



STUDY ON TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE SYSTEM OF THE DIDAYI COMMUNITY IN MALKANGIRI DISTRICT OF ODISHA

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Abstract:

The Didayi, one of the 62 Scheduled Tribe communities in Odisha, had a population of only 8,890 according to the 2011 census, with a male population of 46.96 percent and a female population of 53.04 percent. This study focuses on the traditional marriage system of the Didayi, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) residing in the Malkangiri district of Odisha. Conducting qualitative research, the scholar collected data from 384 respondents using random sampling across two blocks. The Didayi are a small, hilly tribal community in the eastern part of the district, living in the Kondakameru hilly region near the Balimela reservoir. They maintain various traditional practices, including their culture, festivals, food, drinks, and clothing, and speak their native language, 'Gahta Saa,' referring to themselves as 'Gahtare'. The Didayi have several traditional marriage systems, which are now gradually disappearing. Since 1986, the government of Odisha has supported their development through the micro-project, Didayi Development Agency (DDA), Kudumulugumma.

Keywords: Didayi, Traditional, Marriage, PVTG & DDA.

1.1 Introduction

The Didayi is a small hill tribal group, ranked 13th among the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in Odisha. According to the 2011 census, their population was only 8,890. Geographically, the region they inhabit is divided into three distinct areas: the plains, the hills, and isolated regions. The Didayi primarily reside in two blocks, Khairaput and Kudumulugumma, within the Malkangiri district of Odisha. Only 39 villages are home to the Didayi, with 37 of these villages currently being developed by the Didayi Development Agency under the government of Odisha's initiatives.¹ The Didayi live at an altitude of 2,000 to 3,500 meters above sea level. Although they do not have a written language, they use a unique spoken language known as 'Gahta Saa' for communication. Their cultural practices, including festivals and social rituals, are distinct from those of other tribal groups in the region. The Didayi place great importance on their

traditional marriage customs, which play a crucial role in preserving their cultural identity. However, these traditional practices are increasingly under threat due to external influences and modernization.²

This study seeks to explore and document the traditional marriage system of the Didayi community, focusing on how these customs have evolved and persisted amidst the socio-economic changes in the Malkangiri district. Understanding these traditions is essential not only for preserving the cultural heritage of the Didayi but also for recognizing the challenges they face in maintaining their unique way of life in a rapidly changing world.

1.2 Objective of the paper

The study on the traditional marriage system of the Didayi community aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of their unique marital customs, which are integral to their cultural identity. By delving into the intricacies of these practices, the study seeks to uncover the various types of marriage systems prevalent among the Didayi and to explore the factors contributing to the changes in these traditional practices in contemporary times. The objectives of the paper are as follows:

- To study the traditional marriage system of the Didayi PVTG in the Malkangiri district of Odisha.
- To identify and classify the different types of marriage systems practiced by the Didayi tribe.
- To highlight the causes of changes in the traditional marriage system of the Didayi in the present time.

These objectives will guide the research in capturing the essence of Didayi marital customs, providing insights into how these practices have evolved and what challenges they face in the modern era.

1.3 Method of the Study

The study employed a qualitative research approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the traditional marriage system of the Didayi community in the Malkangiri district of Odisha. The researcher utilized both primary and secondary data to achieve the study's objectives. Primary data was gathered through fieldwork, during which the researcher conducted interviews and administered questionnaires to collect detailed information directly from the participants. A total of 384 samples were selected for this study, determined through appropriate sample size calculations from the Didayi population of approximately 8,000 in the study area. The field study covered 12 Didayi villages: Muduliguda, Oringi, Purunagumma, Chilipadar, Dandarbeda, Gangapada, Kaneng, Nilapari, Jantri, Sanyasiguda, Orapadar, and Dabuguda.³ In these villages, the researcher collected primary data from 384 households, ensuring a comprehensive representation of the community's marriage practices. To complement the primary data, the study also relied on secondary data sources. These included a wide range of scholarly materials such as books, gazettes, journals, articles, monographs, book chapters, dissertations, theses, conference papers, and online sources. The use of secondary data provided a broader context for understanding the evolution and current state of the Didayi marriage system.

Furthermore, the researcher paid close attention to the socio-cultural dynamics and external influences that have impacted the traditional marriage practices of the Didayi. This holistic approach allowed for a nuanced analysis of how these practices have persisted or transformed in the face of modernization and external interventions. Through this method, the study aims to document the rich cultural heritage of the Didayi's marital customs while shedding light on the factors driving changes in their traditional practices.

1.4 Review of literatures

Damburu Sisa wrote a book titled *The Didayi: Tribe's Cultural Contours and Heritage* in 2020. In this book, the author presents a vivid portrayal of the Didayi tribe, one of the most underdeveloped tribes of Malkangiri district, Odisha. He describes how their culture is gradually disappearing, while also shedding light on the tribe's economic and religious life. Sisa illustrates the beauty of their way of life, yet the book does not explore how the Didayi's socio-cultural conditions are improving. This omission opens new avenues for further study, especially regarding the positive changes in their socio-cultural landscape.

Nadeem Hasnain published the 7th revised, expanded, and updated edition of *Tribal India* in 2019. This comprehensive work addresses important issues such as the social values of various tribal communities across India, including their marital systems and political ideologies. However, Hasnain does not discuss the indigenous tribes of Odisha, particularly the Didayi, leaving a gap in the literature. This creates an opportunity for contemporary scholars to explore and document the social and cultural dynamics of Odisha's tribes, especially the lesser-studied groups like the Didayi.

A. B. Hota, S. C. Mohanty, and B. N. Mohanty edited *Demographic Profile of Scheduled Tribes in Odisha (1961-2011)* in 2018. This book provides a detailed demographic overview of Odisha's tribes, covering aspects such as population distribution, major occupations, and festivals. While the demographic trends of the Didayi tribe are touched upon, their cultural life is largely absent from the discussion. The omission of cultural data presents an opportunity for future research, particularly regarding how the Didayi tribe's cultural practices and traditions have evolved over time.

Kumar Das published *Travesty of Tribal Development* in 2017, where he discusses the development status of Odisha's 62 indigenous communities. The author touches upon the Didayi and Bonda tribes in Malkangiri district, yet his focus remains minimal on these groups. Das primarily addresses broader tribal development without deeply exploring the specific challenges and opportunities faced by the Didayi. This opens a pathway for scholars to delve deeper into the socio-economic changes and developmental challenges of the Didayi tribe.

Charula Mukharjea authored *The Santals* in 2017, a book focusing on the social life of the Santali tribe in Odisha, particularly in Mayurbhanj district. Mukharjea highlights the tribe's journey through various aspects of life, including their economic and religious practices. While the book provides a valuable glimpse into the Santal tribe's way of life, it does not explore other indigenous groups in Odisha, such as the Didayi. This offers a research opportunity for scholars to conduct comparative studies between the Santals and other tribes like the Didayi.

N. K. Behura and Nilakantha Panigrahi jointly published *Tribals and the Indian Constitution* in 2017. This book outlines the constitutional provisions and policy frameworks designed for the welfare of India's indigenous populations. The authors emphasize how important it is for tribal communities to be aware of their rights and the constitutional measures in place for their protection. However, specific tribes, such as the Didayi, are not directly discussed, leaving a potential gap for further investigation into how these legal provisions impact Odisha's tribal groups, especially in terms of political representation and self-governance.

A. B. Hota and S. C. Mohanty edited *Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) of Odisha. Volume 1 (Ethnography)*, published by the SCSTRTI department in 2015. This volume includes insightful chapters by authors such as P. K. Mohapatra, who wrote *Didayi: A Hill Tribe of Orissa*, and S. C. Mohanty, who penned *The Didayi: A Picturesque Tribe of Odisha*. These works provide an ethnographic account of the Didayi tribe, along with details on other PVTGs in Odisha. Despite the rich ethnographic detail, there remains scope for further exploration of how modernization and state intervention have impacted the socio-political organization of the Didayi tribe.

Nupur Tiwari published *Tribal Self-Governance, PESA and Its Implementation* in 2016. This book focuses on the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA) of 1996 and its impact on tribal self-governance in India. Tiwari provides a detailed analysis of how the PESA Act has been implemented in rural areas and its role in promoting tribal development. However, the book does not delve into how the Act affects the tribes of Odisha, specifically the Didayi. This gap in the literature presents an opportunity to study the Act's influence on tribal governance in Odisha's scheduled areas.

B. Dakshayani and M. R. Gangadhar jointly authored *Child Development Among the Scheduled Tribes of India*, published in 2016. The book highlights the steps taken to improve the lives of indigenous children across India. However, it does not mention the tribal children of Odisha, particularly the Didayi. Given the socio-economic challenges faced by the Didayi tribe, this oversight suggests the need for further research on the development of children in these marginalized communities.

S. N. Chaudhary published *Tribal Women Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* in 2015. This book offers a detailed examination of the lives of tribal women across India, focusing on their past, present, and future roles in society. Although the book mentions women from various states, it overlooks the women from underdeveloped tribes in Malkangiri district, including the Didayi. This omission presents an opportunity for further exploration into the lives of Didayi women, particularly their socio-economic roles and how they navigate changes in their community.

1.5 Area of the Study

The study on the traditional marriage system of the Didayi community was conducted in the Malkangiri district of Odisha, with a particular focus on two key administrative blocks: Khairaput and Kudumulugumma. These blocks were selected due to their substantial Didayi population and the continued practice of traditional marriage customs that are integral to the Didayi way of life. Within these blocks, the research concentrated on five Gram Panchayats: Rasabeda, Kudumulugumma, Nakamamudi, Jantri, and

Andrapali. These Panchayats encompass a range of villages that contribute diverse perspectives on the marriage traditions of the Didayi people.⁴

The study further focused on twelve villages within these Gram Panchayats: Muduliguda, Oringi, Purunagumma, Chilipadar, Dandarbeda, Gangapada, Kaneng, Nilapari, Jantri, Sanyasiguda, Orapadar, and Dabuguda. These villages were chosen based on their geographical distribution, population density, and the presence of traditional marriage practices that reflect both continuity and adaptation to modern influences. By examining the marriage customs within these specific areas, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Didayi community's matrimonial traditions, highlighting the persistence of age-old rituals alongside emerging changes due to external factors.

1.6 Background

The Didayi community, one of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) of India, resides primarily in the Malkangiri district of Odisha. Known for their distinct socio-cultural practices and traditions, the Didayi have managed to preserve many of their ancestral customs despite external influences. Marriage, as a vital social institution, plays a crucial role in the Didayi community's cultural identity, binding families and establishing social structures within the tribe. The traditional marriage system of the Didayi people is deeply rooted in their clan-based society, governed by customs, rituals, and social norms that have been passed down through generations.⁵

In recent years, however, the Didayi's way of life, including their marriage customs, has been subject to gradual change due to external factors such as increased contact with mainstream society, government intervention, and economic development initiatives. These influences have begun to impact the Didayi's traditional practices, raising concerns about the preservation of their cultural heritage. This study focuses on the traditional marriage system of the Didayi community in the administrative blocks of Khairaput, Korukonda, and Chitrakonda within Malkangiri district, Odisha.⁶ By exploring the customary marriage rituals and their continuity, as well as the emerging changes brought about by external forces, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the Didayi community navigates the balance between tradition and modernization. The research also seeks to document the role of marriage in maintaining social cohesion within the community, the influence of kinship structures, and the potential shifts in marriage practices in response to contemporary challenges. This study is significant in contributing to the broader discourse on tribal communities in India, particularly regarding how modernization affects traditional social institutions like marriage. The findings will offer insights into the resilience of the Didayi's cultural practices, as well as highlight areas where traditional customs are evolving.⁷

1.7 The Concept of Marriage

Marriage is a fundamental social institution, deeply embedded in both human society and culture. As social beings, humans depend on such institutions to maintain societal balance and continuity. Marriage, in particular, is seen by social scientists as a crucial social process that preserves the human race by creating familial structures. It represents a continuous bond between men and women, recognized by both society and

culture, allowing for sexual relations and the creation of future generations. In tribal societies, including the Didayi community, marriage holds a sacred and central place. Social institutions, such as marriage, provide the organizational systems that meet basic social needs and help individuals connect with their cultural roots. Within the Didayi society, marriage is considered one of the most important social customs, binding men and women in a lifelong commitment under the gaze of their community, culture, and deities.⁸

Marriage in the Didayi community is a highly ritualistic and sacred process. It is governed by specific customs and performed in the presence of the tribe's Ista deity and fire, symbolizing the sanctity and spiritual significance of the union. For the Didayi, marriage is not just a social contract but also a religious duty, fulfilling cultural and spiritual roles within the tribe. The community emphasizes the purity of the woman and the loyalty of the man, making marriage a union that carries both moral and religious weight. One of the defining features of the Didayi marriage system is its exogamous nature, which means that individuals must marry outside their own clan. For example, sons of the father's brother and daughters of the mother's sister are treated like siblings and cannot marry each other. Instead, marriage typically occurs between a man and his father's sister's daughter or his mother's brother's daughter, a practice known as *marraseboi*. In the Didayi language, marriage is referred to as *bihye*. The traditional marriage customs of the Didayi people vary slightly depending on their geographical location, with the tribe being divided into plains, hills, and breakaway regions. Across these regions, seven distinct types of marriages are practiced: *gube*, *passiamundi*, *tosho*, *udilia*, *marraseboi*, *gharjuani*, and *mala boye biye*. Weddings are typically held between the months of February and April, corresponding with the Odia calendar months of Magha, Phalgun, and Chaitra. Tuesdays and Wednesdays are considered the most auspicious days for weddings, and ceremonies are often conducted on these days. In the Didayi society, marriage involves several traditional exchanges between the families of the bride and groom. For instance, in the plain areas of the Didayi community, the process begins with the son's father visiting the daughter's home for a year, bringing gifts such as *tuma* (a pot of *salapa* juice), chicken, and rice. After the year-long visits, the groom's father negotiates the bride price, which includes items such as rice, clothes, goats, chickens, and wine. Once the bride price is paid, the bride is allowed to leave her family's home and move to her husband's house. This process is known as *gneng* or pay. In some cases, as noted by Mohapatra, the bride price may also include a metal plate, an arrow, and other symbolic items. The bride is then escorted to the groom's house, often accompanied by her relatives and village members. Upon arrival, the couple marries according to Didayi customs, but physical intimacy between the couple is prohibited for the first eight days after the wedding. This period of restraint underscores the deep respect for the sanctity of the marriage. The Didayi marriage system reflects not only the importance of familial ties and alliances but also the community's commitment to preserving its cultural heritage. Despite modernization and external influences, these traditional customs continue to play a vital role in Didayi society, connecting the present generation to the ancestral past while balancing the needs of contemporary life.⁹

1.8 Types of Marriages

The Didayi tribe is geographically divided into three regions: plains, hills, and breakaway areas. Due to these divisions, their marriage systems vary slightly. For instance, Didayis from the plains, such as those in villages like Muduliguda, Oringi, Purunagumma, Kudumulugumma, and Chilipadar, sometimes marry girls from other tribes.¹⁰ In contrast, the Didayis of the hilly areas and Winnipeg rarely engage in inter-tribal marriages. Eight types of marriages are generally observed among the Didayis, which are described below:

1.8.1 *Gube Biye* (Kidnap by Marriage)

This is a type of marriage where the Didayis marry by kidnapping, known as '*gube*' or marriage by capture. In this arrangement, if a boy chooses to marry a girl, he informs his friends, who then monitor her activities. From that point on, his friends gather information about where the girl goes and whom she interacts with. If the girl visits a friend's or relative's village, the boy, with the help of his friends, kidnaps her and takes her to another relative's village. Once the girl's family becomes aware of the situation, they request her return and discuss the matter with her.

1.8.2 *Pasiamundi Biye* (Marriage by Physical Relationship)

This is a unique form of marriage found among the Didayi tribe, and it is not commonly seen in other groups. This type of marriage is also mentioned in the Puranas, where it is referred to as Gandharva marriage. According to ancient Hindu literature, the *Apastamba Grhyasutra*, it is a Hindu tradition in which a woman chooses her life partner. According to the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, this form of marriage could gain popularity in society. Social scientists describe it as a marriage based on a sexual relationship. In the case of the Didayis, if a girl wishes to marry a boy, she voluntarily goes to his house and engages in a physical relationship with him. When the villagers find out, they forcefully remove the girl from the boy's house. The boy does not object because he also wishes to marry the girl, but the household initially does not approve. After all of this, the girl returns to the boy's house and pours water near his dwelling to prevent him from leaving. As a result, the boy's father is compelled to marry the girl to his son. This type of marriage is known as marriage by intrusion.¹¹

1.8.3 *Tosho Biye* (Marriage with Family Consent)

This type of marriage among the Didayis is known as marriage by proposal. It is an old and traditional process, common in almost all tribal societies. If a groom sees a girl and decides to marry her, both the boy and girl inform their respective families about their interest. The boy's family then discreetly approaches the girl's house, often bringing a gift of honey as a gesture of goodwill. If the girl's family agrees, they inform the girl about the marriage proposal. When the girl expresses interest, her family invites the boy's family to visit. If the girl likes the boy, her family agrees to proceed. Both the boy and the girl typically do not participate directly in the discussions. After the girl's family visits the boy's house, they send a mediator to inform the girl's family about the dowry arrangements. The date and day of the wedding are set once the families reach an agreement.

On the wedding day, the girl is formally sent off from her family's home. The bridegroom arrives to take her to his home, where the marriage is performed according to the groom's family's customs. This type of wedding tends to be expensive for the Didayis.¹²

1.8.4 *Udulia Biye* (Marriage by Escape)

According to studies, *udulia* is the easiest and most cost-effective form of marriage among the Didayi tribe in today's society. It is also known as marriage by escape. Many Didayi people prefer to marry during adolescence, and sometimes girls may be reluctant to marry through formal arrangements. As a result, they opt for the *udulia*, or marriage by escape. This form of marriage is common among Didayis living in the hilly and remote regions. The marriage is mutually agreed upon by both the boy and the girl. If they wish to live together as husband and wife, they simply run away from their homes, avoiding the need for a costly ceremony. After a few days, the families find out about the marriage. When the son-in-law and daughter-in-law return to their respective villages, a small feast or party is held in the village to celebrate. In this case, however, the bride's family is still expected to provide a dowry or gifts.¹³

1.8.5 *Marshaboi Biye* (Consanguineous Marriage)

Marshaboi is considered an ideal form of marriage within the Didayi tribe, often referred to as a family marriage. This type of marriage is limited to close family members, and in Didayi society, it is viewed as a welcomed and traditional form of union that has existed since ancient times. According to elders in Muduliguda village, it is customary for a man to marry his mother's brother's daughter or his cousin. This practice is also known as blood marriage. In such marriages, a maternal uncle may also marry his niece, reinforcing familial bonds. This type of marriage can be found in all three regions where the Didayis live: the plains, the hills, and the breakaway regions. When a boy becomes eligible for marriage, his first choice is often his uncle's daughter. An intermediary is sent to propose the marriage, and once all the discussions are completed, the wedding is arranged and held under specific traditional circumstances.¹⁴

1.8.6 *Gharjuayan Biye* (Marriage by Service)

Gharjuayan is a unique marriage system among the Didayi tribe, also known as marriage by service. This type of marriage is relatively uncommon in contemporary society but remains specific to the Didayis. It is particularly prevalent in poorer families who may struggle to afford a dowry. In such cases, if a family has no sons and only a daughter, they may choose to offer their property and marry their daughter to a trustworthy person in exchange for service. Typically, the chosen individual must work for the family for a period of three years. If he proves himself to be worthy and reliable during this time, the girl's father will agree to the marriage. This practice is known as *garjuayan*. An example of this can be found in the village of Muduliguda, where a man named Raghu Bisoi had three daughters but no sons. He wished to secure a trustworthy individual for his family. Gopi Khemudu, who worked for Raghu Bisoi for three years, was eventually married to one of his daughters.¹⁵

Additionally, there is a rare practice within the Didayi tribe related to marital disputes. If a man or woman has an affair outside of their marriage, the village holds a meeting to address the issue. The guilty party is admonished, and if the marital relationship remains troubled, the village intervenes. In the case of Gopi Khemudu, who remarried in December 2019, the practice of returning the bride price if a woman remarries another man was observed. If the second husband of a woman is required to return the bride price given to the first husband, Gopi Khemudu complied with this practice. Currently, the village Sarpanch is overseeing such matters, although in some villages, the Sarpanch's attendance is hindered by transportation issues, leading to meetings being conducted by the villagers themselves.

1.8.7 Mala Boye Biye (Give and Bring)

Mala Boye Biye is a rare marriage practice among the Didayis that is now gradually disappearing. Traditionally, this marriage was also known as *Mamu Mala* or *Dhud Leuta* in the local language. The unique aspect of this marriage is that if a family arranges a marriage for their son and the bride has a daughter, the daughter is then married back to the family from which the bride was originally taken. This practice was believed to "repay the loan" or fulfill a reciprocal obligation, hence the term *Dhud Leuta* or *Mamu Mala*.

Typically, this marriage involved the father's sister's daughter being married to the family who had provided the bride for their son. While this practice is no longer common in the plains where the Didayis reside, it continues to persist in some breakaway regions. However, with increased education and awareness, such traditional practices are slowly declining as people recognize that their uncle's daughter may have siblings, leading to a gradual disappearance of this marriage custom.

1.8.8 Randi Biye (Widow Re-Marriage)

The Didayi tribe also practices widow re-marriage, a custom found in many tribal societies. In Didayi culture, this practice is referred to as *Randi Dinge*. If a woman becomes a widow, she is considered as such if her husband dies. Re-marriage is more feasible if the widow has no children. However, if the widow has a child, re-marriage becomes challenging. In cases where a widow remarries, the new spouse is expected to remain faithful, and extramarital affairs are not tolerated. Additionally, the woman's original family does not receive a bride-price or any compensation for their daughter.

1.8.9 Antarge (Divorce)

Despite their traditional lifestyle, the Didayi tribe has a system for handling marriage and separation. This system addresses issues such as child marriage, changing attitudes at a young age, marital discord, and cases of infidelity or lack of childbearing. When such issues arise, a village meeting is organized to resolve the situation. This meeting includes local Sarpanches, Ward members, village heads, respected community members, and both families involved. The purpose of the meeting is to mediate and find a fair resolution for both parties.

In Didayi society, it is more common for husbands to seek divorce than for wives. If a husband wishes to divorce his wife, they must discuss their issues at the village meeting. Both parties present their perspectives, and the attendees mediate to reach a decision. If a divorce is agreed upon, the husband must provide a substantial amount of money as compensation to the wife. Conversely, divorce initiated by wives is rare and often not well-regarded within the community.¹⁶

1.10 Changes of Marriage System of the Didayi

Historically, marriages by capture involved the kidnapping of a bride with the help of friends, followed by negotiations with the bride's family. This practice is now rare due to changing social norms and legal frameworks. Once a common practice, this form of marriage involved consensual physical relationships as a precursor to formal marriage. It has largely faded due to modernization and increased awareness of legal and ethical standards. This traditional practice, involving family negotiations and agreements, remains in practice but has adapted to contemporary norms with greater emphasis on formal procedures and legal documentation. Traditionally a cost-effective and spontaneous form of marriage, this practice has decreased as modern communication and transportation make such escapes less common. Marriages between close relatives, considered ideal in traditional times, are now less common due to increased awareness of genetic implications and changing social attitudes. This system, where a man works for a family in exchange for marrying their daughter, has become rare. Modern economic opportunities and changes in family structures have diminished the practice. This rare practice, involving a reciprocal arrangement of marriages between families, is now nearly extinct due to changing social dynamics and increased education. Widow re-marriage was historically practiced but has become less common due to evolving social norms and legal protections for widows.

Modern marriages are increasingly regulated by legal standards, with formal documentation and registration becoming standard practice. Exposure to modern media and education has led to a shift in attitudes towards traditional practices. Younger generations are more likely to integrate modern customs with traditional practices. Economic improvements and better access to resources have changed the way marriages are celebrated, with a focus on affordability and practicality. There is a growing emphasis on gender equality in marriage practices, with both partners having more say in the choice of spouse and the terms of the marriage. Increased interaction with other communities and exposure to different cultures have led to the adoption of new marriage customs and practices, blending traditional and modern elements.

1.11 Findings

Based on the analysis of both primary and secondary data, the study provides valuable insights into the traditional marriage practices of the Didayi community in Malkangiri district. A total of 37 villages were examined, and their marriage patterns and relationships were analysed. The findings are as follows: Unmarried Population: 52.10% of the Didayi population was unmarried. Married Population: 42.18% were married, forming the majority of adults within the tribe. Widowed Population: 5.42% were widowed, while 0.31% were either separated or divorced.

Gube Biye (Marriage by Capture) accounted for 5.78% of marriages, where a boy kidnaps a girl and later negotiates with her family. Though rare today, it remains part of the traditional repertoire. *Pasiamundi Biye* (Marriage by Physical Relationship) represented 3.94% of marriages, involving a consensual physical relationship before formal marriage, but its prevalence has diminished over time. *Tosa Biye* (Marriage by Family Consent), where families negotiate and consent to the marriage, made up 21.05% of cases, making it the second most common type. *Udliya Biye* (Marriage by Escape) was the most prevalent, with 59.73% of couples eloping and marrying without formal negotiations. *Marshaboi Biye* (Consanguineous Marriage) involved 4.73% of marriages between close family members, though it has declined due to changing social awareness and health concerns. *Gharjuayan Biye* (Marriage by Service), where the groom works for the bride's family, constituted only 0.52% of marriages and has declined due to economic shifts. Finally, *Mala Boye Biye* (Give and Bring Marriage) involved 4.21% of marriages, where daughters were exchanged between families to repay familial obligations, though this practice is also becoming less common.

1.12 Conclusion

The traditional marriage system of the Didayi tribe remains deeply rooted in cultural heritage, but it has undergone significant changes over time due to external influences, improved infrastructure, education, and evolving social norms. While some forms of marriage continue to be practiced, others have diminished or transformed, reflecting the community's adaptation to modernity. Based on the "Study on the Traditional Marriage System of the Didayi Community in Malkangiri District of Odisha," it is evident that the Didayi tribe's marriage practices have evolved considerably. Traditional systems like *Gube Biye* (Marriage by Capture), once prevalent, are now rare, while the most common practice, *Udliya Biye* (Marriage by Escape), continues to dominate. Other forms such as consanguineous marriages (*Marshaboi Biye*) and service marriages (*Gharjuayan Biye*) have decreased significantly due to awareness of health concerns and changes in the economic environment. The exchange-based marriage system (*Mala Boye Biye*) is also in decline, influenced by modern education and changing values. In conclusion, the Didayi tribe's traditional marriage system reflects both continuity and change. While many aspects of their unique marital practices still persist, the tribe's growing interaction with external cultures and the development of infrastructure, like the Gurupriya Setu, have brought about significant shifts. This transformation highlights the balance the Didayi community is trying to maintain between preserving their cultural identity and adapting to the pressures of modern life.

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