Spring 2013

Women in Indian Society: Work, Culture and Gender

Andrea Vega
Colgate University

Sylvie Lauzon
Colgate University

Isaac Porter
Colgate University

Nora Landells
Colgate University

Follow this and additional works at: http://commons.colgate.edu/student_showcase

Part of the South and Southeast Asian Languages and Societies Commons, and the Women's Studies Commons

Recommended Citation
Vega, Andrea; Lauzon, Sylvie; Porter, Isaac; and Landells, Nora, "Women in Indian Society: Work, Culture and Gender" (2013).
Student Coursework Scholarship Showcase. Paper 5.
http://commons.colgate.edu/student_showcase/5

Department:
Core Curriculum

Associated Faculty:
Eliza Kent

Comments:
The CORE ASIA project brought together the students in five sections of CORE China, India, and Japan to compare and contrast the three societies through a research poster salon. The students learned that, although each society has a unique trajectory and story, different communities face similar challenges and opportunities. In many cases, they encounter the same global historical events. Each poster examines one nation's struggle with
Women in Indian Society: Work, Culture and Gender

The Effects of Modernization

Workforce

In developing countries like India, there exists a “U-shaped relationship between level of per capita income and female work participation.”[5] This means that as the economy begins to develop, women gradually leave the workforce until the development of high-paying jobs attracts women to reenter the workforce. Yet, in much of rural India, “the role of women as been and still is auxiliary to that of the men of the household”[6]. India is balancing development and traditional family roles.

Bharatanatyam

Bharatanatyam dance evolved from sadir, a dance style exclusively performed by devadasis.[4] Devadasis, which translates to slaves of God,[9] were dedicated to the God of their temple in a marriage ceremony, but they were allowed to lead normal lives, including sex and childbearing.[10] The Anti-Nautch Campaign to end temple dedication began in 1892,[11] during the British Raj, and in 1947 it was law.[12] The dance form of sadir was revived as bharatanatyam, though it is still influenced by negative connotations surrounding devadasis.[13] Today, bharatanatyam is the most internationally recognized South Asian dance form.[14]

Surrogacy

Surrogacy has become a booming industry in India. Women, who are having financial difficulties, are trying to provide for their family by becoming surrogate mothers. Before 1970s it was unheard of to undergo anything like this. India has an unregulated surrogacy industry, which provides for many ethical concerns. Most women try to hide the fact that they are surrogate mothers. Towards the middle of their pregnancy they will leave their families and live in a home with other surrogate mothers. This indicates that surrogacy holds a bad stigma in India, as motherhood in India is something very valuable and prized.[8][9][10]

Abortion

Since being legalized in India in 1971, abortion, as a means of contraception for Indian women, has recently increased due to a lack of education about other contraceptives, but also due to gender selective pregnancies. Across India, women are uneducated about means of protection in regards to sex due to the underlying societal thought that “sex within marriage [is a man’s] right, and that women have no say in the matter.”[11] Women are more inclined to space their pregnancies, at the cost of health repercussions, by using the method of induced abortion[12] because in many instances “women are not allowed to use contraceptives or cannot say no to sexual intercourse.”[13]