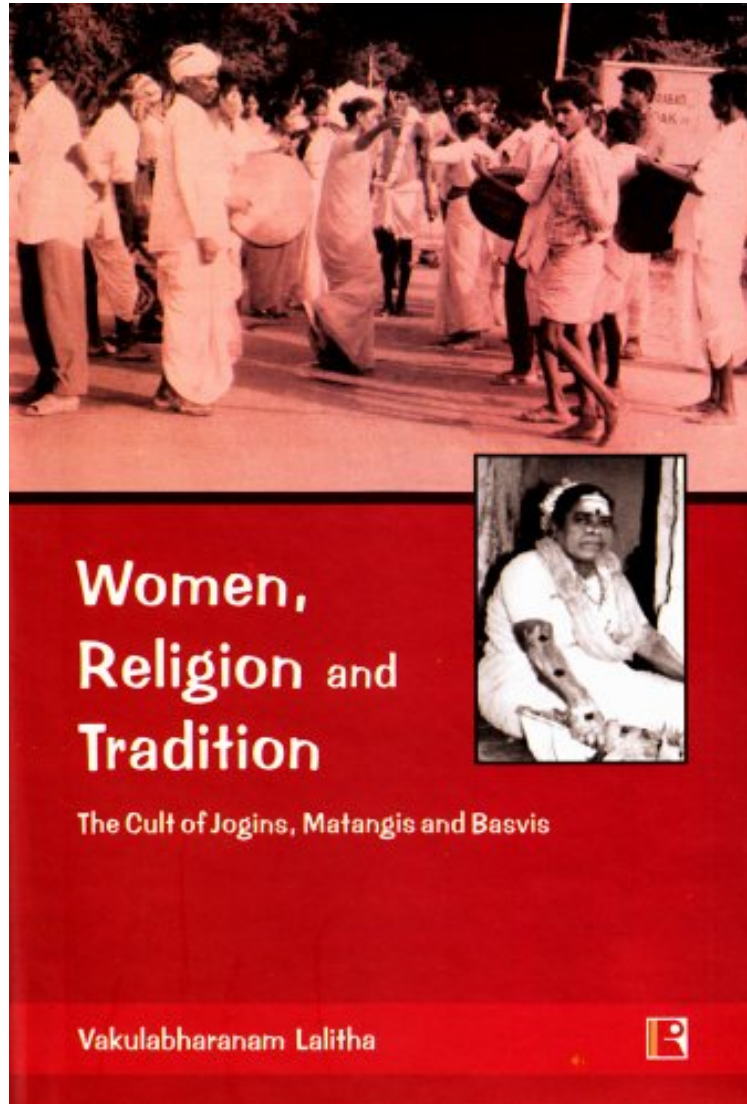


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Women, Religion and Tradition: The Cult of Jogins, Matangis and Basvis

Vakulabharanam Lalitha

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Religion is a complex phenomenon which pervades a vast range of human activities. In India, religion influences

society in diverse ways. This book explores the religious practice of temple dancing in India, which formed an integral part of the ritual service to the gods and goddesses in various South Indian states. The culture of dedicating girls to temples is a common phenomenon in this country. These girls are referred to by different names in different areas of the country, such as Devadasi, Jogins, Matangis, Basvis, etc. which literally mean "female servant of the deity." The book is a comprehensive study of this pernicious practice of female exploitation in the name of religion and tradition. It traces the origin and spread of the Devadasi culture in India, particularly in the Deccan region, and evaluates the impact of reformatory and rehabilitative measures taken by governmental and non-governmental organizations.

About the Author Vakulabharanam Lalitha holds a doctorate degree in Social Anthropology from the University of Calcutta. In a career spanning over almost four decades, she has been a teacher, researcher, administrator and a visiting professor. Her anthropological study of criminal tribes in Andhra Pradesh received high critical appreciation from the academic circles. She has published books, articles, research papers, monographs and special reports on various aspects of social, tribal and cultural life of Andhra Pradesh.