

Satara's traumatised 'Nakusas' speak out

[Mithosh Joseph](#); Kozhikode April 22, 2017 22:19 IST 13



Victims of superstition: One of the several families that have been featured in the film.

Documentary captures agony of women whose parents named them 'unwanted'

For years, many women in Maharashtra's Satara district have lived with the stigmatising name of Nakusa, which stands for 'unwanted'. They were christened thus by their own parents.

Now, a 22-minute documentary, *Nakusa: Unwanted is my name*, produced by V.P. Shijith of Kozhikode captures their trauma and traces efforts to bring them out of the shadows.

"The crudest form of gender discrimination begins with this strange naming practice. To beget a boy, parents name their girl children, Nakusa or Nakoshi. The agony and discrimination faced by these hapless girls during their growing up years is unimaginable," says Mr. Shijith, whose film is the result of three years of research and meetings with 77 families in the villages.

The 31-year-old researcher at the Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad, says there were 292 women with the name in Satara district when he began work on the documentary in 2012.

“From the official record, we selected 77 families from seven villages and met all of them to get a vivid picture of the distressing practice. The Maharashtra government is leading the efforts to find new names for these women,” he adds.

The documentary, released recently at IIT, Hyderabad, by social activist Sunitha Krishnan, focusses on both young girls and older women who have been so named, and the different phases of their life.

Emotional scenes

“Everyone knows that the name Nakusa reflects the parents’ attitude towards the girl. In all stages of life, this cruel reality continues to haunt her,” says Mr. Shijith, who witnessed several emotional scenes while shooting the film.

“We could not include all the images that we had captured as most of the women were haunted by the name and not inclined to share their experiences. Some broke down while a few questioned our motives in featuring them,” he adds.

The team plans to screen the documentary widely.

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