

TATTOO: AN INQUIRY INTO ITS DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS

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Submitted by

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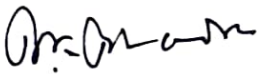
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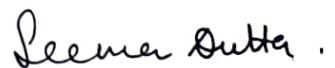
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CONTENT

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION	01-36
Introduction	01
1.1 Body Modification and Identity	03
1.2 Objectives and Rational of the Study	07
1.3 Review of Literature	09
I. Historical Overview	09
II. Works Done in India	11
III. Literature Outside India	19
A. Tattooing and Identity Construction	19
B. Stigma and Tattooing	21
C. Gender Tattooing and Identity	24
D. Religion and Tattooing	28
E. Health Risks and Tattooing	29
1.4 Methodology	31
 CHAPTER 2 – THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK	 36-56
Introduction	36
2.1 Theoretical frameworks and Explanations	37
A. The body in Symbolic Interactionism	37
B. The looking Glass Body	38
C. The Dramaturgical Body and Self	39
D. Feminism, Fashion and Body Modification	46
2.2 Assessments and Criticism	53
2.3 Concluding Remarks	54

CHAPTER 3 – EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS	57-134
3.1 Gender, Sexuality and Tattooing	57
3.2 Tattooing, Religion and Identity	83
3.3 Tattooing and Identity Construction	97
3.4 Tattooing, Technology and Health	113
 CHAPTER 4. CONCLUSION	 135-144
4.1 Summary of Findings	138
4.2 Future Research Potentiality and Limitations of the Study	144
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 145-159
 APPENDIX	 160-165
Interview Schedule	160
End Notes	165

CHAPTER: I.

Introduction.

Humans have been adorning and modifying the body for thousands of years. All cultures everywhere have attempted to change or alter the individual body to meet the cultural standards and their religious and social obligations. Modifying the body is part of the cultural trend of the particular period or region. The type of modification adopted, the style, the design, and the techniques are all part of the fashion trends of society's particular period. It is culturally defined. The culture defines what is to be good or ideal, and the individual joins the race to be ideal, and they follow the fashion trends. Body modification is an ancient phenomenon, but the form, nature, and modification process have evolved. Body modification is a permanent transformation of flesh through tattooing, piercing, branding, cutting, stretching, and scarification. (Romaneiko, 2011: 1-3). Though such practices were common among the tribal cultures of many parts of the world, it has now become a part of the contemporary era's dominant fashion trend. There have been variations along the gender lines, like restrictions on certain body modification forms, types, designs, and techniques. Religious norms and practices also play a significant role in this regard. Tracing back to the history of the origin of body modification, there are pieces of evidence of both tattooed and pierced mummified bodies, tracing back to centuries ago. A naturally frozen mummified body of 1600 years old Eskimo women was found in a beach erosion of Cape Kialegah of St. Lawrence Island of Alaska. (Smith and Zimmerman., 1975: 433-437). Such old discoveries indicate how the process of body modification is as old as history. There are, however, pieces of evidence of both men and women going through the process of modifying bodies though there have been differences in the pattern's techniques and purposes. Body modification like tattooing focuses on the technological advancements of society. At the same time, it highlights the various health risks associated with this technological art.

In the postmodern society, physical appearance has become increasingly central to defining personal identity, as evidence by the proliferation of features in newspapers, magazines, and television concerned with health, shape, and appearance of the body and by the advent of a plethora of product and technologies for modifying the body,

such as diet pills, exercise programs, and cosmetic surgeries. Added to this is modification through piercing, tattooing, etc, to get the perfect look or perfect body. This 'perfect look' is defined by society, which gives the individual a sense of identity. Self in this context is developed through the everyday rituals that the individual adopts to gain the perfect self-identity. The self in this context refers to an organized definition or perception about who one is. It is the overall vision transcending the experimental and event content of self- awareness. (Lipiansky, 2008: 38). Identity on the other hand is one's social face or self-image as defined by the society. Calling upon Ervin Goffman in this context, the 'self' is a sacred object that must be treated with proper ritual care and, in turn, must be presented in a proper light to others. (Turner, 1990: 450-452) Thus, the presentation of self by adopting the norms and values of the society becomes the rule. Through various forms of body modification process like cosmetic surgery, tattooing, piercing, etc., the individuals try to adopt the present dominant rituals or the dominant cultural trait of a particular society to gain acceptance as the individual with perfect self-identity. It is also a matter of Impression Management as if one cannot meet up with society's rituals, one will be looked down upon. In 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life,' Goffman points out that the individual is both a performer who fabricates impression in the "all-too-human task of staging a performance," but this self is a product of a scene that comes off and is not a cause of it. The self "as a performed character, is not an organic thing – the product of some intrinsic nature with a specific location, whose fundamental faith is to be born, to mature and to die, it is a dramatic effect arising from the scene that is presented and the characteristic issues, the crucial concern is whether it will be credited or discredited." (Goffman, 1959: 132-150).

The Self is thus born out of the various interaction process in which the individual tries to adopt the situation's rituals, and the self is developed through the credits and discredits accorded to the individuals. Through the various forms of the body modification process, the individual tries to attain the perfect body or appearance, which gives the individual a sense of identity. Impression management, whether successful or unsuccessful, involves an audience with a stake in ensuring a successful or unsuccessful performance. Consequently, in some cases where the performance slips or something unexpected occurs, the audience may attempt to "save the day" by ignoring it. In modifying the body, the entire society or the group with which the individual is interacting becomes the audience. As the notion of beauty varies from

audience to audience, and the individuals try to achieve the perfect beauty, the perfect beauty for maintaining acceptability in front of the audience, who judges the perfect or imperfect self of the individuals.

The body is the reflection of one's self. Thus, individuals run the race of achieving the socially defined perfect body. To achieve the perfect body, individuals adopt different means, like dressing, gyming, and tattooing. All these are based on contemporary fashion and are culturally defined. The body is the text upon which the cultural codes of conduct are inscribed. (Shilling, 2005: 70-99). Through the body, we express, perform and present subjectivity to others. However, by objects of performance and appearance, others also judge our bodies. As the body's judgment is related to the Self's judgment, the performance and interpretation of the body's performance is an important step in the development of the Self of an individual. The universality of the body was to be founded in a peculiar prestigious version of the beautiful. (Corrigan, 2008: 74-75). Beautiful again is socially defined. Individuals adopt various means of fashion to be beautiful. As beauty has no fixed definition, individuals adopt various means of body modification to look beautiful. Like dressing and ornamentation, tattooing is also a popular means of fashion adopted by individuals to look beautiful. The tattooed body points out the ability to manipulate the materiality of the body. (DeMello, 2000: 2-5). Individuals adopt material means to get the perfect body.

1.1.Body Modification and Identity.

Body modification or body alteration is how individuals change or alter their body, which generally has a long-term effect. Body modification is how culture is inscribed upon or performed through the body in everyday practice. This process is defined by De Certeau (1984) as 'intextuation,' i.e., how patriarchal notions of beauty are inscribed in female bodies. (Atkinson, 2002: 211, 219-235.). Female bodies are socially constructed, monitored, regulated, and maintained according to femininity's dominant notions. The female body is organized around unattained images and styles of respectable yet sexually desirable femininity. The female body is the product of the dominant culture, which is the patriarchal culture. The individual's type of body modification is for attaining the perfect body for the male dominating society. There are different types of body modifications like piercing, tattooing, opting for cosmetic

surgery, etc. The type of body modification opted by the people is culture-specific and reflects the particular society's fashion trend. Body piercing, one of the most popular forms of body modification, can be defined as puncturing the body so that an opening is created in order for the jewelry to be worn. Tattooing includes inserting inks or dyes into the skin to get a design. Other than piercing and tattooing, there are various other types of body modification popular across the globe. All share the same thread that it includes technology, reflects the technological evolution. At the same time, it reflects the cultural codes of the society, determining the individuals' identity.

Individuals get tattooed as a mark of self-expression, and at the same time, tattoos define an individual's self. It is a reciprocal process. People get tattoos as a mark of celebration of maturity or freedom from parental authority when they enter adulthood after school or college completion. As an 'initiation ritual, even piercing ceremonies act as a rite of passage, symbolizing one's life's next stage (Sween, 2008:32-73). Among Indian tribes, Toda girls getting tattoos after puberty and women after their first-born child are instances of how tattoos indicate a rite of passage (Rao,1942/1945: 175-179). Secondly, the desire to appear 'cool' in front of peers (Sween, 2008: 13) and display courage and heroism (Rewathy & Linojah, 2019) compel many to undergo body modifications. Whether it was cool or heroic because of how it looked or because it was developing as a new trend is a question of debate. Individuals today feel a need to convey a certain desirable persona, which will gain respect from peers. For this, they often go for their astrological sign or an inspirational quote to communicate to people their attributes and what they aspire to be in the future (Sween 2008: 32-73). Spiritual meanings of certain mythical symbols are also attributed to tattoos by some (Munet. al, 2012). Such tattoos are believed to provide emotional support, confidence, strength, and protection. South Indian tribes using Vaishnava sect marks, totems, or Hindu god Hanuman imageries to relieve pain says much about the spiritual influences of getting tattooed (Rao,1942: 175-179). Then there are commemoration motives- to mark a personal achievement or preserve the memory of someone special after their death, be it a friend, family member, or even a pet (Teeter, 2005: 31-33). This implies that although people are becoming individualistic in their approach towards life, they still savor their roots and primary relationships. Bonds of loyalty are manifested in 'family name' tattoos and dates and places related to loved ones. Studies reveal that reasons for getting *tattooed* revolve around one's self-identity-who they are, what they have lived

through, their hobbies, family background, interests, and beliefs. Hence the common thread running through their narratives point towards the development of a unique, individual identity where self-expression, self-definition, and perceiving modifications as a reflection of themselves is highlighted (Tiggemann and Hopkins, 2011:245-250; Antoszewski et al, 2010: 471-479.). It symbolizes freedom, self-control, and self-satisfaction by which they feel whole, realized, and complete. (Sanders and Vail,1986: 33-61; Cipolletta et al 2010:85-93). The tattoo becomes an item in the practitioner's personal '*identity-kit*' (Goffman, 1961: 24-25). As it is in the '*doings*' of people that the body is embodied, i.e., crafting or manipulating it in cultural contexts, they serve as instruments of a '*performance*,' to garnish the '*peg*' with meanings in a particular '*scene*' (Goffman, 1959: 10-13).

However, modifications are also a marker of one's social identity. The modified body becomes a mode of communication consisting of a display-view-judge process where audience perceptions and interactions influence the decision-making process and how someone experiences his/her tattoo (Atkinson 2004:125-146). Cooley's theory of the looking-glass-body supports this view. As there is no sense of 'I' without its correlative sense of 'you, he, or they, body modifiers may first try to assess what reactions his modification would bring from others and then proceed with their decision-making process. The literature reveals that individuals decide on their ornamentation's location and design upon interaction with friends, family and seeing where others get their tattoos. Peer pressure and friends and partners getting modified together prove how much enthusiasts care about their social groups' acceptance. In this way, modifications promote subculture affiliation. Religious, military groups, members of a gang or sports team, or even extreme modification practitioners like neo-primitives and resistance portrayers get similar designs to strengthen social ties. (Sween, 2008: 32-84; Romanienko,2011:2-8; Sanders and Vail,2008). In the Indian context, the obligation for planning Lambani women to have a dot tattoo also symbolizes social inclusion. The findings here correspond to Goffman's saying that when someone claims to be a person of a particular kind, he exerts an obligation on the audience to treat him in his expected ways (1969:11-12). Through various forms of body modification processes, individuals desire to impress the audience (society) to gain acceptance.

Gender identity played an important role in getting tattooed. Men go for large 'masculine symbols (skull, dagger, dragons, eagles, etc.) and choose a visible location like the arm. Women choose conventional imageries of feminine beauty (butterfly, flowers, small birds) and opt for covered locations like hip and shoulders (Sanders and Vail, 2008). This speaks of women's relegated position as symbols of sexual promiscuity, attention seekers in bars and nightclubs, and being treated as delicate and fragile. Although not marked with tattoos' permanency, the recent incident at Rabindra Bharati University where 4 students painted their backs with distorted lyrics of a Tagore song shows how breaking notions of acceptable femininity brings social outrage. While it was an insult to Tagorian sentiments, the fact that 'women' took autonomy of their bodies to paint profanities on themselves instead of choosing admired freely, genteel words like 'Basanta' (Spring), instigated puritanical Bengalis to give rape and murder threats. (News18.com, 9.03.2020). Indian actor Kiara Advani was rebuked for getting a Tagore song tattooed on her chest, which she required to play a rebellious character who challenges dominant femininity in a web-film. (eismay.com, 13.03.2020). Even with piercings, Men going for the art symbolized transgression of gender boundaries, after which wearing it in the right ear was marked by masculinity and in the left ear by femininity.

While getting a fashionable tattoo brings favorable reactions from friend's close associates and subculture members, people may also react negatively to their presence. The message a person intends to communicate may be misinterpreted by others (Atkinson, 2004). Hence a void form between '*actual social identity*' and '*virtual social identity*' (Goffman, 1965: 132-150). Most people indulge in self-evaluation based on others' perceptions by either regretting their decision upon getting negative feedback or embracing it on being appreciated (Sween, 2008: 32-84). In Cooley's terms, he reacts to this '*perceived image of the other's judgment*' with '*pride*' or '*mortification*' (1902: 87). The majority face stigmatizing experiences in the form of rude behavior from strangers, reprimands from parents, members of the extended family who are conservative and religious, and a job providing sector. Those who consider their career goals more important hide them under clothing. Those with multiple piercings or tattoos, however, can't cover them up and are restricted from attending family gatherings, identified with rapists, murderers and become victims of discriminatory hiring policies of job granters. (Sween 2008: 32-84; Teeter, 2005: 31-33). Goffman's notion about stigmatized

individuals being treated as '*not quite human*' by '*normals*' (1965:7) is highlighted here. People with piercings, especially men, receive more social rejection than those with tattoos (Antoszewski et al., 2010:471-479; Cipolletta et al., 2010:85-93).

The reason for this disapproval is the history of the practice. Criminals were one of the firsts to be tattooed to distinguish inmates of jail from others. One can't rule out the insecurities of job hirers, and family members as many studies have found that people with multiple tattoos and intimate piercings are likely to deal in drugs, marijuana, alcohol, and criminal activities (Koch & Roberts, 2010:151-161) or belong from low educational and cultural backgrounds (Clerici and Meggiolaro, 2011:85-93). Although an overgeneralization is not justifiable as many blurs its marginalized status by perceiving it as an artistic practice (Rees, 2016), associating deviant behavior practices is not completely irrational.

Religion plays a significant role in the tattooing norms of a particular society. Though in many religions, tattooing is banned, like in Christianity and Islam, those who get themselves inked get the social identity of being the outsider and are stigmatized. In Asian countries, particularly in India, tattooed is an accepted practice among many communities. There are mythological stories associated with it. However, in modern times religious tattoos are more a marker of fashion trends than religious symbols and identity alone.

As the practices of performing body art through tattoos are gaining popularity, there is a growing social need to address the health hazards associated with these practices. Some of the common health risks associated with the art are – transmissible diseases, like aids, infection due to lack of proper care, cancer, hepatitis. The prime cause is ignorance and lack of knowledge about the techniques and colors used for the art. There are at the same time some positive consequences of this art, which is called therapeutic tattooing. These tattoos act as a medium to hide scars to avoid social stigma, which helps in boosting up one's self-esteem. It highlights how social norms control the definition of the perfect body.

1.2.Objectives and Rationale of the Study.

Over the last twenty years or so, there has been a major revaluation of fashion in terms of its legitimacy as an area of serious academic investigation and its significance in

contemporary culture. Body modifications like piercing, tattooing, surgery, etc., are various techniques that individuals use to obtain the perfect self-image as per society's demands. In contemporary times have seen a considerable resurgence in the popularity of tattooing, piercing the body, and cosmetic surgery, a development that some have dismissed as a fashionable trend. The relative permanence of such forms of body modification militates against their full absorption into the fashion system. Whether or not their meaning is fixed, tattoos are employed by some as a form of anti-fashion and as a way of fixing or anchoring the reflexively constructed self. In this sense, they share both affinities and differences with other forms of contemporary body projects.

Society's culture and fashion trends shape body modification, a focal point of interest in the present research on tattoo bodies. The significance of tattooed bodies is immense. Firstly, tattoos are the first visible form of body art, through which the cultural codes of conduct of society are written, and the self of an individual is defined. Contemporary discourse on tattooed individuals seeks to assert individual agency in becoming tattooed through the expression of oneself. Tattoos are increasingly done as a sign of rebel against social norms. It highlights the importance of an individual's autonomy and freedom of choice in contemporary times. Phelan (1993:277-298) suggests that bodies that are socially marked carry social value. Butler (1993:21-50) argues that discourse creates groups or social categories that consist of bodies of privileged social positions and abject ones. At the same time, the tattooed body has signs that have destroyed the natural body and thus become socially stigmatized. Accepted tattooed bodies need to follow the social norms associated with them. Thus, tattooed bodies reflect the cultural demands of society and also its changing nature. Thus, in this context, the present research aims to analyze the historical evolution of tattooing as art and how the particular society's cultural standards shape it at a particular period. The research aims to highlight how these cultural norms also shaped its religious beliefs and gender norms. Above all, how a definition of self is created and impression management is practiced to avoid stigmatization in tattooing culture is also analyzed. The technological evolution of tattooing as body art and its risks is also analyzed, as the evolution of tattooing is related to the evolution of technology. The tattooed body is controlled by the same discourse that controls the body in general. It is both a metaphor for social inscription theories and a key cultural site or creation of body theory in general.

Objectives of the Study.

Body modification like tattooing is one of the most popular forms in both past and present society. The present study thus tries to get insights into this popular form of body modification which has the following objectives:

1. How do tattoos as a marker of body modifications help create a definition of self or identity construction?
2. What role do gender and religious factors play in the processes of body modification and identity construction?
3. What are the positive and negative social and individual effects of body modification, especially concerning the health risks associated with it?

1.3.Review of Literature.

I. Historical Overviews.

"Tattooing is the most ancient and widely practiced form of permanent body alteration" (Sanders, 1988:400). It has been argued that in every culture, tattooing has been present for thousands of years. (Koch et al., 2005:79-102). Such claims are backed by a recently discovered 5,000-year-old iceman found near the Alps (Armstrong, 1991:215-220; Koch et al., 2000:79-102; Schildkrout, 2004). However, tattooing origin is associated with a Polynesian tradition dating back centuries back where a body of 1600 years old Eskimo women was found on an island near Alaska (George and Zimmerman.1975 433-437). The discovery of tattooing made by Captain Cook in 1769 in the Polynesian island highlights the long history of tattooing tradition dating back to 1200 BCE (Poli, 2012:38-105). Tattooing in these islands was most well-known due to the Maori people engaging in face tattooing, popularly known as moko. Each moko states a story of individuals rank and status. (Caines and Bynard 2008:197-220). Through making incisions, tattoos were created, into which dye was placed, resulting in a raised and colored scar. (Brain 1979). Tattooing based on social status was also seen among the Tahiti Island people, the Polynesian island, which Crook first encountered tattooing. (Gilbert, 2000:172-185).

The history is also quite old in the context of India. Figures found in Bharathut dated 200 BCE had Godna in their hands and legs. (Singh 2015:15-22). The first concrete evidence of tattooing dates back to 3300 BCE. A mummy was found preserved in the

regions of the Alps. (Green 2003). Known as Otzi, the body shows blue tattoos in several places, including spines, ankles, and across the posterior of one knee. Though this body art's cultural implications are unknown, it may have acted as therapy for a physical ailment, marker identification, or ethnic markers. (Cains and Byard 2008:197-220).

There is only a limited body of historical evidence from which conclusions on body modification's evolution and cultural significance. However, we can gather evidence about the origin and evolution of body modification practices through archaeological artifacts, literary evidence, and mummified remains of tattooed bodies. The earliest artifacts with tattoos can be dated to the Upper Paleolithic era. Sharp bone implements were used to puncture the skin to insert dyes or colors. (Cains and Byard 2008:197-222). The images were mainly of geometrical designs, decorative. The shreds of evidence are not conclusive but provide a genesis of body modification conceptualization.

Figures similar to those of the Upper Paleolithic age were found in Egypt dating to the Bronze Age. (Bianchi 1988:21-28). Mummified remains of several females from the 11th Dynasty of Egypt between 2160-1994 BCE highlighted tattooing practice during this era. (Bianchi 1988:21-28, Sperry 1991:131-139). The most notable case was the mummy of Amunet, a priest of Goddess Hathor. (Bianchi 1988:21-28, Gilbert 2000:172-185, Tassie 2003:85-101). The designs here were also geometrical. There are several other mummies found indicating the same designs. Though the mummies indicated that only females were tattooed, several pictures and paintings were also found indicating that even pharaohs and other men of high ranks were also tattooed. (Gilbert 2000).

Though there was no similar word associated with tattooing was found in Egyptian culture but in some parts, the term glyph "menu" meaning "inscribed", or "engraved" was used concerning body modification. The global reach of the traditional tattooing culture can be demonstrated best from the mummified bodies found in America. The naturally mummified remains of a woman were found in St. Lawrence Island of Alaska, with significant evidence of tattoos on her arms and her hands. (Smith and Zimmerman 1975:433-437, Sperry 1991:131-139). At the time of discovery, tattooing was still practiced in the St. Lawrence islands, pointing out the continuation tradition as an

integrated practice in their community. Zimmerman's article points out how tattooing was and is an integral part of many community cultures today.

II. Works Done in India.

There is very little or scarce literature on body modification, particularly about tattooing in India's context. Some anthropological studies focusing on Godna, the term used for traditional tattooing, can be found. However, this literature is particular to culture or religion-based studies.

Arup Deb and Jitender Kumar Premi (2016:32-33) study a study focusing on the various tattoo forms of the Bhujia Tribes of Chattisgarh, especially concerning its anthropological perspective points out that Bhujia's are mainly the Gond community's decedents, residing mainly in the Sonabera plateau areas of Chhattisgarh, region of India as tattooing includes, technology, the tribes of this region use the most primitive and popular technique with a rake and striking stripes.

Tattooing in this community is associated with their religious beliefs, and it is believed that they will carry it after their death as a marker of their identity. Tattooing in this community is popularly known as Godna. It is mainly done on women with designs like that of flowers which are feminine in nature as per social norms. In conclusion, the author points out that the culture is somewhat losing its significance in contemporary times. However, many women have Godna or tattoos; however, they lack knowledge about their cultural significance. The study, however, lacks sociological interpretations like the social norms deciding the tattooing rules, the interplay of gender norms and tattooing etc and comparison with other tribal cultures. It cannot be generalized.

Singh (2015:15-22), in her study on tattooing culture across the Awadh region of India, points out that the art of Godna (Tattooing) is traditionally linked with or related to religion and considered rites of passage among the Nondwij castes of the Awadh regions of India. Both men and women opt for such art, though there are variations in designs as similar to other tribes of India. These tattoos are done mainly when puberty is attained to get the identity of entering adulthood. In modern days these tattoos mainly opt for fashion equipment rather than rites of passage. Technological advancements are also seen in the process of getting inked.

Mythological stories show how tattooing was part of the Hindu culture through centuries. The traditional art of body tattooing is known as Godna, practiced in Central India. This art is closely related to the Hindu religion and is mainly practiced by the Nondwig castes of the Avadhi region. The artist is known as Godarins or Maharins. As Godna is a permanent mark on the body, it is believed that God will save the individual in crisis even after death by recognizing the symbol. (Neetu., 2015:15). In India's Awadh region, Godna tradition is associated with the concept of purity and pollution, which is an important dimension of Hindu caste, order, and identity. A myth that is associated with the Godna art of this region.

The myth states that Lord Shiva invited the Gods to feast. A Gond God also went for the invitation. The Goddess was sitting in a different place. The Gond God went searching for his wife but could not recognize her. By mistake, he touched Goddess Parvati's shoulder. Lord Shiva knew that it was a mistake, but Goddess Parvati got annoyed and ordered that all Gond women were to wear a permanent mark to be identified.

This identification was caste-based. Such stories highlight how religion acts as an agent of social control and helps in bestowing individual identity, mainly the identity of belongings to a particular group.

Another mythical story was that Yamraj was confused about the gender of the dead when the spirits went to their kingdom. He desired that his daughter-in-law should be marked with some kind of black stuff at her death. When this was done, his daughter-in-law became extremely attractive. Thus, he ordered his son and daughter-in-law to go to the earth in an attire of a Godhanhari and display them to the villages.

Since the Godna mark is seen as a mark of prosperity and wealth, it was taken up by the earth's people, which can be taken even after death. Such forms of stories or myths highlight that how religious ideologies create a gender identity. However, in this case, the concept of looking good in the case of the female gender is very significant. Thus, by ordering the body modification processes, rights, and rituals, religion creates a form of identity, whether it may be based on parameters like caste, gender, and other social hierarchy. Such processes help in the surveillance and monitoring of the human body in the name of religion.

Through the Godna rituals of the Awadh, control of females is also significant. Various folk songs stating that fathers-in-law should not stare at the daughter laws tattoo motif – acts as an example of avoidance relationship between daughter-in-law and father-in-law in kingship terminology.

"Sassu ke dant ray Battisti

Bahu ke bahin godna.

Sasur sa bole bahu toh,

Moray nihare godna.

Janu hum janati kee sasur niharba tu godna

Sasur nahin ray godaittee –

Aapan baahin godna" (Singh,1989.295)

(Sparkling teeth of mother-in-law, tattoo in daughter-in-law's hand, daughter in law told to father-in-law, why you stare at my Godna mark? If I knew that you would be looking at my tattoo, I would not get a tattoo mark on my hand.).

Thus, taking the above stories, it can be pointed out that religion is the agent of social control, and the body becomes the medium in such control. The tattoo mark becomes the mark of identification which the individual also wants to carry with him or herself even after death. As mythologies have a significant role in our lives, such belief in tattooing can be observed in contemporary times also. As discussed in the section on tattooing and gender, that how among certain communities, it becomes mandatory for a marriageable girl or woman to get tattooed. Such mandates are made by the religious institution, which creates the cultural code of conduct. The folk song mentioned above points out how an individual's body, especially that of the women, is controlled based on visibility. The audience, the design, the visibility, and the tattoo location are culturally defined, which is coded by religion. As religion is an active and strong agent of socialization, individuals internalize them taking it as normal. Thus, to be part of this, normal individuals try to gain acceptability from the community within which they live and hence passively get controlled by society's dominant ideologies.

Mythological stories do have an impact on tattooing and body modification, especially among particular communities of India. Their significance, however, has eroded with time. Among India's Hindi-speaking Hindu community, tattooing is more often a

compulsion defining their caste and religious identity. In the present research, 9 respondents out of 20 Hindu respondents belonged to the Hindi speaking community, originated from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh regions of India, presently living in Kolkata for more than two generations, had tattoo inscribed in names and images of Hindu God and Goddess, and they believe that it gives them the identity of being part of their group or community. The women, however, had small motifs.

Body Modification like the Godna/tattooing in India is also related to caste identity and hierarchy, which is based on the Hindu concept of purity and pollution. Practices like restrictions to temple entry, restrictions to common access to water, etc., are some concepts related to it. Around 250 km from Raipur, the capital of Chhattisgarh, there are some Dalit community-based villages. They are mainly Ramnami Samaj's followers, a religious movement founded in the the1890s by a Dalit Ram devotee called Parshu Ram Bhardwaj, who was denied entry to a temple in one of the villages in Chhattisgarh. As they believed that God exists everywhere, they started tattooing the name of 'Ram' on different parts of their body as a marker of being a devotee to Lord Ram. The process was mainly administered by women using an ink made of shoot and water and would be done at an interval. Such practices highlight how such practices in the name of religion helps maintain social equilibrium and control.

The mark of lord Ram on their body indicated their belonging to the Dalit community, as among the particular Ramayani community, it was adopted by the lower castes, and thus the identification. Though the movement on its face seems to emancipate them from the clutches of traditional beliefs and practices, the mark on their body gives them a Dalit identity, separating them from the rest of the society. The politics of religion is thus so strong that y engrafting the name of Lord Ram individuals feel, free and emancipated from the clutches of religious ideologies, but it only a false consciousness as stated by Marx – which created a state of illusion in which everything seems just in the name of religion. Getting such tattoos to get accepted in society can also be taken as an example of Sanskritization, where these individuals to be part of the mainstream society adopts various cultures of the dominant caste.

In a study by Mohanto (2015:82-83) on the Baiga tribe of India, the author emphasizes the importance of tattooing upon the tribal culture of India; he analyses the symbols used and their significance. Baiga is one of the particularly vulnerable tribal groups,

known for its traditional treatment method and shifting cultivation. Both men and women tattoo. The tattoo is treated as wealth and ornament of the tribe. As tattoos are less costly than jewelry, these poor tribal people opted for tattoos as jewelry symbols. They use traditional methods using homemade dyes, inserting with iron needles or wooden needles. In recent times there is also the emergence of battery-operated tattooing machines. Dr. Mohanto points out that designs of the tattoos were strongly on gender lines. Flower, moon, etc., such symbols were assigned to women, scorpion and other symbols are associated with men. These are associated with norms of masculinity and femininity as defined by the cultural standards of the society.

Rao (1942:175-179) stated that tattoo culture is prevalent among south Indian tribes like Korava, Irula Doms and mostly connected with their religion and mythology, totems, and traditional avocation. The figures of scorpions, birds, fishes, flowers are common. The Vaishnava sect marks (namans) are also included. Names of persons or the initial letters of names are also noticed. In muscular pain or other disorder cases, tattoos of gods (e.g., Hanuman) are resorted to as remedial agents. Among Lambani women, no one can be without a dot tattoo on the nose's left side. Among the Todas, only women tattoo, and as a general rule, must have borne one or more children. Occasionally, however, girls are tattooed after reaching puberty but before giving birth to children.

Though tattoos on tribal women were more invisible than that of women of mainstream society, the definition of size and design more based on feminine and masculine characteristics is the same as that of mainstream society. Women usually had small, simple motifs that are associated mainly with femininity. Analyzing the tribal tattooing among Daunian women, it is seen that there are six times more tattoos with ornamentation among women, and men only had tattoos with designs of weapons. (Norman, 2011:1-2). In South India, the Korava women, the body's parts generally getting tattoos are the chin, arm, forehead, and cheeks. It stated that muscular pain areas were confined to men, especially over the shoulder joints, thighs, etc. Lambani women have elaborate patterns tattooed on the backs of their hands and a dot on the nose's left side. No Lambani women are supposed to live without it. (Rao, 1942:175-179).

In most of the tribal culture, girls get themselves as a marker of entering adulthood or on reaching their puberty. Within the tribal communities of Dudhi and Singrauli Estates

of Mirzapur District of Uttar Pradesh, girls get their tattoos done when they reach maturity. Unlike the mainstream tattoo artist, the tattoo artist is an elderly woman known as 'guadhanharin'. Usually, the girls get a tattoo done before their marriage, and no man marries a girl without a tattoo. The designs include 'Hathi, pothi, chandrama and phulwari. (Elephant, book moon, and flower. The tattoo location is generally on the chin, neck, breasts, backs, arms, thighs, and legs. The tattoo girl makes her a full-fledged member of the female circle. (Mathur, 1794:139-145).

Though an elephant's motif is associated with masculinity and the tattoo artist being a woman takes up a masculine job, though it makes the act more rational and emancipating, there are some hidden patriarchal terms and conditions. In many tribes of India and the world, tattooing is a norm for women. They are mainly done on women's faces to discard their beauty and save themselves from other tribe members. Unlike the western world, we find a long history of women tattoo artists in India. The traditional art of body tattooing is known as Godna in India. This art is closely related to the Hindu religion and is mainly practiced by the Nondwig castes of the Avadhi region. The artist is known as Godarins or Maharanis. (Singh, 2005:15-23). Though tattoo artists were not confined to men only, women also had a significant role. Women's role as tattoo artists is somewhat culturally defined, and religion plays a significant role here. The tattoo artist is a woman who conducts the art on a woman and not on a man. The women's body is thus seen and touched by a woman and not by a man. Here patriarchal control of women's bodies also comes in. In case of choice, there is no choice given to the girl or the woman whether she wants to get a tattoo. Her acceptability by the woman by a man as a wife is something that becomes important. Here again, Foucault's conception of the docile comes into mind as if the women's body is the canvas upon which the cultural codes of conduct are painted. Such forms are also made to believe true, particularly in a Hindu-dominated society like India, through religious myths and ideologies.

Having a tattoo is, many a time, a sign of achievement of men. As discussed in the section on women and tattooing, women reaching maturity and being accepted as marriageable is an achievement, so among many tribes and communities, they get inked. In the case of men, though there is no formal rule, it marks an indicator of being strong and the achievement of being the bearer of pain. Among the Naga tribes of

Nagaland, the Konark was the fiercest warrior among them. The Konark was the last tribes among the Nagas to accept Christianity, but analyzing history shows that they were known for marauding nearby villages of other tribes, thus resulting in the killing of the opponent tribesmen. Headhunting was practiced, and the Konark used to carry the heads back to their villages and hung them in the community hall, representing the head-hunter's power. As a mark of his headhunting achievement, tattoos were inscribed on their bodies, which gave them the identity of being strong and a brave man. Headhunting was like a ritual practiced to mark the achievement of the men. This was also associated with social prestige and status. (Chingang, 2008). Here the social prestige and status were associated with masculinity. All the above studies highlight how tattooing in India forms a part of tribal culture and identity and its evolution. However, these studies do not highlight the popularity of tattooing culture among contemporary Indian youth.

Among the Santhals, tattooing is limited to women. Tattooed women wear small tattoos on their wrists near the end of the forearms and their chests. The tattooing processes generally take place at the age of 10 to 11 before marriage. Women without tattoos were regarded not suitable for marriage. It served as a totem and thus occupied religious significance. The tattoo marks are considered as testaments before God (Bhogoban) of their existence in the world and after their death to help extricate them out of the sins. Among the Kanbi and Warli of the Gujarat region, women practiced tattooing on their foreheads and cheeks. (Joshi 2006). The main symbol is that a tree and its leaves. In this case, tattoos are used both as a mark of beautification as well as a totem. Women of this community generally wear a tattoo of a peepal tree or an acacia tree has crucial significance as a mark of purity in the Hindu religion. On the other hand, the men have pictures of Hindu Gods like Hanuman, Krishna, the motif of 'OM', etc. Such symbols also reflect how women's identity is related to nature and the concept of being pure and how the engraftment of masculine Gods reflects the socially created concepts of masculinity and femininity.

Among the Nagas, the Konyaks are considered unique for their tattoo marks on their faces, chins, necks, etc. For them, a tattoo was a symbol of dressing and identity. Changing in The Konyak Naga: Yesterday and Today (2008:8-10) expounded the oral narratives about tattoo origin among the Konyaks, based on oral traditions. The myth

prevails that an incident took place in Yingnyu hong, where the inhabitants killed a bizarre animal and distributed it among themselves, except a widow. After eating the strange animal, many misfortunes occurred like crop-failure, sickness, turmoil, etc. The villagers, in fear, moved to a different region. In the meantime, the Royal family moved here. Instead of seeking guidance from the Kahwang, the people blamed him for the misfortune. There was an earthquake soon after. With the fear of such calamities, the eastern region people decided to distinguish themselves from others. As a result, they marked their faces with a mixture of frankincense, a juice of a particular plant, and the black powder obtained from utensils. In this way, tattooing became a mark of identity among the Konayks groups among the Nagas. However, with the advent of Christianity in this region, tattooing's importance declined, as Christianity does not promote body modification and alteration.

Tattooing involves lots of health risks as colors and needles are injected into the dermis of the skin. The major causes for the increase and spread of these risk-prone diseases associated with tattoos are lack of awareness and less professionalism among tattoo artists. A study conducted on a small number of tattooed respondents in Kolkata, India, by Archita Dey, Kaustav Das, Koel Mukherjee, and Sutopa Mukhopadhyay (2017:32-33) points that there are no legal issues and rules related to tattooing in India; anyone with a tattoo machine becomes a tattoo artist without proper knowledge. The individuals who are getting inked are also not aware of the health risks associated with tattooing unless there are some issues. There are also no rules about the certification of tattoo artists. The desire for high profit leads to the use of low-quality ink, making the process more risk-prone. The literature on health risks associated with tattooing can be summed up as indigenous traditions of tattooing methods are changing with technological advances, but new technologies have new risks. Thus, indigenous methods should also be preserved for medical references. The major health risks are mainly associated with transmissible diseases. However, lack of awareness among the individuals and less governmental control on this profession makes it more risk-prone. However, risks are not only associated with health factors only.

III. Literature Outside India.

A. Tattooing and Identity Construction.

Clinton Sander's research conducted in the late 1980s is one of the earliest academic endeavors on tattooing. Lived experiences of the respondents were highlighted in his research. These experiences included decisions on what type of tattoo to get, including the design, size, location, and visibility of the tattoos. His focus was on how to get tattoos and how these tattoos have an impact on the tattooed individual's relationships with others. Sander's research also aimed to point out how having a tattoo impacted their definition of self and their interaction experience with others.

Sander published several books and articles on tattooing. An overall summary of his work published in 1989, 1985, and 1988 has been summarized for the present research. After interviewing several tattooed individuals, Sander found that individuals often decided to get themselves inked because of their significant others, close to the respondent had a tattoo or want to get one. It was often a spur of the moment for the individuals to decide to get inked. (Sander, 1988:405). Choosing the design was related to "the person's connection to the other people", "fit his or her definition of the self," and in the case of women, it is to "enhance the beauty of the body". (Sanders, 1988:409).

He argued that tattoos symbolize membership in an unconventional group. These groups created their norms for their members. These norms define accepted standards, and they are tagged "normal". (Sanders, 1988:425). Sanders concludes this piece with a discussion of the tattoo as an "indelible mark" situated as a stigma symbol (Sanders, 1988:430).

Sanders and Vail (2008), in their book *'Customizing the Body: The Art and Culture of Tattooing'* points out that wearing a tattoo connected a person to significant others who were similarly marked and made one unique by symbolizing freedom or self-control. Tattoos are used to demonstrate a commitment to a group. Military personnel members of sports teams and unconventional law violating subcultures like youth gang members choose similar designs. There is a definite convention affecting the decision to place the tattoo on a particular body part. Men mostly choose the arm, while women choose the hip, lower abdomen, back, or shoulder. Women tend to regard the tattoo as a permanent body decoration intended for personal pleasure and the enjoyment of those,

they are most intimate with. The male tattoo is an identity symbol—a more public display of interests, associations, separation from the normative constraints of conventional society, and, most importantly, masculinity. The designs chosen by men are usually larger than those favored by women and, rather than employing the gentle imagery of nature and mythology (flowers, birds, butterflies), they frequently symbolize more violent impulses—Snakes, bloody daggers, skulls, dragons, and birds of prey. Women's tattoos continued to be interpreted as signs of sexual promiscuity, even as women of high socioeconomic status increasingly wore body ink. Only tattoos that supported 'respectable' femininity (being gentle, nurturing, delicate) received acceptance. The tattooed consistently conceive of the tattoo as having an impact on their definition of self.

Michael Atkinson is another influential tattoo scholar to publish several works on tattooing. Based on three years of participant observation research across Canada with various tattooing groups. (Atkinson, 2003, 2004). His research is significant in arguing against the mainstream anti-social views, which he argues has dominated sociological and psychological research. Atkinson believes that tattooing is a pro-social activity in which individuals purposely engage to resist cultural discourses about what is defined as an appropriate body project. Atkinson's (2004:125-146) ethnographic study with 92 tattoo enthusiasts of Canada concluded that tattooing the body represents one's sense of "I" within social circles, i.e., "WE" groups (e.g., family, friends, peers). The majority of tattoo enthusiasts interviewed spoke of the power of cultural expectations to perform identity through "aesthetically pleasing" forms of physical manipulation. Building "better looking" bodies (i.e., powerful, beautiful, and controlled) is a vehicle for acquiring recognition, admiration, and inclusion within mutually identified 'WE' groups. Enthusiasts claim that the tattooed body is distinctively communicative, consisting of a Display-view-judge process, where audience perceptions influence how someone experiences their tattoos. The message that a person intends to communicate through a tattoo is not always the message received by others. The complex motivations often impose unintended meanings on their tattooed bodies. For many women, tattooing involves conformity and resistance to the expectation that their bodies are attractive to men. While many women have sought tattoos as a way to transgress gender norms by challenging the limited roles of wife and mother and exploring other ways to define themselves, contemporary women increasingly seek tattoos as conventional markers of

feminine beauty, desiring to draw attention in certain contexts (i.e., in a nightclub, on a date). For a small group of enthusiasts, tattooing projects express "negative" feelings of anger or aggression. Instead of attacking the source of frustration through a physically threatening act, they undergo body projects to illustrate their capacity for self-restraint.

Romanienko's (2011) book *'Body Piercing and Identity Construction: A Comparative Perspective'* was based on fifteen years of experience with defiant communities engaged in body modification (Gutter punks, bikers, and anarchists). She explored how body modification can be used as private and public symbols that portray a particular identity of rebellion and defiance, demonstrating rejection of conformity and conventionality. Such displays also provide a sense of status and belonging within one's group. Thus, one's body becomes a canvas for displaying discursive resistance. When legitimate institutional means are unavailable, body modification provides individuals an opportunity for self-determination, empowerment. DeMello and Irwin. DeMello's research investigates how various popular culture and academic outlets address the topic of tattooing. (1995:37-52). DeMello points in his work point out that aesthetics, individuality, and personal growth are three major reasons for individuals to get tattooed. (1995:37-52). DeMello's study also points out the increasing presence of the middle class in tattooing.

Irwin conducted extensive research into tattooing culture. She came in contact with tattooing culture through her involvement with Lefty Blue, her husband. He researched the 1990's while she got herself inked. She found out that to get away with fears of being associated with the lower class, individuals engaged themselves with various legitimizing techniques. (Irwin, 2001). Irwin points out that these techniques often involved legitimizing the decision of getting inked as a moral passage was involved with it. Getting inked was a marker of liberation and freedom. Irwin also pointed out that more middle class, not themselves, inked to avoid the stigma associated with it. (2001:49-73). She concludes that there is a need for more research focusing on how interactions are tied to and can impact social change.

B. Stigma and Tattooing.

Many studies highlighted the association of tattooing with deviance, crime, disorder resistance, etc. Scholars like DeMello, Sanders showed the correlation between certain

groups with tattooing, like Bikers, convicts, sailors, punks, and delinquents. These groups also were stigmatized by society. The popularity of tattooing with these groups was associated with the relation of tattooing with symbolized group affiliations. Sanders indicates that by the twentieth century that tattooing was established as a deviant practice in the public mind. (1989:445).

Tattooing as a form of body modification is mainly associated as part of the deviant culture. Tattooing is associated mainly with sailors, criminals, etc., who are mainly men. The earliest stories of sailor's tattoos are not women's stories. Women's bodies speak on behalf of the patriarchal scripts that limit women's voices and bodies to their respective roles. Therefore, on a women's body, any tattoo becomes a symbol of bodily excess. Thus "when a woman's body is a sex object, a tattooed woman's body is a lascivious sex object, when a women's body is nature, a tattooed woman's body is primitive when a woman's body is spectacle a tattooed woman's body is a show." (Braunberger.2000:1-23.). Whatever meanings the woman attaches to their tattoos, tattoos simply inscribe meanings to the woman's body within a larger cultural domain. Taking the phrase 'tattooed woman's body is a show' and the fact that tattooing is associated with deviant culture, all patriarchal gaze on tattooed woman's body is taken to normal as it portrayed in a manner that such women go through the tattooing processes for the male gaze. An example of a rape trial in the late 1920's Boston shows that the judge and jury concurred that as the victim had a butterfly tattoo on her leg, she has misled the man. They also interpreted that a tattoo indicated her past sexual records. (Braunberger.2000:4-5). In much popular cinema, serials, and advertisements, tattooing is associated with the socially created notions of 'bad women.' That is, they are either prostitute, women engaged in extramarital affairs, etc.

Goffman's concept of Stigma can be associated with this connection. According to Goffman, Stigma is a sign that designates the individual as spoiled and differentiates them from normal. (Goffman,1963:132-150). Now, this normal is a social construct, something that is followed by the dominant accepted culture. Ones who do not follow the trend are stigmatized as deviant or rebels. Individuals to maintain impression and avoid stigma tries to abide by the norms culturally set. Others get the identity of being deviant. Stigmatization is an individual process; some attributes and characteristics that are devalued are socially created, depending upon how individuals interpret the

situation in the interaction. "Stigmatized individuals possess (or are believed to possess) some attribute, or characteristic, that conveys a social identity that is devalued in a particular social context" (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998 quoted in Link & Phelan, 2001:277-298).

As per the definition of stigma given by various scholars, a particular social context tattoo can be viewed as a stigmatizing agent. Stigma in the presence of others may both be a discredited or discreditable attribute. (Goffman, 1963:132-150). Borrowing from Goffman, Sander argues that having a tattoo indicates that the individual may possess a 'potentially discredited attribute'. (1985). Sander's points out that:

"Because of the historical course of tattooing in the West, the tattoo is conventionally defined as an indication of the bearer's alienation from mainstream norms and social networks. It is a voluntary stigma that symbolically isolates the bearer from "normals." Since tattooees are deemed to be responsible for their "deviant" physical condition, the mark is especially discrediting" (Sanders, 1988:397).

As individuals voluntarily get inked, they got tattooed knowing the negative connotations. By trying to normalize the negativity or stigma, this may have resulted from having a tattoo; individuals take into account both the discrediting attributes and the audience's reactions to their differentness. Sanders points out: "choosing to mark one's body in this way changes the tattooee's experience of his or her physical self and has significant potential for altering the social interaction." (Sander, 1988:397). Goffman's point on stigma becomes important in this respect. Goffman points out individuals' action in reaction to stigma, an individual must decide *"to display or not to display; to tell or not to tell; to let on or not to let on; to lie or not to lie; and in each case, to whom, how, when, and where"* (1963:57).

Stigmatization associated with tattooed individuals can be best explained by seeing the difference in people's attitudes towards tattooed and non-tattooed individuals. Arndt and Glassman conducted a study in 2009 and pointed out that there are differences in people's attitudes towards tattooed and non-tattooed individuals. (2012). The study concluded that participants with tattoos were trusted more by tattooed people than participants without tattoos, and the willingness to work with tattooed people was also more when compared to non-tattooed people. The major reason was harsh or negative

comments from non-tattooed individuals. Often non-tattooed people associate tattoos with something 'bad' or deviant. (2012:50-65).

Munet. Al (2012) conducted interviews with 30 women of Pennsylvania University where many participants used tattoos as a medium to express their values-designs that symbolized music of interest, characters from comic books, books read, art pieces, or animals they liked. Many used it as self-expression using terms like "reflection of myself." Another emergent meaning of tattoos was to denote a past life event or relationship with a family member or a friend. Spiritual meanings of certain mythical symbols were attributed to tattoos by some. Participants thought such tattoos gave them emotional support, confidence, strength, and protection. Participants were concerned not to reveal their tattoos in front of disapproving family members and job interviews. Meanings of tattoos were found to be dynamic. Because selves change over a lifetime, the tattoo's original meanings were often perceived as incompatible with their current self. Participants in such a case went through a type of reflexive negotiation or revision process where new meanings were developed that replaced original meanings.

C. Gender Tattooing and Identity.

Along with the various other body modification practices, tattooing has recently received increased attention in academic literature, as the practice is rising its popularity with time. Detailed academic research involving the interplay between gender politics and tattooing is relatively rare. For the present study, several academic kinds of literature focus on tattooing as a practice that has been historically devalued which has more or less not changed; it also focuses on tattooing as a traditional masculine practice. It also tries to relate literature that draws a correlation between the historical development of female tattooing and the sexualization of the practice. It also highlights the concept of power and control of the body about one's bodies. The study also looks at current views on female tattooing, resistance, and gender negotiations.

An important underlying theme in tattooing literature is the association between tattooing and the display of hyper-masculinity. As tattooing has been historically linked with the lower class throughout the 20th century (Atkinson 2003, Caplan 2000, Demello 1995), tattoos and tattooing historically were also associated with the concept of masculinity and display of masculinized characteristics and behavior. (Atkinson

2003, Guest 2000, Halnon 2006). This association of tattooing is traced back to the tattooing culture in North America, mainly upon men sailors' bodies. (Atkinson 2003, Caplan 2000, DeMello 2000). Images of the tattoo were mainly masculine, like that of militarized 'tough' version associated with tattooing by displaying one's tattoos (Atkinson 2003). Atkinson pointed out that during the 1920's and 1950s, tattooing became increasingly associated with militarized ideals related to characteristics associated with honor, patriotism, and strength. At this time, tattoo parlors became "ports of call for servicemen, settings to prove one's masculinity to others." (Atkinson 2003). Recent academic research suggests that tattoo is often displayed in advertisements and characteristics associated with hyper-masculinity like aggressive, strong, etc. Historically, the tattooed body was associated with a male body, which has important implications on female tattooing.

Tattoos are associated with male bodies and masculinity. Tattoos are associated with female bodies, historically often been associated with sexuality. This association has its earliest roots in the North American Culture, in the circus era of the late 19th and early 20th Century. (Govenar 2000:216-213, Mifflin 1997:10-15, Oettermann 2000:113-136). Heavily tattooed bodies were that was an uncommon sight, and such bodies were treated as a public spectacle generally associated with primitive and uncivilized culture. (Atkinson 2003:219-234). Both tattooed men and women found them make a living by displaying their bodies in the crowds. (Atkinson 2003:219-234, DeMello 2000:40-56, Fisher 2002:91-97, Mifflin 1997:10-15). The tattooed performer included heavily tattooed women, which led to the development of these women as sexualized objects. (Mifflin 1997, Oettermann 2000). Fisher (2002:91-97) has pointed out that towards the end of the 19th century, women were seen wearing revealing clothes as per their occupational demands to show their tattooed bodies. Thus, such occupational requirements led to the association of female tattoos with sexuality. Academic literature points out that the display of the women's body in the circus era developed into "a form of soft pornography in which women would strip before the crowd, adding a libidinal element to the veritable peep show. (Atkinson 2003:219-234). This residual notion of tattooing and sexuality remained throughout the mid-20th century. Samuel Steward researched along with the Kinsey Institute into the sexual cause of tattooing concerning pain. Steward suggested that women's tattoos in the early 1950s often indicated sexual possession of the women by the male lover. (Steward 1990). Recent studies have linked

female tattooing with sexual intimacy in a heterosexual relationship. *"The bikini-line, upper thigh or breast tattoo sometimes represents a secret gift for a lover, it is revealed when clothing is removed...."* (MacCormack 2006:70).

Sander also discussed the concept of a tattoo as an intimate sexual gift. Sanders argued that women use tattoos to beautify themselves and increase their attractiveness as sexual partners. (Sander, 1989). DeMello points out that female tattooed bodies in the media are interpreted in the context of sexuality. DeMello points out that female tattooed body was very much displayed differently than male tattooed bodies: *"The men who are chosen tend to have a large part of their body covered with tattoos; generally, a full back piece.... Women featured in the magazine, on the other hand, often have as few as two or three small to medium-sized tattoos and are very often shown nude....."* (DeMello 1995:46). DeMello argues that for this reason, "Some tattoo magazines can only be purchased by adults due to female nudity" (DeMello 1995:45). In this respect, women's image as an object of sexual gaze in the circus era thus continues. DeMello points out that removing women's clothing was not to display art but to consumer sexualization of the female tattooed body. (1995:49-55). Turner points out that "discrete and aesthetic butterflies and flowers on the shoulders and backs of fashion models and middle-class professional women are sexual consumer images" (Turner 1999:47). The concept of sexuality concerning female tattooing is an important one and is discussed prominently in my analysis. The relationship between tattooed body, power, and control dates back to the earliest practices of tattooing. Forceful tattoos upon prisoners and many of many tribes' act as a marker of control.

Most of the literature on the tattooed body reflected primarily on the male tattooed body or gender-neutral context. Only a few scholars have talked about the gender politics associated with tattooing. Atkinson's study here gain becomes significant. Atkinson argues that despite the growing popularity of tattooing, women's body remains a contested site concerning the gender representation of tattoo selection. Atkinson argues that to mitigate the potential disapproval, women generally negotiate with the tattoo selection process. To make the tattooed body socially acceptable, various measures are taken to make the tattoo look more feminine (2002). This includes the size, design, location, and visibility of the tattoo.

The above literature on tattooed bodies also shows that tattoos upon female bodies also represented resistance and negotiations. In her study on extreme body modifications, Pitts points out how female body projects like tattooing can act as an opportunity to resist female gender roles (2003). Pitts points out that: "Some women have described their body art as a way to rebel against male domination.....they aim to reject the pressure of beauty norms and the role of "proper" femininity." (Pitts 2003:3).

Female body projects act as a social signifier in which female bodies are most often categorized as either resistant or negotiated. This concept of negotiation and rebel is one of the central points of discussion in the present research.

With the increasing interest in the Sociology of the body, there has been an increase in interest in the female body norms for fashion and modification process in gender politics. Various studies on female beauty point out that there has been a link between expectation on feminine beauty and symbolic meanings associated with such meanings of ideal femininity. Findlay (1996), in his study, discussed the normative expectations for a female body. The ideal feminine beauty includes a series of expectations upon the looks of women. It also puts up expectations upon the "social territory" of women. To put it simply, men are expected to go through modification practices that will give them the identity of being strong, powerful, brave, etc. On the other hand, women need to present an opposite image defined as feminine beauty. Faludi (1991) and Wolf (2002) point out that to maintain the ideal feminine beauty, women need to look feminine and need to be feminine. The feminine image prescribed by society forces women to be less aggressive, less economically and politically driven and less threatening to corporal presentations. Wolf argues that "The beauty myth is always actually prescribing behavior and not appearance". (2002:14). Individuals who do not follow the socially prescribed notions of feminine beauty are stigmatized. Thus, the power of not attaining acceptability within the social sphere acts as a medium of control.

There is literature focusing on stereotypes upon tattooed individuals based on their gender. Arndt and Glassman, in a study conducted in 2012, pointed the differences in gender norms associated with female and male tattooed respondents at the workplace. Like black Celtic designs, snakes, etc., the masculine designs were described as aggressive tribal and bad when done or adopted by women. The study concluded that even if tattoos are accepted, there are definite codes of acceptable conduct for male and

female tattoos. The research also concluded that tattooed salespersons were not always viewed negatively by tattooed respondents than by non-tattooed respondents. Keinlen, in her study, points out that a tattoo shop owner Justina Kervel Noted that both men and women get tattoos to alter their identity of how society views them. The study also points out that women are not afraid to get larger tattoos that they do not accept, but they tend to hide their tattoos. Along with the size, tattoo placement becomes important in the case of visibility and gender norms. (Keinlen, 2005).

D. Religion and Tattooing.

Tracing back to the history of tattooing, tattooing culture has been prevalent almost in all religions. In many religions like Christianity, for example, tattooing is banned and is associated with deviance. Individuals belonging to these communities who opt for tattooing are tagged as members of our groups. (Scheinfeld, 2007:363). Tattooing has been an important tool for carrying out rituals and traditions. Though certain religion like Christianity and Islam are hostile to it, many religions like Hinduism and Buddhism makes it a part of the cultural trends. Based on religious purpose, tattooing can be classified under two broad categories: Devotional and Protective tattoos. (Scheinfeld, 2007:362-366).

Unlike the west, where tattooing was associated with criminality and deviant behavior, art does not have a history associated with deviant activities among all the existing communities. Among the Hindu community of India, it was more a ritual than a revolt. Mythological stories and narratives are supporting it.

In this context, the beliefs of the Ramnaamis Community can be noted. Ramnaamis is the most uniformly and devoutly tattooed sects in the world. Belonging to the untouchables group, they are sparsely populating the Indian states of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. The Ramnaamis believe that their tattoos furnish a refuge from harm in the form of their distinctive tattoos, the name "Ram" repeated in Sanskrit, which cover their bodies. These tattoos even appear on their tongues and the inside of their lips. (Katiyar Arun, India Today Dated 15th October 1992). However, modernity has changed such beliefs to a great extent, and in contemporary times, only 1500 tattooed individuals belonging to this community are there. Among the Kanbi and Warli of the Gujrat region, women practiced tattooing on their foreheads and cheeks. (Joshi 2006). The

main symbol is that a tree and its leaves. In this case, tattoos are used both as a mark of beautification as well as a totem. Women of this community generally wear a tattoo of a peepal tree or an acacia tree has crucial significance as a mark of purity in the Hindu religion. On the other hand, the men have pictures of Hindu Gods like Hanuman, Krishna, the motif of 'OM', etc.

E. Health Risks and Tattooing.

With the increase in technological innovations, there is an increase in tattooing popularity as the process is made easy, available, less painful, and more decorative with the increase in popularity, there increasing risks associated with it. The risks are both social and health-related. Along with the social risks of non-acceptance and stigmatization, there are many health risks associated with it. Though the history of tattooing points that in many tribal cultures, tattooing was used as a healing remedy, the current studies show a high chance of health-related issues associated with it. The evolution of technology from the prick of a plant to needles and machines for eyeball tattooing has made the risks even more complicated, which most tattooed individuals are unaware of. The present section aims to point out the relevant literature associated with this theme. The existing literature makes contradictory conclusions.

A study conducted by Carney, Dhalla, Aytaman, Tenner, and Francois (2013:3-71), tested 3871 tattooed individuals without any history of traditional risk exposure like sex work, drug, blood donation, etc., in the USA. Out of the total respondents, 1930 were HCV positive (Hepatitis c Virus), of which 95% had a direct connection with tattooing. The study also signals towards poor public health care systems. According to Samantha et al. (1998), tattooing is often performed in a group ceremony without sterilization between uses of needles and razor blades. Often, the same ink receptacles were used for all customers.

Body piercing and tattooing have been demonstrated to be risk factors for acquiring HBV, hepatitis C, and D virus, especially with non-disposable needles. Bleeding, tissue trauma, bacterial infection, and localized inflammations are also common. Recently, the piercing guns themselves have been recognized as a possible vehicle for the transmission of viral hepatitis. They are not easily cleaned and are infrequently sterilized. The choice of jewelry is also important. Dermatitis may occur with surgical

steel or gold. HBV transmission has also been associated with spring-loaded finger-stick devices, which have a similar mechanism of action to the piercing gun and maybe inappropriately cleaned.

In many parts of the world, laypeople perform the procedures with virtually no knowledge of anatomy, sanitation, or procedural precautions. They cannot thoroughly instruct the clients about the procedure, risk, proper aftercare techniques necessary for avoiding infectious complications. Gallè et al. (2011:2-7) Investigated knowledge about health risks for students at high schools and universities in Naples, Italy. Health problems with body piercing were found to be frequent. Infections at the site (blister, pus, drainage, pain, and redness) were reported by 45% of the students. Almost half of these students reported skin irritations and infections due to not receiving aftercare instructions (written and verbal instructions from the artist). 73% of the high school students and 33.5% of the university students had body art done at unauthorized places. Very few students presented themselves to health professionals for assistance in managing their body piercing problems, with most stating that they attempted to take care of any problems themselves. Participants with large tattoos had more knowledge about medical risks and complications compared to those with small tattoos. A significant number of students in both groups claimed to be aware of infectious and non-infectious risks but couldn't identify the viral diseases and allergic reactions. This suggested an inadequate level of information.

Deschesnes et al. (2006:379-393) conducted a study with 2,145 students (aged 12 to 18) in Quebec, Canada. While most teens said that a "professional" in a studio performed their body modification and that they received aftercare instruction, a high percentage of students report health complications following the procedure. Girls were proportionally more likely than boys to have called on a professional for a tattoo or a piercing. Girls received more verbal and written instructions concerning the care of their tattoo or piercing than boys. Boys were more likely than girls to resort to an amateur (mostly friends) or to do the procedure themselves, and they reported more complications than girls in general. Millner (2001:424-441) surveyed 79 pierced and/or tattooed participants from Florida and Louisiana to assess participants' perception of health risks related to their body modification. Most of them chose their tattoo/piercing artist based on the safety and cleanliness of the environment. However, those tattooed

reported less assurance with safety than did pierced participants. The author thinks that this is because the tattooed are exposed to unregulated pigments and unregulated instrument sterilization methods, whereas pierced individuals may only be exposed to unregulated instrument sterilization.

Tattooing also had therapeutic values. Anthropologist Lars Krutak has studied and analyzed tattooing cultures of many societies and written extensively on the subject. She points out that in several societies like Borneo, Papua New Guinea, and several indigenous cultures throughout America, tattooing was believed to be a remedy for several problems like infertility, spiritual possessions, joint pain, vision problems, paralysis, body pain, headache, etc. (Krutak, 2018:1-5). Other indigenous people like the Ainu of Japan and several native American groups like the Hupa practiced therapeutic tattooing. (Krutak, 2015:1-5). In a study approved by the Ethics Committee of Tokyo Women's Medical University, 56 breast cancer patients went through nipple tattoos. It was observed that the process took approximately thirty minutes, where eighteen needles and several pigments were used. A needle angled perpendicular to the skin was used. Instead of opting for the conventional approach, the areola's provisional position was marked of the healthy side, determined after the adjustment of the study. The results were achieved without any complications. (Sasaki and Matsumine, 2018:1-2). Thus, the positive consequences can also not be overlooked.

1.4 Methodology.

Methodology refers to the philosophy of the research process. This includes the assumptions and values that serve as a rationale for research and the researcher's standards or criteria for interpreting data and reaching conclusions (Bailey, 1982). It offers the theoretical underpinning for understanding which method, set of methods, or best practices can be applied to a specific case, for example, to calculate a specific result. Hence it is the logic of scientific investigation. On the other hand, research methods refer to the tools, instruments, and techniques used for performing and conducting research operations such as making observations, recording data, processing data, etc.

According to Claire M. Woollet, "Mixed methods research questions are those that ask either what and how or what and why. In such cases, both quantitative and qualitative

approaches are of use: respectively addressing what and the how or why". (2008:08). Traditionally Mixed Methods are defined as the use of both quantitative and qualitative data and methods. (Hesse-Biber, Johnson, 2013:103-104). The present study attempts to use a mixed-method approach to explore tattooed individuals' perceptions about body modification and identity construction and explore how technology has made the process a part of contemporary fashion. The present study is based on both quantitative and qualitative approach, with more emphasis on qualitative approach. In case for qualitative analysis experience of the respondents through the narratives shared by them are comprehended and explained, which became the primary base of the research. In case of quantitative analysis, the demographic profile is discussed with descriptive statistics. At the same time percentage calculations were also done to figure various dimensions associated with tattooing.

To combine quantitative and qualitative approaches for an expanded understanding of the research problem, a mixed-method approach has been used for the present research. The research was conducted based on a partially mixed concurrent dominant status design where quantitative and qualitative data was collected with major emphasis on qualitative data and methods. The present research aims to use a qualitative approach to analyze how through the process of body modification like tattooing, individuals develop his or her identity. Fashion and identity are socially constructed phenomena shaping tattooed individuals' lived experiences of the respondents, supported with quantitative data.

Though the research is mainly based on qualitative methods and data in certain contexts, quantitative measures are also used. For example, while analyzing demographic data and some other aspects, quantitative methods were of help. No single methods get priority over the other in the case of qualitative research. According to Cresswell, qualitative research is an 'intricate fabric composed of minute threads, many colors, different textures, and various materials. (2007:35).

In addition to mixed methods research, the present research also aims to use an Interpretative approach to mixed methods research. An interpretative research approach aims to understand how individuals make meanings of their social world. The social world is not independent of an individual's perceptions but is created through social interactions of individuals with the world around them. (Hesse-Biber, 2013:03). From

an interpretative perspective, a mixed-method project often uses quantitative research as an auxiliary to a primary qualitative methodology as a means of understanding both broader objective context and contextualizing people's experience. When a researcher employs an interpretative research approach, the researcher's epistemology assumes multiple subjective realities that include meanings and stories constructed or produced by individuals within their natural settings. (Hesse-Biber, 2011:10).

The present research aims to interpret that how the social experiences of individuals lead one to adopt a certain form of body modification as an agent of acceptable fashion by the society and how tattooed individuals, through their lived experiences in society, create a form of identity dictated and controlled by the societal norms. Here individual's interpretation of meanings of the social world is significant in creating his or her identity. Individuals adopt fashion trends and modify their bodies to manage impressions with the audience in interaction. Thus, individuals' interpretations of the reactions of their audiences are significant. Individuals' interpretations are to a great extent shaped by their social experiences.

Therefore, the research's primary aim is to interpret how tattooed individuals, through their lived experiences, create a form of social identity. The research aims to interpret gender and religion as social parameters in such identity construction through a cross-sectional approach. The research also highlights and interprets how technology has evolved with the changing society making fashion and body modification an accepted trend of contemporary society.

In the present research, I have used different qualitative approach methods, i.e., face-to-face interview schedule followed by observation and narrative analysis. The research tool was a semi-structured interview schedule. The interview method is often preferred by many researchers while conducting a qualitative approach. It is a "favorite methodological tool for the qualitative researcher" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:353) is practiced in this present research. Interview methods help the respondents to answer in their own words and also express their thoughts and feelings. They do more than just providing information about cultural frames and their importance while individuals create meanings of their social experiences. Through interviews, the lived experiences of the individuals studied, and their perspectives were able to be taken into account, which is again an attribute of the qualitative interpretative approach.

Narratives are defined as a movement from the start point to the endpoint with stepping or movement that involves telling stories or events. (Cobley: 2001:237). Narratives might be any term assigned to any discourse or text, or it might be texting simply used as a mode of inquiry in qualitative research with a specific focus on stories told by the respondents. (Chase,2005). Narratives are the preferred choice here as the research aims to highlight the tattooed individuals' experience in creating his or her identity. Narratives like respondents' experiences of getting stigmatized for having tattoos despite being a woman, mythological narratives of particular communities for compulsorily having a tattoo as a marker of community identity, and many more were significant for the present research.

Unit of Analysis and Sampling:

In the present study, the analysis unit was 40 tattooed individuals, both men and women residing in Kolkata, in 20 to 60. The age gap of 20 to 60 was taken to analyze the technological evolution that individuals adopt for getting ink. This age group was also taken to analyze the changing notions associated with tattooing as a form of body modification and point out how such notions influence individuals' identity. Selecting this age group also helped to analyze how notions of the stigma associated with tattooing and gender and religious norms change across generations.

In this study, the primary sampling technique was used to select the respondents. The Snowball method for collecting samples was also used. As 40 tattooed respondents were required after interviewing one respondent, contacts of known people with tattoos were gathered. A tattoo artist with a tattoo became the main source for snowball sampling. Individual face-to-face interviews were taken while recording the interviews with the respondents' consent while keeping in mind the ethical issues. Besides recording the data, field notes were also taken so that all necessary information could be taken into account. Narratives and live experiences of the respondents were also taken into account for better in-depth insights.

With this setup, I have attempted to present the basic demographic questions quantitatively. With the help of tables, the demographic data is presented. As the research is more qualitative, the data regarding tattooed individuals' experiences and their impact on their construction of identity has been presented qualitatively. All

respondents' names have been changed to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the present research.

CHAPTER:2.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

Introduction.

In the Post-modern society, the individual acts as a performer as they have the perfect self to maintain as defined by the society. Post-modern society is characterized by Post-industrial society. In the 1960s, the idea of moving into post-industrial society took hold in the U.S. (Doshi,2003:20). To maintain the perfect self-image, which is mainly reflected through one's appearance of the body, individuals adopt various body modification processes like tattooing following the fashion trend. Such modification processes are culturally defined, and the body, in this case, becomes the medium to express it. Identity construction is also significant in this respect. Theoretical frameworks help to introduce and describe the theory explains the question of why the research problem under study exists. Thus, various theoretical perspectives associated with symbolic understanding of these cultural codes and identity construction becomes significant here to be explained and discussed.

With the help of the symbolic interactionist perspective of Charles Horton Cooley and George Herbert Mead and the Dramaturgical Perspective of Ervin Goffman, the following chapter tries to analyze how individuals interpret the common body idioms and presents a perfect body and self that is socially desirable. As the individual's goal is to avoid stigma and maintain impression, societal control and discipline are ignored. In this context, feminist theories on body and discipline are examined to critically analyze whether body modification, like tattooing, acts as a control and discipline tool. It puts forward the norms of masculinity and femininity, or is it an act of emancipation and empowerment.

There is a common line of similarities that will be discussed through these theoretical frameworks. There are common symbolic meanings associated with various acts and functions of society. These meanings are culturally defined. The meanings also define the self of the individuals. In the case of tattooing, the symbol, shape, and design, the techniques all have some symbolic meanings and are culturally defined. The individuals adopt such forms of body modification process in order to follow the cultural trends. As the individuals run the race to reach the perfect self as defined by the society, to

avoid stigma and maintain impression, the individuals follow these culturally defined set of norms. Thus, through these theories, how the self of the individuals is created, what is society's role in the creation of the self.? How gender norms play a significant role in this respect comes into the limelight. As the body is the prime location upon which the art is practice, it becomes the text upon which the cultural codes are inscribed. Thus, views on different Sociologists on the body are also discussed.

2.1. Theoretical Frameworks and Explanations

A. The Body in Symbolic Interactionism.

"The body social is many things: the prime symbol of self, but also society; it is something we have, yet something we are, it is individual and personal, as unique as a fingerprint or odor plum, yet it also common to all humanity...The body is both an individual creation physically and phenomenologically, and a cultural product it personal as well as state property" (Anthony Synnott, 1993. 483).

Shilling (2003:17) suggests that "the body has historically been something of an 'absent presence' in sociology" – an object and subject of analysis that is both "at the very heart of the sociological imagination" and "absent in the sense that sociology has rarely focused in a sustained manner on the embodied human as an object of importance in its own right." That is historical; there have been works on the body in Sociological literature, but it has not received the amount of attention at times at it should have been. The importance of a social body that a socially shaped body needs much discussion also reflects one's identity and culture.

From a general interactionist perspective, the body is more than a mere object. It is more than "a mere skeleton wrapped in muscles and stuffed with organs" (Moore 1998) – the body is also an enormous vessel of the meaning of utmost significance to both personhood and society. The body reflects and defines the personality and self of the individuals. The body is a social object as the norms of society socially create it. "The body as an object cannot be separated from the body as a subject; they are emergent from one another" (Waskul and van der Riet 2002). Thus, the object body is actively experienced, produced, and thus transformed into the subjective body as defined by society. This process is termed embodiment. Through the various forms of modification processes, the body is embodied as it is transformed to attain the perfect, fit body as per

society's demand. Attaining the perfect self becomes the marker of society, which again is attained through body modification. The body becomes the medium through which the culturally set ideal body is attained and the ideal or perfect self. Thus, it becomes significant to point out how the body reflects the societal norms and gives the individual a sense of identity.

B. The Looking Glass Body.

The "looking-glass body" intentionally and resonates with Cooley's familiar "looking-glass self" (1902:151–152). Cooley explains that one can only reflect and form images of oneself from the imaginary perspective of others. In this process, Cooley identifies "three principal elements: the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his judgment of that appearance; and some self-feeling, such as pride or mortification." (Cooley, 1902:85). For these reasons, Cooley argued, "the imaginations which people have of one another are the solid facts of society," self and, as members of the society suggest, the body. (1902:87). Bodies are seen, and the act of seeing is reflexive in precisely the same way that Cooley identifies. When we gaze upon the bodies of others, we necessarily interpret what we observe. Similarly, others imagine what we may be seeing and feeling, thus completing the looking-glass reflections. This looking-glass body is not a direct reflection of other's judgments – it is an *imagined* reflection built of cues gleaned from others. *What we call "me," "mine," or "myself" is, then, not something separate from the general life, but the most interesting part of it, a part whose interest arises from the very fact that it is both general and individual.... To think of it as apart from society is a palpable absurdity.... There is no sense of "I"... without its correlative sense of you, or he, or they.... A social self of this sort might be called the reflected or looking-glass self.* Charles Horton Cooley, *Human Nature and Social Order* (1902. 92-93).

There is a common tendency among individuals, adopt societal norms just to maintain the identity of the perfect self. However, there is no fixed definition of the perfect self. It varies from society to society and across time. If we interpret Cooley's concept of the 'looking glass self,' we can say that like Mead, Cooley also believes that the self is the individual's interpretation of what others think about them. Thus, they always try to modify their daily acts according to such interpretations to reach the socially defined ideal self. Adapting to a particular society's fashion trend is one of the popular ways of

expressing oneself, adhering to the social norms. For example, after getting ready, the individual looks into the mirror and rectify whatever he/she thinks is not perfect. Similarly, society becomes the mirror where individuals adopt the appraisal and stigmatization process to the fashion trends to maintain the perfect self-image. In the case of tattooing, also such a concept can be applied.

In the context of the present research, the body and the modified bodies, especially with tattoos, are judged both by the audience and by the individuals giving rise to a definition of the self. The individuals, while interpreting such definitions tries to modify their bodies to create the perfect body and the perfect self as defined by society and interpreted by the individuals. For example, individuals adopt various fashion trends like tattooing to get more acceptability, and the same individual often tries to hide such tattoos with modified dresses, especially in front of an audience whom they think may treat it as deviant.

C. The Dramaturgical Body and Self.

As body modification like tattooing is associated with symbolic meanings, which are culturally defined, and the process of impression management is highly associated it, Ervin Goffman's dramaturgical approach on how the Self is created, modified, and again created through the process of Impression Management, while in interaction with the audience becomes important. Born in 1922 in Canada, Erving Goffman is an important figure in Sociology and a prominent name in Identity theory. Influenced by George Herbert Mead's work and his idea of interconnectedness between self and social experience, Goffman, like Mead, put forward the idea that how by interpreting the gestures of the audience in interaction, the self-conception of the individual is created.

Mead sees the Self as composed of two parts, the "I" and the "Me." "As the organized set of attitudes of others, the "me" is involved in thinking or reflexive role-taking, during which individuals engage in an internal conversation." (Applerouth and Edles,2007:180-181). The idea that we see ourselves as objects in a way that others see us is Goffman's central idea, expressed in his Impression Management concept. "Impression Management refers to the verbal and nonverbal practices we employ we present an acceptable image of the self to others". (Applerouth and Edles,2007:150). Taking the example of the present study, individuals modify their bodies as per society's

cultural standards to present an acceptable image of the self to others. This can be treated as the same reason why individuals tend to show their tattoos in front of a certain audience group and hide it from another. Thus, the self-created result of impression management, like Mead's concept of "me," is divergent and flexible. The socialized self-changes according to different roles and according to the situation, which Goffman terms as the 'definition of the situation. This self is also shaped by the audience involved. Mead's concept of 'significant others' and 'generalized others' becomes significant in this context.

In this context, the fashion trend one adopts, the type of modification that he goes through while following the fashion trend depends very much on impression management, and in the case of tattooing, the 'definition of the situation becomes very significant. This is particularly true in the case of the visibility of the tattoo. A person may display his or her tattoo in a particular situation, while he may hide it from another audience group in a different situation. This is mainly done in order to maintain an impression and avoid stigma. Here, the "me" becomes significant as the individual tries to display that part of himself to the intended audience, which he or she has learned to be ideal as per society's cultural standards.

In his work 'The Presentation of Self and Everyday Life' (1956:22), Goffman points out that individuals are involved in performance to maintain the definition of the situation. These performances revolve around many interrelated dynamics. Firstly, a performance includes the creation of a front. The front includes physical settings, fixed equipment like stage props to create a certain impression. The front also includes – a) items of expressive equipment, b) appearance, and c) manner. Items of expressive equipment include emotions, energies, and other capacities for expression. Appearance is signs that inform other individuals' social position and status as well as their ritual state. Manners are those signs that inform others about the roles that individuals are expected to play. They are a relatively small number of fronts, and individuals generally know them all. Forms of body modification like tattooing can be items of expression as through them, individuals' self is expressed. It also defines individuals' social situations and the ritual state as defined by the society, as what type of appearance holds higher social and ritual status are culturally defined. In the case of manner, tattoos are often

considered signs of deviance, and individuals are expected to associate with deviance and rebellious roles.

Second, along with presenting a front, individuals also use gestures, what Goffman calls 'dramatic realization'. This means that the individual uses signs to highlight the commitment to the given definition of a situation. For example, hiding the tattoo in front of an audience may associate the tattoo with deviance and may lead to unsuccessful social interaction. According to Goffman, the more a situation creates problems in presenting a front, the greater will be efforts at the dramatic realization. (Turner, 1990:451). In the front, individuals use various props to maintain their appearance, which includes the self-image, and hence when certain signs create problems in maintaining the self-image, individuals will try to edit and alter through dramatic realization. The modifying body can also be used as a prop for dramatic realization, as it helps maintain the appearance in the front as socially defined.

Third, the performance also involves idealization that is an effort to presents oneself as described and demanded by the dominant social-cultural values. Goffman defines it as efforts to present oneself in ways that "incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of society." (Goffman, 1959:35). In idealization, the actual self may be hindered, giving rise to the socialized social self. Individuals adopt various fashion trends to show a self that is more accepted by society. Such self becomes more flexible and lucid than concrete as it changes with changing fashion trends or the changing cultural ideologies of the society. The audience here also becomes significant as ideal, or one group of the audience may not be ideal for the other. Therefore, different representation of the self is created depending on the audience and the definition of the situation.

Fourth, efforts of such concealment are part of a process of maintaining expressive control. According to Goffman, ".....the impression of reality fostered by a performance is a delicate, fragile thing that minor mishaps can shatter." (ibid). In the present research, concealment includes involving oneself in the process of modification as part of the popular dominant culture and presenting a self that is accepted by society and maintains expressive control. Visibility of the body art in front of a selected audience can be treated as a mechanism of expressive control to maintain the

impression of the ideal or perfect self as culturally and socially defined. (Turner,1990:56).

Fifthly, individuals can engage in misinterpretation. Many a time's interpretations of gestures of the audience may be wrong. Many times, also perceived notions about the audience's notion of perfect appearance might also be wrong. Like people tend to hide their tattoos during job interviews with the fear of getting tagged as deviant. Many a time, this acts as a myth. Though it is related to the roles assigned and learned values and norms associated with the roles, not all audience demands. However, to maintain expressive control, a more generalized self-image gets created.

Sixthly, often engage in mystification or maintain distance from others to maintain the definition of the situation. However, such activities are confined primarily to individuals belonging to higher ranks or status or to people who are not dependent on others. Here the significance of the audience position becomes important. Distance from those audiences is possible or are practiced with whom individuals are not dependent. For example, in the case of display of body art and its association with the presentation of self, can lead to mystification from the audience like friends and distant relatives, but in the case of a job interview, where getting the job becomes important such distancing or ignoring the audience that not following their rules becomes difficult.

Seventh, individuals tend to make the performance look real; that is, they try to represent a self-defined and created by society so that it seems to be the actual natural self. Goffman sees the construction of the self as highly situational and dependent upon the responses of the others. Thus, to create the ideal self in front of the other individuals tries to portray it as the real self. However, there is no real or fixed self. In almost all of his, work Goffman points out that individuals do not have any underlying personality or identity. It changes depending upon the situation. For example, for a group of tribal people, tattooed men are brave and courageous, whereas for some, they are sensual, and for some, they are deviant. Individuals to create an accepted social self-accept the fashion trend of the particular dominant culture of the society.

The entire process is dependent on the concept of impression management, where the self-act as a performer and adopt various means to portray the perfect self as culturally and socially defined. Adopting modification measures as per the fashion trend is a part

of the performing self in maintaining the impression of being the ideal. The rehearsal is done backstage where the individuals, through socialization, learn the social roles and develop a self-image associated with such roles and present them on the front stage in front of the audience depending upon the roles played and the definition of the situation. Goffman points out that when presenting oneself in front of the audience, there may be multiple motives: *"Sometimes individuals will act in a thoroughly calculating manner...Sometimes individuals will be calculated in their activities but will be relatively unaware.....Sometimesbecause of the tradition of the group or social status.... this is likely to be evoked from those impressed by his expression..."*. (Goffman, 1959).

Maintaining impression is also related to the socially defined concept of morally right or morally wrong, which Goffman captures in his notion of the 'merchant of morality'. According to Goffman, "As performers, we are merchants of morality...." (Goffman, 1959;251). Individuals abide by the moral standards of good and bad to achieve the perfect self-image. In situations in which being deviant is the accepted popular value associated with the self, individuals prefer that to be morally right as here he benefits from being accepted and getting tagged as ideal or the perfect. The individual body along with the individual self, then as a performed character, is not an organic thing that has a specific location, whose fundamental fate is to be born to mature and to die; it is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented, and the characteristic issue, the crucial concern, is whether it will be credited or discredited. In analyzing the body, its possessor becomes important, as he or she will profit or lose most by it. Moreover, the means for producing and maintaining bodies are often thus bolted down in social establishments. Thus, the body becomes the reflection of the individual's self.

Individuals adopt modification through piercing, tattooing, etc., to get the perfect look. This 'perfect look' is defined by society, which gives the individual a sense of identity. Self in this context is developed through the everyday rituals that the individual adopts to gain the perfect self-identity. Calling upon Ervin Goffman in this context, the 'self' is a sacred object that must be treated with proper ritual care and, in turn, must be presented in a proper light to others. Through various forms of body modification process like cosmetic surgery, tattooing, piercing, etc., the individuals try to adopt the

present dominant rituals or the dominant cultural trait of a particular society to gain acceptance as the individual with perfect self-identity.

It is also a matter of impression management as if one cannot meet up with society's rituals, one will be looked down upon. In 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life,' Goffman points out that the individual is both a performer who fabricates impression in the "all-too-human task of staging a performance" self is a product of a scene that comes off and is not a cause of it. The self "as a performed character, is not an organic thing – the product of some intrinsic nature with a specific location, whose fundamental faith is to be born, to mature and to die, it is a dramatic effect arising from the scene that is presented and the characteristic issues, the crucial concern is whether it will be credited or discredited".

The self is thus born out of the various interaction process in which the individual tries to adopt the situation's rituals, and the self is developed through the credits and discredits accorded to the individuals. Through the various forms of the body modification process, the individual tries to attain the perfect body or appearance, which gives the individual a sense of identity. The self of the individual is defined as the rituals of society as per the society's rituals. Thus, the self develops through the process of Impression Management what others want or what society defines to be the ideal self. Through the various modification processes, the individuals try to impress the audience, i.e., society, thus rise to a self that is socially defined.

The process of Impression Management is closely related to the concept of Stigma. The word stigma is associated with deviance, negativity, and something that is not accepted by the society's members whom the individual tries to impress. Goffman uses the word stigma in his famous work on Asylum (1961), where the psychologically unfit or not normal are stigmatized for not being fit as per the norms of societal norms. The term 'normal' itself is very abstract. What is normal for one group of people, in one particular society, in a particular time frame may not be normal or another group of individuals in a different social and time frameset. The individuals who maintain the impression of being the normal adopt various processes and adopt the fashion trend is a part of it. The fashion trend gives him or her a social identity of either normal or not so normal by the members with whom the interaction is taking place.

In the case of body modification like tattooing, it both a process that stigmatizes individuals to be deviant while a marker of Impression Management. The audience here becomes significant. For a group of individuals, a tattooed body is the marker of deviance. If such a group of the individual becomes the significant audience for the individuals with tattoos, then by hiding the tattoo the individual tries to show an outer self-demanded by the society in that particular situation. The same individual may show off his or her tattoo just to impress his or her peers, among whom getting inked is the trend. Thus, individuals to avoid stigma portray multiple self-images as demanded by the intended audience in that particular interactional context through the Impression Management process. Turner criticizes Goffman for his denial of a core self, which is against the mainstream interactionist theorists. However, the Core Self, like Meads' 'I,' is the unsocialized self that, through socialization, gets fragmented into multiple selves or "me's" as taught by society. Individuals' roles in societies are related to one's self; thus, the core self remains buried under the pressure of maintaining the perfect self-images, which are always a transition.

Goffman recognizes that the body is the vital instrument by which we disappoint, disgust, delight, or impress others, giving the individual a definition of themselves. (Elliot, 2019). Goffman points out individuals' actions in reaction to stigma; an individual must decide. *"to display or not to display; to tell or not to tell; to let on or not to let on; to lie or not to lie; and in each case, to whom, how, when, and where"* (1963:57).

Stigmatization associated with tattooed individuals can be best explained by seeing the difference in people's attitudes towards tattooed and non-tattooed individuals. Thus, through Goffman's theory as a researcher, we can get an insight into how to avoid stigma and to maintain impression, the individuals follow the social norms and adopt the cultural codes of conduct in the similar way the actor does in a stage performance. The individual here runs the race of performing the perfect self, which like Cooley's Looking Glass Self, reflects the interpretation of the actor of the others interpretations. On the stage as a performer, the actor tries to impress the audience by interpreting their demands. In the social setting, the society and its members become the audience. Drawing upon Mead in this context, it is the "Me" that is the socially defined self that comes out through this process of interaction as the actor in the stage performance and

the self-changes as the per the roles and situation, similarly the "me" or the socially defined self of the individual's changes according to the different definition of the situation and according to the changing audience. The role of the significant others becomes very crucial in this respect.

D. Feminism, Fashion and Body Modification.

When talking about fashion identity, body modification, and tattooing, the social norms related to gender norms becomes significant. Fashion, particularly tattooing, has shown variations in gender norms—the gender orders of society guide the size, design, and visibility. Fashion is regarded by many primarily as an instrument of oppression in which women are turned into passive objects of the male gaze. Feminist scholars like Amelia Bloomer, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony all are against fashion which restricts women's movement. Through the process of socialization, individuals are meant to learn various norms associated with gender roles. Maintaining the attributes of masculinity and femininity is challenging for both men and women. The challenges become double in the case of women as we live under a patriarchal structure. In the case of tattooing, following fashion trends, there are defining norms defining the size, design, shape, visibility, etc. therefore, individuals do not enjoy the full autonomy to follow fashion according to their will. In a patriarchal society, many norms are more rigid in women's case; particularly, women are taught through socialization that they need to adopt various body modification techniques either to attract the opposite gender or to safeguard themselves from the opposite gender. The norms are made to believe as if it created for their good. The fact that it is actually enslaving oneself to society's cultural norms is not emphasized. However, fashion does not always enslave individuals, particularly women. It also emancipates them often or gives them a sense of freedom to express their identity according to their will, especially when it is done for self-satisfaction. However, this is a care case. Thus, in this section of this chapter, through different feminist perspectives, a critical analysis emphasizes how fashion is used both as an instrument of oppression and the emancipation of individuals' self.

Contemporary feminist scholarship on the body relied heavily upon the theories of the French poststructuralist philosopher Michel Foucault. Foucault has argued that in modern society and the development of democratic and parliamentary social systems, there have been developed specific strategies for disciplining the body. He argues,

"The historical moment of the disciplines was the moment when an artist of the human body was born, which was directed not only at the growth of its skills nor at the intensification of its subject, but at the formation of a relation that in the mechanism itself makes it more obedient as it becomes more useful.....discipline increases the forces of the body and diminishes these same forces." (Discipline and Punish, 1975: 138).

From Foucault's notion of the docile body, one which is subjected and transformed by disciplinary power, it can be pointed out that women's choice to body modification process is coerced conformity to gender roles and heteronormativity. The docile body is like a passive body. Such bodies are simply objects upon which the cultural texts are inscribed. Thus, such a body is under the control of society, modifying it according to its norms. Feminist scholar Kathryn Morgan in his essay, 'Women and the Knife: Cosmetic Surgery and Colonization of Women's Bodies' points out that Foucault's theories apply well to what she terms a contemporary "recognizably political metamorphosis of embodiment" that there is a politically motivated change in what bodies mean, in which women's bodies figure importantly as the disciplinary site for constructing normative femininity as young and beautiful. (Davis, 1995) By disciplining their bodies, women gain social acceptance and power that determines how and what bodies will signify. Tattooed women are tagged to be less feminine, which is often against the feminine concept of beautiful. Even the size, design, and visibility of the tattoo are gender-specific. A socially defined gender norm dictates both men's and women's bodies, giving society the power to control the body. As individuals run the race of impressing the audience involved in the interaction, they simply become passive agents of control. Here, the body becomes a passive entity that is modified according to society's demands, set by the dominant cultural ideology. This dominant cultural ideology is mainly patriarchal in nature. Even those who do not follow the trend and believe themselves to be different follow the social trend of being different and thus adopt various modes of modifying their body to maintain the impression of being different. Here the control is in a very unconscious matter. Something which may apparently look emancipating, in reality, maybe a mechanism of control of itself. In all contexts, the body remains passive as it is modified by the individual, following the cultural norms; the identity associated with such a body is also socially defined. Therefore, a powerplay comes into the game. Society controls the individual and also

the body by disciplining it through cultural norms. Recalling Goffman's concept of Impression Management in this respect, it can be pointed out that as the individuals try to maintain an ideal impression by avoiding stigma, such societal control becomes much more significant.

Relying on Foucault's explanation of power, Morgan argues that benevolent, therapeutic discourses of choice mask women's coercion. The source of this coercion can be located in contemporary privileges of technologies. Continuing the historical pathologization of women's bodies in social culture, contemporary medicine promises to finally cure the unruly female body through technological surveillance, interventions, and maintenance. From this promise of technology, any form of body modification seems normal and sensible. However, most body modification processes are long processes bearing the pain that individuals adopt to be a part of the disciplined society. In this respect, the pain that the women are the individuals who receive from society for not being able to attain the perfect body as defined by society is much more when compared to the pain caused by such technologies. Such technological advances act as a therapeutic agent healing the social pain and stress, giving the individual the desired social identity.

Feminist scholar Kathy Davis argues that many women suffer tremendously when their bodies do not conform to cultural standards of beauty, leading them to seek cosmetic surgery as a means of exercising control over their bodies. (Davis, 1995). Not only cosmetic surgeries in case of tattooing nipple tattoos, eyebrow tattoos, tattoos to hide the burn, or birthmarks are also examples of how society forces the notion of beauty upon individuals, especially upon women. Putting Foucault's analysis in this respect, society acts as an agent of disciplining the body as per their dominant cultural norms, and women's body in this respect tries to gain their perfectibility to acceptance in the male gaze. The concept of power, according to Foucault, is also fundamental; as Foucault points out, power is everywhere but not with everyone. In a patriarchal society, it lies with the patriarch. However, Davis talks about the notion of "free choice" and individual agency. She focuses on women's power in choosing to reshape her body, which is not similar to Foucault's conception of the dominance of culture in the body shaping regime. However, this point of the feminist perspective is very vital as despite the cultural dominance, any form of body modification, despite its cultural background,

does play a significant role in freedom of choice of the individual who is opting to modify her body for whomever concerned.

Women's bodies are texts upon which cultural codes of femininity are produced and contested. Female body projects involve either the ongoing maintenance of hegemonic ideology about femininity or the conscious attempt to subvert patriarchal ideologies through bodily resistance or both. Body modification is how culture is inscribed upon or performed through the body in everyday practice. This process is defined by de Certeau (1984) as 'intextuation,' i.e., how patriarchal notions of beauty are inscribed in female bodies. (Atkinson, 2003). Female bodies are socially constructed, monitored, regulated, and maintained according to femininity's dominant notions. The female body is organized around unattained images and styles of respectable yet sexually desirable femininity. The female body is the product of the dominant culture, which the patriarchal culture. The individual's type of body modification is for attaining to perfect body for the male dominating society.

Feminist works concentrate on objectification and propose aesthetic surgery dehumanizes and disempowers, whose efforts at self-improvements lead to objectification under the male gaze. (Covino, 2004). This point on the female body's objectification stems from the well-documented philosophical tradition that has emphasized the female body as inferior and disorderly. In this tradition, the female body is excluded from the male province of the sublime and its associations with transcendent intellect and eternal truth that is too regulated to the category of the beautiful subject to mutability and corruption. Edmund Burke defines beautiful as – connoting smallness, smoothness, fragility or delicacy and light as quite distinct from the sublime, which he describes in terms of darkness, vastness, heartiness, etc. The ideal beauty is the early and long-standing philosophical solution to relativity in human senses, perception, and taste, and mutability in material nature.

The aesthetic surgical industry maintains conceptions of ideal beauty that spiritualize the surgically beautiful body and maintain an ordinary body's aversion. In this way, the industry continues a dominant tradition in philosophical aesthetics that feminist theorists were working to reconstruct. Following the Platonic, neo-Platonic, and Enlightenment arguments that an ideal body is nobody at all, a body freed from materiality; the industry often presents an etherealized or disappearing body in its

advertisements. Beautification becomes the ascendance from the material realm of the beautiful to the eternal sublime. Feminist scholars like Faludi, Wolf, and Bordo, challenged the concept of ideal beauty and promoted the displacement of false consciousness by critical consciousness. It is important to be critical about the concept of ideal beauty as it creates the dominant patriarchal culture. An individual should be critically conscious before adopting any form of body modification techniques. A contrary, different view on the body modification process can also be pointed out. Women may challenge traditional beauty by adopting certain body modifications like bodybuilding, cosmetic surgery, etc. For some women modifying the body in these ways creates an avenue of self-exploration and personal emancipation.

In an analysis of women's participation in tattooing, authors such as Sanders (1991), Mifflin (1997), and De Mello (2000) have stated that tattooing, branding, and scarification body projects confront 'hegemonic masculine' construction of female body. Pitts (1998:445) has suggested that for many women, radically or subversively modifying the body becomes a vehicle of liberation in the process of reconstructing one's self-identity. (Atkinson,2003). Participating in non-normative body projects like branding or piercing signifies a former powerless movement to an empowered self. It gives women the freedom to modify the body as per their will. Not all women modify their bodies to gain acceptance in male society or for the male gaze. Many women modify their bodies for their likings for fashion. It is also not always a part of the dominant culture as, within a culture, there may be individual variations.

Thus, considering the dominant feminist ideology that women body modification is a part of the dominant cultural ideology, which is mainly a patriarchal one, it can be said that women do not always modify their body as per the patriarchal, heteronormative cultural ideologies but also for their own free will, which gives them a sense of freedom in attaining self-hood. There is a significant difference between the process of body modification adopted by men and women. Women tend to choose more feminine forms than men. In the case of tattooing or piercing, women's tattoo practices tend to be more about private display than those of their male counterparts. This may be due to the possibility that women remain more concerned with the publicly perceived unconventional nature of tattooing than men (Sander, 1991; Watson, 1998). Women tend to define tattooing as a piece of "body jewelry," a private decoration with personal

meanings meant to share only with those she has intimate contacts. However, the design choice is usually made for a specific reason and is related to the person's individual and social identity. Women in particular often choose designs for aesthetic reasons, in that they find the design to be particularly attractive. (Sanders, 1988). Women involved in body modification can use their bodies in a revolutionary way to rewrite their place in society. Contemporary body modifications allow women to choose their bodily appearance. However, the process itself is important as women create their meanings during the entire modification process.

Feminist such as Orbach (1978) and Chernin (1983), point out the new pressures brought to bear on women by the advent of body shaping techniques such as plastic surgery, diet, exercise, etc. All aimed at attaining the perfect body, which was the product of patriarchal desire and patriarchal gaze. These new technologies for fashioning the female body operated insidiously.

Body modification like tattooing is associated with sexuality and objects of attraction for the audience, especially for the male counterparts. In the Circus Era in England, for example, visibility of the female bodies inked with tattooed was offered to the audience as prey to male desires. Such acts of body modification, which many as emancipating acts, often make women's bodies merely objects of the male gaze. Such women are also tagged as deviant as they challenge the hegemonic patriarchal structure and take part in the public, making it normal for the male gaze. Society defines through its culture dos and don'ts, and fashion is not exempted from it.

Hindered by inconvenient clothing, the bodies of women appeared to men as their property. This was further reinforced by makeup and various forms of the modification process, which transformed women into idols. The dependence of women on their looks as one of the primary sources of their self-esteem left them totally at the mercy of others' judgment as Beauvoir points out women only "*came into being*" through the advancing glances of others. Even where women asserted that they adopted body modification as the latest fashion trend, considering how others saw them was always implied. As fashion is highly related to impression management, the audience somehow becomes significant and powerful in shaping the actions of the individuals involved in the interaction and defining themselves. As a Beauvoir points out that woman comes into being by advancing others' glances, the others mainly included the male counterparts.

Even it is not the male counterparts, the societal gaze can also be synonymously used as the patriarchal gaze because both are codified based on patriarchal norms. Thus, the women's body to maintain perfect, modern, emancipated, and empowered ultimately surrenders to the patriarchal ideologies. Thus, gender play is always at work when fashion trends are adopted to maintain the perfect impression. However, fashion like tattooing is not always adopted to enhance the beauty of women. Many times, it is also used to discard beauty. In many tribes of Asian countries, women's faces are pricked with thorns creating a tattoo-like mark to prevent them from other tribe members. Here also to save from a group of patriarchal gazes, another group puts on their norms on the women's body without their consent. The patriarchal society teaches them to accept it as normal as if protecting women's bodies is the right and responsibility of the men, and thus, they can control the women's body in the name of protective care. These can all be treated as examples of how the patriarchal society creates different social norms, particularly concerning women, to control their actions. In the case of the tribal women whose faces are inked, with the excuse that it will protect them from men of the enemy tribe, their consent of whether they wanted to get protected in this way is never asked, only the social norms associated with patriarchy is bestowed upon them.

In the last couple of decades, however, there has been a re-evaluation of fashion by several feminist theorists such as Elizabeth Wilson (1857[1985]) and Kala Silverman (1996), who have defined fashion as an avenue of self-expression and creativity. By adopting the various forms of the modification process, the women can express their wants. In tattooing as a form of body modification, women who opt for tattooing often go against mainstream fashion trends. It is as if their body their right. Therefore, they can modify the way they want. However, such feminist writings ignore the fact that adopting body modification practices is related to some audiences; being different or being deviant is sometimes also the trend and accepted norms among a certain group of peers. Therefore, the concept of discipline, stigma, and control associated with the modification process cannot be ignored. It may be an emancipating and empowering act in some limited spheres, but it for a very limited few. For the large portion of the society, norms associated with masculinity and femininity strongly influence the fashion sense and hence their body modification process, making the body subject to societal and patriarchal gaze. In the long run, discipline and control through social-cultural norms hamper the process of full emancipation.

Besides tattooing, individuals use other technologies to get the desired body. Thompson and Hirschman (1995) point out that individuals use activities like dieting and plastic surgery to transform their body into a more desired form. (Atkinson, 2003). Although the body can be seen as a 'socially visible object' that can reconstruct to fit the desired social norms, at the same time, it can be seen as the freedom that the body has, that it can be anything that it wants to be. Here, the individual's autonomy is there to accept or reject the social norms and shape their body, which will reflect their identity. However, as the individual has the goal of impression management, and as he or she is the performer performing various social roles, their wants and desires get shaped according to these roles. Thus, though the emancipating and empowering factor associated with body modification cannot be ignored, the dominance of the discipline and control factor still holds the position of dominance. Whatever the purpose, the individual or the women opt for body modification; she is a performer, trying to perform her social self and achieve her social identity. Here drawing upon the works of Judith Butler (1990.1993.2004), where she points that the problem of gender trouble is that gender identification and heterosexuality are made to appear natural. Hence norms associated with masculinity and femininity are also made to appear natural. Gender performances are something that we learn through socialization, mainly associated with our gender roles. They are acted out according to the social scripts and generally done at a more unconscious level as it is meant to believe to be normal. The individuals to maintain this normal self as described by society falls into the trap of societal discipline.

2.2.Assessments and Criticism.

All the above sociological frameworks help us get structure and base with the help of which empirical findings have better support. All the theories hold a common base that society's social norms dictate the self of the individual, and the individual adopts various modification processes to portray the perfect self-image. In the case of gender dimension discussed through feminist theoretical writings, it is pointed out that women abide or rather made to abide by these rules of fashion to maintain the impression of the socially defined perfect self. The body, as pointed by all the theoretical standpoints, becomes the mechanism of control. Fashion becomes the agency. Control and discipline are thus inculcated in the names of fashion trends, followed by individuals mainly in an unconscious level.

These theoretical frameworks have some drawbacks, like in the case of Looking Glass Self the concept given by Cooley, the interpretation of the audience's gesture may not always be right. Cooley did not also discuss the concept of significant others. However, this was discussed by Herbert Mead when he talks about the role of appraisal and punishment, especially from the significant others. This critique partly becomes true in the case of the Impression Management process. All the theories treat individuals as passive entities, adapting to the social norms, which define oneself. Though the states that they are individuals who do not follow the norms are tagged as deviant, they never talk about the fact that this can be the other trend.

In the feminist theoretical frameworks, the two groups discussed stand as a critique of the other. One, shows fashion like body modification as a source of emancipation and the other as the source of control. However, analyzing both gives an image of reality.

2.3.Concluding Remarks:

With the above theoretical framework's help, a deeper insight into how body modification like tattooing acts as an agent of culture, inculcating into the individuals they need of impression management and avoid stigma. It highlights how the body is mainly passive and how it creates a definition of self. Rules relating to gender can also not be ignored.

Overall, it is evident that tattoos are intimately connected with the tattooed individual's identity. The body is the medium through which the cultural codes are inscribed, and the body also gives the individual his or her identity. Individuals, therefore, adopt various kinds of modification processes to create the perfect body and create the perfect self-image, as defined by the cultural standards of society. The body thus becomes the performer; always try to perform the perfect self-image. Thus, in post-modern societies become fragmented, giving rise to multiple selves. The two sides of the self are the personal and the public self. Drawing upon G.H.Mead in this context, there are multiple roles that the individuals inherit through the process of socialization, and the individual presents these roles to the interactional situation and the audience involved in the interaction. Thus, the intended and unintended audience signified the intended or the unintended self that individuals very much consciously upheld. The individuals remain conscious as to put forward which part of the self to whom. Like for example, in the

case of private tattoos, it was intended by the respondents to a particular group of the intended audience which was not generally meant for the generalized others.

Tattoos themselves became the marker of self-expression. The adjectives used to express themselves through their tattoos to the reasons, designs, images, sizes, location, and visibility of the tattoo defined the person's self or social image. Thus, a process of stigmatization is also related to tattooing. As tattooing is an intentional act and the natural is believed to be most beautiful. As tattooing history is mainly associated with sailors, criminals, slaves, and other backward sections of the society, it is mainly not accepted by the traditional society, and the tattooed individual is stigmatized to be a bad deviant. Individuals thus try to manage their tattooed identity through various measures like covering the tattoos or not interacting with individuals with negative ideologies related to tattoos. This again leads to multiple roles playing for impression management and to avoid stigma. For example, individuals tend to cover their tattoos in the formal work sector or interviews but show them off at a party with family and friends.

A tattoo is also associated with group identity. It is believed that Captain Cook coined the word 'tattoo' in 1769 while on a journey to South Pacific. Over time it uses to describe group identities of sailors, slaves, military personals, prison gangs, motorcycle groups. (Atkinson, 2002). In many communities like the biker's community or some religious community, respondents described that tattoo give them an identity of belonging to a group, which makes them more acceptable in the group and provides safety. In modern times, tattooing is not much associated with group identity, and individuals opt for being different, a sub-group of being different is created, and individuals who belong to this group get the group identity of being different. However, this is done in an unconscious process. This new identity of being different is the trend and the accepted norm in contemporary society.

Others' perceptions of tattoos are also important for creating a self-impression and in identity construction. Taking from the concept of Cooley's 'Looking Glass Self' here the identity is created by the interpretation of others' judgments. Viewers are also from outside the tattooed communities in this respect. Viewers who form the significant others like the family member, the workplace becomes important in this respect. With some social stigmas still associated with tattoos, individuals often face negative

gestures from the audience, creating or giving the tattooed individual an identity, which in reality he or she may not be. Thus, again a duality of identity, the actual identity, and the created identity plays a nexus.

CHAPTER: 3

EMPERICAL FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS.

3.1 Gender, Sexuality and Tattooing.

Introduction.

There is evidence that both men and women opt for various body modification processes like tattooing throughout history. There are various social and cultural norms dictating the dos and don'ts associated with such modification processes, specifically gender norms. As patriarchy dictate every aspect of life, fashion trends and body modification processes are not excepted from it. Different religion sets different rules for such processes particularly, tattooing and the rules are more rigid in terms of gender. Patriarchal norms dictate both men and women, pressurizing them to manage the burden of masculinity and femininity. The body is one of the essential platforms to express the attributes of being masculine for feminine. The type of modification adopted, the style, etc., of the particular society, is culturally defined. Religion plays a significant role in shaping up this culture.

The present study focuses on the tradition of body highlights how body modification, like tattooing, is associated with the socially constructed concepts of masculinity and femininity and how tattooing acts as a mechanism of control over the individual's body and emancipation, and also as an agent of expression of our identity.

Individuals modify their bodies to get the desired perfect body image. They follow the dominant fashion of the particular period, and in the long run, the body becomes the canvas upon which the popular culture does the painting, which again reflects the cultural ideologies. In this respect, the male and the female bodies are different types of canvas upon which different cultural expectations are drawn. Body modification is how culture is inscribed upon or performed through the body in everyday practice. This process is defined by de Certeau (1984) as 'intextuation,' i.e., how patriarchal notions of beauty are inscribed in female bodies. (Atkinson, 2003:3-15).

After researching with 50 respondents living in Kolkata, with the help of a semi-structured interview schedule, the following points can be concluded.

Tattooing Design, Size and Gender Norms.

‘Feminine: soft, delicate, gentle, tender, docile, submissive...

Masculine: Robust, strong, lusty, energetic, potent, bold" J.O. Ronald.1979.

(Reinisch, Rosenblum, Sanders.1987).

There are attributes or characteristics associated with the concepts of masculinity and femininity, which are culturally set by society. These attributes define the gender identity of the individuals. Body modification processes like tattooing are also done following these attributes. Norms dictate the size, design, location, and visibility of the tattoo and the body modification processes. Thus, while maintaining femininity is a challenge, maintaining normative masculinity is also a challenge. The tattooed body points out the ability to manipulate the materiality of the body. (DeMello). Individuals adopt material means to get the perfect body.

A tattooed body is always and gendered. (Dann, Callaghan, Fellin). While tattoos are mainly associated with men, some tattoos are more masculine than others; similarly, some are more feminine than others when done by women. The design is mainly related to the concept of masculinity and femininity. The common symbols associated with women's tattoos are rose, butterfly, names of loved ones, angel, to name some, whereas the symbols used by men are anchor, abstract objects, and pictures of many male powerful Gods like Lord Shiva, etc. All these symbols denote power. 18 of the 25 women interviewed have a tattoo with a symbol of a rose, butterfly angels, or religious chants. The respondents who have tattoos mainly masculine was also occupied with socially constructed masculine works like a gym trainer, athletic, etc. They believed that it was the liking towards their profession that motivated them to choose their tattoo design, which represented being strong and powerful. None of the male respondents had a tattoo with a symbol that was considered feminine in nature; however, 3 of the 25 respondents had a tattoo with more abstract images or images considered masculine in nature. It can be noted here that, like femininity, maintaining masculinity is also a challenge for men. It also restricts them from full freedom and makes them fall under the view of the societal gaze, which becomes the patriarchal gaze in women's case.

Table 1. Tattoo design and women and men

Design of the Tattoo (For Women)	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Rose/or any kind of Flower Motifs	04	16%
Names of loved ones	03	12 %
Small Religious symbols	04	16%
Large abstract objects	03	12%
Butterfly	04	16%
Angel	01	4%
Symbols of pets or pets name	02	8%
Others	04	16%
Total	25	100
Design of the Tattoo (For Men)	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Large abstract images	09	36%
Names of loved ones	02	8%
Images of Lord Shiva or Symbols related to Lord Shiva	06	24%
Images of Lord Ganesha	03	12%
Symbols or pet names	01	4%
Others	04	16%
Total	25	100



(Abstract image selected by male respondents. Source: Primary data).



(Small cute images selected by female respondents. Source: Primary data).

The above table shows the common symbols and designs associated with men and women. They are associated with masculine and feminine identity. A form of tattooing cited by the interviewee as more masculine is those that large symbols, blocky dark texts. One male tattooee, a bearer of such a form of the tattoo, asked what he felt if a woman would have the same form of tattoo termed it to be 'crazy', a term again similar to Goffman's concept of stigmatization. The reference to crazy prompt out several times, especially by men when asked about their view on women having a tattoo of masculine design. Many also described it as not so feminine and other similar phrases. The women respondents also faced many such comments by family, friends, and many other societies' members with whom they interacted during their societal interactions. In the following quote, one respondent described her tattoo in her right arms in the following way: They said to her. *'You are such a beautiful girl; why would you destroy your body by modifying it like a man? Comments like 'oo meye Naki?' (is she a girl?), 'puro Chele der moto' (totally like a man)* Such comments are very common towards women having tattoos more masculine or towards women with multiple tattoos. Thus, to negotiate with the stigma associated with socially defined more masculine tattoos, women often negotiate in selecting the body art to make it look more feminine.

Another case of Nikita, having seven tattoos and multiple piercings, was stopped by a middle-aged man in the middle of the road and asked. *"ma, tumi ki meye" (mother, are you a girl). Shocked by such comments, she replied yes hastily, and then the man said baba, ma boke na (your parents do not scold you?)* The question asked itself highlights that people are scolded for conducting something wrong, and tattooing is wrong for many, and it becomes more wrong if the women go through such forms of bodily excess. Moreover, the parents, especially the father, have the right to scold her as a deviant behavior marker.

In many cases, the respondents cited others' experiences, especially their family and friends, and highlighted that through others' experiences, individuals admit that they have learned about how others could potentially read their tattoos. One respondent described her friend's tattoos as something riskier. She narrated her friend's full arm tattoos as something more masculine and the risk of getting stigmatized for not maintaining the social constructs of being feminine.

Pratiti described her friends' tattoos as risky. Statements like "people might not date if you have a tattoo" (Jane, age 27). Annie (age 23) also stated this identification of risk, who discussed how her family members described her tattoos as crazy. "Good girls don't get tattoos and how will get a husband with such crazy forms get art".

Thus, the social risk of acquiring a tattoo described as more masculine and not considered appropriate for the female bodies is very often substantial within the realm of personal relationships. Tattoos dedicated to loved ones like that of some partner's name or like a symbol of love like 'daddy's little girl' are some of the most commonly accepted tattoos by the romantic partner or the family members. The right over the women's body is something that comes up in this respect.

Shaming is common for individuals with tattoos. The tattooed body also becomes a matter of public gaze. The site may at public places by strangers, by relatives, or even by parents. 23 of the 25 respondents answered that people stare at their tattoos strangely in public transports and roads. Sharmila, having two tattoos, one at her shoulder and another at the cleavage, likes to flaunt her tattoo by wearing a backless top, dress, or blouse many times; she hesitates to wear such dresses as she faced two horrible experiences. *Once traveling in a public bus someone opened her strips, as it was a crowded bus she could not recognize the person, but when she started shouting for help, the comments that she heard were "our Thora dekhna tha" (wanted to see little more), "dekhanor Jonno koriache" (have done the tattoos to show off), "bhalo meye ra ei sob kore na" (good girls don't do all these), etc.*

The shocking fact is that many of such commenters were women, and like the Boston Case trial here, the act of crime was justified with the women act of tattooing as a mark of invitation for the male gaze and as a bad woman. (Braunberger, 2000:4). Comments like "dekhanor Jonno koriache" are similar to the concept of ideas similar to that of the circus era, where women's bodies were treated as sex objects of the male gaze. It is taken for granted by the male-dominated society that tattoos are done to show off, and when it is done in parts that are remained to be covered (as described by the society), it resembles an object of attraction, especially in the case of a woman.

In the case of big, huge bulky, an abstract tattoo is preferred by men, with designs representing power like Lord Shiva, Ganesha, Anchor, dragon, etc. Lord Shiva

symbolizing power is the most popular form of tattooing among men. 24% of the respondents had an image of Shiv or other related objects like a trisul or a damro (both associated with Lord Shiva). Tattoos of Ganesha also symbolize power, but it became more popular with film stars with a macho identity like Sanjay Dutt getting one. In the location, it is mainly covering the entire hand, mostly the right hand, or on the chest. Here the pain involved becomes significant. In the case of Gods' images is mainly of male Gods, in case of Images of female Goddess, only Powerful Goddess like Durga, Kali is chosen. Among 10 men having images of God and Goddess, 4 had Lord Shiva, 2 Ganesha, 3 across, 4 Durga, 2 Kali, and many had symbols associated with these Gods and Goddess. In many cases the respondents had more than one tattoo. Thus, the concept of power is also related here. A large bulky tattoo, especially in the areas mentioned above, creates more pain than men can learn to bear. Therefore, these tattoos also give them the identity of strong men who can bear more pain and thus becomes more masculine and accepted by society. Pain is again correlated to some events of life. *"Life has given me so much pain that these tattoos are nothing to it"* (Rajesh, Age 24). *"My tattoo bears the identity of how much pain I have bared in life.... hence the process of pain involved while getting me inked was a pleasure"* (Ram, Age30).

Though none of the respondents wanted to disclose the events of such pains, their statements explained that a close relationship existed between, individual's life experiences and the ability to bear the pain. Thus, the pain associated with tattooing is more social than an individual act.

Tattoo Location and Visibility and Gender Norms

In the case of visibility, it is also common and accepted among men to display their tattooed body parts, which are, in the case of a woman, as vulnerable and bad. Male tattoos thus represented toughness. Most men get tattoos with masculine iconography...representing aesthetics of violence. (Oksanen and Turtainen, 2005:119). Thus, tattooing acts as a double symbol of masculinity, one in the act and the other in the symbol.

In addition to the site location and design of the tattoos, the tattoo's visibility on the female body is an important aspect of interpreting a women's tattoo as either socially appropriate or inappropriate. Visibility can be seen in correspondence with size and

location; it can also be standalone concerning concealment and how concealment can act as an agent of negotiation.

Table. 2. Location and Visibility of Tattoo (For men)

Location and Visibility of Tattoo (For men)	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Right arms or bicep.	11	44%
Left arms or Bicep	2	8%
Shoulder or back	6	24%
Chest	3	12%
Other not much visible areas of the body	7	28%
Total no of respondents	25	100%

(Note : A particular respondent may have more than one tattoo)

Table. 3. Location and Visibility of Tattoo (For women)

Location and Visibility of Tattoo (For women)	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Right arms or bicep.	05	20%
Left arms or Bicep	00	00%
Shoulder or back	8	32%
Chest	01	4%
Other not much visible areas of the body	11	44%
Total no of respondents	25	100%

Females generally choose locations that are less visible when compared to men. The major areas of having a tattoo are at the leg's ankle, back at the neck, hands, shoulder. In the ankle's case, one needs to wear pants or something above the ankle-length. It is at someone's back, then one needs to wear a backless blouse, in case of a saree or a backless dress or top. These dresses are not acceptable standards of fashion by many as they reveal parts of the body that need to be covered. 23 of the 25 respondents cannot wear any such kind of dresses as the social circumstances in which they interact do not accept them as society's norms. As a result, their body art remains hidden. They show off their tattoos during pubbing, meeting up with friends, on vacation, etc. Thus, the desire to express their body art is there, but the audience becomes important. Here again, the concept of stigma and impression management of the self, as Goffman discussed, becomes important. The concept of impression management is related to the concept of the audience's power intended to be impressed. Thus, establishing power over the body was and is still an important motivating factor behind tattooing. (Fisher, 2000:91-107). Whether it is forceful tattooing on women to prevent them from other tribe members, or to be it for male gaze as it is in case of the circus era, or it be concepts of shaming for flaunting the body parts with a tattoo, control of the body is always a part of the patriarchal structure. Even when if they choose to show it off the audience becomes significant and also which part of the self the individual intends to highlight, the inner or the outer self. Tattoos that are done in more private or personal areas were for a personal audience when the respondents described them as "for my life partner/boyfriend" (Pracheta, Age 23), "for sexual pleasure" (Simran, Age 25).

However, there are exceptions. There are women who dare to choose this normative femininity and choose to get tattooed that are more visible. The power to challenge the dominant culture makes them both powerful and deviant at the same time. They are both powerful and deviant at the same time because they choose to challenge rather than to abide by the dominant normative ideologies of the patriarchal society. The selection of an obvious tattoo by a woman is often treated as a challenge. It also empowers women to take action according to their will.

Shaming is common for individuals with tattoos. The tattooed body also becomes a matter of public gaze. The site may be at public places by strangers, by relatives, or even by parents. 23 of the 25 respondents answered that people stare at their tattoos strangely

in public transports and roads. Sharmila (name changed), having two tattoos, one at her shoulder and another at the cleavage, likes to flaunt her tattoo by wearing a backless top, dress, or blouse many times; she hesitates to wear such dresses as she faced two horrible experiences.

Once traveling in a public bus someone opened her strips, as it was a crowded bus she could not recognize the person, but when she started shouting for help, the comments that she heard were "our Thora dekhna tha" (wanted to see little more), "dekhanor Jonno koriache" (have done the tattoos to show off), "bhalo meye ra ei sob kore na" (good girls don't do all these), etc. The shocking fact is that many of such commenters were women, and like the Boston Case trial here, the act of crime was justified with the women act of tattooing as a mark of invitation for the male gaze and as a bad woman. (Braunberger, 2000:4). Comments like *"dekhanor Jonno koriache"* are similar to the concept of ideas similar to that of the circus era, where women's bodies were treated as sex objects of the male gaze. It is taken for granted by the male-dominated society that tattoos are done to show off, and when it is done in parts that are remained to be covered (as described by the society), it resembles an object of attraction, especially in the case of a woman. Thus, the norms of visibility become more rigid for women.

Quotes like "it makes me look girly" (Sucheta, Age 23), "if I would have done a larger design it would have looked more masculine and my parents would should me more" (Olivia, Age 22), "My tattoo reflects who I am", (Praiti, Age 25) are some reflections of the respondents supporting that construction of self plays a significant role in the body modification process. Here again, the fear of stigma and impression of the self becomes important.

Women, who challenge the norms of visibility, put forward a more rebellious and powerful self. Though women opting for tattoos at the more visible position of the body were less, those who opted for it can be assessed as rebellious, independent, and rational, sometimes deviant by the mainstream society. Participants admitted that concealed tattoos were understood to be more feminine, but it is likely to get more social approval.

Respondents made a distinction between having a tattoo and *"letting the entire world know that you have it"* (Ananya, Age 25). *one respondent pointed out that the*

disapproval of her tattoo was less by strangers and outsiders when compared to that of the family members because she can choose to flaunt her tattoos where she felt would get acceptability and hide it where ever she felt stigmatized. (Susmita, Age 23). Another respondent quoted, *"there is a difference between people knowing that I have a tattoo and flaunting it all the time."* (Shelly, Age 23). The respondents' comments highlight the fact that tattooing was not considered for women, though the scenario is changing in contemporary times and individuals are opting for tattooing, the visibility factor becomes important. The audience again like in the case of Goffman's Impression Management becomes important. Whom to show and whom not to show is a matter of acceptability and non-acceptability, which again is r; though the individuals' identity is good or bad. Therefore, the female respondents prefer locations that can be easily hidden or shown as per the audience with whom the individuals are interacting.

In the case of men, tattoos are more in visible locations than that of women. Tattooing on the bicep also helps show off the muscle built, which is again a marker of strong masculinity. Masculine tattoos in a visible location are associated with power and dominance. A woman also dares to get a more visible tattoo has the power to go against the normative patriarchal ideology and get herself visible inked, but the percentage is very rare. Tattooing is associated with a strong personality and hence a strong self. Six of the male respondents, gym trainers by profession, had multiple tattoos, and all of them had one in their bicep. Having a bicep is essential as a male trainer, and the tattoo makes them more professional and masculine. Here again, the concept of acceptability as a male gym trainer becomes significant. *"My biceps gives me an identity of a good trainer; the tattoo on it makes me look a strong man"*. (Avishek, Age 26). *"I need to look strong as a trainer, and hence the bicep becomes important, and so the tattoo"*. (Charlie, age 30). *"I am the model for men who join my gym, and I need to give them my identity, as of strong man. The one they desire to be.... hence the bicep and the tattoo"*. (Gaurav, Age 32).

Hence men go through various forms of body modification to make themselves look strong, and sometimes it also becomes essential for the profession they are engaged in. Though the research findings point out 4 female respondents, as a gym trainer, their purpose of getting the tattoo was not their profession but for to look strong. However, the size, design, and visibility varied according to the gender lines.

Imagery, location, and site are thus three markers of differences between masculine and feminine tattoos. In terms of imagery, more aggressive imagery like a skull, cross, bullock, etc., are more considered more masculine. The docile ones like a flower, butterfly, or bird to be more feminine. In terms of location, men are expected to have tattoos in more exposed body parts like in their arms, shoulder, neck belly, etc., and women mainly in their ankle hand, etc. The pain involved is also very significant. The areas of one's body also decide the amount of pain related to the tattooing process. Thus, men do not hesitate to choose any area as quotes like 'mard ko dard nahi Hota hai' (men do not get pain) are commonly observed by all the respondents. Whereas in the case of women, fleshier sites are considered to be more appropriate as they cause less pain. In the case of size ranging from big to large, tattoos covering the entire hand, shoulder, or other body parts are generally considered; by men, whereas small tattoos are more feminine.

Men tend to wear full sleeve shirts when job interviews and other works related to their profession. Here stigmatization and acceptance become important. However, for women, it also leads to sexual comments, and vulnerable behavior for men is the only stigma of being deviant. Thus, tattooing may be identified as deviant for both men and women; only the extent, content, and intensity vary. Respondents pointed out how the myths related to tattooing their profession often led them to hide their tattoos. *"For my entrance interview for TISS, I wore a full sleeve and high neck shirt to cover my tattoos at my hand and my neck. I was also scared as one of the tattoos on my neck was partly visible...I feared that it would restrict my chance of getting selected...as they may categorize me as a bad boy... However, after my selection in the university and the faculties interest in knowing about the meanings of my tattoo broke my myth".* (Neel, Age 21). *The same response, when asked, did he ask for permission to get tattooed, said "No". "I did my tattoo at my will; I show off to my friends and family... I don't care what others think about it".*

"For my bank job interview to cover all my tattoos, I also thought of erasing it, as it was a matter of high cost it became a challenge.... I feared that I might not get the job". (Krishna, Age 28). *"But I never hide it from any members of my family nor my friends."*

Thus, whom to show it off and from whom to hide it is impression management and significant others. It also depends on the importance of the situation and the audience

involved. Irrespective of the gender involved, individuals hide it many times for acceptability by the audience and avoid stigmatization. "I hide my tattoos when I go to school, especially in front of my teacher." (Shelly, Age 18). "I wear anklet length socks to hide my tattoo from my teachers". (Kavita, Age 21). "I never wear shorts for my university as my left leg is inked...". (Rohit, Age 23). "I always wear a full sleeve shirt when at work to hide my tattoo as it may look unprofessional." (Sunny, Age 32). Thus, irrespective of the gender involved, a tattoo's visibility is a matter of intended or unintended audience; it is a matter of impression management and a matter of which self-one wants to show.

Thus, like females, men also go through the cultural construction of perfect identity. Like the bodies of females, the males' bodies are also the agent of their identity. The body becomes the canvas where the cultural codes of masculinity and femininity are drawn; body modification becomes the medium. Acceptable and non-acceptable codes of conduct for body modification, especially in tattooing, are culturally defined. The concept of impression management, especially in maintaining normative masculinity, becomes a challenge as it is in the case of normative femininity. Thus, a form of social control is there, which supervises and controls the body in the name of stigmatization.

Role of Significant Others

Individuals opt for tattoos to express themselves, their liking, their thoughts, etc. However, as individuals want to display a perfect self-image, they abide by the social and cultural norms while modifying their bodies. As stigma is associated with social inappropriateness, people tend to abide by the socially constructed body modification norms to gain acceptability in the field. Individuals tend to adopt the norms of fashion, especially to gain acceptability from their significant others. As men or boys are given more freedom of choice from their childhood as a social norm, the norms of control become more rigid in women's cases than men's. In the present study, seeking permission from socially defined significant others like parents or romantic partners becomes important for women compared to men.

Table. 4. Seeking Permission (In case of man).

Seeking Permission to get a tattoo (for men)	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
From Parents	04	16%
From romantic partner	01	4%
From none	20	80%
From any other	00	00%
Total	25	100%

Table. 5. Seeking Permission (In case of women)

Seeking Permission to get a tattoo (for women)	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
From Parents	11	44%
From romantic partner	07	28%
From none	03	12%
From any other	04	16%
Total	25	100

From the above data, it is evident that acceptability and seeking permission from significant others become more evident in women than men. This is mainly because from childhood; there are more constraints imposed on women than men as a form of control mechanism. Ruth quoted, *"if my tattoo design were more masculine, he (my father) probably would have been more upset. I think my family and friends are ok with my tattoo maybe because it is cute and more feminine and it is appropriate for who am I."* (Ruth, Age 21).

Tattooing is thus discussed by participants along gender lines with measures of acceptability and non-acceptability by family and friends. Ruth's experience can be understood in this context; for a while, her family was opposed to tattooing, her choice of selecting a more feminine cute tattoo design gained her some acceptability within her family. She may have chosen a different design, but to make the process of getting inked less problematic, which again is a problem for the women, the design and the size became significant. Thus, as getting a tattoo is something treated not to be normal for 'good women', the design, the size, and the location still play a significant role for individuals who have opted for revolt to modify bodies. Thus, the revolt is also socially shaped.

Five of the respondents belonging to the Hindi-speaking community mainly originated from Uttar Pradesh but, living in Kolkata for their last three generations, pointed out that getting a tattoo done before the marriage is a mandatory activity for them. *"humare parivar mei sab koi sadi se pehle karati hai. Yeh ek pratha hai or hum eise mante hai"*. (Puja, Age 25) *(All family members get a tattoo done before marriage, it is a ritual, and we follow them)*. *"It will make me eligible for marriage."*(Sharmili, Age 23). *"Mujhe pasand nahi hai. Suna hai bohot dard hota hai. Par mummy ne kaha karna parega"*.(Nisha, Age 21). *(I am not too fond of tattoos, I heard that the process involves much pain, but my mother said it is compulsory, and hence I have to do it)*. *"Will do a small one, but have to do it."* (Anjali, Age 20). Such narratives highlight that in many cases, women seeking permission play no importance, as the patriarchal norms make it compulsory to get them inked, where the individual's consent is never taken into account. This leads us to the debate whether body modification like tattooing leads to full emancipation to express oneself or is guided by the societal norms of control.

Tattooing or body modification is also related to the debate of empowerment and freedom, whether it gives the full freedom to express oneself by adopting the body art or simply imposing societal ideologies, mainly patriarchal in nature. The majority of the female respondents that 13 of the 25 respondents (52%), feel that going through the tattooing process empowers them. The reasons cited are like they have taken their own decision in getting inked despite objections from family and friends and knowing the risks associated with it. Few have quoted showing off the tattoos, especially in their body parts that society mentions to be covered, making them sexy and thus empowered.

It can be pointed out that in this case, patriarchal ideologies are so dominant that societal gaze that is mainly male gaze are taken to be normal. Individuals' feel accepted and thus empowered, ignoring the hidden agents of disempowerment related to such processes. However, not all individuals go through such forms of modification process to gain acceptability from others. Many just do it for themselves, for self-satisfaction and self-beautification. Here lies the actual empowerment. However, the line of difference is skinny and, therefore, tough to demarcate.

When asked about the means adopted by them to look beautiful, the respondents believed it to be dressing, gyming, makeup, and tattooing. (dressing 100%, makeup 36%, tattooing 49%. Gyming 16%). However, in cultures where tattooing is tagged to be anti-beautiful, women are tattooed in their face to look ugly and get saved by their rival tribesmen. For example, in Arunachal Pradesh, among the Apatani tribes' women are forcefully tattooed to become unattractive. Michi, a 20 years student of Delhi University, calls herself a free soul. Her friend defines a beautiful, fashionable girl narrating how her 80 years old grandmother in Arunachal Pradesh, belonging to the Apatani tribe, is forcefully tattooed and is given ugly women's identity. (Barua. 2011). Thus, an agent of fashion that may define an individual as beautiful and a free soul is again defined as ugly and dictated by another culture, giving two different identities to two individuals.

Foucault's conception of 'docile body' becomes very significant here as it renders the body to external regulations and regulatory structure. The paradox of body modification acts as an aesthetic marker related to the everyday act of beautification that women are always encouraged to go through. The relative passivity through which the women accept the mainstream beauty industry's cultural conduct makes their bodies docile. (Atkinson 2000, Braungerger 2000:1-23, Wolf 1990:19-35). In being more feminine, while choosing the size, design, location, and visibility of the body art, the individual body becomes docile as it gets regulated by the societal, regulatory structure of control through stigmatization and impression management. Disciplining the body becomes important and thus controlling the body.

By disciplining their bodies, women gain social acceptance and power that determines how and what bodies will signify. (Kathryn Morgan in his essay, 'Women and the Knife: Cosmetic Surgery and Colonization of Women's Bodies').

The respondents' responses highlight how the act is passed on from generation to generation based on cultural norms mainly imposed on women, and they follow them to get acceptability in society.

Though the respondents were aware that tattooing is considered a part of the deviant culture by many, they did not pursue it as a mark to be deviant or revolt against the mainstream fashion trend. They did follow the trend of being "me," which is again the new trend. All the 30 respondents believed that one of the major purposes of getting inked was to be different and stand out in the crowd. In the process of being different, a group is created at an unconscious level, a group that wants to be different, a group that wants to challenge the dominant cultural ideology, a group that wants to be 'me'. Thus, just like in a traditional tribal society where tattoo were markers of collective group identity on a conscious level, in the present time, tattoos are also in unconscious manner brackets off individuals into groups who want to be me.

However, tattooing is not always a marker of women's submission to patriarchal ideologies and their control of women's bodies; they are also agents of resistance and emancipation. Tattooed bodies can compress both resistance and conformity to trends at the same time. (Atkinson,2002:219-235). Though the individual's ways of looking towards tattoos have changed over time, tattoos on women are sometimes still described as creating 'cultural noise' (Hebdige, 1979), as they fall outside the expected standards of femininity in many societies. However, in many parts of the world, women getting inked is the norm as discussed above that in many tribal cultures and even in many communities of the world and in India, that makes it compulsory for women to get inked to achieve their identity of mature women. The notion of bad women has tattoos or women should not have tattoos are restricted to these cases but common across culture and time through its acceptability of modern urban youth has changed over time and gained popularity. Exceptions are there in some communities and among tribal groups, where again the tattoo act as a mechanism of control, as to be ready or accepted for marriage, getting tattoo becomes a mandatory act., where the choice of the women is never judged. Women's body modification practices are often defined in the discourse of their choice, the choice of whether a woman can choose to conform to or resist from choosing the dominant ideology. (Walter, 2010). However, individuals are not free to choose; they are rather compelled to choose to maintain an impression of being the

ideal. Thus, something which looks seemingly emancipating is something that is made compulsory to fit into society.

Tattooing and Sexuality.

Women's bodies speak on behalf of the patriarchal scripts that limit women's voices and bodies to their respective roles. Therefore, on a women's body, any tattoo becomes a symbol of bodily excess. Thus "when a woman's body is a sex object, a tattooed woman's body is a lascivious sex object, when a women's body is nature, a tattooed woman's body is primitive when a woman's body is spectacle a tattooed woman's body is a show." (Braunberger.2000. 1-2). Tattooing in both men and women is considered an object of attraction. It is seen that both men and women, especially women, adopt tattooing as a medium of fashion to attract the male gaze. Though the female respondents do not believe it, the experiences they faced for flaunting their tattoos, especially in public, highlight how society sees tattooing art as an object of sexual attraction.

Revealing the body is something that is culturally not accepted by women. It is the bad women who show off their bodies for the male gaze. Thus, in this case, tattooing against the accepted code of conduct for women, stripping off their clothes to show off the tattoos makes them a sex object for the male gaze, which has voluntarily come in public again is against the cultural code or norms for women. In contemporary times, people also tattoo themselves as a marker of art, and they do so to flaunt the beauty of the art to others, but in the case of women, such flaunting is described by society to attract male attraction or are related to so-called bad women. Many believe that women beautify themselves by tattooing to present themselves as sexually attractive to their partners. (Sanders, 1989).

Sharmila, *having two tattoos, one at her shoulder and another at the cleavage, likes to flaunt her tattoo by wearing a backless top, dress, or blouse many times; she hesitates to wear such dresses as she faced two horrible experiences. Once traveling in a public bus someone opened her strips, as it was a crowded bus, she could not recognize the person, but when she started shouting for help, the comments that she heard were "our Thora dekhna tha" (wanted to see little more), "dekhanor Jonno koriache" (have done the tattoos to show off), "bhalo meye ra ei sob kore na" (good girls don't do all these),*

etc. The shocking fact is that many of such commenters were women, and like the Boston Case trial here, the act of crime was justified with the women act of tattooing as a mark of invitation for the male gaze and as a bad woman. (Braunberger, 2000:4). Comments like "dekhanor Jonno koriache" are similar to the concept of ideas similar to that of the circus era, where women's bodies were treated as sex objects of the male gaze. It is taken for granted by the male-dominated society that tattoos are done to show off, and when it is done in parts that are remained to be covered (as described by the society), it resembles an object of attraction, especially in the case of a woman.

Men are not exempted from such gaze. Female respondents described male tattoo design s as *"toughness"* (Annie, Age 26), *"Street Cred"* (Egala, Age 21), and *female tattoo design to be "girliness"* (Pratiti, Age 21), *"cute"* (Susmita, Age 28) and *"feminine"* by many. Any tattoos that deviated from these standards set by society are considered socially inappropriate. However, tattoos, mainly the visible ones, become the matter of attraction more in women's case than that of men and which becomes evident from the fact that norms and regulations dictating the size and visibility of the tattoo are more in the case of women than that of men.

Many times, individuals opt for tattooing for a special audience, mainly romantic partners. 6 of the 25 women respondents, 24% of the respondents, believed that they display their tattoos done in private parts, only to romantic partners during romantic interactions. However, none of the male respondents from the present study have a tattoo in their private areas, but they believe that there is always an intended audience to whom they wanted to show their tattoo. Such difference in terms of gender is mainly because of the social norms associated with the size and visibility of the tattoo, along with the notions that any human body is modified to attract the audience in interaction. However, 51% of the respondents believed that they have gone for the tattooing process as a marker of independent will, but their social experiences while interaction tell a different story. Narrating the case of Sharmila mentioned above that how women with visible tattoos are treated as objects of the sexual gaze. In the case of men, they do not become sex objects, but they definitely come under the societal gaze.

Tattoos done on more intimate areas are considered to be made for a special audience, for romantic interactions. Here the concept of public self and private self becomes significant. The public self is "the self-manifested in the presence of others, formed

when the people attribute traits and qualities to the individual" (Baumeister, 1986). The private self is one that we disclose to significant others or limited groups. Body modification through tattooing involves both public and private self. When the individual chooses the design, size, location, and visibility of the tattoo as per the societal norms of masculinity and femininity, the public self is disclosed. The development of self is a significant step in symbolic interaction that helps the individual define, identify, and evolve their own identity. (Callero, 1985:203-215). Here the identity construction of being feminine or being good is associated with the process of tattooing: the private and the public or the intended or the unintended self. (Romanreiko, 2011:5-15). As in the case of impression management, as put forward by Goffman, the audience plays a significant role. Participants with a tattoo intend to show it off only to an audience who believes they will accept it. As tattooing as other forms of body modification is culture-specific may be accepted as normal for some and deviant. There are also various myths associated with it, like people do not get a government job if they have a tattoo. Therefore, men also often tend to hide their tattoos if the audience with whom they interact may take it as deviant, especially when the audience becomes significant. Hence visibility and stigmatization associated with tattooing are also common among men; only the context and the nature of stigmatization differ in a man and a woman.

No fixed self develops through the process of body modification. Individuals adopt different body modification processes to highlight different kinds of selves to the different intended or unintended audiences in various socio-cultural contexts. Many theorists have argued that we develop many selves, which emerge given the appropriate situational cues. The public self-manifested in the presence of others formed when other people attribute traits and qualities to that individual (Baumeister, 1986:3-15). On the other hand, the private self is the way we intimately self-disclose to limited groups of closed others. (Tedesehi, 1985:1-20). Body modification through piercing, Tattooing, etc., is a characteristic, which defines the private self and defines the public self. The self's development is a fundamental process in symbolic interaction that enables the individual to define identity and evolve his or her own identity. (Callero:203-215). The identity construction process occurs both through the private reflective, intimate display of piercing and tattooing and through the public, expressive defiant display of piercing tattooing and other forms of body modifications. (Romaneinko. 2003).

In the private realm of the body –piercing, modification practices tend to take on a highly utilitarian form, with the symbol intended for more intimate interaction at various levels. Intimate body modification placement is positively correlated with the level of intimacy required to view the tattooing. The commitment of pleasure as communicated in the meaning of symbols of the private self's modification helps the individual identify like-minded others, promote in-group communication, and alienate outside pleasure-seeking, sensual alternatives, and liberating groups networks. The process of tattooing is, to a great extent, a private act of expression of one's inner self.

The majority of the respondents tend to hide their tattoos from an audience from whom they intend to receive rejections or negative comments. All individuals have multiple selves, as they show different selves to a different audience for Impression management. In the case of tattooing, whom to show or whom to hide is also a matter of presentation of the perfect self as defined by society. In the private realm, individuals show off their tattoos to whom they identify as like-minded, like friends, partners, and family members from whom they receive appraisal and hide this from the general others, from whom they may not get appraisals. *"I never wear a backless dress or blouse, during any family functions as my tattoo becomes visible, but when with friends I am comfortable showing it off... In the case of family members, they may tag me as a bad woman".* (Shrestha, Age 32). *"I always show off my tattoo, my friends and family know who I am and how I am....I only hide my tattoos during job interviews; it may have a chance of rejection as it is associated with deviance".* (Pratab, Age 36).

Intimate body modification placement is positively correlated with the level of intimacy required to view the tattooing. There are individuals with tattoos placed at intimate parts. The audience intended are partners and the self-highlighted are the most private ones. *"out of the 5 tattoos, 2 are in my private parts, and yes I did for my boyfriend, and one is his name"* (Projeta, Age 23). *"I have to look hot, and hence the tattoos are made here...of course the audience will be someone special."* (Simran, Age 25).

Secondary data collected during the research, highlights that tattooing and piercing in private parts enhance sexual pleasure, but no such expression was expressed in the case of primary data. This may again be because of the self's presentation in front of the interviewer, who is not part of the respondent's in-group.

Table. 6. Intended Audience and Placement of the Tattoo

Intimate Placement of Body Modification and Intended Audience	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Intimate Tattoos are for only Intended Audience	11	91.66%
No Intended Audience	01	08.33%
Total	12	100

There are myths people always tattooing for personal display and that every tattoo means something explicit. Some people tattoo with the intention of others seeing and interpreting it. However, these individuals may have private tattoos, which cannot be seen by the general public, as it is a symbol for themselves and the individuals with whom they are intimate. *"I have three tattoos, the one in my wrist and arms are for the display of friends and family, the one at my private part is for my special one"* (Reshmi, Age 34). *"I cover up by tattoo at my back, as my in-laws do not like it, but when I am with my friends and maternal relatives, I wear backless dresses to show off my tattoos."* (Simmi, Age, 37). *"I am a part-time gym trainer, I always flaunt my tattoo, at the gym, it gives me the identity of a rough and tough man, associated with my job, but when I visit my office, I tend to cover my tattoo as it does not suit my job profile there."* (Abhishek, Age 32).

Here G.H. Meads concept of 'I' and 'Me' becomes significant. The 'I' is the unsocialized self with which the individual is born. On the other hand, the 'Me' is the socialized self of the individual, which he or she learns through socialization. Development of the 'me' is mainly taking up the roles which Mead terms Role taking. (Turner, 1991:375). Here in many cases, tattooing does associate with the socially described roles, and hence that 'me' is hidden and customized in one form of interaction and highlighted in the other. The two self that develops in the process is part of the same individual, just chances, with different social roles at different time points. Taking the example of the above respondents – once the individual is a gym trainer, where his role demands him to show off the tattoo, and at the office, his roles demand him to hide it. Similarly, in the woman

with the tattoo at the back, when she plays the role of a good daughter-in-law as described by her society, she covers up her tattoo with her friends; she is the modern woman who adopts the popular culture. Such differentiation in role-taking is done to maintain an impression among the social group and create a perfect self-identity. Thus, individuals may adopting various kinds of the modification process, fits into multiple socially defined selves.

In the public self-symbolizing domain of body modification, the individual engages in body tattooing with the primary intent of communicating readily demonstrable public displays of defiance. Public symbolic identity construction through body tattooing is motivated by rebellion and defiance, serving as a mechanism of cultural, social, economic, and political dissent that communicates rejection of conformity and conventionality. *"I wanted to look different and hence the tattoo I do not care what others think of me."* (Prabin, Age 34). *"My father never wanted me to have a tattoo.... but I also want him not do many things, he always does no listen to me then why should I listen to him"* (Shrestha, Age 28). *"People in my family calls me spoilt, as I smoke, consume alcohol and have multiple tattoos and piercings.... but I do not care I feel liberated and free."* (Riya, Age 32). *"Being the 'boro bou' (elder daughter-in-law), my other in-law always told me to hide my tattoos in front of my family relatives...As I never agreed to do so...I am tagged 'behaya' (disobedient) and uncultured"*.

However, public tattooing is often hidden by the respondents, where the interacting audience becomes significant. Therefore, the Self that gets highlighted from the process of body modification is intentional or unintentional. It depends on the audience and the socio-cultural context of the interaction.

Table.7. Situational Covering of the Tattoo.

Hiding or Covering of Tattoos	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Hide tattoos depending on the interactional situation and audience	42	84%
Do not hide	08	56%
Total	50	100

One motivating characteristic associated with private and public symbolic self-construction is the desire to influence the quality, methods, and body self-constructions and participants in one's own future life events. Whichever form of self-expression, whether be private or public, a sort of Impression Management is always used. The intended impression can be a positive or a negative one as in many cases of medication; it is intended to challenge the dominant cultural ideologies. The audience is a crucial symbol in the body modification process. Identity goals have legitimacy only when recognized by an intended audience, whose perception substantially impacts the intensity of the effort made and the choice of symbols deployed. Regardless of the size of the audience defined, when identity goals are successfully achieved through effective use of symbols to the audiences for whom they are intended, self-esteem is enhanced, the legitimacy of performance is satisfied, and authentic identity construction is in full progress. One of the respondents quoted: *"when we get a tattoo, it our choice, and it is much more embolismic of who we are"* (Respondent 36, age 44).

Tattoos also act as an agent of expression of self. Whether it may be public or private, participants acknowledged their view of expressing themselves through their tattoos. The respondents linked their tattoos to their identity throughout the interviews using strong, hardy, gregarious, happy, extrovert, rebellious to describe themselves.

Concluding Remarks.

Few conclusions can be drawn from the above analysis. First, those tattoo meanings are not static across bodies. The meanings are highly gendered. How a tattoo is interpreted

varies from one body to another. The interpretation of the tattoo of a woman is very much different from that of a man. For example, the bicep tattoo is interpreted differently when it is done on a man than when it is done on a woman. These differentiations are culturally coded. Female tattooing is mainly activities bound with certain rules, and these rules become significantly important due to the differences of rules surrounding men. These rules include the design, size, location, and visibility of the tattoo. Though there are rules both for men and women, the context, the seriousness, and the purpose these rules are made vary significantly along gender lines. For example, when a man shows off his tattoo, he is macho, and when a woman shows off her tattoo, she is a slut or a bad woman. Again, large designs are characterized as strong and meaningful to men's bodies; small, gentle tattoos are cute and acceptable for female bodies. Thus, the meanings associated with the tattoos, whether good is bad, depend on normative masculinity or normative femininity. Tattoos on men's body are markers of achievement as headhunting on the contrary tattoo on women's body marks their maturity to get married rather than get accepted as a suitable bride. However, there is a preference for partners with tattooed masculine-built bodies in modern times, but there are no social norms associated with it, as in women of many communities and tribes across the world.

Second, the meanings attached to tattoos are not always the same across time. The meanings of tattoos and acceptability in contemporary times are very much different from that of primitive ones. The purpose of getting a tattoo in tribal culture or among sailors or criminals was very much different from that of contemporary times. In contemporary times is tattooing is much more associated with fashion and hence identity. In primitive times, it was status, identity, and prestige. These differences in meanings of tattoos and their acceptability across time can also be seen along the lines of gender. The fluidity of the tattoo's meanings over time is reflected in how many female tattooees have experienced a shift in interpreting their tattoos by others. Any tattoo on women was seen negatively; however, more feminine tattoos have become accepted standards with time. Even though a woman goes through some feminine tattoo, their meanings may change over time. This makes body modification more minefield for women, as they never know when their meanings would change and hence make them more vulnerable to social risks of getting stigmatized.

It is, however, not the case that men do not face such challenges, and the choices are more for men than that of women. The choice to choose, show off, or get inked itself is more open for men than that of a woman. Women clearly steam towards displaying passive femininity in their tattoo selections, and women who do not follow the rules of normative femininity fail to achieve impression management and get stigmatized. Stigmatization is also common in men's cases, and the meanings associated with their body art are also open to change concerning time and culture. For many tribes, it was a symbol of achievement for men, and for contemporary professions, it often becomes the symbol of their profession, like in the case of the gym trainers.

Men and women are both encouraged to use tattooing to display traditional gender roles, and it is also right to say that both men and women experience shifts in meanings of their body art; it is their appropriate body art that makes a symbolic expression of power. The research findings highlight those men perform normative masculinity through body art and women also perform normative femininity. However, how tattoos are interpreted empower men as strong, brave, and muscular; in the case of women, they are, in fact, disempowered, tagging them as rebels, sluts, or vulnerable. Therefore, changes of meanings make women disempowered though they may feel empowered, as in the case of raunch culture at the face of it.

However, all women do not get themselves tattooed and become disempowered. Some do it as a revolt or for resistance. All the respondents believed that tattooing is related to power. Even the ability to bear pain associated with tattooing is correlated with power. Negative tattoos or tattoos treated to be deviant or tattoos are against the normative culture are considered more powerful. Individuals who dare to get such tattoos have the power to challenge society's dominant ideology and hence are more powerful. Getting inked itself is a step towards challenging the norms; the design, the size, and the tattoos' location are the add-on factors.

Thirdly, informal social control of both men's and women's bodies through stigmatization and impression management are created. Both managing and maintaining the ideals of masculinity and femininity is a challenge that the respondents face in day-to-day interactions. The body is the mechanism through which the norms of society are obeyed. Thus, to gain acceptability, the individuals follow the norms of the society. This becomes evident that how in some communities, getting accepted for

marriage is related to getting tattooed. The body is marked as an indication for marriage consent, which in reality is never taken from the women. Hiding the tattoo from the audience who may tag it as deviant also highlights that impression management and control are significant parts of the body modification process. Concepts like tattooing and sexuality are social ways of monitoring the women's body.

Thus, it can be concluded by saying that body modification is associated with normative masculinity and femininity, giving men and women their social identity, which is again described by society's particular culture. The cultural codes of acceptability depend on time and upon gender lines. In meeting up with these cultural codes of acceptability, individuals go through a process of social control, though on a very unconscious level as an impression in front of the audience becomes a matter of significance. The context setting and the audience become significant in the case of tattooing, and thus in maintaining impression.

3.2 Tattooing, Religion and Identity

Since the development or emergence of human society, religion was prevalent in one form or the other. Pioneer sociologist Emile Durkheim described '*religion as a unified system of beliefs and practices related to sacred things, that is to say, set apart and forbidden, beliefs and community that unite into one moral community...*' (1915). (Morrison, 2012:232).

The body is one of the major mediums through which the cultural code of conduct of the various religious beliefs is inscribed or practiced upon. Religious actions that the individuals perform either in public or private allows believers to express their spirituality externally and physically. Body modifications like tattooing and piercing also express the religious and cultural beliefs of the particular society. Both the word 'religion' and 'body' has a variety of connotations and applications. Body politics is associated with surveillance and control, which is reflected in many religious practices. In case of India, the mythological stories, explained in chapter one can be taken as examples as how religion controls the body norms. Chinese foot binding, neck binding, etc., are various examples of control of body modification and many religious beliefs and rituals associated with it. Through various body modification processes and rituals,

religion guided individuals' identities, monitored the human body and acted as surveillance and control agents.

Norms of restriction and permission of tattooing varies across religion. However, for the contemporary youth it is more a fashion statement rather a custom. At the same time tattoo symbols are great means of expressing individuals' religious identity. For purpose of the present research members from each community was interviewed.

Table No: 8. No of Respondents from different religious groups.

Religion	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Hinduism	20	40%
Islam	15	30%
Christianity	15	30%
Total	50	100%

Religion and Tattooing Norms.

Unlike the West, where tattooing was associated with criminality and deviant behavior, art does not have a history associated with deviant activities among all the existing communities. Among the Hindu community of India, it was more a ritual than a revolt. Though the ritual part is associated only among certain communities in modern times, the majority follow it as a part of the fashion trend. Unlike Hinduism, tattooing is not much accepted among the Christian mythologies though it is again popular among young Christians of modern times. Like Islamic belief, the body is something created by God, and hence cutting, wounding or altering, is not permissible. The Bible uniquely describes human beings. Genesis 1:26-28 states that human beings are created according to God's images and likeness. Thus, to modify it is not permissible or accepted. (Zelyek, 2005). Like many Muslim dominating countries, in India, where the third-largest population is Muslims, individuals opt for body modification processes

like tattooing and get categorized as deviant. Just like girls getting, large abstract tattoos are deviant. Similarly, Muslims getting inked, which is against his/their religious norms, becomes deviant.

Tattooing Symbols and Religion

Religious symbols and religious slokas are very popular styles adopted by the respondents. These symbols or designs though adopted by many simply as fashion trends, in the social setting a sense of identity for belonging to a particular community is always associated with it.

Table No: 9. Individuals with tattoos of Religious Symbols.

Symbols	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
OM	03	6%
Trisul or similar symbol associated with Hindu religion	05	10%
Lord Shiva or Ganesha	03	6%
Cross	05	10%
Slokas	04	8%
Others	02	4%
Total	50	100%

(Note: All 50 respondents did not opt for a tattoo with a religious symbol)

In choosing a tattoo with religious symbols or images, religion plays a significant role in a very unconscious manner. None of the respondents belonging to the Hindu Subgroups had an image or symbol belonging to other communities. The Hindu community's sub-community that makes tattooing mandatory often has prescribed images and slokas associated with their community identity. Inscribing names of many Gods and Goddesses and various slokas associated with them were very common among the respondents. Whatever the reasons may be, the construction of religious identity is one of the important factors, though in many cases, such construction was mainly created unconsciously. Like in the case of Ramayani Samaj as discussed in chapter one, many women and men belonging to the lower castes are found to inscribe tattoos with Lord Rama's names, giving them the identity of the worshipper of Lord Rama. *"Ram hi mere pehchan hai...."*(Sushma, Age 55). *"mei Ram Bhakt hu...isliye ye banayi"*.(Sarita, Age 58).

At the same time, none talked about their caste identity, which remains unconsciously. Taking account of the primary data, age is an important factor related to tattooing and religious identity. Individuals who opted for tattoos only with religious meanings attached to them mainly belonged to 45 to 60 years. This is true in the case of other religions also. For the modern youth, it is a piece of art associated with body ornamentation and fashion. Mythological stories do have an impact on tattooing and body modification, especially among particular communities of India. Their significance, however, has eroded with time. Among India's Hindi-speaking Hindu community, tattooing is more often a compulsion defining their caste and religious identity. In the present research, 9 respondents out of 20 Hindu respondents belonged to the Hindi speaking community, originated from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh regions of India, presently living in Kolkata for more than two generations, had tattoo inscribed in names and images of Hindu God and Goddess, and they believe that it gives them the identity of being part of their group or community. The women, however, had small motifs. *"Hum Hindu hai, hum shiv ke bhakti hai...sab Mujhe mere tattoo se pehechan te hai...."*(Ravi, Age 32). *(I am Hindu. Moreover, I am a worshipper of Lord Shiva, and everyone identifies me with my tattoo)*. *"Humare me sab koi karta hai..."*(Ravikrishan. Age 29). *Everyone in our community does it, and so did I*. *"baba nei kiye, bhaiya ne bhi kiya, ram ka nam, yei mera pehchan hai....merne k baad Bhagwan Hume issise pehchan payga"*. (Bunty, Age 26). *(my father did it, so*

did my brother, it's the name of Lord Ram, after our name God will identify us with this mark).

Thus, tattoos always gave the respondents a sense of belonging to their communities. Many adopt such forms of body modification process as a part of traditional social action, and most just to highlight their religious identity. In females belonging to this community, they go through ritual processes once they reach maturity age. No such rituals are, however, attached in the case of the male respondents. The rituals are associated with the religious beliefs of the particular community. For the female respondents of this particular community, it becomes a compulsion and not a choice. *"My grandma did it for me... I never wanted to get one, as I was afraid of the pain involved....it is essential for getting married".* (Puja, Age 23). *"I did a small motif as I don't like any such forms of art but community pressure especially that of my family made it mandatory for me..."*/(Rashi, Age 32). *"hum Hindu aurat hai....dharm to manna parega or Shadi bhi zarrorat ha..."* (I am Hindu women; we have to conform to your religion and marriage is also essential". (Sharaladevi, Age 52). Thus, socialization of gender roles and religious norms to get acceptability again becomes a very significant step for individuals involved in body modification.

The case is more or else similar in the case of the respondents of the Hindu community. However, there are no ritual codes for getting tattooed, as in the case of respondents belonging to the Hindi-speaking group of the Hindu community. Among the Bengalis and other communities living in India, and in the case of Kolkata for the present research, there is a huge popularity tattoo with religious icons and symbols. Among the 50 respondents interviewed, 28 of them had some religious symbols, though 21 of them had different symbols also along with the religious ones. These were the case for the respondents having more than one tattoo. However, it was more for fashion trends than for religious rituals or codes. The reasons behind such forms of tattooing are coping the reference group, mainly the media personals, following the trend and gaining acceptability, and religious beliefs and identity. As discussed in chapter one examples of Hindu mythologies and tribal history, tattooing was associated with lower castes, giving them their caste identity; however, this is not the case in modern times. In modern times it is not confined to any particular caste groups or community. There are no historical stories of upper caste rituals and tattooing, the Hindi-speaking community

who still follow it as a ritual act are also from the lower caste. Thus, caste identity is marked through tattoos, and religion uses it as a weapon to identify their caste positions.

However, the contemporary youth have a different outlook on tattooing. Most of them are not even aware of these mythological stories; they get themselves inked for fashion, passion, and belief in Almighty. (For those who hold images and symbols of Gods and Goddess). The concept of immoral and moral is related to tattooing in this context, which is again related to the social norms of acceptable behavior standards, leading to social control. According to his likeness, tattoos are immoral because as the body is created by God, modifying without his will becomes a crime or a deviant act. Tattoos also create harm and pain, which is also immoral. Tattoos many times devote ungodly figures and images, which is again immoral. Therefore, God's images and symbols are considerably moral and accepted codes of conduct. This concept of accepted morality is also common among present-day youths. All the respondents were aware that any kind of body modification is morally not accepted in Christianity. However, they believe that they are engrafting images and symbols of God to represent their love towards Him. Sunny, age 32, *"papa said that we are Christians and we are not supposed to get tattooed, but as it is across, the symbols of Jesus Christ he accepted it....my purpose was also to show my love and respect towards Lord..."*. *"I know it is deviant in my religion, but God will never be angry on me as it is his symbols; he will identify me as his child"*. (Shelly, Age 25). *"I believe in Lord, and hence this symbol and no other myths can change my decision in getting inked...."*. (John, Age 48). *"I am His child, and in one hand it's my mom's name and in another it His...I love my mom and the Lord...as my mom is not angry on me, so will not Him"*.

Like immorality, tattooing in Christianity is also related to morality. It is believed that he believes that humankind is free and has to full right to decorate his or her body with his or her choice of body art. Similarly, many believe that God has created individuals with different skin colors, so individuals with different tattoos should not be stigmatized. *"Yes, I am Christian, and I own a tattoo of a butterfly and an angel. That does not mean I do not believe in Christ; God loves art and freedom, so I don't think he will be angry at me"* (Ruth, Age 23). *"My tattoo cannot be the marker of morality; God will never be angry on me...believe in humanity, not morality."* (Christopher, Age 28).

Yes, I have a tattoo on my right hand, but how it related to morality or my belief in religion, it only does make me identified as a strong personality". (Daniel, Age 40).

Thus, concepts of morally accepted and morally not accepted, which is also there in other religions, become important as morally acceptable and culturally defined and hence related to stigma and impression management. What is normative morality, and what is normatively not moral is culturally defined? Like gender norms, through tattooing, the cultural code of conduct is inscribed in the body, giving individuals the identity of deviant or ideal as per society's cultural standards. As morality's concept is highly related to tattooing, the concept of design, size, and tattoo location becomes significant. In the case of the design, 13 of the 16 respondents belonging to the Christian community had a Cross or symbols associate with their religion, though 7 of them had other tattoos like their partner's name, a butterfly, a dragon, etc., along with a tattoo of a cross. The size was mainly based on gender lines, like in the case of a cross, for a woman is small and simple ones, for men it was large abstract ones. The location and visibility factor becomes important as the audience becomes important. Respondents often admitted like they hide their tattoos in a job interview or some formal meeting; they also hide them when visiting the church. *"I generally cover-up by tattoo, when visiting a church, as people pass negative comments". (Shelly, Age 23). "I cover up my tattoos while visiting Church, not because I think that I have done a sin, but because I hate the negative comments...." (Sunny, Age 32). "For her, we will go to hell; she is bad girl, she is sinner, these are the various comments that I have faced while I visited Church...I go there to pray, the cross in my body is the symbol of my faith towards Lord....so I hate the negative comments, so I prefer hiding from people who do not like it". (Samantha, Age 28).* Thus, it can be pointed out that rather than religion, the audience becomes important in the tattoo's case of visibility. Stigma and impression management thus again becomes significant.

However, there has been an overall new image of tattooing across the globe, which is evident worldwide. There has been a change in tattooing culture all over the world. The new culture is less a deviant act and more a part of the popular culture and fashion trend. Rubin (1988) used the term "tattoo renaissance" to depict this culture's changes. This revolution made tattooing an art. In most of the countries like that of America, it has become a medium through which individuals express their individuality and gain

acceptance into the subculture. (Blanchard, 1991, Gagne and Orend, 2009). Gaining acceptability and expressing individuality has become the major purpose for tattooing among contemporary youths, deteriorating religion's importance or significance in contemporary life. Like Hinduism, Christian youths also prefer tattooing and select popular images, which will enhance their acceptability in society. *"I have chosen across because I am Christian, but that makes me trendier and more fashionable.... It is a symbol of my fashion sense rather than just a symbol of my religion. I have multiple other tattoos that of a butterfly and a rose...."* (Shelly, Age 23). *"The abstract cross in my right-hand makes me identifiable as the bearer of pain, it a huge image and my friends call be, macho..."*. (Sunny, Age 32). However, the religious significance cannot be denied. None of the Hindu respondents had a cross or symbol associated with Christianity, and none of the Christians had symbols associated with Hinduism. Though tattooing is associated more with fashion ideologies in modern times, religion's significance cannot be denied in its fullest sense.

In recent years we have seen a considerable resurgence in the popularity of tattooing and piercing, a development that some have dismissed as a fashionable trend. Others have argued that the relative permanence of such forms of body modification militates against their full absorption into the fashion system. (Paul 1999). Religious myths and ideologies related to tattooing as also evolved. It is no longer only related to group identity or identity-related to a particular community. It is more related to the concept of 'mess. (Negrin). That is to stand out in the crowd. However, to be different, a trend is created, which again gives the individual the identity of being different and creating a group identity. However, for the contemporary youth, it is more a fashion statement than only religious beliefs. *"Yes, I have an Om...but I do not associate with any religious norms, it is also not customary in our family to get tattooed....I did it as my friends did, it makes me more fit among my peers."* (Devjeet, Age 24). *"Yes, my tattoos represent some Sanskrit slokas related to pain...I do not know the exact meaning associated with it....I did as I felt they are in trend...."*. (Gurpreet, Age 23). *"The slokas inscribed at my back makes me look sexy and identify me as bold...I don't care to know its religious authentication"* (Sonam, Age 25). *"The slokas at my right-hand make me look more masculine, as it is associated with power and strength. It makes me identifiable among my friends"* (Abhishek, Age 32). Thus, religious significance with tattooing varies along the line of age in the case of tattooing. Modern youth tend to get inked more to

get accepted among peers and highlight their individuality. However, religious significance cannot be denied.

In contemporary times it is common for individuals to get a tattoo that their media icons have done. "Daddy's little girl," the one done by Priyanka Chopra, is most common among the respondents; in the case of religious symbols, the image of Lord Shiva, Ganesha, and Sanskrit slokas are most common among the respondents. Some of the common reasons cited are – *"Sanju baba did it, and so did I....if it was not a Ganesha and something else I would have opted that....."* (Vaibhab, Age 35). *"Look at the tattoo at the right arm, of Kohli, I just wanted that and so did I got this one..."* (Santosh, Age 25). The masculine characteristics associated with these tattoos become more important for the tattooer than those of religious identity. A tattoo artist in his interview said that *"tattoo of Lord Shiva is the most common among my customers, especially the youth.... one-third of my respondents goes for Sanskrit slokas.... however, religion is not their main purpose, I think it is the new trend..."* (Sandy, Age 38).

However, getting tattooed Muslim respondents was a challenge as it is much less popular when compared with the other two communities discussed for the study. In the present study, the Muslim youth tends to adopt such forms of body modification processes as a part of their fashion trend; their community members often stigmatize them. Hence getting permission from parents also becomes a challenge. Such individuals are often regarded as deviant or revolutionaries who do not follow the social norms. *"Many things are not permitted in our religion, like exogamy, wearing makeup, but people do, so why not tattoos...I like to be different, and tattoos are the ones that make me different...I get scolded by my parents for getting myself inked.... but now I am ok with it as I enjoy being different."* (Imran, Age 25). *"My mausi (maternal aunt calls me a non-Muslim because I have a tattoo. Many also compare me with the devil...but I believe that it's ok as it is not my view."* (Razia, Age 19). *"I did not ask my parents at all whether to get a tattoo or not as I knew that the answer would be no, and once done, it cannot be altered."* (Rizu, Age 28).

Many respondents thought twice before getting themselves inked as getting accepted among the group becomes important. Individuals who opt for tattooing against their religious ideologies prefer the other group's acceptance more than religious ones. All the respondents feel that this tattoo makes them deviant among a particular segment of

society; it also helps them showcase their individuality and higher the chance of acceptability among friends and relatives, mainly from other communities. However, many admitted that friends and family members from their community also positively responded to their body art. *"I know tattooing is forbidden. Initially I was in a dilemma, but once I did it, I feel proud....I feel different many of my relatives tag me as non-Muslim but how do this matters....."* (Rafat, Age 24). *"shadi nehi hogi tumhari"* (You will not get married). *"My mother told me this when I approached her for permission to get tattooed...I often hear such things from my relatives also...I gave a second thought, and I went for it, and now my friends call me sahasi ladki (brave girl), and I enjoy being one."* (Zeenat, Age 26). *"Mujhe dosto ki samne mard hona tha, isliya kiya"* (I wanted to be a man in front of my friends, so I did the tattoo). (Kazi, Age 28). *"All my friends had one, even Viral Kohli has one, so I did it".* (Sameer, Age 25). Thus, though getting acceptability within the community is a challenge, popular culture and acceptability at a larger scale, especially among peers, and media effects are important factors behind tattooing among contemporary Muslim youths.

A tattoo becomes a negative symbol, stepping away from social norms. It is related to the concept of otherness that is not similar to the community of a group. This tag of otherness or deviant that individuals often hide their tattoos within the community or from individuals who view it negatively. Though individuals act of getting a tattoo within a group in which it is forbidden is a difficult challenge to overcome, to maintain the social life balance, individuals often hide it from the audience of interaction, depending on the situation of the interaction. The most common place where the respondents hide their tattoos are when they visit places for worship (all 100% do so), at times of family gatherings like a marriage of relatives (68% of the respondents), and during job interviews (88%), though it is not religious. Thus, whether be religious acceptance or any other forms of fear of stigmatization and impression management is an important step in tattooing and body modification.

In the context of otherness, two Hindu respondents got tattooed from a tattoo artist who is Muslim by my community origin. Generally, all tattoo artists have a tattoo done on themselves or themselves, but these artists did not get one done; when asked by the respondents, they answered: *"yeh humara cheez nahi hai, hum to sirf paisa ke liye karte hai"* (these are not our things, we just do it for money.) *"hum logo yeh karnaa mana"*

hai app Karo na" (it's forbidden among us, you people can do). These tattoo marks thus give the identity of being others. Even Muslims who do others often hear comments like *"you are not nor from our community", "Allah will not accept you in heaven...make tattooing and identity of being other a correlated fact among the Muslims."*

Thus, though modern Muslim youth challenge their religious community's normative ideologies and adopt tattooing as a mechanism of expression of individuality and free identity, and as an expression of adoption of contemporary fashion, religion does not erode its significance in its all-encompassing ways. In certain dimensions, it still plays a significant role when seeking permission becomes a challenge. The difficulty in getting Muslim respondents also highlights that though modern youth Muslim youth is adopting it as a fashion trend, its popularity is much less compared to that of the other two communities. (The ratio of the respondents – 20:15:15 = Hindus: Christians: Muslims).

Individuals who do not follow the dominant or popular definition of beauty are given the identity of ugly, deviant, or revolutionary for not following society's cultural norms. Thus, body modification is an intentional act to maintain the perfect social identity. In contemporary times, the perfect social identity is to be "me," i.e., different from the crowd, and to be different individuals adopt the various forms of body modification processes, especially the ones that the majority do not follow. In doing so, they again form the sub-group identity of being different. In the present student, all 75% of the respondents have to go for tattooing out of their own choice to be different and stand out in the crowd. There are exceptions in tribal societies where tattooing was done to maintain group identity and among some Hindi-speaking Hindu communities, where tattooing is a compulsion for caste and gender-based identity. (Explained in chapter 2 on gender and religion). Tattooing in modern times is the marker of an identity to be different. *"In my class, I am known as the tattooed girl...among my relatives, I am known as the deviant child who always does not follow the family norms and one of the norm-breaking act was getting inked...and I enjoy this identity of being the other"* (Simran, age 23). *"The tattoo in my right arm and my muscles is what that makes me popular among my friends, especially among girls, and I enjoy it, but my parents had objections, but now they are ok with it."* (Daniel, Age 28). *"Being different", "being me," "stand out in the crowd"* are some of the common answers for the respondents

opting for tattoos. Thus, as the cultural codes of conduct are inscribed in the body, individuals opt for tattooing to be different, to be "me" but in the long run they again be part of the group of being "me" and gets the accepted identity of being me or being different. Therefore, the tattooed body becomes an important metaphor for social inscription and the portrayal of one's inner self. Like clothing, makeup, etc., tattoos decorate the body. Therefore, the tattooed body is controlled by the same cultural discourse as that of the body in general.

The Self, in modern, more individualistic terms, times are seen as in which the fashioning of personal appearance is seen as an expression of individual identity. The outward appearance of the individual and portraying one's social roles and status in contemporary times is first and foremost a reflection of one's inner self. As Giddens points out: "under the condition of high modernity, the body has become a self-reflexive project, integral to our sense of who we are in contemporary culture, we have become responsible for the design of our bodies." (Giddens, 1991:37). The Self in modern times is seen a fragmented and in a constant flux of change and is the fashion trend. Confronted with a range of different styles derived from diverse sources, individuals today experiment with different looks as is epitomized. Tattooing has become of the major means to experiment with one look. Though there are different agents like gender and religion influencing the size, shape, and visibility of the tattoo, the individuals' choice to express one own identity becomes one of the most significant criteria in getting inked. *"My tattoos make me highlight my indent of a strong woman, who can oppose all odds". (Ruth. Age 23). "The tattoos at the back make be express by bold identity.... though sometimes I get negative comments I don't care". (Riya, Age 32). "My tattoos make my friends believe that I am a strong man and I can bear much pain as it is a huge, colored abstract tattoo."(Abhishek, Age 33). "Since my childhood, I was a deviant child, the tattoo makes my deviant identity more prominent. However, for all it is not associated with different, for me, it is different than deviant". (Santosh, Age 28). "I live my tattoo as it helps to express my free soul...the birds flying express me...I love to fly high as the birds do" (Parjetcheta, Age 23). "I love taking bold steps, getting inked without any one's permission is one such act...getting inked at my boobs is another bold step as my mother says whom will you show...and now is show it off and many with whom I interact stares at my tattoos or many times passes negative remarks...but I don't care as that is who I am." (Samira, Age 24). "I am a religious*

man; I want God to see my love towards him and hence the tattoo of Lord Shiva". (Prasad. Age 36). "I am my daddy's girl... I love him to the fullest, and that what my tattoo states – 'love you, papa'". (Sucheta, Age 23).

Table No:10 Individuals Believe in tattooing and a Sense of identity

Tattoo a marker of Individual Identity	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Believe that their tattoo gives them the identity to be different	37	74%
Gives the Respondents the identity of belonging to a group or community	13	26%
Total	50	100

In contemporary times the individual's identity becomes more important than one's caste, status, religion, or gender identity. The meaning of items associated with an individual's outer appearance, like dress or tattoos, becomes more ambiguous. Baudrillard points out that in post-modern cultures, such items become "free-floating", signifiers, signifying nothing beyond them. (Baudrillard. 1993). Tattoos are no longer associated with an individual's gender, caste, or religious identity only. Out of the 30 Hindu respondents, 3 of them had a cross as their tattoo image. Though many a times strangers with whom they interact identifies them as Christians, for the respondents, it is only a fashion symbol, or the trend, or inspiration from some media personality. In women respondents' case, there were women with large abstract tattoos, which were mainly considered parameters for men's art. In the case of tribal or caste-based, culture inscribing Lord Ram's name and highlighting their identity is also not confined to certain communities. (Chapter on religion and tattooing). Respondents belonging to upper Brahmin families had the name of Lord Ram inscribed on him or her, not always as a devotee of Lord Ram but also as a fashion icon. Among the men respondents, it was also fashionable to get a Cross, or images of Lord Shiva, or Powerful Goddess, like Goddess Kali and Durga, which enhanced their masculinity, rather than their religious

identity. Tattooing, however, was not assigned to individuality and "me-ness" throughout its history. It was mainly associated with tribal culture and collective identity.

In conclusion, it can be pointed out that religion plays a significant role in every aspect of our life. The importance of religion in body modification though it declined insignificance in its rituals and customs, has not eroded altogether. The popularity of religious symbols as tattoos and a mark of religious identity reflects the importance of religion among individuals in an unconscious state of mind. Some of the major findings associated with this study on religion and tattooing are – Firstly, religion creates different cultural ideologies, and these ideologies determine individuals' code of conduct and body modification like tattooing is one such code of conduct. All religions, though, share similar ideologies, but there are differences in their belief system. Even within the same religious groups, there are different codes of conduct. Like for tattooing in Hinduism, it is more or less an accepted code of conduct; in Islam, on the other hand, it is forbidden. Even among Hindu sub-groups, there are variations. For most Hindi-speaking communities of the Hindu religion, residing mainly in Uttarpradesh and Central India, getting a tattoo is a ritual and a mandatory act. For the Bengalis and other Eastern states, it is more a fashion trend than religious acts. However, a form of control over the individual's body is always there, teaching the individuals the accepted standards of society's cultural norms. Moreover, religion plays a significant role in creating these norms.

Second, as tattooing is related to the deviant act, it also highlights the identity of the lower strata of the society. Even though accepted among some communities, it had to be according to the set norms related to the size, image, design, and tattoo visibility.

Thirdly, religion defines what is morally accepted and what is morally not accepted, which again is related to the concept of impression management and stigma. In the case of tattooing and body modification, it is not an exception. Religion defines the do and doesn't relate to tattooing, and individuals adopt them to be part of society's accepted norms. For example, in many tribal communities, tattooing is a mandatory act; it is a sign of their maturity for girls reaching marriageable age.

Finally, and most importantly, contemporary youth follow religious norms more for fashion trends and acceptability among peers and other societal groups. Though the importance of religion in its truest sense has declined over time, it has taken a new shape. Tattoos with religious symbols have gained new popularity in contemporary times. 23 of the total respondents, irrespective of their religious identity, have a tattoo with images of Gods and Goddesses or religious symbols like an "Om", "Trisul", "Cross," etc., or Slokas and chants from different religious texts. This again highlights that religion has taken a new form. This time it gives individuals the identity of a religious group, but this time in a more unconscious manner. Two of the Hindu respondents were often tagged as Christians by individuals whom they interacted with and not much known to them. Thus, these symbols are not used to highlight religious identity and sentiments, but it does so, as most of society are taught to see it in that manner. Thus, though tattooing is more a fashion trend among contemporary youth, religion had taken a new shape of importance though not altogether eroded.

3.3 Tattooing and Identity Construction.

The individual through the various forms of body modification process tries to attain the perfect body or the appearance which gives the individual a sense of identity. The self of the individual is defined as the rituals of the society is defined as per the rituals of the society. The self here thus develops through the process of impression management what others want or what the society defines to be the ideal self. The individuals through the various modification processes try to impress the audience i.e., the society thus rise to the self that is socially defined. Impression management, whether successful or unsuccessful involves an audience that has a stake in ensuring a successful or unsuccessful performance. Consequently, in some cases where the performance slips or something unexpected occurs, the audience may attempt to "save the day" by ignoring it. In the case of modifying the body, the entire society or the group with which the individual is interacting becomes the audience. Like the notion of beauty varies from audience to audience and the individuals try to achieve, the perfect beauty, the perfect beauty for maintaining acceptability in front of the audience, who judges the perfect or imperfect self of the individuals.

The individuals while adopting the various body modification processes adhere to the social norms related to fashion, to create the perfect or ideal self-image. Those who do

not follow the cultural code of conduct are tagged as deviant. The degree of acceptability is also a significant factor here. The present chapter aims to highlight how through the process of Body modification, the identity of the individuals is created and how the fear of stigmatization creates forces individuals to adopt the trend. It also aims to highlight how the body becomes the medium through which the cultural codes are inscribed and the identity of the individual is created.

The body is the reflection of own self. Thus, individuals run the race of achieving the socially define the perfect body. To reach the perfect body individuals adopt different means, like dressing, gyming, and tattooing. All these are based on contemporary fashion and are culturally defined. The body is the text upon which the cultural codes of conduct are inscribed. Through the body, we express, perform and present subjectivity to others. Yet by objects of performance and appearance, others also judge our body. As the judgment of the body is related to the judgment of the Self, the performance and interpretation of performance of the body is an important step in the development of the Self of an individual. Beautiful again is socially defined. Individuals adopt various means of fashion to be beautiful. As beauty has no fixed definition individuals adopt various means of body modification to look beautiful. Like dressing and ornamentation, tattooing is also a popular means of fashion adopted by individuals to look beautiful. The tattooed body points out the ability for manipulating the materiality of the body. Individuals adopt material means to get the perfect body. The respondents when asked about the means adopted by them to look beautiful believed it to be dressing, gyming, makeup and tattooing. (Dressing 100%, makeup 36%, tattooing 49%. Gyming 16%). However, in cultures where tattooing is tagged to be anti-beautiful, women are tattooed on their faces so that they may look ugly and get saved by their rival tribesmen. For example, in Arunachal Pradesh among the Apatani tribes' women are forcefully tattooed to become unattractive. Michi a 20 years student of Delhi University, calls herself a free soul and a beautiful fashionable girl defined by her friend narrates how her 80 years old grandmother in Arunachal Pradesh belonging to the Apatani tribe, is forcefully tattooed and is given an identity of an ugly woman. (Barua. 2011). Thus, an agent of fashion which may define an individual as beautiful and a free soul is again defined as ugly and dictated by another culture, giving two different identities to two individuals.

Thus, body modification is an intentional act to maintain the perfect social identity. In contemporary times, the perfect social identity is to be "me" i.e., different from the crowd, and to be different individuals adopt the various forms of body modification processes especially the ones that the majority do not follow. In doing so they again form the sub-group identity of being different. In the present student all 75% of the respondents, have going for tattooing out of their own choice to be different and to stand out in the crowd. There are exceptions in tribal societies where tattooing was done to maintain group identity and among some Hindi speaking Hindu communities, where tattooing is a compulsion for caste and gender-based identity. (Explained in chapter 2 on gender and religion). Tattooing in modern times is the marker of an identity to be different. "In my class, I am known as the tattooed girl...among my relatives, I am known as the deviant child who always does not follow the family norms and one of the norm-breaking acts was getting inked...and I enjoy this identity of being the other" (Simran, age 23). *"The tattoo in my right arm and my muscles is what that makes me popular among my friends, especially among girls and I enjoy it but my parents had objections but now they are ok with it."* (Daniel, Age 28). *"Being different", "being me", "stand out in the crowd"* are some of the common answers for the respondents opting for tattoos. Thus, as the cultural codes of conduct are inscribed in the body, individuals opt for tattooing to be different, to be "me" but in the long run they again be part of the group of being "me" and gets the accepted identity of being me or being different. The tattooed body, therefore, becomes an important metaphor for social inscription and well as the portrayal of one's inner self. Like clothing, makeup, etc tattoos decorate the body. The tattooed body, therefore, gets controlled by the same cultural discourse as that of the body in general.

The Self in modern times is seen as more individualistic terms, in which the fashioning of personal appearance is seen as an expression of individual identity. The outward appearance of the individual along with portraying, one's social roles and status, in contemporary times, is first and foremost a reflection of one's inner self. The Self in modern times is seen a fragmented and in a constant flux of change and is the fashion trend. Tattooing has become the major means to experiment with one look. Though there are different agents like gender and religion influencing the size, shape, and visibility of the tattoo the individuals' choice to express one own identity becomes one of the most significant criteria in getting inked. *"My tattoos make me highlight my*

indent of a strong, woman, who can oppose all odds". (Ruth, Age 23). "The tattoos at the back make be express by bold identity.... though sometimes I get negative comments I don't care". (Riya, Age 32). "My tattoos make my friends believe that I am a strong man and I can bear a lot of pain as it is a huge, colored abstract tattoo". (Abhishek, Age 33). "Since my childhood, I was a deviant child, the tattoo makes my deviant identity more prominent. However, for all it is not associated with different, for me it is different than deviant". (Santosh, Age 28). "I live my tattoo as it helps to express my free soul...the birds flying express me...I love to fly high as the birds do" (Parjetcheta, Age 23). "I love taking bold steps, getting inked without anyone's permission is one such act...getting inked at my boobs is another bold step as my mother says whom will you show...and now is show it off and many with whom I interact stares at my tattoos or many times passes negative remarks...but I don't care as that is who I am." (Samira, Age 24). "I am a religious man; I want God to see my love towards him and hence the tattoo of Lord Shiva". (Prasad, Age 36). "I am my daddy's girl. I love him to the fullest and that is what my tattoo states – 'love you, papa". (Sucheta, Age 23).

The tattooed body also assigns symbolic meanings and such meanings also add a definition of self to the individual. A tattoo is permanent on the body, it many times signifies a person's separation from the crowd. He or she gets the identity of 'tattooed women', 'a tattooed lady', 'tattooed man' etc. In the history of tattooing also we can see that prisoners were tattooed to get the identity of committing a crime. The respondents also get the 'tattooed identity'. *"When I was in college there was two Anwesha in our class, my teachers use to identify me with my tattoo...one with the butterfly tattoo in her wrist.... same was in case of my friends". (Anwesha, Age 32). "When I visit Church on Sundays, everyone calls me the tattooed lady...just visit my church and ask about my name, they may not know but just ask where is ruth with tattoo everyone will tell you at once is." (Ruth, Age 21). "Among my cousins I am known as for my tattoo, even mu Masi (maternal aunt) calls me are or jar tattoo ache. (The one who has a tattoo)." (Ranjan, age 36).*

Table No: 11. Tattoo a Symbol of Identification.

Tattoo as a Symbol of Identification	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	28	56%
No	04	8%
Sometimes	18	36%
Total	50	100%

The reasons individuals have for getting tattooed also signified an important part of their self and personality. There are many reasons for getting tattooed and some of them are - an expression of individuality, as a marker of revolt and protest for the mainstream cultural ideologies, defining group membership, representing symbols of love and respect for someone, or marking milestones such as some achievements and expression of religious beliefs. *"Being tattooed is an act of creativity.....tattoos can honor their family or lover, display their religious beliefs and patriotism or can associate them with some group."* (Bell. 199).

Table No. 12 Reasons for getting a Tattoo

Reasons for getting tattooed	No of Respondents	Percentage
Expression of Individuality	37	74%
Marker of Revolt and Protest.	10	20%
Defining Group Membership	12	24%
Symbol of Love	16	32%
Religious belief	10	20%
Marking a milestone	05	10%
To follow the trend	09	18%
To become popular and noticed in the crowd.	07	14%
Total	N=50	100

Those who got themselves inked as a mark of challenge and revolt are generally those who also challenge other aspects of life. Out of the 10 respondents who believed that their tattoos represent a marker of protest, 8 of them did not seek permission from their parents to get tattooed. The very fact of not taking permission shows the rebellious nature or self of the individuals. Such respondents also tend to break many other norms like gender norms of females getting large abstract tattoos which are more masculine in nature, religious norms like individuals belonging to Muslim community getting inked though it is forbidden. Such individuals get the identity of being different from deviant. However, such a definition of the self is created as per the choice of the individuals, and many times they enjoy it. *"My tattoos are forms of expressing myself and I don't care what others think about me... I want to be myself".* (Imran, Age 28). *"Everyone cannot be good or bad and I am what I am I love to deviant; it makes me different."* (Projecheta, Age 25). *"I don't need to impress people anymore so I don't care"* (Rajesh, Age 38).

In the case of religious faith similarly, the tattoo gave the respondents an identity of a religious man, the love expression shows his or her commitment towards his or her partner, thus get the identity of a committed man or woman. Tattoos are done to show accomplishment gives the individual the identity of a successful man or woman. Tattoos are also related to identity and occupational roles. Like for example bikers' tattoos, tattoos of models and gym trainers, etc, highlighting their identity related to their profession.

In choosing the design also, the individual self is defined. A woman with small symbols like a butterfly, angel, etc acquires the identity of a polite, subtle, cute, beautiful woman. The same woman if creates a large abstract tattoo gets the identity of being masculine and hence deviant. The images associated with religion make the individual religious in nature though in reality he or she may not be religious at all their purpose was getting a religious symbol as a tattoo was solely to follow the fashion trend. *"I am various Sanskrit slokas inscribed on my body, I do not even know the meanings of half of them, many people identify me with being religious in nature as these are slokas but I hardly believe in Superpower."* (Sashivaran, Age 36). *"The cross in my arms gives me the identity of being a believer, of Christ but in reality, I follow no religion."* (Suchetana, Age 33).

The body and the self-become the performer, performing various roles assigned to them by society, to avoid stigma and maintain the impression. Through tattooing also such roles are enhanced, giving the individuals a definite social identity. For example, a person with a huge abstract tattoo on his arms is described as 'macho', 'strong', and with many other masculine adjectives. A woman with tattoos gets the identity of 'attractive', 'sexy', 'hot' etc. However, if the same individual does not follow the gender norms related to the size, image, location, and visibility of the tattoo, he or she gets the identity of being deviant. The same can be seen in the case of tattoos with religious symbols. *"I am always been described as a strong woman by my family and friends.....the tattoo enhances the personality of being strong...My aunt often says that I have a strong heart and courage to take the decision of getting such a big image and the pain involves with it... I am also compared with men, with statements like 'cheerleader moto' (like men)."* (Sumana, Age 35). *"The feather of Lord Krishna on my right hand, makes me identifiable as the devotee of Lord Krishna, the very next person whom I meet asks me are you a devotee of Lord Krishna? Yes my tattoo gives me an identity of being religious, but that is only one part of me".* (Neepea, Age 32). *"I have a red-colored tattoo with the image of a chili, the chili is it symbolically means hot....my friends also calls me hot..."* (Olivia, Age 27). *"I am a gym trainer I should have a personality that is strong and tough... My large tattoo on my arm helps to enhance that strong part of my personality."* (Donald, Age 38).

No fixed self develops through the process of body modification. Individuals adopt different types of body modification processes to highlight different kinds of selves to the different intended or unintended audiences, in various socio-cultural contexts. In the private realm of the body—piercing, modification practices tend to take on a highly utilitarian form, with the symbol intended for more intimate interaction at a variety of levels. Intimate placement of the body modification is positively correlated with the level of intimacy required to view the tattooing. The commitment of pleasure as communicated in the meaning of symbols of the modification of the private self serves to help the individual identify like-minded others, promote in-group communication, and alienate that outside pleasure-seeking, sensual alternatives, liberating group networks. The process of tattooing is to a great extent a private act, of expression of one's inner self.

The majority of the respondents tend to hide their tattoos from the audience from whom they intend to receive rejections or negative comments. All individuals have multiple selves, as they show different selves to a different audience as for the matter of impression management. In the case of tattooing also whom to show or from whom to hide is also a matter of presentation of the perfect self as defined by the society. In the case of the private realm, individuals show off their tattoos to whom they identify as likeminded like friends, partners, and family members from whom they receive appraisal and hide this from the general others, from whom they may not get appraisals. *"I never wear a backless dress or blouse, during any family functions as my tattoo becomes visible, but when with friends I am comfortable showing it off... In case of family members, they may tag me as a bad woman". (Srestha, Age 32). "I always show off my tattoo, my friends and family know who I am and how I am...I only hide my tattoos during job interviews, it may have a chance of rejection as it is associated with deviance". (Pratab Age 36).*

Intimate placement of the body modification is positively correlated with the level of intimacy required to view the tattooing. There are individuals with tattoos placed at intimate parts. The audience intended are partners and the self-highlighted are the most private ones. *"Out of the 5 tattoos, 2 are in my private parts and yes I did for my boyfriend and one is his name" (Projeta, Age 23). "I have to look hot and hence the tattoos are made here...of course the audience will be someone special." (Simran, Age 25).* Secondary data highlights that tattooing and piercing in private parts, enhances sexual pleasure but no such expression was expressed in the case of primary data. This may again be, because of the presentation of self in front of the interviewer who is not part of the respondent's in-group.

Table No. 13. Intimate Placement of Body Modification and Intended Audience

Intimate Placement of Body Modification and Intended Audience	No of Respondents	Percentage (%).
Intimate Tattoos are for only Intended Audience	11	91.66%
No Intended Audience	01	8.33%
Total	12	100%

There are myths people always tattooing for personal display and that every tattoo means something explicit. Some people tattoo with the intention of others seeing and interpreting it. Yet these individuals may have private tattoos, which cannot be seen by the general public, as it is a symbol for themselves and with the individuals with whom they are intimate. *"I have three tattoos, the one in my wrist and arms are for the display of friends and family, the one at my private part is for my special one"* (Reshmi, Age 34). *"I cover up by tattoo at my back, as my in-laws do not like it, but when I am with my friends and maternal relatives, I wear backless dresses to show off my tattoos"*. (Simmi, Age, 37). *"I am a part-time gym trainer, I always flaunt my tattoo, at the gym, it gives me the identity of a rough and tough man, associated with my job but when I visit my office, I tend to cover my tattoo as it does not suit my job profile there."* (Abhishek, Age 32).

In the public self-symbolizing domain of body modification, an individual engages in body tattooing with the primary intent of communicating readily demonstrable public displays of defiance. Public symbolic identity construction through body tattooing is motivated by rebellion and defiance, serving as a mechanism of cultural, social, economic, and political dissent that communicates rejection of conformity and conventionality. *"I wanted to look different and hence the tattoo I do not care what others think of me"*. (Prabin, Age 34). *"My father never wanted me to have a tattoo.... but I also want him not to do many things, he always does not listen to me then why should I listen to him"* (Shrestha, Age 28). *"People in my family call me spoilt, as I smoke, consume alcohol and have multiple tattoos and piercings....but I do not care I feel liberated and free."* (Riya, Age 32). *"Being the 'boro bou' (elder daughter-in-law), my other in-law always told me to hide my tattoos in front of my family relatives...As I never, agreed to do so...I am tagged 'behaya' (disobedient) and uncultured"*.

However, the public tattooing is also many times hidden by the respondents, where the interacting audience becomes significant. Therefore, the Self that gets highlighted from the process of body modification, is both intentional and unintentional depending on the audience and the socio-cultural context of the interaction.

Table No. 14. Hiding of Tattoo

Hiding or Covering of Tattoos	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Hide tattoos depending on the interactional situation and audience	42	84%
Do not hide	08	16%
Total	50	100%

One motivating characteristic associated with private as well as public symbolic self-construction is the desire to influence the quality, methods, and body self-constructions and participants in one's future life events. Whichever form of self-expression whether being private or public a sort of impression management is always used. The intended impression can be a positive or a negative one as in many cases of medication it is intended to challenge the dominant cultural ideologies. The audience is a crucial symbol in the body modification process. Identity goals have legitimacy only when recognized by an intended audience, whose perception has a substantial impact on the intensity of the effort made and the choice of symbols deployed. Regardless of the size of the audience defined, when identity goals are successfully achieved through effective use of symbols to the audiences for whom they are intended, self-esteem is enhanced, the legitimacy of performance is satisfied, and authentic identity construction is in full progress. One of the respondents quoted: *"when we get a tattoo it is our choice, and it is much more emblematic of who we are"* (Respondent 36, Age 44).

Tattoos also act as an agent of expression of self. Whether it may be public or private participants acknowledged their view of expressing their selves through their tattoos. Throughout the interviews, the respondents linked their tattoos to their identity using words such as strong, hardy, gregarious, happy, extravert, rebellious to describe themselves.

An important characteristic of stigma is that individual's lack of conformity to social norms. Stigma gets defined within a context and the norms to which individuals are subjected. Like for example the tattoo images which are accepted among a certain age group of peers are taken as deviant by others in society). Such stereotypes help to

categorize behaviour so that others can be understood more efficiently. This helps us to create instant viewpoints or judgments on others, without proper informative evaluation. In this way, we tend to link many attributes such as tattoos to judge an individual's character.

Physical stigmas are those with which individuals are born and social stigmas are mainly behavioural, chosen mainly intentionally or unintentionally by the individuals and hence are the responsibility of the individuals. Those possessing a social stigma are tagged as deviant, through the commitment of deviant acts such as tattooing. Such process of defining deviance also defines 'normal', thus making the object of deviance such as tattooing a stigmatized process as it is acquired and not inherited. The ability to use strategies to overcome stigma becomes important as those facing long-term stigmatization processes may suffer consequences such as low self-esteem, feelings of shame, etc. To overcome these consequences individuals, develop ways to live the balance between their tattoos and their social status. Like a person tends to show off their tattoos when partying with friends and tend to hide in case of a job interview or formal work. Here again, the matter of Impression management becomes important.

Though tattooing has gained popularity in contemporary times, is always and to some extent associated with deviant behaviour. The social stigma associated with tattooing has changed very little. The tattooed body place the individuals in an unconventional social group. Identity construction is a significant step in this regard. Tattooing was associated with a class of individuals who were marginal and were outside the mainstream society. Like in the Circus Era, tattooing was done on women who performed in the circus and not upon upper-class women, in the case of India, where tattooing is associated with certain religious communities and its rituals it mainly highlighted their lower caste positions. Like tattoos among the Gond tribes demarcated them from other tribeswomen. (Refer to chapter 2.). In many parts of the world, the tattoo has been used to signify exclusion. It gave the individuals the identity of being others.

Tattooing was not many parts of the accepted norms; the tattoo mark became a symbol or mark of deviant practice in the public mind. Individuals who had tattoo though has positive meanings attached to their tattoos, the audience has a mixed reaction. All the respondents interviewed faced negative comments and reactions both in public spheres

and among close relatives for having a tattoo. Thus, tattoo becomes the symbol of deviance for many audiences. Some common comments are – *"baba, ma kichu bole na...boro loker meye to tai ei sob...bhodro barir meye noi...."* (Father and mother do not say anything? Girls of a rich family that why... she is not a decent girl.). *"This is one of the comments that I heard from a passerby in the mall...but such comments are now normal, and staring at the tattoos are more normal"*. (Ruth, age, 23). *"The three phrases that I often hear from people are 'baje meye', (bad girl), uncultured and many words meaning slut... but I don't care as they are not my significant others...."* (Sucheta. Age28). *"He consumes alcohol, has girlfriends, does not have a proper job, and has some design types mark in his body... God knows what will happen in his future.... these are said by my friend's mother and he is also advised not to interact with me."* (Rohan, age 32). Such impression by the audience creates a deviant identity for the individuals with a tattoo as one of a spoiled children with no parental control, no career ambition, and thus socially not good. As all individuals in society try to manage this stigma, they generally tend to hide the tattoos from these audiences and present a self that is acceptable to others.

All participants in the present study realized and identified tattooing and tattooed individuals are viewed as deviant or in a negative position in the society, giving them a negative social self or a negative social image. The phrases that the respondents used to describe the negative ways in which tattoos are viewed by the society's members are – 'shabby, not clean, uncultured, non-conformist, bad person, rebels, deviant, bad, drunks, criminals, not trustworthy, etc.' These interpretations were not generally concluded from persons' interactions and experiences but generate out of general assumptions that are socially created and culturally defined. This is evident from the fact that participants got to hear such comments more from outsiders and strangers than from their close relatives and friends. Out of the 50 respondents interviewed 46 of them have been confronted with such comments and out of these 46, for the 27 respondents it was only from strangers, for 12 respondents such stigmatization was only from relatives and friends, and for the rest, it was from both. Thus, stigmatizations of individuals without even knowing them, only based on some common societal values were common among the societal members, giving the respondents a social definition of self which in reality may differ.

Tattooing is also associated with stigma informal sector especially in the workplace. As individuals with tattoos are tagged as deviant and informal, it is not much an accepted norm in the workplace. The most relevant context the respondents received in this context was that tattoos were 'unprofessional'. All participants believed that it was acceptable to cover their tattoos at the workplace as a mark of professionalism. *"If you are a business owner and you want to appeal to your client that you have to be professional and so I cover my tattoo"* (Ritesh, Age 38). *"The tattoos may act as a distracting agent; it makes the interaction unprofessional and so I prefer to cover it up when at the office."* (Olivia, Age 25). *"As a teacher to flaunt my tattoos in front of students, gives me an unprofessional identity...So I prefer to hide my tattoo".* (Rasna, Age 44). The same respondents feel free to show off their tattoos at parties or when with friends. Thus, a dual self is created for many of the tattooed individuals and such duality is created to avoid stigmatization and maintain the impression of the ideal or the perfect self. For the present study individuals many times felt that they were treated as others. *"amader barir meyera ei sob kore na"* (Girls of our family does not do all these). (Nikita, Age 23). *"yeh sab humlogo mei nahi Hota hai (these things do not happen among us) said my parents when I asked for their permission...."* (Imran, Age 25). *"meye manush ei sob kore Naki....baje meyera kore.....my aunt commented on my tattoo during a family function".*(Do girls do all these things? It is done by bad girls). (Sucheta, Age 26). 'Bad girl', 'bad boy', 'not our culture' are some of the common phrases associated with tattooing making it an act of the others. However, being the other is the new trend among the youth, creating a collective identity of the other in the long run.

However, as more and more individuals started getting tattooed, this view started changing to some extent with time. Among the respondents of the present research also acceptance from the audience. *"When I sat for my TISS interview I covered up my tattoo from the fear of rejection in the interview... But later when I started class in the same institute both teachers and students were well interested to know the reasons and meanings associated with my tattoos. I never felt tagged as deviant there. However, such reactions towards my tattoos are not common among all audiences with whom I interact."* (Nikita, Age 25). *"My father initially disliked my tattoos, but it is quite popular among my friends and accepted among my family members".* (Abhishek, Age 32). *"Both my family and friends are fine with my tattoos, the negative comments and strange looks comes from passer-by while traveling, especially in public transport."*

(Sucheta, Age 25). Thus, with time, tattooing has acquired an acceptable position among quite huge masses but it is not an accepted norm for fashion among all.

The Self that develops out of this process is mainly the interpretation of others. It is like Charles Horton Cooley's 'Looking Glass Self', where the Self is the reflection of the interpretation of the individual of others interpretation of his or her self-images. The individuals here always try to modify the self, interpreting the demands of society. Impression of the Self here again becomes significant. Individuals through the body modification process modify and present different social selves and different social situations.

Infused with cultural meanings tattoos thus operate as symbolic resources to create an individual identity. In contemporary post-modern society's tattoos have personal appeal in the post-modern market that provides a variety of choices in the construction of identity with almost limitless options to improve and change themselves. The notion of self that becomes flexible with co-modification of culture and with the pressure of refining identities which never ends and fashion is an ever-changing subject of contemporary times. This has led to some form of identity politics. Taking the example of tattooing the politics lie in the duality of the expression of the individual's self. On the one hand, the individual wants to portray the free and liberated self by showing off his or her inked body, on the other hand customizing or hiding it as per the cultural norms highlighting the traditional cultured self. In the case of the interpretation of the audience of self of the tattooed individuals, there is also a duality that exists. Like for example, individuals may not be religious in nature but the tattoo may represent him or her as a religious person. In the case of the interpretation of the respondents themselves, there may be a duality. Like women, respondents feel that their inked bodies are symbols of their emancipation and empowerment and men see them as symbols of attraction. This is evident from the negative comments the tattooed lady faces while interacting in public.

There are various strategies that individuals adopt to manage this stigmatization process. All participants except Jimmy and Procheta who have a tattoo on their neck and her face adopted hiding the tattoos as strategies adopted to hide the tattoo as part of their stigma management process. Concealment avoided social consequences associated with the stigmatization process and tattooing by removing the tattoo from a

position of display and thus the individuals could display another side of their identity. One of the respondents specially purchased clothes to cover her tattoos when going for an interview. *"I always wear dark color clothes, especially not white clothes to make sure that my tattoos do not become visible"*. (Shrestha, Age 33). Similarly, another respondent accessed the context before deciding whether to display or conceal her tattoos. *"I love my tattoos when I visit someplace where I feel it may attract wrong kind of attention, I feel comfortable to cover it"* (Shalu, Age 35).

Another strategy used by the respondent to manage stigma is to avoid interacting with individuals who tend to have negative reactions to their tattoos. *"I tend not to attend any of my family functions unless they are very significant, as most of my relatives talk negative about my body art and also tends gossip relating it with my character"*. (Pritha, Age 31). *"When I was small and did not have a tattoo, I had lots of family friends but now they always tend to lecture me about how and why it is forbidden in our religion, thus I tend not to be or interact with the most of the time."* (Imran, age 28)

Table No. 15. Strategies Used to Avoid Stigma

Strategies Used to Avoid Stigma	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Cover the Tattoos	24	48%
Ignore interacting with audience having negative reactions	13	26%
Both	13	26%
Total	50	100%

Thus, body modification like tattooing is part of modifying and presenting different social and personal selves. The presentation of self is and was a significant step in this regard. As individuals have the perfect social image to maintain, they adopt various modification processes to avoid stigma and maintain impression. Such processes are culturally defined and those who do not follow are termed deviant. Individuals thus adopt strategies depending on the interactional situations, to avoid the stigma of being deviant. Thus, multiple identities are created in this respect.

Concluding Remarks.

Overall, it is evident that tattoos are intimately connected with the tattooed individual's identity. The body is the medium through which the cultural codes are inscribed and the body also gives the individual his or her identity. Individuals, therefore, adopt various kinds of modification processes, not only to create the perfect body but to create the perfect self-image, as defined by the cultural standards of the society. The body thus becomes the performer; always try to perform the perfect self-image. Thus, in the post, modern societies become fragmented, giving rise to multiple selves. The two sides of the self are the personal and the public self-group of the intended audience which was not generally meant for the generalized others.

Tattoos themselves became the marker of self-expression. Starting from the adjectives used to express themselves through their tattoos to the reasons, designs, images, sizes, location, and visibility of the tattoo defined the person's self or social image. 8 of the respondents 4 male and 4 female described their tattoos as a sign of empowerment for showing the courage to go something that is socially much not accepted. Those respondents who followed the socially defined norms of body modification got the social identity of 'good' and those who do not follow the norms of the society related to body modification gets the socially defined identity of being 'bad', 'deviant', 'rebellious' 'different' etc.

Thus, a process of stigmatization is also related to tattooing. As tattooing is an intentional act and the natural is believed to be most beautiful and as tattooing history is mainly associated with sailors, criminals, slaves, and other backward sections of the society it is mainly not accepted by the traditional society, and the tattooed individual is stigmatized to be bad or deviant. Individuals thus try to manage their tattooed identity through various measures like covering the tattoos or not interacting with individuals who have negative ideologies related to tattoos. This again leads to multiple role-playing for impression management and to avoid stigma. Like for example individuals tend to cover their tattoos in the formal work sector or the case of interviews but show it off at a party with family and friends. Similarly, to be the perfect housewife or daughter-in-law, individuals wear clothes that hide their tattoos, when on vacation or at a party they show it off with pride. However, the notion of non-acceptability has

changed over time as in many cases, unexpected acceptances by the respondents were also observed.

Others' perceptions of tattoos are also important for creating a self-impression and identity construction. Taking from the concept of Cooley's 'Looking Glass Self' here the identity is created by the interpretation of the judgments of others. Viewers are also from outside the tattooed communities in this respect. Viewers who form the significant others like the family member, the workplace becomes important in this respect. With some social stigmas still associated with tattoos individuals often face negative gestures from the audience, creating or giving the tattooed individual an identity, which in reality he or she may not be. Thus, again a duality of identity, the actual identity, and the created identity plays a nexus.

3.4. Tattooing, Technology and Health.

Introduction.

In every part of the world, all humans go through a physical transformation to attain the perfect body and the ideal social self. One of the oldest forms of body modification practice found almost in all parts of the world is tattooing. Inscribing the body always involved technology. Development in technology has brought new ways to acquire a tattoo. Technological advancements have also affected the design and techniques involved in tattooing. Though tattooing is often used with therapeutic values, there are many health risks associated with it. New dimensions of health risks emerged with the emerging technologies that tattooed individuals are mainly ignorant about. The present section to highlight the health risks associated with tattooing and how technological evolution has made it more complicated. Its section also aims to point out the awareness among the tattooed respondents about these risks and assess the steps they take to avoid such risks. The section also tries to describe the nature of therapeutic tattooing and the positive social roles it plays in building up a new self with confidence, hiding, the personal pains inflicted mainly by social stigma.

Evolution of Tattooing Technology and Health Risks.

The earliest evidence of tattooing can be traced back to 5300-3000 B.C years back in history. Pacific regions have a long history of tattooing, and the techniques used were unique. There are different hypotheses related to the origin and antiquity of distinct types of tattooing technology in the Pacific regions. Multi-toothed bone comb tattooing traditions deserve mention in this regard. (Ambrose 2012:2-3). The presence of the bone comb in the archeological record makes it evident as a tattooist's kit in this era. The bone tattoo comb was angle-hafted, and into soluble pigment, then the haft handle was stuck with a mallet to drive the comb points into the dermis, making a permanent mark into the skin. Anthropomorphic art suggests designs on the skin with or without pigment can be traced back to the Upper Paleolithic age in Europe. (Kind et al., 2014:130-132). Simple pointed tattooing tools or implements date back to the Magdalenian age consisting mainly of single and inline tattooing tools. (Wolf 2013:26). There is also archeological evidence of multi-toothed tattooing kits in Egypt, Nubian, and Zidarov (Tassie, 2003:86-87).

Archeological evidence found across the globe points out that to avoid health risks associated with tattooing, proper steps were taken to select tattooing kits and preserve the tattooing kits. Saint-Just and Marthe Pequart, during their 1937-1943 excavations sites of Mas d'Azil in southern France, discovered thousands of artifacts revealing information about the decorative artistic practices of the Magdalenian. (Wolf 2013:26). Pequart and Pequart 1962 identified that the tattooing toolkit included animal bones and sharp toolkits and even need-like objects. Bi-pointed and Batonnet needles were also in use. They were tapered on one to and flattened at the opposite. The Pequarts is via that the bi-pointed needles functioned as tattoo while the latter was used to extract pigment from the palette and apply it to the skin. (1962). All the toolkits were stored inside a bucket woven with leaves. Some of the best-documented tattooing toolkits originate in Oceania. Among the Maori community, similar toolkits and preservation of tool kits were observed. The tattoo artist traveled alongside a suite of toolkits, including mallets, small pots containing pigments, and leaves from karaka trees for healing. (Teawekotuku 1997). In southern Asia, the Shan stored their bronze and bamboo tattoo needles inside wooden boxes and pigment containers. (Conway 2006). Similar was the case all over the globe.

With the evolution of technology, industrial machines have taken up the place of primitive tools. These machines are electronic-based as opposite to the hand-operated machines of the past. These machines help for faster and more acute designs in case of creating a tattoo. Samuel L. Riley first invented the electric tattoo machine in 1981, allowing for faster and less painful tattoos on individuals. (Kosut, 2015:79-80). The tattoo machines of contemporary times have come a long way from that of the old ones. The very first machine was adapted from an Edison rotary-operated stencil pen, which was very heavy to be operated. It was Charles Wagner who invented to twin coil set used side by side. The electronic tattoo machine was the major invention of the entire evolution of tattooing technology, making the process faster, less painful, and the art more accurate and beautiful. Though these machines have made the process less painful and easy, it has resulted in some complicated health risks that individuals are mainly unaware of. Unlike the past techniques, the components used are no more dyes and shoots of plants, but organic pigments are used in the composition of the tattoo color, which is very harmful to the body. Since tattoo compounds in comparison with the cosmetic industry are hardly controlled officially, these coloring agents' origin and chemical structure are hardly known, making the process more risk-prone. As risk is a part of postmodern society, technological evolution in tattooing makes health risks more complicated, which the individuals seem to be mostly ignorant about.

Electronic tattoo machines are the most used methods in recent times to get tattooed. In many remote areas, Godwanis, using traditional methods. The urban youth visits tattoo parlors and get themselves fancy tattoos. Another popular site of getting inked is in fairs though its ratio has declined with time. (Primary data). Generally, men get themselves inked in fairs belonging to the upper age group. 12 of the total respondents got themselves inked in a local fair, and of which 9 of them belong to the age group of 40 and above. As local fairs are no more popular, and rise of tattoo parlors can be the factor for such acts. In both cases, tattoo machines are used where ink is inserted into the skin using a single needle or a group of needles joined in a bar attached to an oscillating unit. The needle repeatedly gets inserted into the skin giving the skin, the mark, or the tattoo design. (Described by a tattoo artist). There are also permanent tattoos done as permanent makeup to alter the eyebrows or to have a permanent lip color. In such cases, needleless machines are used, which are less painful and less prone to risks associated with transmittable diseases. The technology has evolved to such an extent that one gets

their eye tattooed and can even get a musical tattoo. The risks are high in these cases. As tattoo technology is more popular in the western world, eyeball tattooing popularity is not much high in India. It is only done in Mumbai, and participants are also very few. Thus, from the pricking of bone comb to advance tattoo machines, there has been an evolution of tattooing technology.

Health Risks and Tattooing.

Skin Infection and Tattooing.

The most common type of health risk associated with tattooing is an infection or skin allergies. Many times, the ink used does not suit the skin and may cause infection or skin irritation. A study conducted by Vasold, Kong, Landthaler, and Wolfgang (2008) conducted a study on the health risks of tattoo colors and found out that most of the colors used in modern days tattoos consist of azo-pigments or polycyclic compounds. Black color often consists of carbon black or a by-product of shoot-production, which may also cause infections. The intensity of the problem lies with the fact that neither the tattoo artist nor the individuals getting tattooed are aware of the composition of the ink used. Thus, a major threat is being ignored, and risk is bestowed.

Table No. 16. Experience of Skin Infection by the Respondents.

Skin allergies/infection/similar problem faced after tattooing	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Faced such problem	43	86%
Have not faced any problem	07	14%
Total	50	100

Of the total 50 respondents, 43 of them that is 86% of the total respondents, complained of having some form of skin irritation like itching or infection after having a tattoo, which they considered a part of the wound created. *"After the second day of my tattooing process, I started having skin irritation, and the tattoo got infected. My tattoo*

artist informed me that it might be due to the heat, as I did it in summer. After few days of staying at home, the wound slowly got settle down. I never consulted a doctor as I thought it to be a part of the tattooing process as a wound was created, and it depends from individual to individual for a wound to cure." (Sanjana, Age 24). "Itching is common when a wound cure, and yes, my tattoo was also itching, but I never bothered to consult the tattoo artist nor a doctor." (Rohan, Age 42).

However, it may be due to the substance present in the color pigment, which the individuals are mostly ignorant about. Unlike traditional tattooing techniques, where natural substances were used, the tattoo dyes' chemical composition makes it more risk-prone. The two major measures taken by them were using an antiseptic cream and not exposing the area to the sun as advised by the tattoo artist. When asked about the composition of the color, none of them were aware of it. Remarks like "*colored tattoo hai*" (Colored tattoo mainly usage of colors more than black). "*that is something that my tattoo artist can tell you*". "*it may be simply clothing of the blood that gives the color to the tattoo*" by the respondents highlight the fact that individuals get inked to follow the fashion trend or to maintain an impression but awareness about the process, technique and specifically the most basic but important knowledge about the color used is something there are unaware of. Thus, the gap between science and technology and day-to-day common life is huge. The hierarchy makes a gap between the two, creating a lack of awareness and hence prone to risk.

Table No 17. Awareness Regarding Risks.

Awareness Regarding Risks associated with the color of the tattoo.	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Aware of Risks Associated with Color	41	82%
Not Aware	09	18%
Total	50	100

The above data shows that the respondents were mainly unaware of the risks associated with the color used in the tattoo. The respondents thought that the infection was mainly due to exposure to dust, sunlight, or pollution. Out of the 43 respondents, 86% of the total respondents who faced skin problems after tattooing, 33 of them, that is 76%, believed that it might be due to exposure to dust or other similar substance. At the same time, aftercare protection and awareness are also very few among the respondents. The respondents' common aftercare measures are not exposing the tattoo to the sun or the heat for few days and not exposing the tattoo to water for few days. However, this is also rare in no.

Table No. 18. Aftercare Measures taken.

Taken aftercare as advised by Tattoo artist	No of Respondents.	Percentage (%)
Followed the advice fully	7	14%
Partially followed	17	34%
Not followed	26	52%
Total	50	100

Risk of Cancer and Tattooing.

In 1995 The International Agency on Research on Cancer (IARC) conveyed that the carbon black present in color used in tattoos is an essential substance that may cause cancer. (Vasold, et al., 2008). Experts have warned that toxic ink may get inserted into the human body causing deadly diseases like cancer. British scientists founded that nano-particles from ink may get into our bodies. Desmond Tobin, Director Bradford Centre for Skin Sciences, points out that collagen, the body's connective tissue, is completely damaged by the chemical ink. He states, *"it takes a long time for multiple-face cancer to show its face. I don't think we should wait for 20 years to see if there is anything wrong with these ingredients."* (Times of India, 22nd September 2013). However, all ingredients are not toxic, but there is a lack of awareness and ability both among the tattoo artist and the individual getting tattooed about the composition of the ink used, making the process more risk-prone. However, there are no statistics or

research done to prove that tattooing causes cancer. The chemical substances used contains compounds that may be the leading causes of cancer.

For the present research, as the respondents were unaware of the chemical composition of the ink used in tattooing, the risk of cancer associated with tattooing was something they were unaware of. When asked about awareness of the major risks associated with tattooing, the respondent's awareness about infection was 93%, risk of transmissible diseases like HIV was 66%, risk of transmissible diseases like Hepatitis B and C was 6%, and risk of cancer was only 3%. Parents or friends informed many times, the risk associated with tattooing and cancer to the tattooed individuals, however as there are no scientific proven statistics of correlation between the two variables and awareness about the chemical composition is almost nil, so the respondents tend to ignore such risks and take up tattooing as a casual cosmetic technology. *"My father told me I would die...as I am inked with so many tattoos as sooner or later, I may have cancer"* (Nikita, Age 25). *"But I never believe him as he does not have any rationale to support his arguments". "I read from the internet that some toxic materials used in tattooing may cause cancer but not all, I did it from a reputed tattoo studio, and I hope they have used proper materials"* (Angshuman, Age 32).

Analyzing some of the respondents' remarks suggests that awareness is very less, especially concerning cancer. The individuals getting tattooed blindly depend on tattoo parlors or the tattoo artists, by paying thousands of rupees, but the sad part of the story is that the tattoo artists are the experts or have no knowledge about the risks associated with it. Knowing the potential risks associated with tattooing is a good idea, and as there is no statistical evidence to prove that tattooing causes cancer. For the present, none of the respondents having a tattoo, even those who are having it for years showed any symptoms of cancer, nor do they said to know anyone having a tattoo and is suffering from cancer. Prevention like knowing the composition of the tattoo artists' ink, more governmental surveillance can make the art a safer platform for individuals.

However, there is little or no governmental control on the tattooing industry, especially on its products. In Western developed countries where tattooing is popular and almost every youth gets inked, the tattoo ink composition is not much regulated. The US Food and Drug administrator have not approved any tattooing ink, and the European Council in 2003 stressed the importance of regulating the components of the ink; in Germany

and France, using Azo Pigments is illegal. (Nicolas Kluger, Virve Koljonen. 2012). However, it is difficult to regulate has the ink is mainly exported or are bought at the tattoo conventions. In developing countries like India, where tattooing is a rising culture, the regulation becomes difficult. However, regulation and awareness remain two remedies to prevent the risks associated with the ink used in tattooing.

Risks Associated with Tattooing Toolkit and Transmittable Diseases.

From traditional tattooing techniques to modern ones, the needle plays a significant role in creating a tattoo. Tattooing requires injecting the needle, puncturing the skin more than 80 to 150 times a second. (Jafari et al. 2010:928-930). Therefore, the needle as a tattoo toolkit plays a very significant role. Proper sterilization of the needle and proper safety measures are essential parts of the tattooing process. In traditional tribal cultures where bone comb and other forms of sharp objects were used, storing it properly was essential. One major reason for proper sterilization of the needle is that the needle enters the human body, and the chances of transmittable diseases are very high. Transmittable diseases like HIV, Hepatitis C, and Hepatitis B can occur if proper care is not taken with the tattooing toolkit.

Table No. 19. Awareness Regarding Health Risks Associated with the needle used for Tattooing

Awareness Regarding Health Risks Associated with the needle used for Tattooing	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Aware of HIV from used needles	27	54%
Aware of Hepatitis B and C	07	14%
Aware of both	04	8%
Aware of None	12	24%
Total	50	100%

Awareness regarding the dangers of needles and transmittable diseases was quite high among the present research respondents. However, for transmittable diseases, individuals mainly meant HIV. Only 14% of the total respondents were aware of transmittable diseases like Hepatitis B and C that occur if the needle as a tattooing toolkit is not of single-use or not properly sterilized. (Sucheta, Age 23).

Similar responses were recorded from almost all the respondents. This highlights that, like in the cosmetic industry where we use so many products almost unknown about their side-effects, similarly, many common causes of everyday diseases remain unknown, making us more risk-prone in the contemporary scenario.

Doing the tattoo from a proper tattoo parlor is something that the respondents choose to make the process of getting inked safer. Tattoo parlors are the most common site of getting a tattoo. However, age and cost are a factor behind it.

Table No. 20. Place of Getting Inked

Place of Getting Inked	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Tattoo Parlor	27	54%
Local Fairs	12	24%
From a local traditional Tattoo artist other	11	22%
Total	50	100%

The data in the above table highlights tattoo parlors are most common of getting inked. The respondents believed that tattoo parlors are safer as they are renowned, located in the proper place, and if there are any problems, they can get back to for help and assistance. Some of the reasons stated by the respondents support this fact. *"I have done three tattoos in total; all of them are from a renowned tattoo artist in his house. So, I made it a point to check that the needle used was new and then exposed after every use."*

As for larger tattoos, multiple needles are used." (Avantika, Age 27). *"Tattoo parlor, tattoo artist and well-known ones that I hope would make the process safer"* (Abhishek, Age 22). *"I know there are chances of transmittable diseases, but I have chosen a proper tattoo parlor; I think that is the only safety measure that can be taken by an individual willing to get herself or himself inked safely."* (Procheta, Age 23). However, age and economic criteria are important conditions dictating from where a tattoo can be done. Out of the 27 respondents opting to get a tattoo done from a tattoo parlor, the majority belonged to the lower age group.

Table No. 21. Respondents age at the time of getting tattooed.

Age of respondents getting inked from a tattoo parlor	No of respondents	Percentage (%)
20-25	11	40.74%
25-30	09	33%
30-35	04	14.81%
35 and above	03	11%
Total	27	100%

The rest 23 respondents opted to get a tattoo either from a local fare or a traditional tattoo artist. Here the availability of such advanced technology and tattoo parlors are factors behind choosing such options. Along with it, the cost of getting a tattoo done in a tattoo parlor is much high in comparison to that in a tattoo parlor. The cost ranges in thousands in a tattoo parlor whereas in a local fare such as hundred rupees a tattoo can be done. Thus, availability and advance technology, and cost are two important factors that make individuals ignore risks and fulfill the trend's desire.

In a developing country like India, individuals got themselves both from tattoo parlors, where proper hygiene is maintained, and many people get a tattoo from a local fair. As they call themselves, local tattoo artists with little or no knowledge about the safety measures come from villages or takes up their parental profession and start making

tattoos in the streets of fairs, mainly found during some festivals. A huge number of people get tattooed from these people knowing little or none about the safety measures. Of the total 50 respondents for the present research, 12 of them, 24% of the respondents, have got a tattoo from these local tattoo artists. From the respondents' experience, it is known that a battery-operated or sometimes electric operated device is used with local colors. The place where the tattoo will be done is generally rubbed with a dab of alcohol as a preventive measure. Turmeric is used as an aftercare measure, but not always. As it is done in open dust, particles may also cause infection. The respondents had little or no idea about the disposal of the needle. The charge of getting tattooed in these fairs is very minimum. It ranges from Rs. 100 to Rs. 1000 max, which is quite the opposite of the tattoo parlors, where thousands of rupees are charged. (Primary data). Here also, there is no government control or check.

When highlighted with the risks associated with the unhygienic toolkits, these respondents pointed out that fashion is something that everyone wants but cannot afford and thus these risks. *"Hum to makeup bhi local use karte hai...jisme problem hai...kya Kare paisa nahi hai"* (We use local makeups which we know are problematic, but we do use it as we cannot afford the higher-end ones). (Laxmi, Age 33). *"Yes, the same needle was used by the local tattoo artist to create the tattoo for both my brother and me...I asked the men about it, but he said that in much less money, a second needle could not be used, and as he was my brother, it was ok for me"*. (Ramji, Age 38). In this case, also individuals' lack of awareness makes the process more risk-prone. Though the current research data showed that none of the 50 respondents had many medical histories of transmittable diseases, the relation between the two cannot be ignored. The usage of the single-use needle by almost all the respondents makes the process safer. Several studies show the relationship between tattooing and the risks of having transmitted diseases like Hepatitis B and C.

Though there is a list of safety measures associated with tattooing, some of the respondents' major measures were, using turmeric as an antiseptic, (though a traditional method but a prevalent one). *"My tattoo artist suggested some gel-based cream for aftercare, but he also recommended 'haldi' (turmeric)"*. (Rohan, Age 40). *"As nothing as available, I used turmeric as advised by my mother"* (Sabita, Age 35). However, using turmeric as an agent of projective care was confirmed mainly by respondents who

have gone through tattooing in a local fair or by using the traditional model of getting a tattoo. Only one respondent opted for tattooing in a tattoo parlor, used turmeric. Other than using turmeric using antiseptic cream, not using water on the tattoo for a said number of days, using sunscreen on the tattoo when going out in the sun are some of the respondents' measures. Therefore, technology has altered the post-tattoo care procedure. To a great surprise, 12 of the respondents said they never bothered to take any aftercare, and left it for natural healing.

As there are severe diseases associated with tattooing, especially with the techniques and the toolkits, pre and post tattooing procedures need to be taken proper care of. Due to ignorance, such risks become high though the risks are only coincidental. As the tattooing industry is developing as a commercial enterprise, governmental control or check is essential. Individuals' blind dependence on technology, especially on the experts, makes to process more risk-prone.

With the emerging technology, there are emerging risks. The latest form of tattooing technology is Eye-ball tattooing. The while part of the eye is filled with tattoo color—a technique prevalent in Australia and New Zealand. In India, it is quite new. Karan, 28 years, living in Delhi, India, tattooed his eyeball interviewed Outlook in September 2020. He found the process interesting, and he did it as he wanted to do something different. The process costs thousands of rupees, and the associated risks are not known. However, the medical fraternity isn't impressed with this act. "In all my career, I have never heard of anything like this. I did not even know that something like this exists and that people are crazy enough to get it done. I cannot comment on the risks involved," Dr. Atul Kumar, head of the ophthalmology department, AIIMS, told *DNA*. (September 2020.). Many also suggest that it can also cause blindness.



(Karan, 28 years, Delhi-based tattoo artist with his eye tattooed. Source: Karan's Facebook account)

Though in India, such a form of tattooing is not a popular phenomenon, but the emergence of such practice shows the development of technology and its associated risks. Individuals take it up as a part of the developmental process ignoring the risk factors associated with it, mainly to gain the identity of being modern or accepted by peers' society.

Therapeutic Tattooing: The Positive Impact of Tattooing on Health.

Though there is a line of correlation between many health risks and tattooing, analyzing the history of tattooing, it can be seen that ancient people in many parts of the world developed techniques to restore and maintain health through the prevention and treatment of illness. One of such health care practices was therapeutic tattooing. Several paleopathological records and ethnographic research in the Arctic (Krutak 1998ab, 1999, 2007, 2009), Philippines (Krutak 2010), and Sarawak documented several cultural heritages of tattoo as a form of therapeutic use. In 1991 the 5000-years old mummy discovered in the Tyrolean Alps with tattoos was significant because they provide the oldest evidence of therapeutic tattoos in the world. (Krutak, 2010). All knowledge is known from either the archeological evidence of the Paleolithic age or through the remains of many mummified bodies with tattoos. One such oldest mummified body is the 'Otzi,' which is the naturally preserved remains of the Tyrolean Icemen found. (Kutschera and Muller, 2003).

Radiographic analysis of the pictures points that considerable arthrosis in many of the same regions like the lower back or lumbar spine, hip joints, knee joints, and ankle joints are mainly considered the body's acupuncture points. The 'Otzi' had 61 tattoo marks across his body. (Samadelli et.al, 2015). Placement, composition, and possible function, which were of therapeutic value, were important considerations for the tattoo marks of the 'Otzi.'

Another example was the 1500 years old mummy of a young woman found in Peru. The woman was heavily tattooed, suspected to be for decorative purposes, but the circular tattoos around her cervical spines and her upper backs are speculative to serve as therapeutic purposes. (Wingate,2019). The substance used for tattooing also had immense therapeutic importance. Anthropologist Lars Krutak has studied and analyzed tattooing cultures of many societies and written extensively on the subject. She points out that in several societies like Borneo, Papua New Guinea, and several indigenous cultures throughout America, tattooing was believed to be a remedy for several problems like infertility, spiritual possessions, joint pain, vision problems, paralysis, body pain, headache, etc. (Krutak,2018). Other indigenous people like the Ainu of Japan and several native American groups like the Hupa practiced therapeutic tattooing. (Krutak, 2013).

There is multicultural evidence of tattooing used for therapeutic purposes, but very little information is available for its modern application. Meaning therapeutic means healing of diseases; in this respect, healing of emotional stress through tattoo can also be a therapeutic value. For the present research, though none of the 50 respondents used tattooing as an agent of healing any medical pain or issues, there were cases where tattooing was used as a medium to overcome emotional stress. In this respect, the positive social impact of tattooing and, to an extent, its therapeutic value of healing can be stressed.

"I have two tattoos, and getting them was a private matter of necessity. I was in a meditation session when I was going through a lot of mental disturbances after my parental separation, and the only word that I learned and wanted to store in the mt brain was 'I TRUST', so I decided to get a tattoo as a mark of reminder during the times of uncertainty. After doing the tattoo, I never regrated, and it makes me feel that at least

I trust myself. It boosts my self-confidence and brings a positive feeling inside me". (Samantha, Age 25).

"There are around eight tattoos all over the body, and they are quite big... Yes, creating them requires the infliction of pain, but it reduces the pain that I have in my personal life. The flying birds in my hand give me a sense of freedom from the clutches of duties and obligations of my daily life. It shows me the hope of ray. Yes, my tattoos give me emotional relief from the daily stress and pains". (Kavita, Age 32).

"Since my childhood, I was very close to my father; he passed away when I was sixteen, I was shattered. I was in mental turmoil and was having difficulties in coping up with life. I tattooed the phrase 'papa's girl' though it is not a huge achievement or act; it gives me the mental peace that with this tattoo, he will remain within me forever. The tattoo has helped me to come out from the mental disturbances that I was going through after my father's death". (Kajol, Age 38).

"Since my childhood, I was always afraid of failure, the 'Success tattoo on my hand gives me confidence and boosts my self-esteem". (Abhishek, Age 38).

"Since my childhood, I was never accepted as beautiful as I do not fall into the socially constructed category of being beautiful, like fair, having long hair, etc. As a result, I never received many compliments, but like all others, I love compliments; after I got myself inked, I started received compliments like beautiful, it suits you and all. Such compliments give me a better feeling. My tattoos, therefore, have reduced some part of depression from my life". (Sucheta, Age 28).

The above citations by the respondents highlight the facts, that though historical evidence shows that tattooing was used for therapeutic purposes, the respondents of the present research have not adopted tattooing for any medicinal benefits, however as an act of positive outcome of tattooing, tattoos do play a significant role in healing depression and stress, providing courage and inner strength to the individuals with tattoos. This may be considered therapeutic as literally therapeutic means healing, and healing of stress and building emotional stress, which most of the respondents admitted the tattoos had offered them, become significant. This tattooing role can also be treated as a positive social role associated with tattooing as art other than the stigmas and the health risks associated with it. In this context, Victoria Pitts (2003) points out that acts

as a means of stress management, especially for the marginalized and the stigmatized. In her interviews with the members of the LGBT community, working-class members, and oppressed women, she points out that individuals in these groups use body modification practices to cope with life stress. (2003)

Though most individuals get tattoos as a form of self-expression, tattoos can have an entirely different purpose for cancer survivors. Through mastectomy, it can help in the reconstruction of the breast. Nipple tattooing, where through 3D tattooing technique, the nipple is drawn, helps women gain a whole new path to recovery. Typically, there are two ways to create a new nipple, one through plastic surgery, and when that is not possible, women choose tattooing, where a new nipple is drawn. The 3D tattoos, in this respect, make it look more real. The nipple tattoos mark a major milestone in the evolution of tattooing technology, and it can be interpreted as a form of therapeutic tattooing, as it helps in some form of healing. The emotional strength that the individuals gain is something that also needs to be taken into consideration. In a study approved by the Ethics Committee of Tokyo Women's Medical University, 56 breast cancer patients went through nipple tattoos. It was observed that the process took approximately thirty minutes, where eighteen needles and several pigments were used. A needle angled perpendicular to the skin was used. Instead of opting for the conventional approach, the areola's provisional position was marked on the healthy side, determined after the adjustment of the study. The results were achieved without any complications. (Sasaki and Matsumine, 2018).

Though such forms of tattooing have medical benefits and provide emotional support and boost up self-confidence, they show the positive sides of tattooing. However, at the same time, it put forward the social pressure of reaching the perfect body. This is more in the case of a woman. Having a nipple or a perfect breast size is something that society has taught us to be part of the ideal body; when one fails to achieve it, the process of stigmatization again creeps in. The individual with cancer detected and treated has a scar in her body, and a body with a scar is not a perfect body. Hence the tattoo is used as a medium to hide scars to maintain the impression of being perfect. Being ill is also not perfect, so through tattooing, the scars of illness are also hidden. A mastectomy creates a mark on the body that cannot be easily hidden. It points out that one is not healthy and therefore does not have the ideal body as defined by society. Breast Cancer

is "a culturally marked illness, a dominant societal symbol, that once applied to a person spoils the individual's identity radically and is not easily removed." (Kleinman, as cited in Henriksen & Hansen, 2009, 143).

Henriksen and Hansen (2009) explained the narrative of Liselotte, a 41-year-old woman diagnosed with terminal breast cancer, which states that *"I am not an actor and therefore I am not used to 'adopt[ing] another character.' ... It is not just the hair that's gone. The exterior 'I' has also gone ... I do not know if I can get used [to] the picture of myself that now greets me in the mirror. Every morning I put on my breast prostheses. And now also my wig. To look normal. To look like a woman as much as possible. However, it does not make me feel like a woman. I do not feel like anything at all anymore."* (p. 146).

Though such narratives and many more narrates the social pressure of reaching the perfect, especially those upon women, the positive sides of such forms of tattooing, which is therapeutic, cannot be ignored. The positive social impact of tattooing here becomes significant. In this respect, tattoos give the individual the identity as a man or woman; rather, it helps the individual gain back their old self or identity, which again becomes a very significant step.

In addition to the physical healing associated with such forms of tattooing, emotional healing that comes up with the scars' covering is significant. Pain here can be very transformative. Atkinson (2003) explains how some individuals with tattoos use the pain inflicted by the tattoos to cope with their daily lives' traumatic experiences. In this respect, the pain associated with having a deadly disease like cancer, the process of stigmatization associated with it, the process of the stigma associated with losing the old self and the socially defined perfect body is much more than the pain inflicted by the tattoo becomes enjoyable as it helps to get the old self and the socially defined perfect body. Other than nipple tattooing, there are other cases where individuals go through multiple tattooing, and they enjoy the pain or rather never feel the pain created through the tattooing process as according to the individuals, the pain in their personal life is much more than the pain inflicted by the tattoo. The tattoos help them to cope up with the pain or stress of their daily life.

Rush (2005) stated that *"pain alters awareness; it is a focal point that turns us inward, into the psyche"* (p. 178). He explains that receiving pain willingly leads the person through transitions to victory, a conquest much more mental/symbolic than is the mere permanent (mental and [emphasis original] physical) scarification or tattoo; ideas and verbal commitments can fade into the past – tattoos and scars are permanent. Either way, emotional and/or physical pain alters awareness, and altered awareness is a primary ingredient in hypnosis and trance states. (p. 186).

For the present research, nipple tattooing as a form of healing emotional stress was analyzed only based on secondary literature; the respondents used tattooing as a form to overcome pain, they were not active respondents with nipple tattoos. Five of the respondents used tattoos as an agent to hide his or their scars, one acquired through a bike accident and two another to cover a burn mark. Two of the respondents used tattooing an agent to hide their birthmarks. *"Since my childhood, I had a birthmark on the right hand, and it made me uncomfortable especially from wearing specific dresses, that reveal the birthmark, as it leads to negative comments from my friends. So, I decided to hide it with a tattoo, and after I went for it, I never regrated it. It has given me a new self that I have wanted so far"*. (Komal, Age 36).



(Komal's tattoo on her right-hand hides her birthmark. Source primary data)

"I am a model by profession, and then I went through a bike accident; the scars in my body made it not suited for my profession. It went through a period of depression. My friends suggested me for covering the scars with ink, and I went for it; and yes, I have started gaining acceptance in my professional field, which has reduced my depression

but somewhere, the tattoo still reminds me of my accident by it has reduced the pain".
(John, Age 32).



(Source: Primary data).

(Tattoo did to hide Birthmark).



(Sabita, Age 38, tattoos to cover burn mark). (Source: Primary data).

"The burn mark in my hand has always brought many obstacles in my life, like rejections in marriage, negative comments from friends and relatives which to a large extent hampered by self-confidence, then with the advice of my friend I decided to cover by the mark with a tattoo. The scars are hidden; I am married now, but I always feel that this is a new self of mine, and sometimes I try to search my old self". (Sabita, Age 38).



(Tattoo did to hide scars). (Source: Primary data).

Such narratives highlight the fact that tattooing helps to hide the scars and plays a therapeutic role. It also plays the role of giving the individual the perfect socially defined body. It helps to outcome the pain of stigmatization, but at the same time, it points out how society disciplines the body by defining what exactly the perfect body should be, thus giving a sense of identity to the individual.

As the process of tattooing involves pain, here again, getting tattooed on the scars, the pain becomes double. However, the respondents felt that the pain of stigmatization with scars on the body is much more than that of the process of getting inked. Therefore, the pain inflicted through the tattooing process sometimes acts as a pleasure or a reminder that being unable to attain the perfect body or maintain the perfect body is a social act of deviance. *"Getting inked is painful but not as painful as when you get repeatedly rejected for marriage just for a scar in your body, and then get blamed by your family members for it"* (Sabita, Age 38).

Other than nipple tattooing and tattooing to cover scars, there are tattoos made to cover scanty hairs. Though all these seem to be only western affairs, getting tattooed for the said medical purpose is gaining popularity in contemporary Indian society, though the cases are still few in numbers. Dr. Sharmatha Kumar, consultant dermatologist SIMS hospital Chennai said to the Times of India in an interview that *"Medical tattooing is similar to regular tattooing, except that non-allergic ink is used in the dermal layer"* (9th, October 2007. Times of India.). She continues that *"It is permanent and lasts for a lifetime until the skin is removed". "Most patients with scanty hair come for this process, and we have to give the illusion of real hairs"*.

Dr. Selvi Radhakrishnan, who has been doing medical tattooing for five years, informed The Times of India that *"after mastectomy – for cancer patients, surgerybelly fat and the nipple is also reconstructed". "However, every few women opt for this process."* ((9th, October 2007. Times of India.). Delhi-based Dr. Monisha Kapoor informed The Times that she gets around three cases a week, which highlights the rising popularity of the act, and she does it to boost the self-confidence of her client. All these add up to the positive social consequences of tattooing and the technology involved in it.

Concluding Remarks.

In conclusion, it can be pointed out that tattooing technology has evolved. Using both bone comb to the usage of an electronic tattoo machine to get an eyeball tattooed, or a nipple tattooed, or an eyebrow tattooed shows the power of technological evolution. As there is the insertion of the needle and the ink into the skin's dermis, there have always been some risks associated with the tattooing process. The risks got more complicated with the emerging technology. The historical evidence shows that as the major risks are associated with the tattooing toolkits, there have always been steps to maintain hygiene and safety measures associated with the tattooing toolkit. However, statistical evidence of the present research, as well as secondary data, highlights the facts that come major diseases like Hepatitis B and C, which can be caused by transfusion through the tattooing process are something that both the tattoo artist and the respondents getting tattooed are ignorant about. In the case of transmittable diseases, respondents are mainly aware of HIV and therefore take the prevention for using single-use needles, which is the case in almost all tattoo parlors. There is also a wide gap of ignorance about the component of color used for the tattoo, both in the tattoo artists and the

respondents getting inked. Therefore, the risks associated with the pigments of color, like infection allergy, etc., are also ignored. Though the risk between these diseases and tattooing are coincidental, it cannot be ignored, proper awareness programs, especially governmental interventions to check the usage of the components of the color used in tattooing, usage of the single-use needle, checking expertise of the tattoo artist, and authenticity of the tattoo parlor is something that needs to be taken into considerations as tattooing is gaining popularity among the modern youth, and the risks cannot be ignored.

Though there are certain major health risks associated with tattooing, tattooing at some point in time can be used for medical for therapeutic purposes. Archeological evidence highlights that tattoo were used in many points of the body of acupuncture to reduce pain, headache, etc. Recent studies show that tattoos are also used to reduced emotional pain and stress. In the present research, tattoos are used to overcome grief, pain, and sacrifices in life, giving them self-confidence. This acts as a positive social function of tattooing. Tattooing is also used to hide bodily scars to get the socially defined perfect body. In this respect, nipple tattooing, eyebrow tattooing, hair tattooing, tattoos to hide birthmarks or burn marks are some, to name a few. Such tattooing forms act as a medium to give the desired body and the desired social self that the individual aspire from. It reduces the pain that the individuals suffer from stigmatization for not having the perfect body. Though here, the exploitive role of the society in disciplining the body is there, especially in the case of a woman, where having a breast is related to her sexuality, the positive function that the tattoo plays in building up the desires self-confidence cannot be ignored.

Chapter: 4

Conclusion.

Tattooing is one of the oldest forms of body modification practiced almost in all cultures of the world. Though it has a history that shows that the tribes mainly practiced tattooing as art, it has gained huge popularity among the modern youth. Tattooing culture, which was associated mostly with the western world, has also shown great popularity worldwide. Modifying the body to reach the ideal body as defined by society, following the dominant cultural trends of society, or rather following the fashion trend, becomes significant to create or express the perfect social self or identity. Tattooing is one major form of body modification that has seen the evolution of culture, and it has itself evolved with the cultural and technological evolutions. Individuals adopt the body modification practices like tattooing, as defined by society, to represent the perfect social self. The concept of stigmatization becomes very crucial in this respect. An individual has a goal of impression management, and hence they modify their bodies by adopting techniques like that of tattooing to represent the perfect identity. Technology helps to facilitate the process.

Social norms based on gender and religion govern body modification practices, defining our social identity of men and women and highlights our religious identity. These norms also dictate the dos and don'ts associated with tattooing. For example, in some religious communities like Islam, tattooing is forbidden, whereas, in some Hindu communities, tattooing becomes a compulsory act. The symbols used defines our identity and belonging to a particular group. Like a 'cross' signifies the individual's belonging to Christianity, and 'om' to Hinduism. It also dictates the dos and don'ts based on gender, specifically regarding the size, design, location, and tattoo visibility. Here again, disciplining the body becomes significant. Stigmatization and Impression Management goes side by side. Foucault's concept of the docile body becomes very significant in this respect. The body here comes a passive entity where the cultural codes of conduct are inscribed upon. Not following these codes tags one to be deviant and hence stigmatized. As managing impression becomes a significant step in one's life, individuals tend to follow the codes of conduct. Tattooing, which was considered to be a deviant act of "menees," again constitutes a group identity, an identity of being different, which becomes the dominant cultural or fashion trend.

The self becomes the performer, as the individual belongs to an institutionalized system of conduct, where there is a defined set of common knowledge about our appearance that the individuals use to evoke others, that what the individuals perceive as a part of their expression. Goffman defines it as "body idioms" that regulate how individuals have to mind their appearance. (Goffman,1963). It allows us to share body idioms and are learned through socialization from a very early stage of life. Individuals use bodily techniques to recreate their knowledge about their bodies. Therefore, these techniques act as rituals set by the society, which the individuals follow to achieve the accepted ideal self-identity as defined by the society. The self is thus born out of the various interaction processes in which the individual tries to adopt the situation's rituals, and the self develops through the credits and discredits accorded to the individuals. Through the various forms of the body modification process, the individual tries to attain the perfect body or appearance, which gives the individual a sense of identity. The self of the individual is defined as per the rituals of society. Thus, the self develops through the process of impression management what others want or what society defines to be the ideal self. Through the various modification processes, the individuals try to impress the audience, i.e., society, thus rise to a self that is socially defined. These socially defined rituals govern the religious and gender norms while defining the religious and gender identity of the individuals.

Individuals tend to display tattoos among the audience who will accept them. There is a difference in showing off tattoos to the audience, especially in professional fields. Stigmatization and impression management thus helps in both disciplining the body and the self of the individuals. These norms become double in the case of gender. As appearance and fashion become significant, in modern times, individuals opt for tattooing as a form of body modification, as a part of a fashion trend. Being different and standing out in the crowd is the new fashion trend. Though tattooing in tribal society was associated with group identity, and tattooing in modern times is associated with individual identity, 'being different is the new trend, making individuals fall into the category or sub-group of being different again gives a form of group identity.

Tattooing and body modification are associated with technological evolution. The tattooing technology shows a technological evolution of tattooing art. The tattooing culture is as old as history. From inscribing a tattoo with a bone to that of an electronic

machine, the evolution of tattooing technology shows humanity's evolution and the evolution of culture. However, this technology is not without risks. There are some major health risks associated with tattooing, like allergy, infection, transmittable diseases like HIV, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C, Cancer, etc. Though the correlation between tattooing and these diseases is coincidental and is mainly associated with the toolkits used and the colors used, the risks cannot be ignored. However, tattooed individuals are mostly ignorant about these risks, and there is also no governmental control over these tattoo parlors and upon the expertise of the tattoo artist. Thus, proper governmental control and awareness programs are something that we can rely upon. Though there are certain risks, tattooing technology has shown a relationship with medicinal values. Archaeological evidence shows that tattooing was used in many parts of the world in acupuncture points to reduce joint pain, headaches, and other medicinal use. In modern times nipple tattooing, eyebrow tattooing, hair tattooing, tattoos to cover birthmarks and burn marks, etc., are some that are used for medicinal purposes. Such tattoo also holds social values as it helps the individuals to get the desired social body and self, that is, a body without a scar or illness. Though such tattooing is done again for maintaining impression and disciplines the body here also becomes significant, the positive social role of building self-confidence and new desired social self for the individual cannot be ignored. Tattooing in this respect also helps to reduce personal emotional pain and stress. The importance of technology that helps in facilitating this role thus becomes significant.

Tattoos themselves became the marker of self-expression. The adjectives used to express themselves through their tattoos to the reasons, designs, images, sizes, location, and visibility of the tattoo defined the person's self or social image. 8 of the respondents, 4 male, and 4 females, described their tattoos as a sign of empowerment for showing the courage to go something socially much not accepted. Those respondents who followed the socially defined norms of body modification got the social identity of 'good' and those who do not follow the norms of the society related to body modification gets the socially defined identity of being 'bad,' 'deviant,' 'rebellious' 'different' etc. Thus, a process of stigmatization is also related to tattooing. As tattooing is an intentional act and the natural is believed to be most beautiful. As tattooing history is mainly associated with sailors, criminals, slaves, and other backward sections of the society, it is mainly not accepted by the traditional society, and the tattooed individual

is stigmatized to be a bad deviant. Individuals thus try to manage their tattooed identity through various measures like covering the tattoos or not interacting with individuals with negative ideologies related to tattoos. This again leads to multiple roles playing for impression management and to avoid stigma. For example, individuals tend to cover their tattoos in the formal work sector or the case of interviews but show it off at a party with family and friends. Similarly, to be the perfect housewife or daughters-in-law, individuals wear clothes that hide their tattoos; when on vacation or at a party, they show it off with pride. However, the notion of non-acceptability has changed over time as, in many cases, the respondents' unexpected acceptances were also observed.

Tattoo is also associated with group identity. It is believed that Captain Crook coined the word 'tattoo' in 1769 while on a journey to South Pacific. Over time it used to describe group identities of sailors, slaves, military personals, prison gangs, motorcycle groups. (Atkinson, 2002). In the Indian context also, it was done to get group identity; like in the Gond community, all women must be tattooed, giving them the identity of being a Gond woman. In many community-like bikers' communities or some religious communities, respondents described that tattoo give them an identity of belonging to a group, making them more acceptable in the group and providing safety. In modern times tattooing, though it is not much associated with group identity, and individuals opt for being different, a sub-group of being different is created, and individuals who belong to this group get the group identity of being different. However, this is done in an unconscious process. This new identity of being different is the trend and the accepted norm in contemporary society.

4.1 Summary of Findings.

The first chapter of the thesis aims to introduce this study with a review of relevant literature, as available in books and journals. As research on body and body modification regarding tattooing and identity is few, relatively new studies originating mainly in the 19th-century English-speaking world were analyzed. It highlights the history of tattooing and the evolution of tattooing culture and technology. Tattooing being a popular tribal art has gained popularity among modern youth. The chapter also highlights how body modification, specifical tattooing, helps define the individual's social self. With the help of secondary data, the chapter tries to explain the correlation between tattooing, fashion, and identity construction. It aims to point out how the

cultural codes of a particular society teach the do's and don'ts, and thus one who does not follow these codes of conduct are tagged as deviant. Stigmatization and impression management become important steps in defining the identity and self of the individuals. The chapter also highlights the gender and religious norms associated with tattooing. Tracing the evolution of tattooing technology, the chapter discusses the health risks associated with tattooing and tries to point out the positive social consequences associated with the art.

The second chapter discusses the basic major theoretical assumptions applicable to this research. Here, Sociological interpretations of body and self in Symbolic Interactionism, especially in the work of Charles Horton Cooley and George Herbert Mead, and Dramaturgical interpretations of Ervin Goffman, are reviewed. The research is also critically interpreted with a sociological feminist perspective on body, identity, and fashion. The theory in this research was later related to the empirical data collected and interpreted accordingly.

The third, fourth and fifth chapter of the thesis aims to analyze narratives gathered or collected through interview with the respondents, as sources of primary data. As the research was based on qualitative and quantitative approaches, with an inclination towards the qualitative approach, analyzing the narratives with few statistical analyses of data gathered from closed-ended questions from the in-depth interviews.

The third chapter mainly focuses on the gender and religious norms associated with tattooing. The section on tattooing gender and identity construction focus upon socially constructed norms associated with masculinity and femininity, disciplining and controlling the individual's body, and defining oneself. The cultural codes of conduct associated with masculinity and femininity are also reflected in the modification process like tattooing and identity construction. In contemporary times though tattooing has gained popularity, showing off one's tattoo, especially if she is a woman, it is taken for granted that it is purposively done for the male audience. As a result, herself, identity, and character are socially tagged to be deviant. In this way, the body is controlled and disciplined by societal norms. Individuals who do not follow the cultural codes of conduct associated with masculinity and femininity are stigmatized and tagged as deviant. As individuals have a goal of impression management, they tend to follow the social and cultural norms associated with their gender. Individuals who do not

follow it get the definition of having a deviant self-identity, which often becomes the fashion trend.

Tattoo flower. Nature: Feminine Picture 2. Tattoo. Abstract Object. Nature: Masculine.



(Source: Respondents of primary data)

In the section on tattooing religion and identity, the research focuses upon tattooing practices in three major religions of the world: Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity, in India's context. The section analyzes the cultural codes of conduct associated with tattooing and religion and how it helps create an identity. Through body modification practices like tattooing, religion also performs social control by pointing out the dos and don'ts of society. Secondary data source points out that in certain religions like Christianity and Islam, tattooing is considered a sin and is therefore forbidden. However, in the case of Hinduism, there are no such laws. It is a mandatory act to get tattooed in some Hinduism communities, especially for women to showcase their attainment of marriage age. Such norms are even practiced today. Tattooing of religious symbols has gained huge popularity in contemporary times. They also portray the religious identity of the individual—the identity of belonging to a particular group. For example, a tattoo with a symbol of a cross gives the individual the identity of a Christian, which he or she may not be. The individual many a times adopt it just as an expression of fashion trend. Some of the major tattoo design popular among the respondents is 'Om,' 'Cross,' 'Shiv,' 'Ganesha' and 'Sanskrit Slokas. In Christianity and Islam through tattooing is a forbidden act. The tattoo culture is quite high among the modern youth belonging to these two communities. They take it as a fashion statement and describe it as an act of expressing one freedom to beautify oneself. Here again, they are tagged as deviant, and the identity of being different is bestowed upon them. Stigmatization for those who do not follow the religious codes of conduct is also applicable in this respect.

The fourth chapter deals with body modification identity construction and stigmatization. As individuals adopt body modification practices to portray the socially defined perfect body and the perfect self, impression management's concept becomes significant. Tattooing is both a part of the deviant culture and popular culture. Individuals thus adopt it mainly adhering to society's cultural codes, and they tend to display the art to the audience to get acceptability. Here the concept of significant others is fundamental. One's body is the reflection of oneself, and hence, if he or she chooses to display an identity that does not follow the social norms, he or she gets the identity of being deviant. To avoid these deviant self-individuals, they tend to abide by the social norms, especially if the audience involved in the interaction is the significant others. For example, in the case of occupation or profession, respondents feel, and they

hide their tattoo in their work-life where it can give them the identity of being deviant. Simultaneously, in professions like gym training, modeling, etc., respondents felt that showing off the tattoo becomes a need associated with a model or a gym trainer's identity. Thus, individuals maintain multiple identities mainly to maintain the impression to create the desired self-image. In this way, society in a very unconscious level maintains a form of discipline and control, which we individuals just adopt in fashion trends. The personal and public self is also a matter of concern in this respect. Which self the individuals want to portray and to whom.



(Gym Trainer at the gym, showing off his tattoo. Source: Respondents from Primary data.)



(Source: Respondents from primary data. The same gym trainer at a formal meeting of his corporate office).

The final chapter highlights the evolution of tattooing technology as without technology, this art loses its significance. The evolution of technology highlights the evolution of culture and society. The chapter points out certain health risks associated with this art. The evolving technology has made the health risks even more complicated, and the individuals are mostly ignorant about the health risks associated with tattooing. The major health risks associated with tattooing are infection and allergic reaction, which the respondents were more or less aware of. However, risks of transmittable diseases like HIV, Hepatitis B, and C can also occur though coincidental. Data shows that both the tattoo artist are ignorant about the health risks associated with the ink used in tattooing, but knowledge of transmittable diseases from the needle was present mostly among all. Awareness among HIV is relatively high compared to Hepatitis B and C. The respondent did not have any history of these diseases after tattooing, but infection and allergic reactions were common. Though the risks are coincidental, governmental control is essential as these risks cannot be ignored.

The chapter also points out the positive consequences of tattooing technology. In this respect, therapeutic tattooing was analyzed. Though therapeutic tattooing had a long

history of being used in acupuncture points of the body for various medical purposes, in modern times, nipple tattooing, hair tattooing, eyebrow tattooing, tattooing to cover scars and burnt marks can also be regarded as therapeutic, as these tattoos help in healing the pain associated with not having the perfect social body and self. Though such technology can be associated with consumer culture and disciplining the body, the positive social role of boosting self-confidence and creating a new social self cannot be ignored. Often, such tattoos are also used to overcome emotional stress and life events; the symbols of the tattoo also give the individual a sense of emancipation, empowerment, and freedom to express oneself. In this respect, the positive social role of tattooing technology cannot be ignored.

4.2 Future Research, Potentialities, and Limitations of the Study.

The present research is based on 50 respondents living in Kolkata, both men and women belonging to 20-55. The aim was to find how an individual's identity is constructed through tattooing and body modification by following the cultural codes of conduct are analyzed here. There is huge scope for future research also because respondents can be included, and a larger field could have been included. Other forms of body modification practices, can also be discussed.

As tattooing and identity construction is not such researched work in India, more large-scale studies with a larger population can be done. The practice of art in the present-day tribal cultures of India and the changes in them can also be observed.

In the case of the health risks associated with tattooing, patients with diseases that can cause tattooed can be studied, especially in medical sociology. Class factors and health risks that were not a parameter for the present research can be considered as a part of future studies. As tattooing is not researched work in India, finding literature for the study, especially in the context of India was difficult. As the narratives given by the respondents were so vast, interpreting them and bringing them under sub-themes was a challenge.

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APPENDIX.

Interview Schedule

I. Demographic Profile.

i) Name: (optional).

ii) Sex

iii) Age

iv) Religion

v) Educational Qualification

vi) Marital Status

vii) Profession

4. What attributes of an individual do you first notice when you interact with an individual?

a) Appearance

b) Ways of talking while interacting

c) Bodily gestures any other

d) Any other specify.

1. Have you gone through any of the body modification practices?

a) Tattooing

b) Piercing

c) Surgery

d) Others

3. What was the reason for such body modification practices?

4. At what age did you get your first tattoo?

5. How do you define your choice of getting tattooed?

a) Act of freedom

b) religious faith

c) Love for someone

d) Desire or wants

e) Others (specify)

- What was the reason for you get the tattoo?

a) Engaging in the form of dress

b) Group membership

c) Willingness to endure pain

d) To stand out in the crowd

e) Others.

6. What is the design or the symbol of your tattoo?

7. What are the reasons for choosing such a design or symbol?

8. Did you seek permission to get your desired form of body modification?

9. If yes, from whom?

10. What were the reaction or explanations of the persons?

11. If it was a negative reaction, what made you go for the form of your desire for body modification?

12. What does the symbol of your tattoo represent?

a) A cultural artifact

b) A religious symbol

c) An abstract object

d) Someone's name

e) Any other (specify).

1. Do you think certain symbols like the rose butterfly and other objects are gender-specific?
2. Does your choice of selected tattoo design is influenced by your gender identity?
3. Do you think factors like location and size of the tattoo were a decisive factor before getting inked?
4. Why?
5. Have you ever been stigmatized as a man or a woman for being tattooed or choosing a particular design or location of your tattoo? Narrate your experience.
6. Have you ever been the victim of any kind of sexual harassment specifically for getting inked? Narrate your incidence.
7. Do you think fashion is gender-specific?
8. Do you think certain forms of fashion discard women's beauty? How?
9. Does modifying the body is an act of emancipation or an act of enslavement to the societal norms?
10. How?
11. How do you think that gendering of fashion trends is changing over time?
12. How?
13. Do you like to flaunt your tattoos?
14. If yes, is there any intended audience?
15. Do you think that by following or adopting fashion or beautifying themselves, women come under the preview of the male gaze or simply give them the space to express freedom?
16. Have you ever experienced any situation where you have to hide your tattoo?
17. If yes, when and how?
18. Does your tattoo help to express yourself?
19. Did you ever felt the urge to alter or edit your tattoo?
20. Why?
21. How do you define your tattoo?
22. Do you think tattoos are a representation of unconventional beauty?

23. Does your tattoo have any hidden means?
24. If yes, what is the inner meaning of your tattoo?
25. Are you aware of your religious obligations associated with tattooing and modification?
26. What is your view on such obligations?
27. Do you think tattoos with religious symbols represent religious identity?
28. Do you have any such experience? If yes, please narrate?
29. Were there any religious ceremonies associated with your tattooing? If yes, please narrate?
30. Do you think your tattoo represents yourself?
31. How do you define yourself through the art of body modification you have gone through?
32. Do you think that the appearance of the individual is associated with his or her identity?
33. How and why?
34. Do you think the choice of body modification is culturally molded? How?
35. What is your view on fashion and discipline?
36. What is your view of tattooing as a deviant act?
37. Being a tattooed individual, do you have any experience of being stigmatized as deviant? Narrate your experience.
38. Do you have any experience of hiding or altering your tattoo from the audience to avoid stigma and maintain an impression? Narrate your experience.
39. What are the steps you took to overcome such stigmas?
40. Do you have any professional obligations with your tattoos?
41. If yes, what you do to overcome the obligations?
42. Does your tattoo make you stand out in the crowd? Narrate your experience.
43. Do you associate your tattoo with individual free identity or group identity?
44. Do you think that yourself? How?
45. Are you aware of the health risks associated with tattooing?
46. If yes. Name some of them?
47. What is your view on tattooing and transmittable diseases? Name a few of them.
48. Are you aware of the color component of the tattoo?
49. From where did you get yourself inked?
50. What was the cost?

51. Are you aware of the concept of single-use needles in the case of tattooing? Was it used in your case?
52. What are the major health issues you faced after getting inked?
53. What are the remedies you took?
54. Are you aware of therapeutic tattoos?
55. Have you opted for any such tattooing?
56. What is your view about it?
57. What is your view on the pain associated with tattooing?
58. What is the positive role of your tattoo in your life?

ENDNOTES-

Impression Management. It is the unconscious or conscious process by which individuals want to influence others' perceptions in social interaction. Goffman used the concept in his theory of Dramaturgy. For this paper, the concept is used to show how individuals try to create their perception by going through the body modification processes as by the acceptable standards of society, set by the cultural codes.

Stigma. It is the mark of disgrace associated with deviant culture. E. Goffman also uses this concept in his theory of Dramaturgy. In the context of this paper, it is used to highlight how the fear of stigma is associated with tattooing and how individuals follow the normative conditions of maintaining masculinity and femininity in order to avoid such stigma. It is highly related to the concept of Impression management. The process is known as stigmatization.

Raunch Culture. It is a culture that promotes overtly sexual representation of women, which is seen to be empowering women as they dare to challenge the dominant culture of the society. However, at the same time, many scholars take it as disempowering women as they, in an unconscious way, comes under the preview of the male gaze. In the context of this paper, it tries to point out how far women who are showing their tattoos are part of the raunch culture or are they still under the normative sanctions of femininity.

Godna. The form of tattooing used in the Indian Subcontinent.

Godwani. Female tattoo artists found in Indian Sub-Continent

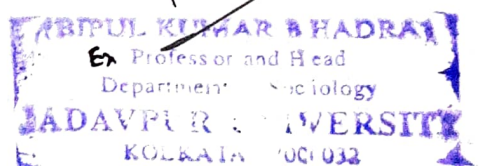
Trisul. The symbol is associated with Hindu God Shiva.

Damru. The symbol is associated with Hindu God Shiva.

Seema Dutta

7/10/2021

Dr. Anand
7/10/2021



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