory. Hence, as the late 1980s of post-Independence India facilitated legislation on reforming Devadasi women and the development of intersectional feminism (Gopaldas 2013), it is hypothesized that a relationship existing among the rhetoric of the legislation and intersectional feminism.

Intersectional feminism can be related to discussions on castes, power, gender identity, and religion (Rege et al. 2013). Further, intersectional feminism ensures the continuity of the devadasi practice has not only sustained due to religious fervor but also the gender and caste structures of South India. It is key to note that the literature examined did not discuss these relations and rather focused on one of the aforementioned components. For example, the Diwakar (2020) notes, "Dalit women's personhood and integrity have been denied" (124). Yet Diwakar (2020) fails to extend these views to the religion, and thereby devadasis. Hence, discussions of Dalit women's struggles are well established in the scholarly literature; it is the relation of religion as a structural component of Indian societal identity with these struggles that is unexamined in the body of published works. Dalit feminism exists to address the issues of women in the lower castes (Rege et al. 2013). However, Dalit feminism is limited to the anti-caste movements (Rege et al. 2013). Failing to consider the religious aspects of the caste system as a whole, Dalit feminism would not extend to advocating for the rights of the devadasis.

The influence of colonial rule has been well-established in literature as seen in the works of Kannabiran (1995) and Nair (1994). Likewise, the notions of purity and social reform resulting from colonial rule are emphasized. However, despite the legislation of the Self-Respect Movement being fundamentally feminist in that its aims lie in obtaining a better quality of life and abolishing the exploitation of young girls, there is no clear relationship between the feminism and legislation discussed in the body of scholarly works. That is, there are mere references to the feminist motives that aided the Self-Respect movement. However, the feminist influences on concrete aspects of the era, such as the stylistic and textual features, are unknown. Establishing a clear influence of feminism on the legislation of the Self-Respect Movement abolishing the system will contribute to a better understanding of the Western ideals that have contributed to the current perspective of India on the system.

Prasad (1983) notes a general change in rhetoric among colonial officials. However, it is not examined if this change is reflected in legislation nor if it spread and persisted in post-colonial India. Further, an established influence, in the form of the rhetoric of legislation that embodies the movement as a whole, would provide for future improvement to these Acts that are currently insufficient. The devadasi system persists in rural India, providing the basis for research to understand the shortcomings of current legislation and their inherent inability to abolish the practice effectively.

Method

For this experimental procedure, a mixed-method approach was utilized. The approval was given on January 13th, 2023, by a qualified teacher at X high school before the beginning of the experiment. No further approvals from qualified scientists, Scientific Review Committee, and Institutional Review Board were required; this was primarily due to the lack of human participants, vertebrae animals, and potentially harmful biological agents. To analyze intersectional feminism's influence on the Devadasi prohibition legislation, the experimental methodology consisted of a content analysis followed by a quantitative analysis. The content analysis was designed with the intent of analyzing and identifying intersectional feminist themes in legislative works prohibiting devadasi. By quantifying these results, a statistical basis for the validity of the results from qualitative analysis of the abstract thematic elements was enabled.

To begin the methodology, the material to be analyzed was selected. For legislation analysis, a total of five documents were selected.

The Andhra Pradesh Devadasis Act of 1988, the Karnataka Devadasis Act of 1984, the Maharashtra Devdasi System Act (2005), and The Telangana Devadasis (1988) are focused on achieving the Self-Respect Movement's aims of social reform by prohibiting the dedication of lower caste girls, in their respective states. As a control group, the Indian Penal Code of 1861, sections 370, 370A, 372, and 373, were analyzed. The Indian Penal Code (1861) was colonial-era legislation that would exemplify pre-Independence rhetoric in its perspective of the devadasi system. The Indian Penal Code (1861) was the culmination of initial attempts to outlaw the practice (Prasad 1983). In the late 1860s, it enabled the prosecution of those involved in the "procurement of a minor girl" through section 272 and 273 (Kannabiran 1995, 59). This was the first piece of legislation addressing the devadasi (Kannabiran 1995). Muthulaskshmi Reddy campaigned against the devadasi system, working towards a bill to end the dedication of women to deities and temples, due to the Penal Code's inability to be enacted sufficiently (Nair 1994). Hence, given that Intersectional Feminism was a post-colonial development, if this development influenced the Abolition Acts, the Penal Code (1861) provides a basis to compare rhetoric discussing girls' dedication for known exploitative purposes.

To create a methodology focused on the effects of intersectional feminism on abolition documents, the investigator found it necessary to narrow the geographic scope of the analysis. Hence, the origin states of the analyzed acts were solely South Indian due to the origins of the Bhakti movement that fueled the rebranding of dance to exclude the devadasi, forcing them to prostitution (Prasad 1999). The legislation chosen ranged from 1984 to 2005, but is primarily concentrated in the mid to late 1980s. This allows for an analysis of legislation influenced uniquely by intersectional feminism, as Gopaldas (2013) finds the late 1980s to be the period of its development of it.

Further, the legislation outlawing sati, another religious practice of women outlawed during the Self-Respect Movement, and the documents pertaining to the inhibition of devadasi to adopt children will be read. These peripheral documents will provide vital background knowledge surrounding the effects of the legislation. These documents will be accessed through online queries for specific Devadasi prohibition acts, available as pdfs.

This experimental methodology retains the intersectional feminist frameworks from a content analysis by Gopaldas (2013). This methodology is similar in nature, as the frameworks themselves will be modified to analyze legislation prohibiting Devadasi's dedication. Intersectional feminism analyzes the unique components influencing a women's experiences (Anthias 2014). It examines the intersection of societal structures as interrelated, rejecting the notion that feminism is oppression experienced to the same extent for all (Anthias 2014). This was the chosen framework because the methodology must consider the unique oppression faced by the Devadasi in terms of Hinduism and the caste system (Menon 2019).

This procedure utilized a device that connects to the internet and will be obtained and the aforementioned legislative documentation. The frameworks facilitate the development of seven unique coding units. The key determinants of one's social identity for which Intersectional Feminism examines the unique combinations were citizenship, education, ethnicity, physique, religion, income, gender, caste, class, race, and age. From these, the physique was removed due to no mention of the physical characteristics of devadasi women in any scholarly works examined before experimentation. Race and ethnicity were removed as all devadasi are of Asian race and Indian origin. Further, class was removed due to its inherent overlap with the idea of caste, a more prevalent notion of graded class inequity in India as it is rooted in Hinduism.

Firstly, each document was read once to establish familiarity. Next, based on the following coding instructions, markers (or lack thereof) of intersectional feminism were noted. References to living conditions, honor, social perceptions, marriage, and motherhood were coded as Caste. Marriage was coded as caste due to caste endogamy, wherein women's role is limited by marriage and their marriage is limited to their caste (Arya 2020). Further, references to temples, rituals, acts of dedication, deities, and idols were coded as religion as they pertain to the dominant religion of the practice, Hinduism. References to rehabilitation efforts were coded as education, as it was indicated as efforts to reintroduce these women would take the form of increased education in prior literature reviewed. References to fines were coded as income, as the ability to pay the fines for dedicating girls is only achievable through sustainable

income. Any references to the state were coded as citizenship, and any references to age were coded as age. Finally, references to gender identity and sex at birth were coded as gender. From these initial codings, the transcriptions for each reference were documented in a CSV database. Next, each transcription was analyzed for positive or negative connotations. If the reference referred to the movement toward protecting women from sexual exploitation, it was coded as positive. Conversely, any reference to removing protection or infringement of non-reformative efforts was coded as unfavorable.

ge numb	quote	Caste + Class	Religion	Education	Income	Nationality	Age	Gender
	Maharastra	1	1	0.75	0.75	0.5	0.5	0.25
page 2	a view to suggest effective measure to	0.75						
page 3	Notwithstanding any custom usage rule	0.75						
page 3	Presumption of legal and valid marriage	0.75			0.75			
page 1	An act to provide for a comprehensive		0.25					
page 1	expedient to abolish the practice of		0.25					
page 2	"dedication" means the performance of		0.5					
page 2	"Devdasi" means a woman dedicated to a		0.5					0.5

Figure 1. This figure displays a sample of the digital database utilized to record results.

Post-analysis of these documents, a SQL database will be created, as the responses were recorded in a digital database application. Quantifying results would then be done: as quantification allows the thematic elements being examined to be numerically and statistically identified. Numerical values will be assigned to the degree of intersectionality and relevance to feminist values demonstrated in the legislation for each metric.

The idea of gender being a traditionally feminist area of concern and was, therefore, the least weighted in the average (0.25). Next, references to Age and citizenship, a key determinant of one's social identity as identified by Gopaldas (2013) were weighted to a greater degree (0.50). However, they were less weighted than education and income references which are more focused on the intersection of caste, religion, and womanhood faced by the devadasi. In other words, references to education and income are inherently based on the caste system in that, as a system dividing Indian society, it limits the availability of education and thereby higher paying jobs to lower castes, whose livelihood is focused on craftsmanship and manual labor. Hence, references to education and income were weighted to 0.75. The caste system and the religion it is rooted in are key stakeholders in the intersection unique to the devadasi, they were the most weighted at 1.0. A weighted average of the average connotation score from above was taken as an overall intersectionality score. From there, bar graphs were analyzed in order to establish statistical analysis.

Thematic Analysis

To provide insight into the coding process of the experimental methodology, a thematic analysis of relevant quotations is provided and will be later detailed in relation to the conclusion.

On page 2 of the Telangana Prohibition of Dedication (1988), it is stated that "the dedication of women as Devadasi... is hereby declared unlawful and void; and any women so dedicated shall not thereby be deemed to have become incapable of entering into a valid marriage". Within this quotation, it is clear that the legislation views the devadasi act as a component of medieval India that is no longer applicable, as it is "void." Further, the legislation declares the practice "unlawful," indicating that the current legislative body agrees with the notion of dedication being exploitative of young girls. The mention of dedication compared to the Indian Penal Code's (1861) reference to dedication through the statement "engages such minors for sexual exploitation" is explicit. This contrast in reference to dedication of young girls is properly understood as rooted in religion compared to the Indian Penal Code (1861). The mere statement of "minor[s]" and "sexual exploitation" remain vague, despite the Code's objective to reform the

device practice. Therefore, it can be inferred that the colonial-era Indian Penal Code (1861) disregards the religious aspect of the practice, while the post-colonial Act considers the dedication as related explicitly to the inherently religiously-affiliated Devadasis. Such disregard and later presence of relationship can therefore be understood as due to the development of Intersectional Feminism during the post-colonial era; hence, the lack of the intersectional ideology is attributable to the lack of its influence present in the rhetoric of the Penal Code (1861).

The extension to marriage within the Telganaga legislation indicates that the institution of marriage can be legislated. In the context of the abolishment, the legislation states that the dedication, which is now inapplicable, should not impact a devadasis' ability to marry. Specifically stating a “valid marriage,” it is understood that the general consensus of the legislative body is that the religious belief of marriage to god is invalid. The ability to enter a legislatively proper marriage allows for the devadasi to become subject to caste endogamy. As marriage limits the devadasi by the presence of a husband and repressed by caste, this quote demonstrates the intersection between caste and feminist goals. Nonetheless, it was coded as inherently positive in that it is a movement away from the sexual exploitation that the feminist theory would disapprove of. The examination of marriage contributes to the exemplification of intersectional ideology rhetoric within the Telangana Act.

Conversely, the Karnataka Prohibition of Dedication (1984) states “whereas the practice of dedicating women as devadasis to deities, idols, objects of worship, temples, and other religious institutions or places of worship exists in certain parts of the State of Karnataka”(2) is demonstrative of neutral mentions of the coding units. The references to “deities, idols” and so on were coded as religious while the mention of the “State of Karnataka” was coded as citizenship. Both quotations function as references to the frameworks to establish a relation between the two, in that the religious act of dedication is prevalent in the state. Therefore, these were considered as exemplifications of intersectionality.

There was found to be a contrast between the rhetoric of being charged “with fine which may extend to rupees three thousand but which shall not be less than rupees two thousand” (3) in the Indian Prohibition Act and the Penal Code’s possibility of being “liable to fine”. This contrast indicates the difference to the extent to which the practice of the Devadasi was viewed as unlawful, in that postcolonial perspective was aggressive in working against the exploitation, providing detailed and significant fine amounts for those still involved in the practice. Conversely, the Penal Code provides a general statement that neither implies the severity of the crime of dedication. Further, it must be considered that income is determined by caste as it is a “division of labor” (Nadkarni 2003, 4783–93), limiting the ability of lower castes to pay fines. As all the prohibition acts follow similar phrasing of varying fine amounts, it can be understood that the contrast in the rhetoric surrounding the fines results from the intersection with caste. Likewise, the rhetoric demonstrates the influence of more explicitly negative postcolonial perspectives on the practice. Such an explicit negative can be related to the development of international feminism as it revealed the variety of factors that possess a key role in the exploitative practice.

Results

After the quantification of data, as mentioned in the methodology, the data below was collected and averaged for an average connotative score for each coding unit and an overall intersectionality score.

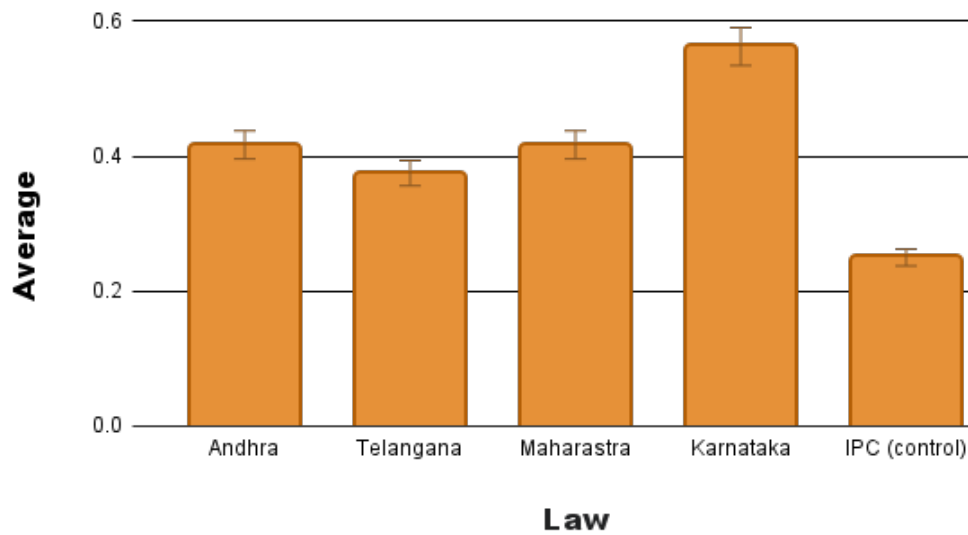
	Caste + Class	Religion	Education	Income	Age	Nationality	Gender	Overall Score
Andhra	0.70833	0.58333		0.41667	0.5	0.5	0.375	0.3139875
Telangana	0.8125	0.75		0.375	0.5	0.5	0.41667	0.3497025
Maharashtra	0.8125	0.42857		0.41667	0.5	0.625	0.5	0.3201532143
Karnataka	0.46875	0.46429	0.75	0.5625	0.5	0.5625	0.375	0.3632021429
IPC (control)	0.25			0.25		0.25		0.0625

Figure 2. This is a table displaying all of the averaged data of connotative score and overall intersectionality measure.

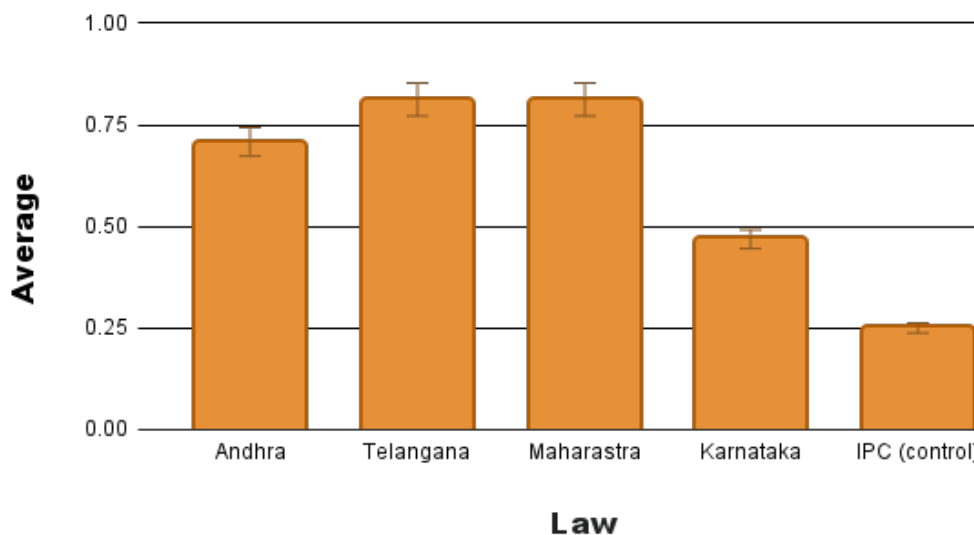
The connotative score for each unit demonstrates the relative prevalence of a certain intersection, while the overall intersectionality score details the extent to which each piece of legislation demonstrates influences of intersectionality in its rhetoric. These values were graphed and statistically analyzed with error bars, demonstrating the standard error of mean.

For Caste, there was a statistically significant difference between the control document, and each analyzed legislative piece. There were similarly significant differences for Income and Citizenship. These significant differences (figure 3a-c) indicate that each prohibition legislation analyzed and discussed the intersection between caste, income, and citizenship in more than in the control group. Therefore, the references within the prohibition legislation are not more intersectional by chance, but rather the development of Intersectional Feminism during the legislative period (1980s). Likewise, the lack thereof of intersectional elements in the Penal Code is due to the lack of Intersectional Feminism.

Income Average Score



Caste Average Score



Nationality Average Score

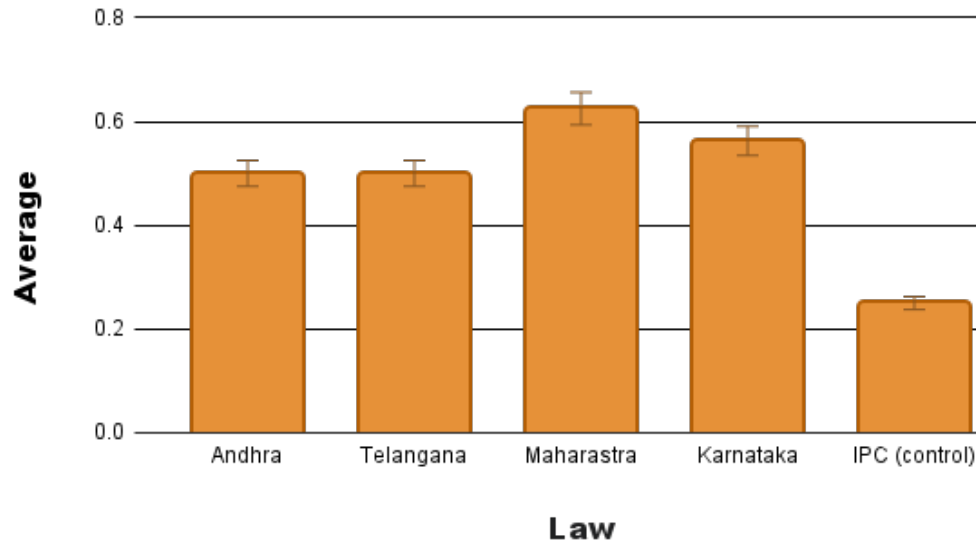
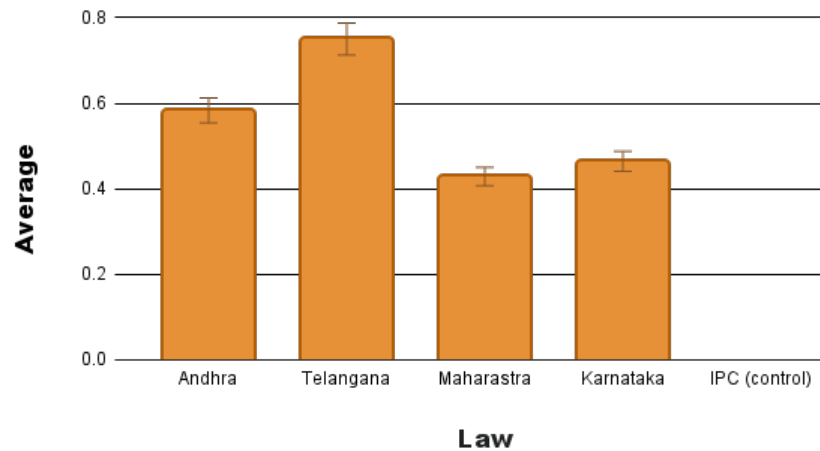


Figure 3. These are the connotative scores for Caste, Income, and Nationality.

For religion, gender, and age, there were similarly statistically significant differences. However, the difference was stronger in that the control document did not contain any references to religion, gender, or age. The absences of these intersections within the Indian Penal Code and presences within the prohibitions Acts indicates the significant influence of Intersectional Feminism on the latter documents.

Religion Average Score



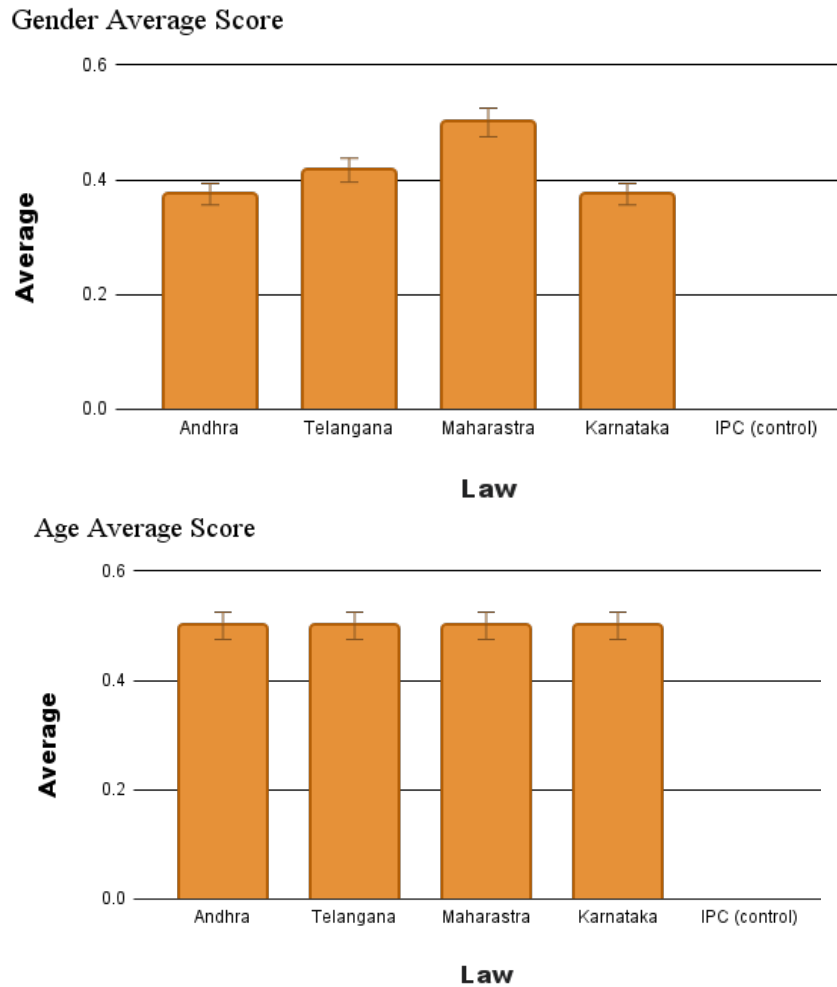


Figure 4. These are the connotative scores for Religion, Gender, and Age.

Conclusively, the overall intersectionality scores for all legislation are significantly different from the control. As seen below, each prohibition act is statistically different from the Indian Penal Code. Hence, these prohibition acts demonstrate influences of intersectional feminism that is attributed to the post-colonial development of the ideology and its incorporation into the reform movements that culminated in these prohibition acts.

Overall Intersectionality Score

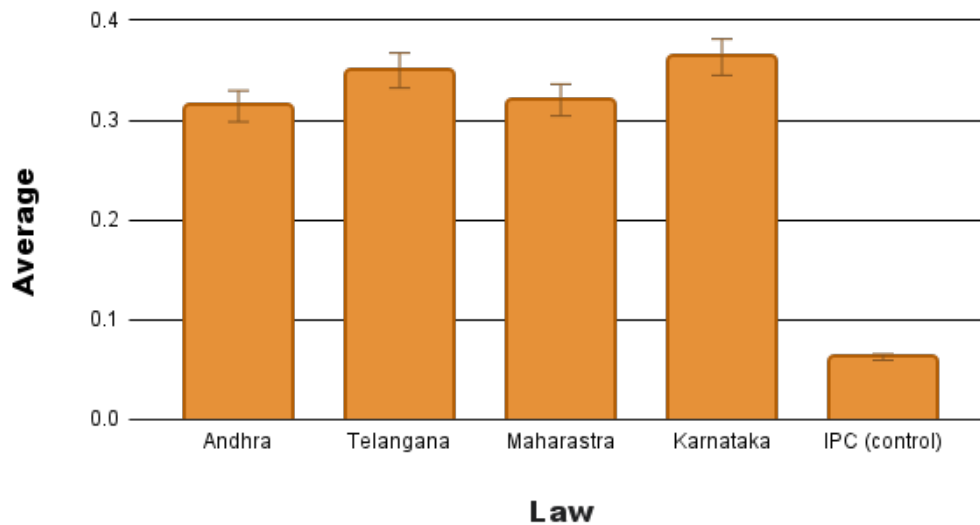


Figure 5. This table displays the overall intersectionality score for each document.

Conclusion

This procedure intended to establish whether or not a relationship exists between the rhetoric of the legislation and the development of intersectional feminism. As the paper aims to examine the extent to which the introduction of intersectional feminism influenced South Indian postcolonial legislation regarding the devadasi system, it found the hypothesis to be supported. The overall intersectionality scores for all prohibition legislation are significantly different from the control Panel Code. Therefore, it can be concluded that the influence of intersectional feminism on the acts quantitatively supports the conclusion that the development of intersectional feminism in post-colonial South India influenced Devadasi legislation significantly.

Conclusively, the devadasi legislation is greatly intersectional in rhetoric in that it examines the relations between power dynamics, gender identity, and religion. Further, it considers the persistence of the practice as a result of gender and caste structures in that it provides social mobility in an otherwise rigid caste system for low castes rather than solely due to religious beliefs. Further, the findings support that the failure of Diwakar (2020) to incorporate the influences of religion the Dalit feminism, defined similarly by Rege et al. (2013), excludes vital components in the unique identity of the devadasis, as both Dalit and women in a religious system.

Likewise, Nair (1994) detailings of the colonial influence on the perspective of the devadasis, through the introduction of purity and desire for reform, are related to feminism; as intersectional feminism developed as influential in India postcolonialism, the precursor motives were introduced by colonial rule. This is supported by the findings in that the Indian Penal Code demonstrates efforts to evaluate the intersections of caste and income, and nationality. Therefore, the attempts, though not considered intersectional feminism due to the lack of specificity in the rhetoric, are significant as antecedents to the later development. Moreover, as Prasad (1983) noted, the change toward negative rhetoric pertaining to discussions of the devadasis during the colonial era supports the post-colonial expansion of this perspective to legislation.

As the Karnataka Prohibition Act (1984) states, the Devadasi system is still prevalent. Hence the now-established influence of intersectional feminism on the legislation that prohibits the practice provides recommendations for improvement to hinder the persistence in rural India. To effectively prohibit the practice, stigmatization of religion

and caste must occur in order to promote societal movements that work to dismantle the rigid and patriarchal caste system and reduce the influence of corrupted religious practices. Further, as aforementioned, given caste as a “division of labor” (Nadkarni 2003, 4783–93), it limits the accessibility to education and, thereby, income. Hence designation of caste will allow for improvements to both income and education, in terms of obtaining feminist inventions. Given education is the least acknowledged intersection, mentioned solely in Karnataka's rhotic discussing reforms and women empowerment, there is a dire need to establish educational efforts for the devadasi. In doing so, they will be unlikely to resort to prostitution. Further, as on page 2 of each prohibition legislation, a woman was defined “a female of any age,” it can be understood that expanding this definition to gender identities of women who are not female at birth may allow for better enforcement of the legislation.

Limitations were first introduced in this aspect of the methodology. The legislations being examined are works of Indian parliamentary and governmental bodies. Phrases unfamiliar to the investigator may affect the validity of the results, as would incorrect analysis of implicit meaning due to varied dialects of English. However, measures to prevent these limitations were taken. The legislation was read three times to ensure complete analysis and no such phrases/words were found. Other methodical limitations included overlaps in mathematics of coding units, such as the intricately religious caste system and education and income based on caste. Further, the coding is subjective, allowing room for error, despite the investigator's efforts to remain objective. However, a content analysis was chosen as a portion of the methodology as its use as an analysis tool for abstract concepts was supported by Gopaldas (2013) study. Further, the quantification and statistical analysis provided a mechanism to ensure results were not solely based upon the subjective readings of the investigator. The findings of a significant extent of influence of Intersectional Feminism on Devadasi Prohibition Acts is limited to South India, as were the documents. Nonetheless, these results establish a clear influence of intersectional feminism on Devadasi legislation, contributing to a better understanding of the colonial ideals that have contributed to the current perspective of India on the system and the post-colonial development of the feminist ideology.

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