



# Changes and Developments in the Socio-Cultural Life of the Didayi Tribe in Malkangiri District: A Study of Tradition and Transformation

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## **Abstract:**

The Didayi tribe, one of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) of Odisha, has undergone significant changes in its socio-cultural life over the years, influenced by both internal dynamics and external forces such as modernization, government interventions, and development programs. This study explores the transformations in the Didayi tribe's social and cultural practices, focusing on aspects such as family structure, marriage customs, religious beliefs, language, education, and economic activities. Traditionally, the Didayi people have maintained a distinct identity through their unique customs, including totemic clan systems, ritualistic practices, and indigenous languages. However, with the introduction of modern education, healthcare, and livelihood schemes, these traditional systems are witnessing shifts. The article delves into the factors driving these changes, including the tribe's interaction with the broader socio-political landscape and the state's developmental initiatives. While certain elements of Didayi culture, such as their belief systems and totemic taboos, remain resilient, others are gradually adapting to modern realities. The study also reflects on the implications of these developments for the future of the Didayi tribe, balancing between cultural preservation and socio-economic progress. Through this analysis, the article contributes to understanding how the Didayi people navigate the complex interplay between tradition and transformation in a rapidly changing world.

**Keywords:** Changes, Development, Social, Cultural, Didayi, Malkangiri, Transformation

## 1.1 Introduction

The Didayi people, also known as the Gahta people, form an ethnic group residing in the picturesque landscapes of Koraput and Malkangiri districts in Odisha, as well as in East Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh, India. Nestled within the diverse and rugged terrain of the Eastern Ghats, their homeland is characterized by mountains, hills, forests, plateaus, and meandering hill streams. Despite their small population, the Didayi's unique cultural heritage and way of life have long captured the interest of researchers and anthropologists alike.<sup>1</sup> Belonging to the Proto-Australoid racial stock, the Didayi speak the Gahta language, a member of the Munda language family. Historically, they referred to themselves as "*Gahatre*," but today, they are commonly known as the Didayi by their neighbours. As a community that has lived in relative isolation, the Didayi have preserved many of their traditional customs and social structures. However, the forces of modernization, external influence, and government intervention have brought about notable transformations in their socio-cultural life.<sup>2</sup> The Didayi are officially recognized as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) by the Government of India, a designation that underscores their marginalization and need for special attention in developmental efforts. Since 1986, the Didayi Development Agency (DDA), established by the State Government, has played a pivotal role in promoting their welfare through cent per cent grants from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. The DDA's initiatives have focused on uplifting the socio-economic conditions of the Didayi through targeted programs in areas such as education, healthcare, and livelihood.<sup>3</sup> This article explores the changes and developments in the socio-cultural life of the Didayi tribe in the Malkangiri district, focusing on the balance between tradition and transformation. The study highlights how their traditional customs have been influenced by government interventions, migration, and exposure to modernity, while also examining the resilience of their indigenous practices amidst these changes. Through a detailed analysis of the Didayi's socio-cultural evolution, this work seeks to shed light on the dynamic nature of tribal identity in contemporary India.

## 1.2 Background

The Didayi tribe, one of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in India, resides primarily in the Malkangiri district of Odisha. Historically isolated from mainstream society, the Didayi have preserved their unique cultural practices, traditional social structures, and indigenous knowledge systems. However, in recent decades, the socio-cultural life of the Didayi has undergone significant changes due to various internal and external influences. These include the impact of modernization, government interventions, economic development initiatives, and interactions with neighbouring communities.<sup>4</sup> Traditionally, the Didayi tribe maintained a strong connection to their indigenous customs, including their marriage practices, clan-based social structures, and subsistence economy rooted in agriculture and forest-based activities. Their socio-cultural systems were deeply intertwined with their religious beliefs, rituals, and kinship networks. However, with increasing exposure to modern education, healthcare, infrastructure development, and external social influences, the Didayi have experienced a transformation in various aspects of their socio-cultural life.<sup>5</sup> The introduction of government welfare schemes, integration into modern political and administrative systems, and increased access to education and employment opportunities have contributed to shifts in their traditional

practices. These changes have also led to tensions between preserving their cultural identity and adapting to the demands of modernity. The study of these changes and developments is essential to understanding how the Didayi navigate the complexities of maintaining their traditional ways of life while embracing modern socio-economic realities. The research thus aims to document these changes and transformations, providing a comprehensive analysis of the Didayi tribe's efforts to balance tradition and transformation in the face of ongoing developments.

### 1.3 Objectives of the paper

- To analyse the impact of government interventions on the traditional socio-cultural practices of the Didayi tribe
- To explore the role of migration and external influences in shaping the transformation of the Didayi tribe's social structures.
- To document the continuity of traditional practices and their evolution amidst socio-economic changes.
- To assess the challenges and opportunities faced by the Didayi tribe in balancing tradition and modernity.

### 1.4 Research Question

- How have government policies and development programs influenced the socio-cultural practices of the Didayi tribe in Malkangiri district?
- In what ways have migration, modernization, and interaction with external communities contributed to the transformation of the Didayi tribe's social and cultural structures?
- What traditional customs and practices of the Didayi tribe have remained intact, and how have they evolved in response to socio-economic changes over time?
- What are the key challenges and opportunities faced by the Didayi tribe in balancing the preservation of their cultural identity with the pressures of modern development?

### 1.5 Method of the Studied

The study employed a qualitative research approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the changes and developments in the socio-cultural life of the Didayi tribe, with a specific focus on traditional socio-cultural practices, social structures, socio-economic changes, and the balance between tradition and modernity in the Malkangiri district of Odisha. Both primary and secondary data collection methods were utilized to achieve the study's objectives. Fieldwork played a central role in gathering primary data, where the researcher conducted interviews and administered questionnaires to collect detailed information directly from the participants. A total of 384 samples were selected for the study, determined through appropriate sample size calculations based on the Didayi population of approximately 8,000 in the study area. The field study covered twelve Didayi villages: Gangapada, Chilipadar, Nilapari, Kaneng, Jantri, Sanyasiguda, Oringi, Orapadar, Dandarbeda, Muduliguda, Purunagumma and Dabuguda.<sup>6</sup>

In these villages, the researcher collected primary data from 384 households, ensuring a comprehensive representation of the community's traditional socio-cultural practices, social structures, socio-economic changes, and how the community balanced tradition and modernity. To complement the primary data, secondary sources such as books, gazettes, journals, articles, monographs, book chapters, dissertations, theses, conference papers, and online materials were also examined. The secondary data provided a broader context for understanding the historical evolution and current state of the Didayi socio-cultural systems. This combination of primary and secondary data facilitated a nuanced analysis of the factors driving transformation and continuity within the Didayi community.

## 1.6 Review of literatures

Damburu Sisa's *The Didayi: Tribe's Cultural Contours and Heritage* (2020) provides an extensive analysis of the Didayi tribe, covering their cultural and socio-economic conditions. Sisa emphasizes the gradual erosion of traditional customs and examines the tribe's efforts to preserve aspects like black magic. Although the book thoroughly addresses various socio-cultural aspects, it overlooks the traditional political system, leaving a gap for future scholars to explore. Further research on their political structures could offer a more holistic understanding of the tribe. The Didayi's traditional governance remains an under-researched aspect of their socio-cultural evolution.

A. B. Hota and S. C. Mohanty's *Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) of Odisha* (2015) offers rich ethnographic insights into Odisha's underdeveloped tribes, including the Didayi. The articles delve into the tribe's reliance on forest resources and the role of women in Didayi society, providing a balanced view of their social structure. However, the political dynamics of the Didayi tribe are not covered, creating an opportunity for scholars to fill this research void. Future investigations could explore the governance models and leadership structures within the tribe. This gap opens new avenues for studying the intersection of tradition and political organization.

In *The Didayi: A Tribe in Search of an Identity* (2024), B. N. Ray explores the socio-political and economic facets of the Didayi tribe, paying particular attention to their governance structures. However, Ray only scratches the surface when discussing the internal conflicts and evolving identity of the Didayi youth in the face of modern influences. This gap presents an exciting opportunity for researchers to examine how the younger generation negotiates tradition in a rapidly changing world. Understanding the youth's role in reshaping political practices could provide fresh perspectives on tribal governance. Ray's work invites further exploration into intergenerational dynamics within the Didayi tribe.

B. Chowdhury's article in *Tribes of Odisha* (2004) offers an overview of the Didayi tribe's socio-cultural and economic life, particularly highlighting the impact of the Didayi Development Agency. Despite its comprehensive examination of developmental aspects, the article lacks a detailed discussion of the tribe's traditional political structures. This omission allows for future research to examine the governance and leadership systems within the Didayi tribe. Scholars could investigate how political participation intersects with socio-economic development. Chowdhury's work lays the groundwork for a deeper dive into the tribe's political dynamics.

In *Development Projects and Displaced Tribals* (2010), A. B. Ota examines the effects of large-scale development projects on displaced tribes, including the Didayi. The book provides an insightful analysis of socio-economic disruptions caused by displacement but does not explore how these events affected the tribe's political system. Further research could delve into how displacement influenced the Didayi's governance practices and traditional authority structures. Understanding these political changes could contribute to a fuller picture of the tribe's adaptation to new environments. Ota's work highlights the need for continued exploration of the tribe's political resilience.

Nilakanta Panigrahi's article in *Adivasi* (2011) focuses on healthcare access among indigenous tribes in Malkangiri, including the Didayi. While providing valuable data on healthcare challenges, the article does not explore the tribe's socio-political structures or how political engagement affects healthcare access. This gap offers a unique opportunity for future scholars to investigate the relationship between political systems and social services in tribal communities. By examining how governance influences access to resources, researchers can provide more comprehensive insights into the Didayi's socio-political landscape. Panigrahi's work calls for further research on these critical intersections.

*Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) of Odisha, Volume II* (2015), edited by A. B. Hota and S. C. Mohanty, presents articles on the development of Odisha's tribal groups, including the Didayi. The volume focuses primarily on socio-economic advancements, with little attention to the tribe's political systems. This presents a gap in understanding the role of traditional governance in the tribe's adaptation to modernity. Research into the tribe's political participation and governance models could shed light on how development initiatives align with traditional structures. Hota and Mohanty's collection leaves room for future scholars to address this vital aspect of Didayi life.

Bhagyalaxmi Mahapatra's *Development of a Primitive Tribe* (2004) offers a detailed look into the cultural, religious, and economic aspects of the Didayi tribe. However, it overlooks the tribe's political structures and leadership dynamics, offering little insight into their governance. Future research could investigate how traditional political systems shape the tribe's socio-economic conditions and development efforts. This would contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how governance intersects with daily life. Mahapatra's work serves as a springboard for further inquiries into the Didayi's political organization.

Satyendra Patnaik's *Indigenous People of Orissa* (2008) offers a comprehensive exploration of various tribes, including the Didayi, focusing on their survival strategies and craftsmanship. However, the book does not explore the political participation or governance structures of these tribes, leaving a critical gap in the literature. Future research could examine how traditional political systems influence the socio-economic stability of the Didayi. Understanding these dynamics could provide insights into the tribe's resilience in the face of modernization. Patnaik's work opens the door for more focused studies on the Didayi's political organization.

*ITDA* (2011) by A. B. Hota and B. N. Mohanty details the role of the Integrated Tribal Development Agency in improving the living conditions of tribal communities, including the Didayi. The book focuses on socio-economic development initiatives, yet it lacks discussion on the tribe's political participation and

governance. This omission presents an opportunity for scholars to explore how traditional political systems interact with development programs. Research into these areas could offer a more holistic understanding of the tribe's adaptation to external influences. Hota and Mohanty's work invites further exploration of the Didayi's political structures.

### **1.7 Area of the Studied**

The present study focuses on the Didayi tribe, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) located in the Malkangiri district of Odisha, India. The geographical area for this research includes the tribal villages spread across Khairput, Korukonda, and Chitrakonda blocks, where the Didayi people reside.<sup>7</sup> The Didayi tribe inhabits 39 villages within these blocks, which are characterized by both plain and hilly regions. Among these, 37 villages are part of micro-projects initiated by the Odisha government for the improvement of tribal life. This study explores the socio-cultural life of the Didayi tribe, focusing on various aspects such as their traditional marriage system, kinship structure, religious practices, social customs, and daily life. Additionally, it investigates the transformation and changes that have occurred over time due to external influences such as modernization, government interventions, and contact with other communities. Through ethnographic fieldwork, the study covers the key villages of the Didayi tribe, including Gangapada, Chilipadar, Nilapari, Kaneng, Jantri, Sanyasiguda, Oringi, Orapadar, Dandarbeda, Muduliguda, Purunagumma and Dabuguda. These areas represent the socio-cultural diversity within the Didayi community, offering a comprehensive view of the tribe's traditions and the gradual shifts in their cultural practices. The study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of how traditional socio-cultural systems within the Didayi community are being preserved or transformed in response to contemporary developments, with a particular emphasis on marriage rituals and societal norms.

### **1.8 Result and Discussion**

The study on "Changes and Developments in the Socio-Cultural Life of the Didayi Tribe in Malkangiri District" reveals significant transformations in various aspects of the tribe's traditional way of life. The findings highlight both the continuity of certain customs and practices, as well as the influence of external factors leading to socio-cultural changes within the Didayi community.

#### **1.8.1 Traditional Socio-Cultural Life of the Didayi Tribe**

The traditional socio-cultural life of the Didayi tribe is intricately woven with their natural environment, totemic beliefs, and deeply rooted customs that have defined their identity for centuries. At the core of their social structure lies the clan system, consisting of five totemic clans, each associated with specific animals, birds, or insects, which are revered and protected by strict taboos. These taboos reflect the Didayi's respect for nature and their belief in the interconnectedness of all living things. Marriage within the tribe traditionally follows a structured process, with family elders arranging unions and negotiating bride price, which is symbolic of respect and familial bonds. Elaborate rituals accompany these marriages, emphasizing the tribe's adherence to ancestral customs. The use of 'Ganta Sa,' their native Austroasiatic language, remains a crucial aspect of their rituals and ceremonies, particularly in religious practices, where the tribe venerates

deities such as *Biru-Vairabi*. The religious sphere is guided by spiritual leaders like the Pujari and Dishari, who perform ceremonies and ensure the tribe's connection to their ancestral spirits remains strong.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the resilience of their traditional socio-cultural systems, the Didayi tribe has been gradually impacted by external influences, including modernization, formal education, and government interventions. While they remain resistant to religious conversions, particularly Christianity, modern developments have begun to influence younger generations, leading to shifts in marriage customs and social interactions. Younger Didayis are increasingly opting for love marriages over arranged ones, and the importance of bride price is diminishing. Moreover, gender roles within the community are evolving, as women participate more in education and contribute to household income, altering traditional family dynamics. While many of their rituals and totemic beliefs continue to shape their identity, the pressures of modernity, including improved infrastructure, access to education, and contact with neighbouring communities, are slowly transforming the Didayi tribe's way of life. This ongoing transformation poses both challenges and opportunities for the tribe as they navigate the balance between preserving their cultural heritage and adapting to the changes brought by the modern world.<sup>9</sup>

### 1.8.2 Forces of Changes and External Influences

The Didayi tribe's traditional socio-cultural life has been significantly impacted by various forces of change, particularly modernization, government interventions, and increased interaction with the broader society. Formal education has introduced younger generations to new ideas and lifestyles, leading to a gradual shift away from traditional customs, especially in marriage, where love marriages are becoming more common, and the importance of the traditional bride price is diminishing. Government initiatives, such as micro-projects, have improved access to healthcare, education, and infrastructure, but have also contributed to changes in the tribe's occupational patterns. Many Didayi youths, who once relied on traditional practices like agriculture and hunting, are now seeking modern jobs, eroding communal life and economic practices. Additionally, religious exposure and modernization have introduced new social norms, including changes in gender roles, as women increasingly pursue education and contribute economically, challenging the traditional patriarchal structure. While development projects have improved living conditions, they have also led to cultural assimilation, weakening the tribe's cultural resilience. These forces of change have set the Didayi community on a transformative path, where balancing their cultural heritage with modernity remains an ongoing challenge.<sup>10</sup>

### 1.8.3 Changes in Family Structure and Marriage Customs

The family structure and marriage customs of the Didayi tribe have undergone significant changes due to the influence of modernization, education, and external socio-economic forces. Traditionally, marriages were arranged by elders, with the exchange of a bride price playing a crucial role in symbolizing respect and familial ties. However, this custom is gradually fading, especially among younger generations who are increasingly opting for love marriages, often without the consent of their families.<sup>11</sup> This shift reflects the growing individualism within the tribe as younger members are exposed to new ideas through education and interaction with non-tribal communities. Additionally, gender roles within the family are evolving as more

women pursue education and contribute financially, leading to a more equitable distribution of responsibilities within households. The traditional patriarchal structure, where men were the primary decision-makers and breadwinners, is slowly giving way to a more flexible family dynamic, with both men and women sharing roles in decision-making and economic activities. These changes in family structure and marriage customs highlight the broader transformation taking place within the Didayi community as they navigate the pressures of modern life while attempting to retain their cultural identity.<sup>12</sup>

#### **1.8.4 Impact on Religious Practices and Language**

The religious practices and language of the Didayi tribe have experienced significant changes due to external influences and modernization. Traditionally, the Didayi people followed their indigenous religious practices, worshipping deities like Biru-Vairabi and conducting rituals in their native language, 'Ganta Sa,' which holds a central place in their spiritual and cultural identity. However, modernization, government-led development initiatives, and limited exposure to other religious communities have created subtle shifts. While the tribe has largely resisted religious conversion, with only a few families converting to Christianity and facing excommunication, the presence of alternative faiths has introduced a new layer of tension. Additionally, the use of 'Ganta Sa' is declining, as younger generations increasingly favor Odia or Hindi for daily communication. This shift threatens the preservation of their cultural and religious heritage, as their rituals are deeply intertwined with the language. As modern influences continue to shape the tribe's way of life, maintaining their traditional religious practices and language remains a critical challenge for the Didayi community.<sup>13</sup>

#### **1.8.5 Economic Changes and Modern Occupations**

The Didayi tribe has seen considerable economic changes in recent years as modernization and government initiatives have introduced new opportunities and shifted traditional livelihood patterns. Historically, the Didayis relied on subsistence agriculture, hunting, and forest gathering as their primary means of survival, deeply connected to their natural environment and communal way of life. However, with the introduction of micro-projects and improved infrastructure, many younger Didayis are moving away from these traditional occupations in favor of modern jobs, including government services, wage labour, and small business ventures. The push for formal education has also played a key role in this transition, as educated youth seek employment opportunities in urban areas, gradually eroding the tribe's reliance on traditional economic activities. While these changes have improved access to income and resources, they have also contributed to the weakening of communal bonds and the gradual loss of indigenous knowledge related to agriculture and forest management. This shift towards modern occupations is reshaping the Didayi economy, bringing both opportunities for economic advancement and challenges in preserving their traditional ways of life.<sup>14</sup>

### 1.8.6 Balancing Tradition and Transformation

Balancing tradition and transformation are a complex task for the Didayi tribe as they navigate the impacts of modernization while striving to preserve their cultural identity. The influx of education, improved infrastructure, and new economic opportunities has led to significant changes in their traditional practices, including shifts in marriage customs, economic roles, and religious rituals. Younger generations, influenced by modern values and aspirations, often seek to integrate contemporary practices with their cultural heritage, leading to a dynamic interplay between tradition and change. For instance, while traditional marriage practices and communal economic activities are evolving, efforts are being made to retain essential cultural elements like their native language and rituals. The tribe's challenge lies in finding a harmonious balance that allows them to embrace the benefits of modernization without losing the essence of their traditional identity. This ongoing process involves adapting cultural practices in ways that respect their historical significance while accommodating the realities of a changing socio-economic environment.<sup>15</sup>

### 1.9 Discussion

The results of this study illustrate a complex interplay between tradition and transformation in the socio-cultural life of the Didayi tribe. On one hand, modernization, government policies, and external influences have brought about significant changes, particularly in marriage, religious practices, and social norms. On the other hand, certain aspects of the tribe's traditional life, such as the clan system and totemism, have persisted and continue to play a crucial role in their cultural identity. The transformation in the Didayi tribe's socio-cultural life can be understood as part of a broader trend affecting many indigenous communities in India. While the benefits of modernization, such as improved access to education and healthcare, have been welcomed by the Didayi people, these changes have also posed challenges to the preservation of their traditional way of life. The study highlights the need for a balanced approach that allows the Didayi community to embrace development without losing their unique cultural heritage. In conclusion, the socio-cultural life of the Didayi tribe is in a state of flux, shaped by both continuity and change. As modernization continues to influence their way of life, the challenge for the Didayi people will be to maintain a sense of cultural identity while adapting to the evolving socio-economic landscape. The preservation of traditional practices alongside the acceptance of modern developments will be key to the future of the Didayi tribe's socio-cultural existence.

### 1.10 Finding

The Didayi tribe, once predominantly reliant on traditional agricultural and hunting practices, has experienced a notable shift towards modern methods. While traditional practices such as communal farming and ritualistic hunting were once central to their way of life, they are increasingly being replaced by commercial agriculture and the use of modern technology. This shift has led to a gradual erosion of traditional knowledge and skills among the younger generation. The introduction of formal education has significantly altered the socio-cultural landscape of the Didayi tribe. Educational initiatives have led to higher literacy rates and greater awareness of broader socio-economic issues. However, this has also resulted in a divergence between the educated youth and the older generations, leading to a dilution of traditional cultural values and

practices. Economic development in Malkangiri District has brought both opportunities and challenges to the Didayi tribe. Access to government schemes and financial assistance programs has improved economic conditions for some, leading to better living standards. However, the influx of external economic influences has also disrupted traditional economic structures, causing dependency on external markets and eroding traditional economic practices. Despite the pressures of modernization, there has been a revival of interest in preserving Didayi cultural heritage. Community-led initiatives and cultural organizations are working to document and revitalize traditional practices, festivals, and rituals. This effort is crucial in maintaining a sense of identity and continuity within the tribe. The penetration of media and technology into the lives of the Didayi tribe has had a profound impact on their socio-cultural dynamics. Exposure to mainstream media and digital platforms has introduced new cultural elements and ideologies, influencing the tribe's values, fashion, and communication styles. This has led to a blending of traditional and modern cultural elements. Social structures within the Didayi tribe have also undergone transformation, particularly concerning gender roles. Traditional gender norms are being challenged as women gain more access to education and employment opportunities. This shift is contributing to a gradual redefinition of gender roles and increasing gender equality within the community. Improvements in healthcare access have led to better overall health outcomes for the Didayi tribe. Traditional healing practices are being complemented by modern medical interventions, resulting in a hybrid approach to health and well-being. This change has contributed to increased life expectancy and reduced mortality rates. Modernization and economic development have had environmental consequences for the Didayi tribe's traditional lands. Deforestation, land degradation, and changes in land use have affected traditional practices such as shifting cultivation and resource management. This has led to a need for new strategies to balance development with environmental conservation. Overall, the Didayi tribe in Malkangiri District is experiencing a complex interplay of tradition and transformation. While modernization has introduced numerous benefits, it has also posed challenges to the preservation of traditional practices and cultural identity. The ongoing efforts to adapt and preserve their heritage amidst these changes are crucial for maintaining the tribe's unique socio-cultural identity.

### 1.11 Conclusion

The study of the Didayi tribe in Malkangiri District reveals a dynamic interplay between tradition and transformation that characterizes their socio-cultural evolution. As the tribe navigates the impacts of modernization and development, several key conclusions emerge: The Didayi tribe faces the challenge of balancing the preservation of traditional practices with the adoption of modern innovations. While modernization has brought tangible benefits such as improved healthcare and economic opportunities, it has also introduced pressures that threaten the continuity of traditional cultural practices and values. Efforts to integrate modern practices with traditional ways are crucial in maintaining the tribe's cultural identity while adapting to contemporary realities. The expansion of formal education has played a significant role in transforming the socio-cultural landscape of the Didayi tribe. On one hand, it has empowered individuals with knowledge and skills that open up new opportunities. On the other hand, it has created generational divides and contributed to the erosion of traditional knowledge. Bridging this gap requires educational approaches that respect and incorporate traditional knowledge alongside modern curricula. Economic advancements have

improved living standards but also disrupted traditional economic practices and social structures. The transition to commercial agriculture and market-based economies has altered traditional ways of life, leading to a dependence on external systems. It is essential to develop strategies that support sustainable economic development while preserving the tribe's traditional economic practices and social cohesion. Despite the challenges posed by modernization, there is a growing movement within the Didayi community to revive and preserve their cultural heritage. Community-led initiatives and cultural organizations play a vital role in documenting and revitalizing traditional practices, rituals, and festivals. These efforts are crucial for maintaining the tribe's cultural identity and ensuring that future generations remain connected to their heritage. The evolving gender dynamics within the Didayi tribe reflect broader societal changes. Increasing educational and employment opportunities for women are reshaping traditional gender roles and promoting gender equality. This shift signifies a positive development in social structures, contributing to a more equitable and inclusive community. The environmental impact of modernization, such as deforestation and land degradation, poses a threat to traditional practices and resource management. Addressing these environmental challenges requires a balanced approach that integrates sustainable development practices with traditional ecological knowledge to protect and preserve the tribe's natural heritage. In conclusion, the socio-cultural life of the Didayi tribe in Malkangiri District is marked by a complex and evolving relationship between tradition and transformation. The ongoing process of adaptation and change underscores the need for policies and initiatives that support cultural preservation while embracing the benefits of modernization. By fostering a harmonious integration of traditional values and modern advancements, the Didayi tribe can navigate the challenges of change while maintaining their unique cultural identity.

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