

Initiatives for eradication of Jogin/ Pothuraj system in Nizamabad district, AP

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Jogins

- Jogins are hapless women/girls dedicated/ married to “God” at very young age, only to be exploited as Common Property of villagers elders and land lords
- They are sexually abused and act as village prostitutes
- Some NGOs work for Jogini’s rehabilitation
- But, Joginis are rehabilitated only when they become old
- Fresh young girls enter the system to replace them
- All are happy as long as replenishment is done to meet demands when rehabilitation of old Jogins takes place

Pothurajus

- Young girls are initiated to the system by “Pothurajus” who are the only “authorized and empowered” personnel to marry these girls to God
- Pothurajus are traditional/hereditary priests of SCs
- Their power is derived from their hair locks which are not cut since their birth
- They are forced to do barbaric practices like dance around dead bodies before burial, do sacrifices of buffaloes and cattle before harvest, whip themselves after getting drunk

A typical Pothuraju



Blood shot eyes, blood stained clothes, whip and long tresses that store the magical power



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Dancing around the corpse



Getting ready for the barbaric acts



Ash facials before the performance!



The Real “Barbaric” Act-killing a lamb by biting at its throat



The Real “Barbaric” Act

Reformation

- As a part of the drive to eliminate “Pothuraju” system and thereby the Jogin system by ending the “initiation of fresh Jogins” in Nizamabad district a massive program was organized by G.Asok Kumar, Collector, Nizamabad on 21st July 2001
- On that day 200 pothurajus divested their “divine powers” by cutting off their “hair tuft” preserved since their birth!
- Now they were no longer “powerful” to do black magic and sorcery



A major social reform- meeting on 21-July-2001 for “relinquishing magical powers”



Pothurajus
leaving
behind
their
whips,
trinkets
and blood
soaked
clothes to
take up a
new life



The mass haircut organised on 21- July-2001

“the Barber-ic Act”



The mass haircut organised on 21- July-2001

“the Barber-ic Act”

Pothurajus' haircut

21 July 2001



Nizamabad

Pothurajus taking oath to lead a civilized life,
and NOT to convert anymore young girls as JOGINS

Potharajus' haircut

28 Oct 2001

The
second
program
in
presence
of the
Governor



Governor and Lady Governor watching
the “Barber-ic” Act



The mass haircut organized on 28-October-2001 in presence of Mrs and Mr Rangarajan, Governor of AP



Turning point in the life of Jogins
Marriages of Jogins held on 28-Oct-2001



Blessings to the couples from Governor and Lady Governor, 28-Oct-2001



“Khush?, Now you are a legally married couple”

Certificate of registration of marriage to the couples from the Governor, 28-Oct-2001

Jogin Marriage



Nizamabad district

Jogin Brides and their Grooms with the Governor

Rehabilitation

- In 3 stages nearly 600 pothurajus gave up their hairs and with it their divine powers!
- All of them were rehabilitated giving alternate income generating activities with the fund of the SC development corporation.
- Marriages were arranged for many Jogins and got them settled into a decent life
- Though there was resistance initially from the landlords and political leaders, the press, electronic media and intelligentsia gave good support to make it a success
- With this the system of Poturajus and Joginis can be said to have been totally eliminated from Nizamabad district

All is well that ends well!

Thanks