

MYTHS AND CULTURAL PRACTICES RELATED TO TATTOOING IN THE BAIGA TRIBE OF CENTRAL INDIA

JAIN D.K., Bhopal, India

Summary

Tattooing i.e. human mutilation on the body is a practice prevalent among the Baigas, a primitive society concentrated in the central part of India. The Baigas, traditionally being shifting cultivators, are however, now settled cultivators, also dependent on roots and tubers as a secondary means of subsistence.

The study reveals that the socio-economic fabric and religious belief existing in the Baiga society is manifest in tattooing on the body. The present paper suggests that the socio-economic fabric existing in a particular group has a dimensional linkage with the form and the content of religious beliefs and practices. This dimension is located in the socio-economic aspect of their life. The tattooing marks visible on the body of Baiga women are not merely artefacts of body/personal adornment but they are references to aspects related to the other sphere of life. As such, most are the representation of deep-rooted socio-religious practices and beliefs.