

Tribal Economic Management of the People of Didayi Tribe of Malkangiri District of Odisha in India

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Abstract: *The purpose of the article is to focus on economic management of the people of Didayi tribe of Malkangiri district of Odisha in Eastern India. India is a country whose geographical boundaries are different from other countries. Similar to other states of India, Odisha has a variety of tribal communities. Of the state's total population, 22.84 percent are members of 62 tribal groups that the government of Odisha has identified. Out of these, 13 tribal groups are identified as undeveloped tribes which the Government of India has been promoting through various agencies by identifying these tribal communities as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). Didayis is one of the PVTGs found in Malkangiri district of Odisha. They speak a special language called 'Gahtasa' to communicate. Its population as per 2011 census is 8000 in the district alone, from the Kondakameru mountain range to the Godavari river valleys at an altitude of 2000-3500 feet above sea level. They are mostly found in 39 villages of Khairaput, Korukonda and Chitrakonda blocks. The geographical boundaries inhabited by the Didayi tribe are divided into three regions, namely, the plains, the hills and the isolated land, which have different lifestyles. They typically rely on traditional agriculture, animal husbandry, gathering forest products, hunting, and fishing to make a living. Due to the lack of transportation facilities where they live, they often focus on different types of traditional agriculture. It is an interesting study, for which present scholars/authors have undertaken it for scholarly work. Source materials collected from both the primary as well as secondary data have been utilised by the scholars.*

Key words: Tribal, Economic, Management, Didayi, Malkangiri, Odisha, India

I. Introduction

The economic management of Didayi tribe is a fascinating aspect of the tribal economy of Odisha in Eastern India. The country of India is a secular state and people from all types of tribes live here. There is 6.8% of the nation's population, as per the 2011 census, are tribal people (Mohanti, 2009, p. 3). Tribal groups can settle under different conditions within the geographical boundaries of India. Although more than 700 types of tribes in the country have been identified by the government, many tribes or tribal groups are likely to remain hidden. Similarly, Odisha is a tribal-dominated state, with 22.84 of percent the state's total population identified as tribal. Here, 62 types of tribes are recognized by the government, while 13 tribes have been giving special attention for all-round development of the communities as PVTGs. Tribes are slightly different from other classes of people.

While they have their own language, food, drink, policy, festivals, ornaments, etc., they love to settle within a specific geographical area.

Identity is the basic means of identifying a person so that we can easily recognize him. In the same way, to identify primitive people, we can only know them through their clothing, movement, food, drink, festivals, and geographical boundaries. The Didayi constitutes one of the 62 Scheduled Tribe communities living in the Malkanagiri district of Odisha. One of the 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) is the Didayi community. The Proto-Australoid racial family includes the Didayi. They speak '*Gahtasaa*' language, which has been included under the Austroasiatic language family, but they have no written alphabets or scripts (Ota, Mohanty & Mohanty, 2018, pp. 167-169). This tribe has own identity, like language and clothes, which they call their clothes as '*Kisalo*'. They use aluminum as jewelry. Aluminum round thick *khadu* is worn as an ornament on hands, legs and neck. Similarly, if we study their religious, they worship nature. *Hmnakonda* (big hill), *Danhakonda* (small hill) are their protectors. *Budaabhairo* (Bhairab) is their main God and *Bhairabi* is Goddess. Didayis live in eastern part of Malkanagiri district from foot hill of Kondakameru and Godabari river banks. They basically settled in Khairaput, Korukonda and Chitrakonda blocks of the Malkanagiri district.

Between 17° 45' and 18° 40' south latitude and 81° 10' to 82° 00' east longitude is where the Malkanagiri district is situated (Taradatt, 2015, p.4). This district is surrounded by greenery within the boundary of 5791 square kilometers. This district is being protected by some neighboring districts and states. Those districts and states are namely Koraput district of Odisha to the east of the district, Vishakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh state and Godavari river to the east, Bastar and Sukma districts of Chhattisgarh state to the north (Mohanti, Mohapatra & Samal, 2021, p. 43). The general topography of the region is characterized by large man-made river banks and watercourses in broken mountains. With peaks and hills, the elevation varies from 600 meters on the western side to 1200 meters on the eastern side. The nature of the district is capable of making the district green due to sandy soil and various types of agricultural soil. The district's varied height has an impact on the climate in several areas. In December and May, this location's minimum temperature is 11.2°C and its highest temperature is 44°C (Bell, 1945, p. 18). In particular, the monsoon starts from June-July and the humidity is usually high in the months of August and October. Every year, this area receives roughly 1500 mm of rain. The south-west monsoon, which occurs between July and September, brings the majority of the year's precipitation to the region. Evergreen, riverine, humid climate and dry deciduous woods make up the region's vegetation.

II. Methodology

In the current article, both primary and secondary sources were utilised. Preliminary data are collected from a variety of original sources, Odia newspapers, Survey reports, unpublished report, from the account of the respondent's hearings through interview methods during the field survey of practical observational tests. Data collection techniques employed by the present authors include both qualitative and quantitative approaches. such as field research, in-person interviews, timetables, and photos. For the socio-cultural development of the Didayi tribe, a thorough survey has been carried out with extensive data collection. He visited the area during the study and spoke with locals to hold in-depth conversations, private conversations, family conversations, discussions with the villages, and discussions with Didayi Development Agency (DDA) officers. The audio and video recordings have been collected in detail in consultation with the general population of the Didayi tribe areas, such as the plains, the hilly areas and the breakaway regions.

Secondary source collection also includes library visits, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, KISS library, Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology, KIIT National library, State Tribal Museum of Odisha, Adibasi Mela, State Museum, Ravenshaw university library, Utkal university library, Harekrushna Mahatab library etc. and some information also has collected from internet. The following steps have been taken in the preparation of the proposed research work. After collecting all the data, most of the data collected has been avoided to ensure that the work is true. All the information is categorized according to the requirements and facilities of this article. All the information collected has verified and the required information has used.

III. Discussion & Result Analysis

3. Economic life of the Didayis of Malkanagiri District

Odisha is where, tribal economies can be divided into two broad categories, namely, production-use economy and product-distribution economy. The economy that produces producers that are usable produces as needed. On the other hand, the economy, which is considered to be marketable, generates more money. The economy is divided into five parts by the tribal of Odisha, namely (i) hunting, (ii) food collection, (iii) animal and poultry farming, (iv) agriculture, and (v) technical (Vidyarthi & Rai, 1976, p. 96). In the eastern part of the state of Odisha, the indigenous economy in the south of the state depends on agriculture. Most of the area is under-cultivated and stable. The people of Bonda, Didayi, Parenga, Jhodia, Koya etc., who live under the Khiraput and Korukonda and Chitrakonda blocks of Malkanagiri district, cultivate in the plains as well as in the hilly areas. The population of the region is divided into three parts. E.g., (i) flat/plain, (ii) hilly, and (iii) isolated.

The Didayi tribe of Malkanagiri District, Odisha, exhibits distinct economic aspects that are shaped by their traditional practices, available resources, and the socio-cultural context in which they reside. Here are some key economic aspects of the Didayi tribe: Agriculture forms the backbone of the Didayi tribe's economy. They practice subsistence farming, primarily cultivating crops like rice, millets, pulses, and vegetables. Traditional farming techniques, such as shifting cultivation (also known as slash-and-burn agriculture), are often employed by the tribe. The community relies on the fertility of the forested land, using organic methods and locally available resources for cultivation. The Didayi tribe has a deep connection with the forest and derives various economic benefits from it. Non-timber forest produce (NTFP) collection is a significant aspect of their livelihoods (Sisa, 2020, p. 37). They gather items like bamboo, honey, medicinal plants, tubers, and wild fruits, which are either consumed or sold. They possess a rich traditional knowledge of forest resources, including sustainable harvesting practices and the use of medicinal plants. Being located near rivers and water bodies, fishing is another important economic activity for the Didayi tribe. They engage in traditional fishing methods, using nets, traps, and indigenous tools. Hunting, though restricted now due to legal and conservation reasons, was once practiced by the tribe for both subsistence and trade purposes. It played a role in their economic sustenance and cultural practices. Historically, barter systems played a significant role in the economic exchanges of the Didayi tribe. They would trade surplus agricultural produce, forest resources, and handicrafts with neighboring tribes or communities for goods they required. Bartering facilitated social bonds and interdependence among tribes and ensuring the availability of diverse products. The Didayi tribe possesses traditional skills in making various handicrafts and artistic items. They create beautiful bamboo crafts, pottery, basketry, weaving, and traditional jewelry (Mohanti & Mohapatra, 2014, p. 54). These handicrafts not only serve as a source of income but also showcase their cultural heritage and artistic prowess.

Since man is a social being, he needs the food of society to survive. Collecting human food is a daily task. This has been classified as a primary activity. In human life, he goes through four stages. He collects food, prey, raise animals and farms to satisfy his hunger. That's why the collection of food for any group is considered a basic necessity. Karl Marx's 'Economic Deterministic Theory of Social Change' points out that the socio-economic situation is an important factor for the change of social institution and social causes (Mohapatra, 2004, p. 115). One of the wild, primitive tribes in Odisha's Malkangiri district is the Didayi. They loved to live in nature and feed their family with traditional farming, animal and bird husbandry, fishing, hunting, and gathering some forest products.

3.1 Socio-economy life of Didayi

Agriculture is the main and basic economy of the Didayis. The land in the hills and plains is used for farming. Those who live on the hills cultivate relocation, while the Didayis, who live in the plains, cultivate steadily. The people of this tribe celebrate a kind of festival before the start of the year, which they call '*Ingir Chang Pande*' (Sisa, 2020, p. 78). Everyone participates in this festival. During the festival, village priests and people gather around 3 pm to fetch a small tree. When they went to fetch the tree, believed that if any animal made sound, it would be a good year for farming. Not participating in the puja is against the traditions of the Didayi tribe, they say.

Didayis have a variety of crops. The people of the hills *Mandia, Biri, Kolatha, Rasi* are the main crops, the people of the breakaway region are the turmeric and the rice is the main crop while the people of the plains are the main crops of paddy, groundnut, zodiac sign, *Kaandula, Alasi* etc.

3.2 Landholding Status

Before India become independent, the lands of the Didayi were under King Jeypore. In the area where the Didayis lived, the king of Jeypore was the owner of the land. The Didayis paid some of their crops to the king as taxes. The king divided the department at various levels to collect taxes. That tradition has been around for years. The area where the Didayis lived was under King Jeypore, but after the country became independent in 1947, all these areas came under the control of the Government of India. Under the Zamindar abolition law in 1952, all areas where the Odia language was spoken came under the control of the Odisha government (District Gazetteers Malkangiri, 2015, p. 5). As a result, Koraput became a part of the district. Since that day, Mustadar has not kept any written information and all information has been kept by the district collectors.

Since the abolition of the land revenue system and the *Mustadar* system in July 1955, taxes have been levied directly on the Didayis by the government. At that time, 22 out of 401 villages under Malkangiri tehsil were identified as Didayis villages. The government of India began taxing cash payments in 1963, which was levied directly by the tehsil. At the same time, the wetland tax was Rs. 3.60 per acre, while the dry and hilly land was taxed at Rs. 2.86. Since 1991, when Malkangiri district was newly formed from Koraput district, seven tehsils have been formed in Malkangiri district. The Didayis started paying their taxes between the Kudumulugumma and the tehsil under the Khairaput block. Currently, the wetland is taxed at Rs. 8 per acre, while dry and hilly land is charged at Rs. 4 per acre. In 1963, twenty-two Didayis villages were identified, and since 1986, 37 villages have been taxed by the government (Mohapatra, 2004, p. 116).

3.3 Inheritance and Succession

When a person dies, his or her son and daughter are inherited as his or her ancestral property. This practice has been around since time immemorial. This practice occurs when a person has a child alive. If his has no children and a daughter, then father's property is given to the unmarried daughter. If the daughter is not married or is married, all the property is inherited by the person's younger brother or eldest son's son. If the tree grows any fruit during its lifetime, all the fruit is given to the person's younger brother or older brother's son. However, if the person has no successor, the village head declares all the property of the deceased for the betterment of the village (The Planning Commission of India, p. 123).

3.4 Occupation

The economic backbone of the Didayis can be seen in two areas. For example, agriculture and the other are the collection of forest products. In these two ways, they earn a living all day long. Their primary occupation is farming (Hasnain, 2019, p. 32). Although the Didayi tribe lived in three areas, the Didayis adopted a flat farming system as they received flat land in some areas. They farm all year round. In the hills, the Didayis make a living by farming and collecting and hunting for forest products. Similarly, the Didayis of the breakaway region subsist on small plains and earn a living by fishing. The Didayis in the plains do not hunt, as do the Didayi is on the hills. They only hunt animals and birds that come to eat during the *chaita* festival and in the fields (Sisa, 2020, p. 52).

3.5 Division of Laborers

The Didayi group is an undeveloped tribe. Within this tribe family, everyone is busy doing their own thing. Everyone, regardless of age, gender or skill, has the upper hand, because everyone in the family, from children to the elderly, does something to alleviate poverty (Mohapatra, 2004, p. 63). Just as a man works, so does a woman. If a man works on the land, then a woman works on the house. When the housework is over, he goes back to work on the land. If a child in this case is seven years old, he or she will help with the work of his or her parents. When her

mother goes to the forest or to the mountains, she also goes with her and reduces them. There is a total of 760 workers in the sample village Muduliguda, which is currently being studied by authors, with 355 as female workers and 405 as male workers. While there are 100 agricultural workers, 1049 non-workers have been identified. The table (Table No: 1) provides all the details of the workers.

Table 1: Different workers from 37 villages of the Didayis

Sl. No.	Different workers	Males	Females	Total
1	Main workers	2066	1128	3194
2	Cultivator workers	1934	693	2627
3	Agricultural workers	145	404	549
4	Workers	33	15	48
5	Other workers	63	31	94
6	Marginal workers	654	1893	2547
7	Cultivators	288	910	1198
8	Agricultural laborers	394	978	1372
9	Household industry workers	10	07	17
10	Non-workers	2046	3214	5260

Source: District Handbook, 2011 census, Malkangiri.

3.6 Primary Occupation

The Didayi tribe, also known as the Didai people or Didiya tribe, is an indigenous tribal community residing in Malkangiri district of Odisha. The primary occupation of the Didayi tribe traditionally revolves around agriculture, hunting, gathering, and fishing (Muduli, Bisoi & Challan, 2018, p. 29). **Agriculture:** Agriculture forms a significant part of the Didayi tribe's livelihood. They cultivate crops such as rice, maize, millets, pulses, and vegetables. The cultivation techniques employed by the Didayi people are often based on traditional knowledge and sustainable practices. **Hunting and Gathering:** Historically, hunting and gathering played a crucial role in the Didayi tribe's subsistence. They would hunt wild animals using traditional methods like bows and arrows, snares, or traps. Gathering of forest products, such as fruits, tubers, roots, and medicinal plants, supplemented their food sources. **Fishing:** The Didayi people residing in areas close to rivers, streams, or water bodies also engage in fishing activities. They use traditional fishing techniques like nets, baskets, or angling to catch fish and other aquatic species. **Livestock Rearing:** Some Didayi families may also engage in livestock rearing, primarily cattle, goats, and poultry. Livestock serves as a source of food, income, and cultural significance within the community. **Craftsmanship:** The Didayi tribe has a rich tradition of craftsmanship, with skilled artisans specializing in creating handmade crafts and products. They produce items such as baskets, pottery, wooden carvings, and traditional jewellery using locally available materials.

It's important to note that the primary occupations of the Didayi tribe may have evolved over time due to various factors, including modernization, changing socio-economic conditions, and government interventions. As with any indigenous community, there may be variations in livelihood practices within the tribe, influenced by factors such as location, access to resources, and interactions with the wider society.

3.7 Settled Cultivation

Two of the three areas inhabited by the Didayi tribes have some land for settled cultivation. These two regions are the plains and the breakaway regions. This applies to geographical conditions and flat terrain. The people use cattle to cultivate the land. Using this cow to cultivate through the plough is an old-fashioned way of cultivating the Didayis, which in the past was similarly farmed. Although the scientific method is now used for

cultivation, the Didayis are less likely to use state-of-the-art scientific methods. The study found that they still love to cultivate using ancient techniques. As a result, it also creates an eco-friendly environment.

The people of the Didayis tribe cultivate the rains during the rainy season from June to August. All plants that need more water are planted. Farmers, who provide a variety of food all year round on their land, plant a variety of canopy trees on their home gardens. The most common crops to eat all year round are rice, *mandia*, *rashi*, *kolath*, *biri*, *mung*, etc., while eggplant, okra, ridge ground, tomato, red gourd, pumpkin, cucumber, maize, etc. are eaten at this time as vegetables. Planted in the land. They do not apply any chemical fertilizers during cultivation. Domestic animals use organic manure for farming (The Planning Commission Government of India, 2002, p. 137). If a tree can be trapped, they can spread the ashes on the tree. If the crop is affected, the leaves of the forest can be harvested by combining different types of special flavoured plants. All the leaves are soaked in water that the father makes them. As a result, all foci are killed. This ancient method is found in Muduliguda, Oringi, Purunaagumaa and Chilipadar. During this time, various deities are worshiped to cultivate good crops. If each family worships the land deity by sacrificing chickens and pigs to get a good harvest during the beginning of the year and after the start of farming on the main land within the family.

3.8 Shifting Cultivation

Another major method of cultivation for the Didayis is shifting cultivation. The Didayis in the plains cultivate in the settled cultivation method, the Didayis in the hills in the shifting method, and the Didayis in the isolated areas cultivate in this method. This is one of the ways in which hilly and isolated people can cultivate their land. The area is geographically surrounded by hills and mountains, making it impossible to use all kinds of state-of-the-art equipment. Only shifting cultivation is acceptable and this method is the main source of cultivation and the backbone of economic earnings. The people of the mountains have given different names to the land there. If any land is cut down and cleared of trees in the hills and turned into farmland, that land is called *Dangar*, where *sunan*, *kolath*, *biri* etc. are cultivated. Similarly, if there is a small hill, it is called a *tikra* if it is covered with flat land with small hills. Various types of oilseeds are planted here, such as zodiac, *Alsi*, and sunflower. The land in which water is always present and the land at the foot of the hill is called *Jahaloti* land. The fourth group is the plains that can be cultivated here. The top three types of land are in the hilly areas, while the fourth type of land is in the plains (Mohapatra, 2004, p. 119).

3.9 Agricultural tools

These tribes prefer to cultivate through traditional machinery. Most of these are made of wood. If the trunks of the various trees found in the forest are found to be suitable for agricultural production, they will be cut down and made in the summer as wood-based machinery. Didayi keeps wooden tools in almost every family in the house. Even if no one has land, he still has farming equipment. The following are the various traditional tools used in agriculture by the Didayi tribe, such as plough (*Cini*), the long wooden handle plough (*Rirana*), spade (*unsua*), ground leveller (*Patta*), spade with spikes (*Insuan*), long handle sickle (*Hoeas*), axes of different sizes (*Malle*) and *hoe* (Mohapatra, 2004, p. 123).

The agricultural tools used by the Didayis are made by various types of tools themselves. Some iron tools are purchased at the nearby Kudumulugumma weekly market. The Didayi Development Agency also provides a variety of agricultural seeds and equipment to raise awareness about the use of Didayi machinery to simplify agriculture. Of the various types of equipment provided by the government, it is almost usable in the plains and isolated areas but not in the hilly areas. As a result, the equatorial region is better than the other two regions. In some cases, Didayi Development Agency provides HYV seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, etc., as well as awareness messages for its use.

3.10 Methods and procedures of cultivation of the hilly areas

The hilly terrain is greener and eco-friendly from a geographical point of view, but it is very difficult to cultivate because all the ground level there is covered with stone floors. As a result, the soil content is very low. The land is filled with large and small stones. There are about three types of land in the Didayis, on the other side of the hill, namely *dangar* land, *kalua* land and hill land. Shift cultivation is suitable for cultivation in *dangar* and hilly lands, while cultivation in *dangar* and ditch lands is suitable for cultivation (Patnaik, 2008, p. 24). The canal lands are suitable for cultivation all year round, as there are always water stores as there are ditches and bottom parts of the hills. Two acres of land to the south of Tikarpada village, which is dug and flat, has water all year round, so that there are paddy fields during the rainy season, such as *kangu*, *harad* and *biri* during the dry season. Similarly, hills and *dangar* are cultivated only once a year. The wild grass that grows there in the summer dries up due to lack of water. At that time, all the dry grass is burned in the fire, which is fertile after the rains and is called *padu* cultivation. At this time, they plant a variety of vegetables, millet, paddy, pine trees, willow trees, banana trees, tomatoes, and chillies. The family joins in planting the pine and willow trees one seed are buried in the ground, all of which are economically viable for the next generation.

3.11 Types of crops produced in various types of land

The Didayis cultivate in the rainy season as well as in other seasons. The fertility and characteristics of the soil in the three regions differ. Where the soil is high in fertility and where the soil is low. The (Table No. 2) shows the crops occurring on different lands by month. (Likhar, 2022, p. 52)

Table 2 Type of land (*Iijo*) and crops produced by Didayi tribe

Area (<i>Jaga</i>)	Types of Land	Months (<i>Arke</i>)	Produced (<i>Jinis</i>)
Plain Area	Plain	Jun.- Aug.	Rice
		Dec.- Mar.	Almonds, Sunflower
	<i>Dangar</i>	Jun. - Aug.	<i>Mandia</i> , Cucumber, Winter Melon, Bottle Gourd, Red Chili, Butternut Squash, Pumpkin,
		Dec. -Mar.	Almond, Sunflower
	<i>Tikra</i>	Jun. - Aug.	<i>Rasi, Alsi, Biri</i>
		Dec.- Mar.	Sun flower, Nuts
Hill Area	Plain	Jun. - Aug.	Rice,
		Dec.- Mar.	Cannabis,
	<i>Dangar</i>	Jun. - Aug.	<i>Mandia, Muga, Biri, Kandul,</i>
		Dec.- Mar.	Cannabis,
	<i>Tikra</i>	Jun. - Aug.	<i>Mandia, Rasi, Alsi</i>
		Dec.- Mar.	Cannabis
Cut off Area	Plain	Jun. - Aug.	Rice
		Dec.- Mar.	Turmeric,
	<i>Dangar</i>	Jun. - Aug.	Turmeric, Winter Melon, Maize, Cluster Beans, Eggplant, Lady's finger, red chili
		Dec.- Mar.	Turmeric
	<i>Tikra</i>	Jun. - Aug.	<i>Rasi, Alsi, biri, kandul</i>
		Dec.- Mar.	

3.12 Terrace Cultivation

Terrace cultivation is a traditional farming method. If this method is different geographically, then the land there is higher or deeper, making it suitable for cultivation. Of the southern districts in Odisha, Gajapati, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Koraput and Malkanagiri districts are the most cultivated (Das, 2006, p. 76). The people of Soura tribe in Gajapati district cultivate this crop while the people of Kandha tribe in Kandhamal district cultivate it. The Kondakameru hill region in Malkanagiri is 2000- 3,500 feet above sea level and the people of Didayi, who live here, also cultivate on a terrace basis. The village of Oringi in the plains cultivates paddy during the rainy season, peanuts and sunflowers during the dry season. Similarly, among the villages in the hilly areas, the villages in Bayapada, Damdarbeda, etc. are also cultivated in this way.

3.13 The Development Scenario of Socio-economy life

Didayi people are very hardworking. They learn to work hard early in life. The area where they live is hilly and waterlogged, so they lack farmland. When the time comes to cultivate, they also cultivate the land of others by asking for it. As a result, they have to pay half of the land to the landowner. Nowadays, the people of this tribe are cultivating in the traditional way and using some scientific tools. They are now using iron plows during traditional farming. They used to spray a variety of tree leaves when the crop was infested with insects, but they are also now using pesticides available in the market. There was a time when the lower Didayis were plowing with their own cattle, and today they are using a variety of plowing machines in the area. But it is now common in mountainous areas for traditional farming methods. Because of the rocky terrain here, it is not possible to use any new methods. In the lower areas, such as Muduliguda, Oringi, Purunagumma and Chilipadar villages, farming is done with some high-quality machinery. Locals believe that sometimes a variety of private companies provide them (Sisa, 2020, p. 164).

3.14 Secondary Occupation

While the primary occupation provides food, it meets the livelihood requirement. Which results in the need for a secondary profession. Through the secondary profession, they meet their daily need. Four professions are included in the study as secondary careers. All of this is summarized below. Didayi people are raising their livelihoods by collecting natural resources. As a result, they are becoming more financially secure.

3.15 Forest collection and food gathering

Although farming is the main occupation of the Didayis, they depend on the nearby forests, hills and mountains to support their livelihoods. They collect edible food found in the forest. Among the items collected are fruits, flowers, roots, leaves and wood. As a result of the wild products they collect, such as *gidikua*, *tarmendia*, *liwa*, *sean*, *hamdia*, *uli*, *lamba*, *ela*, *sinhir*, *tsua*, *tara*, *pade*, *tola*, etc. It also collects tubers such as inkirla, unchola, gabah, tmla, intarla, and vegetables such as *reshha*, *bruasengan*, *diakirha*, *denjariha*, *karlaha*, *hnlaha*, *daliaha*, *karlaha*, *chunchuniha*, *patraha*, *saruha*, and so on. Some other forest products include broom, *jhuna*, mushrooms, bamboo, firewood, *mahula* flowers and *salap* trees for making wine (Sinha & Lekha, 2005, pp. 249-252). Of all these things, a number of things are found according to the season. Not everything is available in all seasons. They keep all these things for themselves while others sell them in the nearby market for some money. For example, mushrooms, carrots, wood, vegetables, etc. are kept for food if they keep honey for themselves, *jhuna*, *salapa* juice, etc., and then sell the rest. Almost all Didayis participate in food gathering and forest collection. When there is no work at home, they go to the hills to collect a variety of vegetables and wood. They also take their children with them when they go to the mountains. All these activities can be seen in almost three areas.

Below is a compilation of the data of a Didayi couple. Buda Gudia aged 63 years, his wife Radha Gudia aged 58 years, residents of Muguliguda village under Khairaput block



of Malkangiri district. They collect different types of forest products from the forest every year, such as *kendu* leaves, *kendu* fruit, *shiaadi* bowl, *shiaadi* rope, *shiaadi* fruit, *mahula* flower, tola, firewood, khandamula, mango, jamun, *anla*, *dumuri*, etc. Here is a photo taken of them preparing the kandamula collected from the forest for consumption. They say that 25 percent of the revenue is collected from forest products.

3.16 Hunting and fishing

The Didayis go hunting in the forest when there is no work. This is not the case with Didayis in all areas. The lower Didayis are hunted when they celebrate the *chaita* festival in March. They don't always like to hunt. Similarly, those living in isolation also hunt only during the festival. This is their cultural tradition of hunting during the festival (Mohanti, 2009, p. 16). According to the rules of the cultural tradition, they hunt only in one day. But when all the crops are in the field, if any animal comes to eat the crop, the Didayis of the lower and isolated areas prey. For the Didayis who are in the mountains, hunting is a daily practice because they are their home in the forest surrounded by hills. When they leave the house, they come out with bows, arrows, and tongs. They like to hunt all year round. The animals and birds that the Didayis hunt are the bara, the deer, the bug, the cuckoo, the peacock, and so on. If any of the above-mentioned animals or birds belong to their clan, they do not prey (Table No. 2)

Gunju Majhi aged 32 years and his neighbor Sama Majhi aged 35 years are residents of Gangapada village under Nakamamudi Panchayat under Korukonda block of Malkangiri district. Both of them are ready to go hunting during the Chait festival with their bows and arrows ready. According to Sama, both of them are daily hunters. They hunt during festivals and on other days as well. It is believed that whatever animal is caught from the hunt helps to earn a little money and support the family.



The people of the hills are good at hunting, while the people of the hills are good at fishing. The dams for the Balimela Reservoir have been flooded, making it easier for people to fish. The reservoir also catches 50kg of fish, ranging from small fish. The villagers near the river always make a living by fishing. The villagers of Arapadar, Sanyasiguda, Nilapari, Kanengi, etc. are always fishing.

3.17 Livestock and bird farming

Just as people of other tribes keep different kinds of animals and birds, so do people of Didayi tribe keep different kinds of animals and birds. The purpose of all these observations is to meet the needs of the animals in or near the pet if there is a lack of money in the family under any circumstances. This is the third type of fundraiser for Didayis. At any outdoor event, naming ceremony and maturity ceremony, they prefer to give gifts to animals or birds. That's why everyone in the house keeps some birds and animals. It shows that 11.83 % the money that Didayis earn during the year is collected from animals and birds (Mohapatra, 2004, pp. 124-125).

In the village of Didayi, there are some animals and birds in every house, these are called pets. Cattle, cows, goats, sheep, chickens, cats, dogs and monkeys are kept as animals. Some pets eat grass and leaves, while others feed the remaining food to chickens, dogs, and cats after humans eat them. Cows and bulls can be sold within two years, just as goats and sheep can be sold within a year.

Didayis are chickens, ducks, parrots, coyotes, bunnies, and so on. These birds feed on a variety of insects as well as the rest of their food. They also donate gifts at any festival, keep the meat in their home and sell it at the market if needed. Poultry are eligible for sale within six months.

3.18 Changes in the Fields of Handicrafts and Animal Husbandry

Handloom and animal husbandry are two areas that contribute to economic growth. There was a time when Didayi people were making and selling their art to the market by making all kinds of handicrafts. They made

their own family by making bamboo *Karli, Mundikarli, Changada, Dala* in bamboo. Now those weavers are disappearing. Bamboo trees were their raw material. Now with the destruction of the forest, the amount of bamboo trees has completely disappeared. As a result, handicrafts are also slowly becoming less common in the market (Ota, Mohanty & Mohanty, 2018, pp. 25-27).

It was common practice for the Didayis to keep cattle, goats, sheep, chickens, ducks, and mercury as domestic animals and birds. Many families supported the Vicky family. In 2016, swine flu pandemic in Malkanagiri district killed all pigs raised in Didayi villages by the government. As a result, they are no longer raising pigs.

3.19 Barter system of Didayis

Didayis usually mean to exchange a variety of things when it comes to exchange. They have the most exchange rates (Sisa, 2020, p. 192). This is because there are no public or private wages in the hills. As a result, they earn money after selling what they cultivate. The lower Didayis get paid by the government or the private sector, which saves them money. But the Didayis, who live in mountainous areas, do not have access to transportation, nor can the government or the private sector benefit. As a result, they exchange what they can't get for what they can afford. As a result of this exchange, they may not be able to get a fair price for their goods and may be victims of fraud. Didayis living in mountainous areas go to nearby markets for daily necessities. There they buy and sell everything they need. Most of the time, the people of this tribe cultivate *Mandia, Shuan, Biri*, gram, black gram turmeric, various types of vegetables like- chilli, tomato, banana, eggplant etc. They come to the market to change everything. Sometimes he sells and buys rice, salt, oil, spices, dried food, soap, etc., and takes the rice with them. The Didayis, who live in the hills, take rice through the *Mandia*, as rice cultivation in the hills is not good. As much as rice is grown, it is scarce for a year. Didayis living in isolated areas also exchange. The inhabitants here prefer to cultivate turmeric. They buy or sell turmeric in exchange for it. Those who exchange *Mandia, Shuan, Biri*, black gram, etc. use a type of measuring vessel. Which is made of bamboo or tin cans. Instead of one *sima Mandia*, one takes one *sima* rice. This method is more common in Didayis living in hilly and isolated areas, but not for Didayis living in flat areas.

3.20 Trade centre or Weekly markets

Just as people from other groups do business to meet their needs, so do Didayis who come in contact with some shopping malls to meet their daily needs. They call the place of trade '*Santa*', which is called '*Hat*' in the *Deshia* language. This '*Santa*' or '*Hatt*' is a gathering place for all the people as well as a common gathering place for their friends (Mohapatra, 2004, p. 126). The market has seen the economic, social and cultural impact of the Didayis. They have the opportunity to entertain one day a week. The young people of the Didayi tribe come together on this day. He succeeds in giving gifts to his boyfriends and girlfriends. As these markets are all far away, they do not have as much transportation, so they have to trade in limited quantities. If there is something to sell or buy in the market, they carry the thing on their shoulders. Those on the hill carry on their shoulders and carry things. But Didayis who are in the plains are more likely to take them by car or bicycle. Similarly, people living in isolated areas bring goods by boat. When they come to the market, they line up and walk on the left side of the road. This is not the case now, as two villages in the country, Muduliguda and Oringi, have been built on the foothills of the hills, making it possible for three- and four-wheelers to enter the market. Most Didayis people do their business in Kudumulugumma. Everything is available for them, including food, clothing, jewellery, cosmetics, and household items, he said in an interview. If his body is not sick, they must come to the market once a week.

Didayi people go to Kudumulugumma on Thursday, Naringijhola on Monday, Janbai and Ankadeli on Wednesday to trade in the market. There is a market in the plains on Thursday, a market in the breakaway region on Wednesday, and a hill market on Monday. Balimela, Chittrakonda, Malkanagiri and Jeypore also go to buy things that are not available in the nearby markets. Food and vegetables are among the things they do business. As a food crop, rice, *Mandia, Biri, Kandula, Muga, Rashi, Alasi*, etc. are exchanged for rice and they sell vegetables for money.



Tulsa Muduli age 39, resident of Gisingbeda village of Nakamamaudi panchayat, Korakonda block of Malkangiri district. She grows a variety of vegetables every year and sells them at the nearby weekly hut Kudumulugumma. He states that he exclusively cultivates from June to November, which is the wet season. Due to the fact that it is a hilly area, irrigation is not available during other seasons. As a result, gathering of forest produce and fishing etc. is reduced in other seasons.

3.21 Income and Expenditure

A detailed study is needed to find out about the economic situation of the Didayis. Here, the current scholar tries to estimate their annual income and expenditure. Of the total land in Malkangiri district, 17.88 percent is under tribal rule. Of this, 54.21 percent of the land is encroached on in the forest, while 82.12 percent of the land is under the control of the government (Table No.3).

Agriculture is the main source of income for this tribe. In addition to farming, they earn a living by raising wages, raising animals and birds, collecting forest products, trading in wine and fish. There is very little land for the Didayis to meet their daily needs. This is because all the villages except Muduliguda, Oringi, Purunagumma and Chilipadar, the areas where they live, are located on the hills and are not suitable for cultivation, so they take other economic activities to supplement their family income. The landholding status of the Didayis has been collected by the revenue department as well as in-person interviews. It is clearly shown here (Table No. 4) that 42.39 percent of the landowners have been identified and 57.06 percent of the people have been identified as landless (Bose, 2006, p. 28).

Table 4: Landholding status of Didayis

Sl. No.	Area	Name of the Village	No. of HH	Average is (acre) Cultivated per HH	Landholder HH	Landless HH
1	Plain	Muduliguda	377	2.88	251	126
2		Oringi	162	2.43	109	53
3		Purunagumma	99	1.76	67	32
4		Chilipadar	49	0.72	32	17
5	Hilltop	Bayapada	34	1.72	27	07
6		Damodarbeda,	103	0.14	86	17
7		Nilapari	168	0.012	130	38
8		Kanangi	33	1.26	28	05
9	Cut off	Orapadar,	82	1.83	72	10
10		Jantri,	107	1.69	85	22
11		Sanyasiguda	40	1.06	29	11
12		Taberu	55	1.56	40	15

Source: Tehsil Records Room, Chitrakonda and Khairapat.

3.22 Wage-earning

In general, those who have less land to cultivate are the ones who work as wage earners, but if you look at the rural areas of India, they find that even if they have land, they work as wage earners to support their families. Didayi is an indigenous group that loves to work hard to eat. A study of the Didayis shows that, in terms of their

geographical structure, the Didayis in the plains and hills are more likely to be paid wages than the Didayis in the hills and isolated areas. Going to work with other people is called 'Sley'. According to the 2011 Census D.D.A, Kudumulugumma reports that 17.24% of the income is earned by working on wages (Singh & Sadangi, 2012, p. 307). For example, the people of the plains earn 25.45% of the annual wage, while the people of the hills and isolated areas collect 14.95% and 12.58%, respectively (Table No. 5).

Table 5: The annual rate of Didayis in all three regions

Sl. No.	Economic Activities	Plains House Holds	Hill House Holds	Cut-off House Holds	Total
1	Agriculture	35.00	35.00	43.67	36.87
2	Livestock	8.71	13.86	10.73	11.83
3	Wage earning	25.45	14.97	12.58	17.24
4	Forest Collection & Food gathering	22.93	29.00	28.53	27.36
5	Fishing	0.10	0.78	2.00	0.81
6	Services	2.72	-	0.34	0.80
7	Business	1.25	0.17	1.43	0.69
8	Others	3.84	6.22	0.72	4.41
Total		100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Council of Analytical Tribal Studies, Koraput, 2001-02.

3.23 Production

Didayis cultivate as the main means of earning money. Farming is one of the main sources in which they support their families (Sahoo, 2017, p. 11). These tribes earn 85.91% of their annual income from farming (Table No. 3.9). The study found that in all three of the 509 households, all of them made a living by farming. They mainly cultivate paddy, *Suan*, millet, pulses, oil seeds and vegetables. This tribe has a total of 15.7 quintals Rice, 5.24 quintals millet, and 3.15 quintals are grown in pulses (Table No. 6). Those who live in the plains do not cultivate *Suan*, but the Didayis who live in the hills and isolated areas cultivate this. 1% of whatever they cultivate is exchanged for different things (Mohapatra, 2004, p. 128). It appears that Didayis usually sell some oil seeds in addition to some forest produce. Didayi People living in mountainous areas collect about 9.39 quintals of oilseeds.

Table 6: Crop-wise Production and the Value of Produce (Plain Sector).

Sl. No.	No. of H.H	Name of Crop	Quantity produced (in. Qt. H.H)	Value (per. Qt.)	Value of produce (in Rs.)
1	159	Paddy	6.34	334.95	2132.00
2		Millet	1.75	500.00	875.00
3		Pulses	1.84	2044.00	3747.00
4		Oilseeds	0.53	1209.00	641.00
5		Vegetables	2.10	500.00	1084.00
Total			12.56	5107.00	8479.00

Note: In terms of market values in the locality.

3.24 Average annual income

In order to know the annual rate of assessment of the financial position of a group or individual, it is necessary to know the standard of annual income of that group or individual. Efforts are being made to find out the production of all the products of this group or tribe and the average annual income. Here, 300 families were

interviewed for personal interviews. All samples were collected and analyzed in detail. An analysis of the data reveals that the main source of income for the Didayis is from agriculture. They earn 85.93% from agriculture. Agriculture is their main source of income. Their second source of income is wages, which they earn from 7.17 percent of their wages. Similarly, the third way of earning their living are by collecting forest products and raising livestock. Here, they earn 1.19 percent and 4.19 percent, respectively, for animal husbandry and forestry. In all, the families living in the plains earn Rs 9,723, while the families in the hilly areas earn Rs 6,347 and the families in the breakaway region earn Rs 8,464 (The Planning Commission Government of India, 2002, p. 77).

3.25 Average Expenditure

Didayi in the plains spends an average of Rs. 9748 per annum (Table No. 7) (Mohapatra, 2004, p. 132). The table also shows that the Didayi family in a hilly area and the families in the breakaway region also spend an average of Rs. 6354 and Rs. 8,504 annually, respectively. In the same way, he spends the remaining Rs. 92.96 percent on the tribe and invests Rs. 8.04 percent in agricultural work for future earnings, as well as for the health of cattle.

Table 7: Average expenditure incurred on different items

Sector	No. of HH	Food	Cloth	Liquor & Tobacco	Kerosene	Medicine	Edu.	Religious Ceremonial	Guests	House repair	Music	Total
Pain	159	6551 (67.2)	703 (7.21)	505 (5.18)	15 6 (1.6)	52 (0.53)	37 (0.37)	288 (2.95)	162 (1.66)	288 (2.95)	85 (.087)	8827 (90.55)
Hilltop	268	4668 (73.4)	391 (6.15)	139 (2.18)	87 (1.36)	49 (0.77)	-	207 (3.25)	98 (1.54)	226 (3.55)	27 (0.42)	5892 (92.7)
Cut off	82	5951 (69.9)	632 (7.43)	484 (5.69)	98 (1.15)	34 (0.39)	25 (0.29)	213 (2.5)	127 (1.5)	254 (2.98)	88 (1.03)	7096 (92.96)
Total		17170 (69.8)	1726 (7.01)	1128 (46)	34 1 (1.4)	135 (0.54)	62 (0.25)	708 (2.9)	387 (1.57)	768 (3.12)	200 (0.81)	21815 (92)

Note: Figures in bracket indicate percentage.

The following is a description of how much this tribe spends on food. According to the study, 69.8 percent of the money is spent on various food items. People living in the plains and isolated areas spend 2.18 percent on liquor and tobacco, while spending less on clothing.

3.26 Saving

It is seen from the income-expenditure pattern that the Didayi families of the 12 villages somehow manages to run in a balanced budget with a meagre difference of Rs. 25, 7 and 40 respectively (Mahapatra, 2004, p. 133). They do not have any savings in the bank as recorded during the field study. However, it has been noticed that they are in habit of saving the money inside a bamboo hollow. Those who can afford to save, they save the currency notes inside the bamboo and hide it in their houses

for safe custody which they rarely take out. They do not prefer to owe or lend monetary help from any other outsiders expect their own kith and kin. They apprehend to borrow money from outsiders as some of them who have availed the TRYSEM loan have been experienced cheating by the VLW who had demanded Rs. 150 from their loan amount. At times, the outsiders like forest officials and the police persons charge allegation and demand money from them. Within the village though they help each other in socio-cultural functions but cannot get the economic assistance as all of them are in the same economic bracket (BPL). It is revealed from the opinion survey that expect the Micro Project they do not ask monetary help from others as they are aware of the fact that the DDA is only functioning for their beneficial sake. The on-going schemes like DWCRA under CD programme and income generating schemes by DDA, have been providing economic assistance to the people. Moreover, the study on beneficiary HH reveals that the developmental programmes, namely DWCRA 92.63%, horticulture scheme (12%) and agriculture scheme (44%), have economically benefited the households respectively. These income-oriented schemes have helped the people to bridge the household budgetary gaps to some extent. Even though, they are in below poverty line still they do not prefer to be indebted as no such case has been recorded.

IV. Conclusion

We can conclude from the discussion of above facts that the people of Didayi tribe are a primitive tribal group; their lifestyle of managing socio-economics is slightly different from that of the common people. They usually earn their living by traditional agriculture. As the geographical boundaries of this tribe are divided into three parts, agricultural land is very scarce. The Didayis pay various types of income tax to the government, of which wet land owners pay Rs 8 per acre to the government and dry land owners pay Rs 4 per acre. In the Didayi tribe, the property of the father of the family is inherited by his own son. Even if there is a daughter in the family, she is not given her father's property. The Didayi tribe is divided into different types of occupations. While they do agriculture as their primary occupation, it is divided into two parts. Agriculture is their main source of income. They divide agriculture into two parts namely fixed farming and shifting cultivation. From agriculture, they produce food crops and also grow pulses and oilseeds according to the season. While the Didayis of the hilly and central areas are farming in traditional ways, the Didayis of the plains are using some modern machinery. Similarly, their secondary occupation is to collect forest produce, hunting, fishing, animal husbandry. Whatever they produce they sell in the weekly market Kudumulugumma. As such, most of the Didayis women support their families by working 100 days of compulsory wages provided by MGNREGSA, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, Didayi Development Agency, Kudumulugumma and the government. The people of this tribe earn 85.93 percent of their income from agriculture while doing various occupations to support their families, 7.17 percent from wage labor, 1.19 percent from collection of forest products and 4.19 percent from hunting and fishing. They were not taking help from anyone to save money. Some Didayi people have started saving money in the bank since the government opened free bank accounts. It is known that they used to collect money in bamboo tubes. This is how the people of the Didayi tribe have been managing their socio-economic system. As if this tribe is a primitive tribe, the government of Odisha has given it status as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group and the government is making various plans to improve this tribe. Now some of the changes are found in socio-economic life of Didayis due to the development schemes provided for the upliftment of the people of this community. Now a day, the barter system is prevailed in the Didayi community of the Malkangiri district for their material exchange. On the whole, the economic life of Didayis of Malkangiri district is an important aspect to know the tribal economic system of one of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups of Odisha in eastern India.

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