iJRASET
International Journal For Research in Applied Science and Engineering Technology



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH

IN APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Volume: 12 **Issue:** IX **Month of publication:** September 2024

DOI: https://doi.org/10.22214/ijraset.2024.64215

www.ijraset.com

Call: 08813907089 | E-mail ID: ijraset@gmail.com

International Journal for Research in Applied Science & Engineering Technology (IJRASET)
ISSN: 2321-9653; IC Value: 45.98; SJ Impact Factor: 7.538
Volume 12 Issue IX Sep 2024- Available at www.ijraset.com

Socio-Cultural Life of the Didayi Community in Malkangiri District of Odisha

Mr. Jyotiranjan Gudia[1], Dr. Tusarkant Pattnaik[2]
[1]*NFST Ph.D. Scholar,* [2]*Assistant Professor, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, KISS Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar*

Abstract: ***The Didayi tribe, recognized as one of India's Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), inhabits the remote Malkangiri district of Odisha. Known for their distinct socio-cultural practices, the Didayi have preserved a way of life that is intricately tied to their natural surroundings and deeply rooted in tradition. This paper aims to explore and document the socio-cultural life of the Didayi, focusing on their social structures, totemic beliefs, rituals, and oral traditions. The objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these practices have evolved over time, the role they play in maintaining social cohesion, and the ways in which the Didayi have adapted to external pressures while striving to preserve their cultural identity. The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the broader discourse on the preservation of indigenous cultures in India, particularly in the context of rapid socio-economic changes. By examining the Didayi's socio-cultural life, the paper sheds light on the resilience of their traditions and the challenges they face in balancing cultural preservation with the need for modern development. The study concludes that while the Didayi have successfully retained many aspects of their traditional socio-cultural life, they are increasingly confronted with the need to adapt to changing circumstances. The paper calls for a nuanced understanding of these dynamics and emphasizes the importance of supporting the Didayi in preserving their cultural heritage while enabling them to thrive in a modernizing world.***
Keywords: Social, Cultural, Didayi, Community, Malkangiri, District, Odisha.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Didayi tribe, classified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG), resides in the remote and rugged terrains of Malkangiri district in Odisha, India. Known for their unique socio-cultural life, the Didayi people have preserved a way of living that reflects deep connections with their environment, rich traditions, and a resilient community structure. This tribe, with its distinct identity, occupies a critical place within the ethnographic landscape of Odisha, contributing to the state's cultural diversity.[1] The Didayi's socio-cultural life is characterized by their age-old customs, rituals, and beliefs, which are intricately woven into their daily existence. Despite the encroachment of modernity, the tribe has managed to maintain a significant portion of their cultural heritage, including their traditional political systems, clan-based social organization, and totemic beliefs. Their rituals, language, and folklore, passed down through generations, provide a glimpse into their worldview, one that is deeply spiritual and closely linked to nature.[2] This introduction sets the stage for an in-depth exploration of the socio-cultural life of the Didayi PVTG, highlighting the interplay between tradition and change, and the tribe's ongoing efforts to preserve their cultural identity in the face of external influences. Understanding the Didayi tribe's socio-cultural dynamics is crucial for appreciating the complexities of their existence and the challenges they face in the rapidly evolving socio-economic landscape of Odisha.[3]

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1) To explore the traditional practices and customs of the Didayi community, focusing on their social structure, marriage rituals, and festivals, highlighting the unique aspects that distinguish them from other tribal groups in the region.
2) To analyse the impact of external influences, such as modernization and government policies, on the Didayi community's cultural heritage, including changes in their language, art, and religious practices.
3) To document and assess the role of the Didayi community's socio-cultural life in maintaining their identity and resilience, particularly in the context of challenges posed by economic development and environmental changes in Malkangiri district.

III. METHODOLOGY

The researcher conducted immersive fieldwork in selected Didayi villages, where he lived among the community members to observe and participate in their daily activities, rituals, and social interactions. This provided him with first-hand insights into their cultural practices, beliefs, and social organization.

©IJRASET: All Rights are Reserved

He engaged in participant observation during key cultural events, such as festivals, marriage ceremonies, and religious rituals, to understand their significance and role in the community's social life. In-depth interviews were conducted with elders, religious leaders (Dishari and Pujari), and other knowledgeable community members to gather detailed information about their traditions, customs, and changes over time. The researcher also collected oral histories from various age groups within the community, capturing generational perspectives on socio-cultural continuity and change, particularly focusing on how modern influences had impacted their way of life. The researcher designed and administered a structured questionnaire to a representative sample of the Didayi population, collecting quantitative data on aspects such as social norms, marriage practices, language use, and participation in traditional and modern cultural activities. The survey data allowed him to identify patterns and trends in the socio-cultural practices of the Didayi community, enabling a comparative analysis between different geographical regions within the district, such as the plain areas and hilly areas. Additionally, the researcher reviewed existing literature, government reports, and archival materials related to the Didayi tribe, contextualizing his findings within broader historical and socio-political frameworks. He analysed past anthropological and sociological studies on the Didayi community to identify gaps in knowledge and build upon previous research. The researcher also utilized photographic and audio-visual documentation to capture cultural practices, rituals, and daily life in the Didayi community, creating a visual ethnography that complemented the written analysis. He recorded traditional songs, chants, and oral narratives in the native language, Ganta Sa, preserving and studying the intangible cultural heritage of the Didayi tribe.[4]

During his field study, the researcher covered 12 Didayi villages: Muduliguda, Oringi, Purunagumma, Chilipadar, Dandarbeda, Gangapada, Kaneng, Nilapari, Jantri, Sanyasiguda, Orapadar, and Dabuguda. He collected primary data from 384 households and supplemented this with secondary data from various sources, including books, Gazettes, Journals, Articles, Monographs, Book Chapters, Dissertations, Theses, Conference Papers, and Online Sources.

IV. AREA OF THE STUDIED

The study on the socio-cultural life of the Didayi community was conducted in the Malkangiri district of Odisha, focusing on three key administrative blocks: Khairaput, Korukonda, and Chitrakonda. These blocks were selected due to their significant Didayi population and the presence of traditional socio-cultural practices that are central to the community's way of life. Within these blocks, the study concentrated on five Gram Panchayats: Rasabeda, Kudumulugumma, Nakamamudi, Jantri, and Andrapali.[5] These Panchayats encompass a diverse range of villages, each contributing to the broader understanding of the Didayi community's social and cultural dynamics. The research was further narrowed down to cover 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 both traditional and evolving socio-cultural practices among the Didayi people. By focusing on these specific areas, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of the socio-cultural life of the Didayi community, capturing both the continuity of their traditions and the changes brought about by external influences.

V. REVIEW OF LITERATURES

The socio-cultural life of the Didayi community in Malkangiri district of Odisha has been the subject of various academic studies and research, covering aspects such as social organization, cultural practices, economic activities, and religious beliefs. This literature review categorizes the existing research into four main sections: Social, Cultural, Economic, and Religious.

1) *Social Aspects:* Research on the social organization of the Didayi community has often highlighted their clan-based structure and the importance of kinship ties. The work of Dambru Sisa (2020) in *The Didayi: Tribe's Cultural Contours and Heritage* provides a comprehensive overview of the Didayi's social structure, focusing on the roles and responsibilities within their clans and the influence of traditional leaders like the Pujari and Dishari. Sisa's work also emphasizes the role of the clan system in regulating social behavior, marriage norms, and conflict resolution within the community.

   Further studies by scholars like Elwin (1955) have documented the Didayi's resistance to social changes brought about by external influences, including their interactions with neighbouring tribes and the mainstream society. These studies suggest that the Didayi community has maintained a strong sense of identity and cohesion, despite the pressures of modernization and government interventions.
2) *Cultural Aspects:* Cultural studies of the Didayi tribe have focused on their rituals, festivals, and language. The use of the native Austroasiatic language, Ganta Sa, in rituals and oral traditions has been highlighted by various anthropologists, including Sahoo (1985), who explored the linguistic uniqueness of the Didayi community.

Sahoo's work underscores the significance of language in preserving the tribe's cultural heritage and the challenges faced in its transmission to younger generations due to the lack of a written script.

Additionally, field studies conducted by Singh (2002) have documented the Didayi's cultural practices, including their traditional music, dance, and art forms. Singh's research shows how these cultural expressions are closely tied to their social and religious life, serving as a means of both community bonding and spiritual expression.

3) *Political Aspects:* Mishra (2021) highlights the increasing political awareness and participation among the Didayi community, driven by issues like land rights, resource access, and cultural preservation. This political mobilization has been supported by NGOs and tribal associations, enabling the Didayi to engage more actively with district and state-level political processes and form alliances with other tribal groups to advocate for their rights.

   Behera (2002) provides insights into the traditional political structures of the Didayi, where the village headman, or *Mukhia*, plays a central role in maintaining order and representing the village. The *Mukhia*, often a hereditary position, is supported by a council of elders who ensure that decisions align with the community's cultural and social frameworks, preserving traditional customs in governance.

4) *Economic Aspects:* Economic studies on the Didayi community have primarily focused on their subsistence economy, which is heavily reliant on agriculture, hunting, and forest-based activities. The work of Mishra (1998) on the economic practices of tribal communities in Odisha provides insights into the Didayi's reliance on shifting cultivation (slash-and-burn agriculture), which has traditionally been their primary mode of subsistence. Mishra also discusses the impact of government policies, such as the introduction of micro-projects aimed at improving agricultural productivity and reducing dependence on forest resources.

   Another significant contribution is from Das (2010), who explored the effects of economic development initiatives on the Didayi community. Das argues that while some government interventions have improved access to basic amenities, they have also disrupted traditional economic practices, leading to a gradual erosion of the Didayi's self-sustaining economy.

5) *Religious Aspects:* The religious beliefs and practices of the Didayi tribe have been the focus of several ethnographic studies. Notably, the work of Mohanty (1995) provides a detailed account of the Didayi's religious system, including their worship of ancestral spirits and natural deities like Biru-Vairabi. Mohanty highlights the central role of the Dishari (medicine man) in conducting rituals and the importance of maintaining harmony with the natural world, which is seen as essential for the well-being of the community.

Further exploration by Patnaik (2001) examines the impact of external religious influences on the Didayi's traditional beliefs. Patnaik's study discusses the resistance of the Didayi community to religious conversion, attributing it to their deep-rooted belief in their indigenous deities and the social ostracism faced by those who abandon traditional practices.

VI. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Didayi tribe, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG), has a rich and complex socio-cultural history that is deeply rooted in the rugged landscapes of Malkangiri district, Odisha. The tribe's origins trace back to the Austroasiatic linguistic family, and their cultural practices have evolved over centuries, shaped by their close connection with nature and their environment.[6] Traditionally, the Didayi lived in small, isolated communities within the dense forests and hilly terrains, where they developed a unique way of life centered around subsistence agriculture, hunting, and gathering. Their social organization is clan-based, with each clan adhering to specific totemic beliefs and taboos that govern their interactions with the natural world, including the animals, birds, and insects that are considered sacred. The Didayi have a rich oral tradition, with myths, legends, and folklore passed down through generations, encapsulating their worldview and cosmology. Rituals and ceremonies, often led by community elders or religious leaders such as the Pujari and Dishari, play a crucial role in maintaining social cohesion and reinforcing cultural values. Over time, the Didayi have resisted significant external influences, including attempts at religious conversion and integration into the mainstream economy, preferring to maintain their traditional practices and beliefs. However, the pressures of modernity, including the expansion of state governance, infrastructure development, and economic changes, have begun to impact their way of life, leading to a gradual transformation in their socio-cultural practices. Despite these challenges, the Didayi continue to uphold many of their ancestral customs, making their socio-cultural life a vital area of study for understanding the resilience and adaptation of indigenous cultures in the face of change.[8]

VII. ORIGINS AND SETTLEMENT

The origins of the Didayi tribe, one of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in India, are steeped in the ancient history of the Austroasiatic linguistic family, to which they belong.

The Didayi have long been inhabitants of the hilly and forested regions of Malkangiri district in Odisha, a location that has played a pivotal role in shaping their socio-cultural life. Their settlement in this remote and rugged terrain has allowed them to develop a distinct identity, closely intertwined with the natural environment. The Didayi's choice of settlement is characterized by small, isolated villages, often located in the dense forests and along the hilly slopes of Malkangiri. These settlements are strategically positioned to support their subsistence lifestyle, which includes shifting agriculture, hunting, and gathering. The tribe's deep connection with their land is evident in their totemic beliefs, which assign spiritual significance to various elements of nature, including animals, birds, and insects. This connection to the land is not just a matter of survival but is also central to their cultural practices and social organization. Historically, the isolation provided by their geographical location has allowed the Didayi to maintain their traditional way of life with minimal external influence. This isolation has also contributed to the preservation of their language, rituals, and social customs, which have been passed down through generations. However, the settlement patterns of the Didayi have also made them vulnerable to challenges, such as limited access to modern amenities and exposure to external socio-economic changes. As a result, while the Didayi have managed to retain much of their cultural heritage, their settlement patterns continue to play a crucial role in both the preservation and transformation of their socio-cultural life in the face of ongoing changes in the region.[9]

VIII. CLASSIFICATION AS PVTG

The Didayi tribe, residing in the remote Malkangiri district of Odisha, has been classified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) by the Government of India. This classification is significant as it recognizes the Didayi's unique socio-cultural life, which is marked by vulnerability due to their small population, relative isolation, and socio-economic challenges. The criteria for PVTG classification include factors such as pre-agricultural level of technology, stagnant or declining population growth, extremely low literacy levels, and a subsistence economy characteristic that are prevalent among the Didayi.[10] The Didayi's classification as a PVTG underscores the need for targeted interventions to preserve their cultural heritage while addressing their socio-economic needs. This group has traditionally relied on subsistence agriculture, hunting, and gathering, with limited exposure to mainstream economic activities. Their totemic beliefs, clan-based social structure, and ritualistic practices are integral to their identity but also make them particularly vulnerable to external influences and changes. As a PVTG, the Didayi are entitled to special protection and support from the government, aimed at improving their living conditions, enhancing their access to education and healthcare, and ensuring the sustainability of their traditional practices. However, the classification also highlights the delicate balance between preserving the Didayi's socio-cultural life and integrating them into the broader socio-economic framework of the region. Understanding the implications of this classification is essential for developing policies that respect the Didayi's cultural identity while promoting their well-being and development.

IX. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The social structure of the Didayi tribe, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) in Malkangiri district, Odisha, is deeply rooted in their traditional clan-based organization. The Didayi community is divided into several clans, each with its own totemic symbol and associated taboos, which play a crucial role in governing the social and cultural interactions within the tribe. These clans form the foundation of the Didayi social system, determining marriage alliances, social responsibilities, and communal rituals.[10] The clan structure is inherently hierarchical, with leadership roles often held by elder members who command respect and authority in decision-making processes. Social cohesion is further reinforced through a network of kinship ties, where the extended family plays a significant role in providing support and maintaining cultural continuity. The Didayi also have specific roles designated for community leaders, such as the Pujari (priest) and Dishari (medicine man), who are responsible for conducting religious rituals and mediating disputes. This intricate social structure, based on age-old traditions, ensures the continuity of the Didayi's cultural practices and the preservation of their identity amidst external influences and socio-economic changes.[11]

X. CLAN SYSTEM AND KINSHIP

The clan system and kinship structure of the Didayi tribe, residing in the Malkangiri district of Odisha, form the backbone of their socio-cultural life. The Didayi tribe is organized into distinct clans, each of which is associated with specific totemic symbols, such as animals, birds, or insects, that are considered sacred and are integral to the tribe's identity.

These totems not only define the clan's identity but also establish certain taboos and rules that govern the behaviour and interactions of clan members, particularly regarding marriage, hunting, and other cultural practices. Kinship among the Didayi is intricately linked to their clan system, with clan membership determining social relationships, responsibilities, and inheritance.[12]

The tribe practices exogamy, meaning that individuals are required to marry outside their clan, which helps to maintain social harmony and strengthen ties between different clans within the community. Marriage alliances are carefully arranged, often with the involvement of elders, to ensure adherence to these traditional rules. The extended family, or kin group, plays a central role in the social life of the Didayi, providing a strong support network that is crucial for both economic and emotional well-being. Kinship ties extend beyond the immediate family to include distant relatives, creating a wide network of social obligations and connections that bind the community together. This kinship network is also vital in maintaining the transmission of cultural knowledge, rituals, and practices from one generation to the next, ensuring the continuity of the Didayi's rich cultural heritage. The clan system and kinship structure of the Didayi not only preserve their traditional way of life but also adapt to changing circumstances, helping the tribe navigate the challenges of modernity while maintaining their unique cultural identity.

XI. MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

The marriage customs of the Didayi tribe, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) in Malkangiri district, Odisha, are a reflection of their deep-rooted cultural values, social structure, and totemic beliefs. Marriage is considered a vital institution in Didayi society, not only as a union between two individuals but also as a means of strengthening clan ties and maintaining social harmony within the community.[13]

One of the central aspects of Didayi marriage customs is the practice of exogamy, where individuals are required to marry outside their own clan. This practice is rooted in their totemic beliefs, which prohibit marriages within the same clan to avoid violating sacred taboos associated with their totemic animals, birds, or insects. Exogamy ensures that clans remain interconnected through marriage alliances, fostering a sense of unity and cooperation among different clans. The process of arranging a marriage in the Didayi community is a communal affair, often involving the extended families of both the bride and groom. Elders from both families play a significant role in negotiating the terms of the marriage, including the bride price, which is a customary payment made by the groom's family to the bride's family. The bride price is not just a financial transaction but a symbol of respect and recognition of the bride's value in her new family. The Didayi marriage ceremony is a multi-day event filled with rituals, music, dance, and feasting.[15] The ceremony is conducted by the Pujari (priest), who performs the necessary rituals to bless the union. These rituals often involve offerings to the clan totems and prayers for the couple's prosperity and fertility. The Dishari (medicine man) may also be involved, providing spiritual guidance and ensuring that the marriage is conducted in accordance with traditional customs. A unique feature of Didayi marriage customs is the emphasis on community participation. The entire village often comes together to celebrate the marriage, with communal feasts and traditional dances that can last for several days. These celebrations reinforce the social bonds within the community and provide an opportunity for the transmission of cultural values to the younger generation. After the marriage, the bride typically moves to the groom's village, where she becomes an integral part of his family and clan. However, she maintains close ties with her natal family, and the relationship between the two families continues to be important, particularly in times of need. Despite the pressures of modernization and external influences, the Didayi tribe has largely retained their traditional marriage customs. These customs are not only central to the social structure of the tribe but also play a crucial role in preserving the Didayi's cultural identity and ensuring the continuity of their unique way of life.[16]

XII. LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The leadership and governance structure of the Didayi tribe, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) in Malkangiri district, Odisha, is deeply embedded in their traditional socio-cultural life, reflecting a system that is both communal and hierarchical. The Didayi community is governed by a council of elders, were age and experience command respect and authority.[17] The headman, often the eldest or most respected male member of the tribe, plays a pivotal role in decision-making processes, guiding the community in matters related to social conduct, conflict resolution, and the management of communal resources. His leadership is not autocratic but rather consultative, with the headman seeking the counsel of other elders and influential members of the community, including the Pujari (priest) and the Dishari (medicine man). The Pujari and Dishari hold significant positions within the governance structure, primarily overseeing religious and spiritual matters. The Pujari is responsible for conducting rituals and ceremonies, ensuring the tribe's spiritual well-being, while the Dishari, who is often a healer and diviner, mediates between the spiritual world and the community, offering guidance on health, agricultural success, and other vital concerns.

Together, these leaders work to maintain social order and reinforce the cultural norms and values that are central to the Didayi way of life. In addition to their traditional governance system, the Didayi have increasingly interacted with external political structures due to the influence of state governance and development programs.

While they have adopted certain aspects of modern governance, such as engaging with local panchayats (village councils), the Didayi continue to rely heavily on their traditional leadership to manage internal affairs and preserve their cultural identity. This dual system of governance allows the Didayi to navigate the complexities of modernity while maintaining the integrity of their traditional social structure.

XIII. CULTURAL PRACTICES

The cultural practices of the Didayi tribe, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) in Malkangiri district, Odisha, are deeply intertwined with their environment and reflect their rich heritage and traditional beliefs. Central to their cultural identity are the rituals and ceremonies that mark significant life events, agricultural cycles, and religious observances. The Didayi celebrate various festivals that are closely linked to nature, such as the harvest festival, which is a time of communal feasting, dancing, and singing. These festivals are not only occasions for social bonding but also serve to reinforce the tribe's connection to their land and the natural world. Totemic beliefs play a crucial role in Didayi cultural practices, with each clan venerating a specific animal, bird, or insect that they believe to be their ancestor or protector. These totems are considered sacred, and there are strict taboos against harming or killing them. The clan's totemic symbol is also central to their rituals, with offerings and prayers made to ensure the well-being of the clan and its members.[17] The Didayi's religious practices are led by the Pujari (priest) and the Dishari (medicine man), who are responsible for conducting rituals, healing, and communicating with the spiritual world. These rituals often involve the recitation of mantras in the tribe's native language, 'Ganta Sa,' which has been preserved orally over generations. The rituals are performed to seek blessings for good health, bountiful harvests, and protection from evil spirits. Music, dance, and oral storytelling are integral to Didayi cultural life. The tribe's traditional songs and dances are performed during festivals and ceremonies, and they often depict stories from their mythology, historical events, or moral lessons. These performances are not just forms of entertainment but are also vital means of preserving and transmitting the tribe's cultural knowledge and values. In recent years, while the Didayi have been exposed to external influences, they have managed to retain much of their cultural heritage. However, the tribe is facing challenges in preserving these practices amidst the pressures of modernization and economic change. Despite these challenges, the cultural practices of the Didayi continue to be a cornerstone of their identity, providing them with a sense of continuity and belonging.

XIV. FESTIVALS AND RITUALS

The festivals and rituals of the Didayi tribe, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) in Malkangiri district, Odisha, are vibrant expressions of their cultural identity and deeply rooted in their connection to nature and the spiritual world. These events are central to the Didayi's socio-cultural life, serving as opportunities for communal bonding, cultural expression, and the reaffirmation of their traditional beliefs.

One of the most significant festivals celebrated by the Didayi is the harvest festival, which marks the end of the agricultural cycle. This festival is a time of great joy and communal participation, where the entire community comes together to celebrate the abundance of the harvest. The festivities include traditional dancing, singing, and feasting, with offerings made to the deities to express gratitude for the successful harvest and to seek blessings for the coming year. The festival also involves the performance of rituals led by the Pujari (priest) and the Dishari (medicine man), who play crucial roles in maintaining the spiritual well-being of the community. Rituals in the Didayi community are closely tied to their totemic beliefs and the natural world. Each clan has its own set of rituals, often centered around the veneration of their totemic animal, bird, or insect. These rituals are conducted to seek protection and blessings from the totem, with offerings and prayers made to ensure the prosperity and health of the clan. The rituals are performed using the tribe's native language, 'Ganta Sa,' which is preserved orally and passed down through generations. The Didayi also observe various life-cycle rituals, such as birth, marriage, and death ceremonies, which are essential in marking the transitions within the community. These rituals are rich in symbolism and involve elaborate ceremonies, where the Pujari and Dishari play leading roles. For instance, marriage ceremonies are significant events, marked by rituals that ensure the couple's future prosperity and adherence to the cultural norms of the tribe, such as exogamy, where individuals marry outside their clan. In addition to these major festivals and rituals, the Didayi also conduct smaller, community-specific ceremonies that are tied to seasonal changes, hunting success, or other significant events in their daily lives. These rituals are often simple but deeply meaningful, reinforcing the tribe's connection to their environment and their ancestors.

Overall, the festivals and rituals of the Didayi tribe are vital to their cultural continuity, providing a framework for social cohesion and the transmission of their rich cultural heritage to future generations.

©IJRASET: All Rights are Reserved | SJ Impact Factor 7.538 | ISRA Journal Impact Factor 7.894 |

Despite the challenges posed by modernization, these traditions remain central to the Didayi's identity, reflecting their enduring connection to their land, community, and spiritual beliefs.[19]

XV. AGRICULTURAL FESTIVALS AND RITUALS

The Didayi tribe's cultural and religious life is deeply intertwined with their agricultural practices and oral traditions, reflecting their connection to the land and their ancestral heritage. The agricultural cycle is marked by festivals and rituals, where the tribe seeks blessings from deities and ancestors before sowing, and celebrates the harvest season with communal feasting, dancing, and offerings to spirits. These rituals not only ensure crop prosperity but also reinforce the tribe's cultural identity. Oral traditions, including folktales, myths, songs, and proverbs, play a central role in preserving the Didayi's cultural heritage. Folktales and myths often center on totemic beliefs, ancestral heroes, and the creation of the world, educating the younger generation about the tribe's values and history. Songs, integral to religious ceremonies and agricultural cycles, are passed down orally and are often accompanied by traditional music and dance. Proverbs and sayings in the Didayi language encapsulate the tribe's wisdom, reflecting their experiences with nature and social interactions, and offering moral guidance for harmonious living within the community and environment. These cultural expressions, rooted in oral tradition, ensure the continuity and dynamism of the Didayi's cultural practices.

XVI. BIRTH AND DEATH RITES

The birth and death rites of the Didayi tribe, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) in Malkangiri district, Odisha, are profound rituals that embody their spiritual beliefs and cultural values, reinforcing social bonds and ancestral connections. Birth rites involve rituals invoking totemic spirits for the newborn's protection, with the naming ceremony conducted by a Pujari or Dishari, reflecting the tribe's cultural heritage. Protection from evil spirits and community support for the mother and child are crucial during the postpartum period. Death is viewed as a transition to the spiritual world, with meticulous rites ensuring a peaceful passage for the deceased's spirit, led by the Pujari or Dishari. The body is buried following clan traditions, and a post-death purification ceremony restores social order, concluding with a period of mourning and a final celebration of the deceased's life. These rites, despite external influences, remain central to the Didayi's cultural identity and continuity.and way of life.

XVII. ECONOMIC LIFE

The economic life of the Didayi tribe, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) in Malkangiri district, Odisha, is intricately linked to their natural environment and traditional practices, with subsistence-based agriculture, foraging, and animal husbandry at its core. Shifting cultivation, where land is cleared and used for farming before being left to regenerate, forms the backbone of their agricultural activities, with crops like millets, pulses, maize, and rice sustaining the community. Foraging in the surrounding forests provides essential food items, medicinal plants, and materials for daily use, while animal husbandry offers milk, meat, eggs, and livestock for social and religious ceremonies. Although hunting has declined due to legal restrictions, it remains a part of their cultural identity, linked to totemic beliefs and traditional taboos. The Didayi also engage in trade and barter within their community and with neighboring groups, exchanging surplus produce and handcrafted items for goods like salt, clothing, and tools. Despite increasing exposure to the cash economy through government programs and the sale of forest products, the Didayi's economic activities remain deeply rooted in their cultural heritage, sustaining their community in the face of modern challenges.[19]

XVIII. CHALLENGES AND PRESERVATION EFFORTS

The Didayi tribe, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) in Malkangiri district, Odisha, faces several challenges in preserving their socio-cultural life amid a rapidly changing socio-economic and environmental landscape. These challenges impact their traditional practices, cultural identity, and overall way of life. However, various preservation efforts are being made to address these issues and safeguard the tribe's heritage.

1) *Environmental Degradation:* The Didayi tribe's traditional livelihood practices, such as shifting cultivation and foraging, are increasingly threatened by environmental degradation. Deforestation, land conversion, and climate change are depleting the natural resources on which the Didayi depend for their agriculture and foraging. This not only affects their food security but also undermines their traditional ecological knowledge and practices.
2) *Loss of Traditional Knowledge:* As younger generations increasingly pursue formal education and migrate to urban areas for employment opportunities, there is a risk of losing traditional knowledge and skills.

The transmission of cultural practices, such as craftsmanship, rituals, and oral traditions, relies heavily on oral instruction and practice, making it vulnerable to generational gaps and cultural dilution.

3) *Educational Programs:* Integrating Didayi language and cultural studies into educational programs is essential for preserving their heritage. Efforts are being made to include Ganta Sa and traditional knowledge in local schools and community learning centers. This approach not only promotes the use of the Didayi language but also fosters a sense of cultural pride and identity among the younger generation.
4) *Health and Social Issues:* The Didayi tribe faces health challenges, including inadequate access to healthcare and sanitation. Poor health conditions can impact their ability to engage in traditional practices and ceremonies. Social issues, such as poverty and lack of infrastructure, further compound these challenges, affecting the tribe's overall well-being and cultural continuity.
5) *Modernization and External Influences:* The encroachment of modern agricultural practices and external economic pressures are altering the Didayi's traditional ways of life. The introduction of cash crops and industrial farming methods has led to changes in land use, which impact traditional agricultural practices and the tribe's self-sufficiency. Additionally, exposure to mainstream culture and language, including the dominance of regional languages like Odia, poses a risk to the preservation of the Didayi language and oral traditions.

XIX. FINDINGS

The study on the socio-cultural life of the Didayi community in the Malkangiri district of Odisha reveals a rich tapestry of traditions, rituals, and practices deeply rooted in their natural environment and ancestral heritage. The Didayi tribe, recognized as one of India's Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), has maintained a distinct cultural identity despite external influences and pressures. The study found that the Didayi's social structure is intricately linked to their totemic beliefs, with the clan system playing a crucial role in governing social interactions, marriage practices, and community leadership. Rituals associated with birth, death, and agriculture are central to the Didayi's cultural life, serving to reinforce social bonds and connect the community with their deities and ancestors.

The research also highlights the resilience of the Didayi's oral traditions, which encompass folktales, myths, songs, and proverbs. These traditions not only preserve the tribe's cultural heritage but also play a vital role in educating younger generations about the tribe's values, history, and moral codes. However, the study notes that external influences, such as modernization, government policies, and economic development, are gradually impacting the Didayi's traditional way of life. Changes in language use, religious practices, and art forms were observed, reflecting the community's adaptation to new circumstances. Despite these changes, the Didayi have shown a strong commitment to preserving their cultural identity, as evidenced by the continued practice of key rituals and the importance placed on traditional knowledge.

XX. CONCLUSION

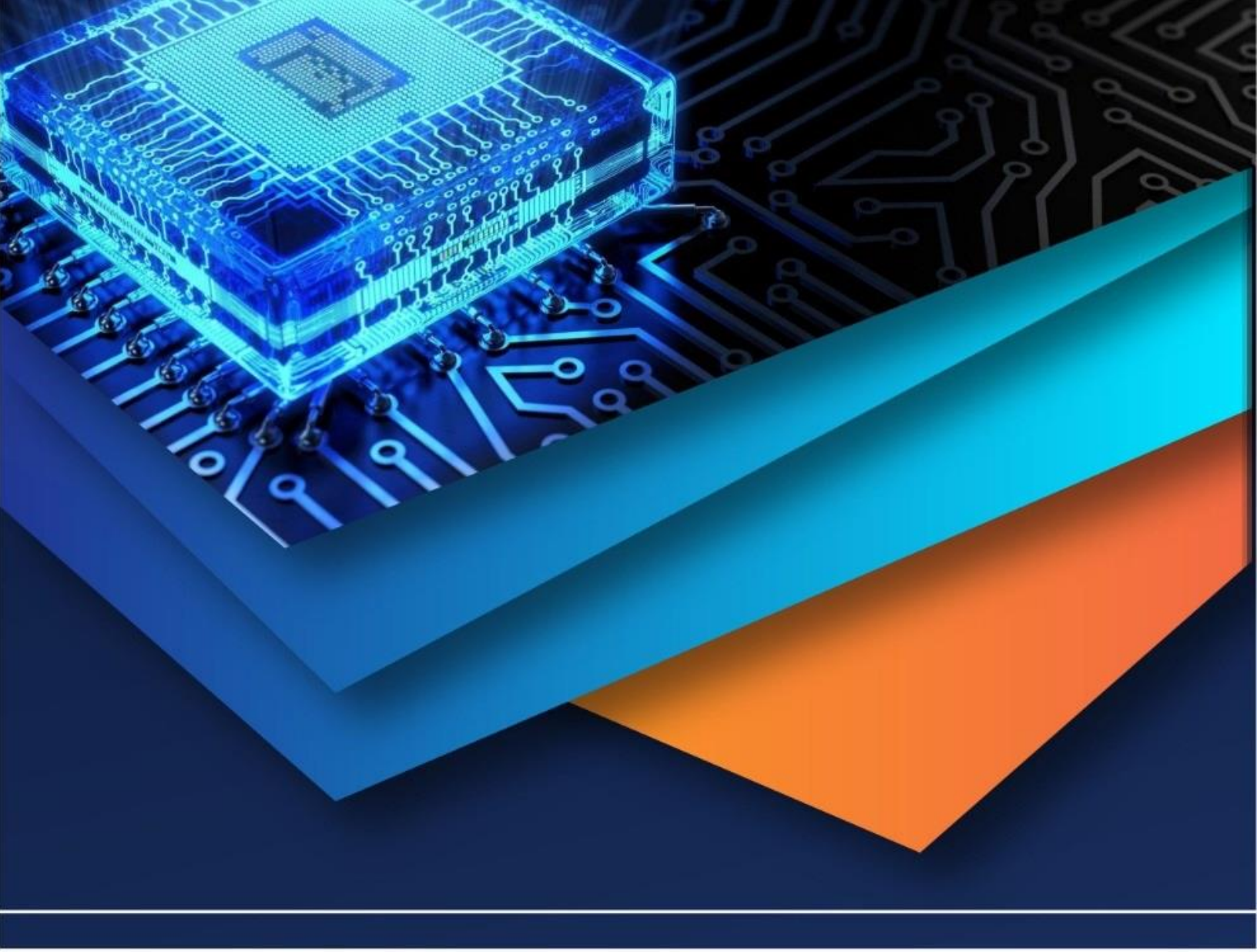
The findings of this study underscore the complexity of the Didayi community's socio-cultural life, characterized by a delicate balance between tradition and adaptation. While the Didayi have successfully retained many aspects of their cultural heritage, they face significant challenges in the face of rapid socio-economic changes and external pressures. The study concludes that the Didayi's resilience is rooted in their deep connection to their land, ancestors, and traditional practices, which have provided a strong foundation for maintaining social cohesion and cultural identity. However, the increasing influence of modernization and economic development necessitates a nuanced approach to supporting the Didayi community. There is a critical need for policies and initiatives that respect and preserve the Didayi's cultural heritage while enabling them to navigate and thrive in a modernizing world. The study emphasizes the importance of community-led efforts and the involvement of the Didayi in decision-making processes that affect their cultural and socio-economic future.

REFERENCES

[1] Didayi people: Revision history - Wikipedia
[2] Sisa, D., (2020). The Didayi Tribe's Cultural Contours and Heritage. Bilaspur: Evincepub Publishing, p. 1.
[3] Mohanti, K.K., (2009). Didayi. Bhubaneswar: Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute CRPF Square, p. 4.
[4] Gudia, J. & Mohapatra, R., (2023). "Tribal Economic Management of the People of Didayi Tribe of Malkangiri District of Odisha in India". In Innovations. Vol. 73, pp. 1657-1658.
[5] Gudia, J, (2022). Socio-cultural Development of Didayi tribe in Odisha: A case study on Malkangiri district. Bhubaneswar: Kalinga Institute of Social Science, p. 2. (Unpublished)

[6] COATS (2001). In Search of a Strategy to Build a Field Model to Ensure people's Participation for Sustainable Development: case study of the Didayi (A Primitive Tribal Group of Malkangiri district of Odisha). Koraput: COAST Koraput, p. 25.
[7] Sisa, D., (2020). The Didayi Tribes Cultural Contours and Heritage. Bilaspur: Evincepub Publishing, p. 49.
[8] Mohapatra, B., (2011). Development of a Primitive Tribe. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company Pvt. Ltd., p. 1.
[9] Pradhan, G., (2014). "Status of Didayi Women of Malkangiri District of Odisha". In Adivasi. Bhubaneswar: Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute, pp. 78-83.
[10] Nayak, S., (2016). "Socio-cultural Uniqueness of Odishan Didayi Tribe". In International Journal of Social Research. Vol. 5 (4), pp. 428-424.
[11] Mohanati, K. K., (2009). Didayi. Bhubaneswar: Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute, p. 4.
[12] Mishra, K. K., (2016). The Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups in India. Bhubaneswar: Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute, p. 20.
[13] COATS, (2002). In Search of a Strategy to Build a Field Model to Ensure People's Participation for Sustainable Development: Case Study of the Didayi (A Primitive Tribal Group of Malkangiri District of Orissa). Unpublished Report of the Planning Commission sponsored study. p.233.
[14] Ota, A. B. & Mohanty, S. C., (2015). Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) of Odisha. Vol. 1. Bhubaneswar: Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute, p. 233.
[15] Sisa, D., (2020). The Didayi: Cultural Contours and Heritage. Bilashpur: Evincepub Publishing, 118.
[16] Mahapatra, B., (2004). Development of a Primitive Tribe. Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, p. 108.
[17] Mohanti, K. K., (2009). Didayi. Bhubaneswar: Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute, pp. 35-45.
[18] Pradhan[2], G., (2015). "Status of Didayi Women of Malkangiri District of Odisha". In Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) of Odisha. Ota, A. B. & Mohanty, S. C. (Eds.). Vol. I, Bhubaneswar: Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute, p. 247.
[19] Gudia, J., & Mohapatra, R., (2023). "Tribal Economic Management of the people of Didayi Tribe of Malkangiri District of Odisha in India". In Innovations. Vol. 73, pp. 1657-1670.

©IJRASET: All Rights are Reserved | SJ Impact Factor 7.538 | ISRA Journal Impact Factor 7.894 |



10.22214/IJRASET

45.98

IMPACT FACTOR: 7.129

IMPACT FACTOR: 7.429

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH

IN APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Call : 08813907089 (24*7 Support on Whatsapp)