



E-ISSN: 2706-8927  
P-ISSN: 2706-8919  
[www.allstudyjournal.com](http://www.allstudyjournal.com)  
IJAAS 2020; 2(4): 343-347  
Received: 18-08-2020  
Accepted: 21-09-2020

**Dr. Maneesha Thakur**  
(Ex-Guest Faculty), Govt.  
Women's Polytechnic College,  
Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh,  
India

**Dr. Neelam Agrawal**  
HOD (Fashion Technology  
Department) Govt. Women's  
polytechnic College, Jabalpur,  
Madhya Pradesh, India

**Dr. Smita Pathak**  
Professor, (Food and Nutrition  
Department) M.H. College of  
Home Science, Jabalpur,  
Madhya Pradesh, India

## Comparative study of tribal tattoo motifs among women for designing a dress

**Dr. Maneesha Thakur, Dr. Neelam Agrawal and Dr. Smita Pathak**

### Abstract

Tattooing is very widely practiced thing among the tribals. The tribal tattoo is the most popular of all the tattoos in the world. Tattooing is an ancient art which has a great significance among the tribals. Currently tattooing is in fashion amongst the younger generation. The tribal tattoos was initially used for different symbols and designs which showed their status within the community. This study was motivated through the observation that various tattoo designs found on the body of tribal peoples. It may be very suitable as motifs for designing a dress. The research was focused on identification of tattoo design motifs of Gond and Baiga tribes of Dindori district, Madhya Pradesh. Field Study was undertaken with the objective to elucidate the traditional knowledge on tattooing art.

**Keywords:** Gond tribes, Baiga tribes, Tattoo motifs and Designing a dress

### Introductions

The tribal culture is full of proverbs, tales and rituals. They are stretched in different states of India. They follow different types of custom that are different from other tribes. The custom which is prevailing in tribes is tattooing custom. The custom of tattooing in tribes was from ancient period and which is continuing today in traditional form.

The culture of India refers to the way of life of the people of India. Madhya Pradesh represents one such culture that is tribal culture of India. Madhya Pradesh has the distinction of the having largest tribal population of India.

Gonds and Baigas are in largest number among all the tribes of Madhya Pradesh. The women of Gonds and Baigas get their bodice tattooed extensively and elaborately. Tattoo motifs reflects not only the environment of the triblas but also their occupation and tools. Baiga women get their bodice elaborately tattooed and for Gond tribes, tattoo art is a matter of prestige to them.

For the study it was necessary to critically survey, identify unveil, study and document some of the traditional tattoo design motifs found on the tattoos of Gond and Baiga tribes of Dindori district for adaptation on textile fabrics.

### Need and importance of the study

Tribal culture is a culture which has its own unique importance. But now tribes are impressed by urban culture and mixing their selves in it, due to this there is some difference observed in their customs. There are some customs which are on the border of extinction. The art of tattooing in the tribes is decreasing gradually. This type of research very essential and important for preserving the existence of amazing art of tattooing and their motifs.

The research work aims at:

- Exploring and generating tattoo motifs for textile design through the use of selected tattoo designs.
- Providing an illustrative report to serve as a reference document for people to know about tattoo design motifs and its significance. This will serve as research material for designers in textiles and related fields in art and increase their knowledge and creativity.
- Promoting tribal culture at the international level to earn foreign exchange for the country.

### Objective of the study

It is very important in any research work to formulate objectives. These objectives give direction to the research work and due to this the researchers has goal directed behavior.

**Corresponding Author:**  
**Dr. Maneesha Thakur**  
(Ex-Guest Faculty), Govt.  
Women's Polytechnic College,  
Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh,  
India

- To procure information about tattooing tattoo motifs in Gond and Baiga tribes.
- To compare reaction towards traditional tattoo motifs by working women and housewives.
- To study acceptability in tattoo designs.

**Delimitation of the study**

- Only Gond and Baiga tribes of Dindori Districts, Madhya Pradesh were selected for the study.
- Tattoo design motifs were selected for the study.
- Working women and housewives were selected for the study

**Review of literature**

A collective body of works done by earlier researcher is technically called the literature. A careful review of the literature enables the researcher to collect and synthesize prior studies related to the present study, this helps to identify the significant overlaps and gaps among prior works.

Mahawar N. (2004) [5] explored that tattooing is a common practice amongst the Central Indian tribes. This is done not only to decorate body, but also has other functions associated to fertility. Most tribal women tattooed the motif of a scorpion at the back-side of the right hand thumb. This motif of male sex is tattooed for the purpose of reproduction of procreation. There are about more than two hundred motifs on different part of the female body of the Central Indian tribes. The Baiga get their bodies tattooed elaborately. Almost the whole body except the parts covered under loin cloth are tattooed. The motifs for tattooing on different parts of their bodies are already fixed. The Baiga women look like painted sculptures and their nudity is covered behind the tattooing.

Morton K. narrated that a tattoo or being inked is a permanent picture, design or other marking on the skin by pricking it and staining it with an indelible dye. When people are getting tattoos they are forming an expression of themselves in ink on their bodies. They are showing off to the world and everyone in it how they feel or how they live their day to day lives.

Musabasyarahil described that bright colours and tribal motifs print is still a trend in the row collection Fall/winter several leading brands. One of the motifs are quite popular this season are a tribal motif. Generally tribal motifs released in the form of dress or tops. But do not get stuck into a clown motif using it.

Khushi M described that the Gonds, Bhils, Baigas, Binjwars, Kanwars, Murias, Bhatras. Dondami, Marias, Dorlas, and other sub tribes of Gonds, practice tattooing in varied forms. The women amongst the Bhills, Korkus, Gond, Baigas, Mudias, Murais are tattooed over a large part of their bodies. Their face, arms hands thighs and back are tattooed with different motifs. Tattoo motifs reflect not only the environment of the tribal's but also their occupation and tools.

Koret SI conducted a study "Dresses and Ornaments of the Gonds of Madhya Pradesh", revealed that the Gonds of Madhya Pradesh, the men wore only a few tattoo marks on the outer side of their legs, at knee-level and sometimes on the upper arms. However the Gond women were conspicuous for their tattooing over a large part of the body. Gond women preferred stars, crosses and crude figures of men and animals as tattoo marks. Tattooing was very common among the Gonds. Women were more lavish in getting their face, forehead, arms and often breast elaborately tattooed.





Divya N explored that the ethnic trends and details are all over the fashion runways as people more or less want to return to their roots. Indian traditional and tribal motifs and embroidery were the first to gain mainstream popularity and it later led to Indo western and fusion clothes in the 2000's. We all follow tribal fashion all the time, we just don't recognize it as a particular trend or pay too much importance to it. A tribal shawl, like as Toda shawl would glam up your outfit in seconds. Mach it with oxidized jewelry for a traditional look or acrylic embellishment for a modern look.



**Methodology**

The quality and success of research depends on the adequacy of research design, investigators in the job, sample selection, the tabulation and reporting of the findings and the validity of the procedure employed.

The descriptive survey adopted as the research methodology for the study. The initial survey was conducted to identify tattoo design motifs of Gond and Baiga tribes of Dindori district. These identified tattoo design motifs were shown to working women and housewives. They were requested to rate these motifs according to their likes from the most liked to least liked for designing a dress. The results were tabulated.

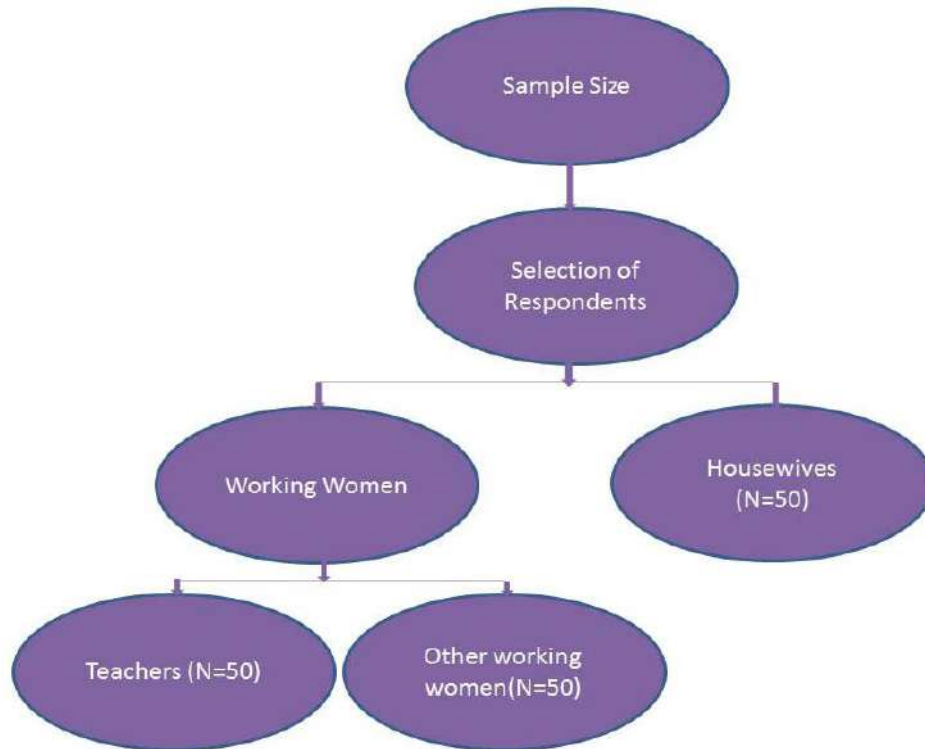
These tattoo design motifs are presented with their name and source of inspiration in figure as follow:-

S.No.	Motifs	Name and source of inspiration
1.		Dohri Zehra is a form of Zehra motif in which double curve cross design made with dots. It usually made on bottom side of the leg.
2.		Phool is a flower motif with one sided leaf. Made on the back side of the palm.
3.		Trishool phool is a trishool like beautiful motif which is made on hands
4.		Choolha motif signifying the fire in which 'v' shaped made on the center of forehead and both side of 'v', lines and dots were made.

5.		Machhimudi is a cross shaped design with dots. It is made on chest.
6.		Shankhchudi is a motif in which double parallel lines and dots are made. Which is usually made on back side of the leg, hands and back.

**Sampling method**

The random sampling method was used for the study



The present research work is very comparatively done in which working women and housewives were selected for study. Working women included two types of employees, these one the teaching profession and rest in other profession.

The number selected in each category is quite comprehensive and the researcher tried her best to make it as representatives as possible so that the result may be generalized. The number selected is 50 each for professor, other working women and housewives.

**Tool used for data collection**

The researchers collected the data by observation, personal interview, questionnaire and home visit. The respondents were requested to spare their leisure time for filling the

questionnaire.

**Analysis and discussion of result**

Analysis and discussion is one of the most important aspects of any research work. It is the real outcomes of one research.

The analysis and discussion of the result based on the various aspects for the above objectives.

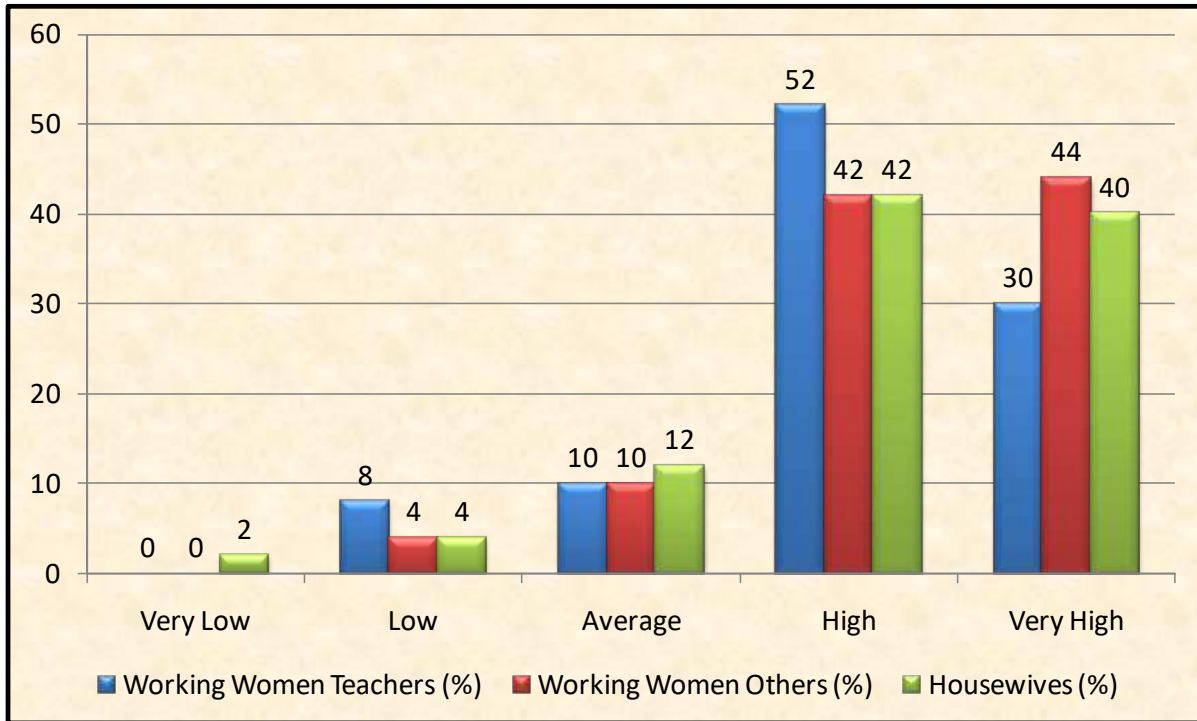
- Procure information regarding tattooing tattoo motifs in Gond and Baiga tribes.
- Comparatives responses regarding traditional tattoo motifs by working women teachers, other working women and housewives.
- Comparative responses regarding acceptability in tattoo design motifs by working women teachers, other working women and housewives.

**Table 1:** Comparative responses regarding aesthetic value of tattoo motif by working women and housewives

Sl. No.	Aesthetic value of motif	Responses					
		Working Women teachers (n=50)		Working Women others (n=50)		Housewives (n=50)	
		(f)	(%)	(f)	(%)	(f)	(%)
1.	Very Low	0	0	0	0	01	02
2.	Low	04	08	02	04	02	04
3.	Average	05	10	05	10	06	12
4.	High	26	52	21	42	21	42
5.	Very High	15	30	22	44	20	40

The above table shows that more working women teachers (52%) and housewives (42%) opined that the aesthetic value of motif is high followed by very high (30% & 40%). While

more working women others (44%) opined very high followed by high (42%).



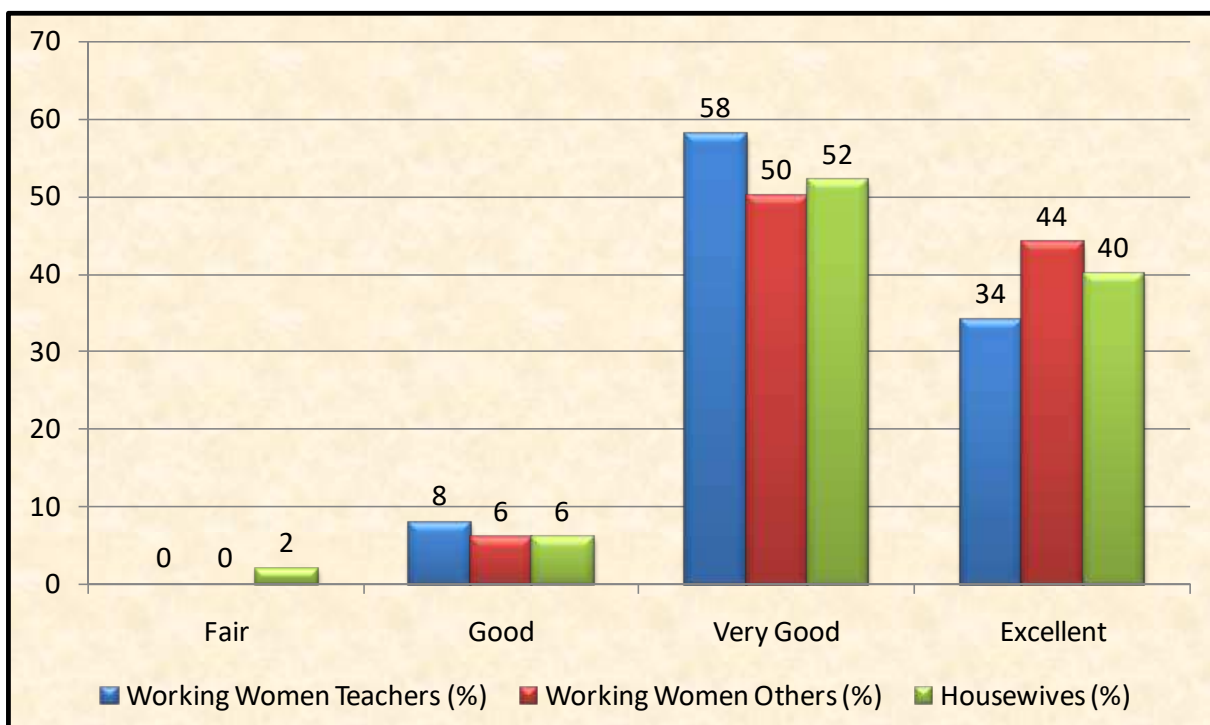
**Graph 1:** Comparative responses regarding aesthetic value of tattoo motif by working women and housewives

**Table 2:** Comparative responses regarding acceptability in tattoo design motifs by working women and housewives

Sl. No.	Opinion	Responses					
		Working Women teachers (n=50)		Working Women others (n=50)		Housewives (n=50)	
		(f)	(%)	(f)	(%)	(f)	(%)
1.	Fair	0	0	0	0	01	02
2.	Good	04	08	03	06	03	06
3.	Very Good	29	58	25	50	26	52
4.	Excellent	17	34	22	44	20	40

The table reveals about the comparative responses regarding acceptability in tattoo design motifs. It is evident that more working women teachers (58%), working women others

(50%) and housewives (52%) opined that the newly designed motifs and CAD were very good followed by excellent (34%, 44% & 40%).



**Graph 2:** Comparative responses regarding acceptability in tattoo design motifs by working women and housewives

The tribal tattoo is by far the most popular of all the tattoos in the world. The tribals tattoo was initially used for different symbols and designs which showed their status within the community. Traditional tattoo motifs have been preferred by working women and housewives may be because the motifs are very unique.

Working women have better knowledge, information and awareness about tattoo motifs than their counter part. This is probably due to better exposure, interest, dearth of educational background, acquired knowledge and zeal to gather information by the working women. And other hand housewives spend their leisure time to watching television, reading book and magazines by which they get new information about latest fashion trends and styles.

### Conclusion

The present research work was based on the traditional tribal tattoo motifs of Gond and Baiga tribes of Dindori districts, Madhya Pradesh. Tattooing is very important part of the women life. All the Gond and Baiga women started tattooing at their very young age. It act as a kind of acupressure treatment. The Tribal people believe that tattooing is the main means by which they can beautify their body. It can neither be stolen nor can it be taken away from them.

The tribal tattooing is very popular among different countries in the world. It is significant to mention that modernization has made significant changes in tattoo culture. The popularity of tribal motifs can be seen in fashion world. As per result it is found that traditional tribal tattoo motifs has been preferred by working women and housewives for designing a dress, may be because of identification of the particular religion and traditional Indian culture. Respondents indicate their choice may be due to beauty, uniformity, elegance and unique appearance of these motifs.

### Acknowledgement

The authors are grateful to the knowledge providers - Mrs. Shanti Bai Maravi and Ms. Mangala Maravi from lalpur village and Mrs. Susheela Maravi and Mrs. Rekha from singarsati village and Mrs. Jamni and Mrs. Ram bai from baigantola for sharing the information on tattooing of the Gond tribe. Author also grateful to working women and housewives for giving me precious time.

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