



## Research Article

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**Present Scenario of Marriage Practices among Kora Tribe of Dhalla Village: An Anthropological Appraisal**Prokash Kumar Palit\*<sup>1</sup>, Sayantan Dey<sup>2</sup>, & Sayak Kar<sup>3</sup>,<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Bangabasi Evening College, W.B, India<sup>2</sup>Post Graduate<sup>3</sup>Research Scholar, Dept of Anthropology. University of Calcutta**Article History**

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**Abstract:** *The Kora, is one of the lesser studied ethnic people in West Bengal. The tribe is also known as Kura, Kuda, Kaora, Dhangar etc. Being an ethnic group they reside at nearby cultivator people or caste people as they are mainly labourers. They find the jobs of labour mainly in the agricultural field of caste people or in the field of other land owners. As their land size is small or poor, they prefer the other landholders or caste people. In Dhalla village of Birbhum, they are residing for a long time just beside the caste people, land owners of the area, they follow them for their daily life and rituals and ceremonies. They try to be more acceptable to the common Hindu people. As their habitat is just around 11 km away from them and tourists of Santiniketan are travelling around them, they acquired various cultural traits or cultural aspects from Hindu castes. As an effect of these, they changed their pattern of practices of the marriage ceremony.*

**Keywords:** Kora, Dhalla village, Absorption, Rituals, Hindu caste.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The Kora people who reside in Dhalla are lesser known and lesser studied people. The primary occupation of the Koras is associated with earthwork (as construction of roads, digging well, ponds construction and labour work for agriculture). In Dhalla village, maximum Kora families sustain their lives on labour works on agricultural land. Therefore, they practice cultivation experts neighbouring agriculturist tribal communities and peasant-like Hindus. In Marriage practices, the Koras are more similar to the Hindus, and being a tribe, the Kora tribe absorbs culture from Hindus. In many places, the Kora tribe has maintained its language and culture without experiencing significant change, but in some places, they have integrated with the dominant local Hindu tradition, which is significant for the research. In this study, the Kora people of Dhalla village were studied to find out how their marriage customs compared to those of the local Hindu caste.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Koras arrived in West Bengal after leaving their native Bihar. They continue to exist at the Hindu religious border. They establish strong, mutually beneficial business relations and cultural exchanges with the Hindus. (Paul, 2004). Due to industrialization, globalisation, urbanisation, industrial growth, agricultural improvement, the advent of Panchayati Raj,

the Integrated Tribal Development Project, and the adoption of the Tribal Sub Plan Approach, there have been some recent changes in the Kora tribe (Samanta, 2015).

**METHODOLOGY**

In this ethnographic study observation, interview and case study methods were followed extensively. The primary data were collected from the Kora community and the other community members present in the village. The secondary data were collected from various sources like literature and offices. The study is based on primary data mainly collected from the villagers during the fieldwork at Dhalla Village.

**Location of the village**

The Dhalla village is situated at the Dhalla Post Office. The Gram Panchayat and Block are Bilati and Illambazar Block respectively. Police Station and Sub Division is Bolpur of Birbhum district. The nearest railway station is Bolpur Railway station. The village is about 20 km away from the station. But sometimes they avail Panagarh Railway station; the distance of the railway station is approx. 25 km from the village. The village is located 3 km away from the Panagarh to Bolpur road.

According to Risley (1894), the Kora term originated from the Mundari word possibly, meaning earthworks "Koda".

In addition to their native tribal language, the Kora of Dhalla village also speaks Bengali and the kora language. The Mundari family of languages includes the Kora language. Kora adheres to Hindu culture as well. The Kora families are patrilocal, nuclear, and have a patrilineal structure. For funerals, they typically cremate their dead bodies after natural death and bury them after an abnormal death.

### History of Settlement

It was talked to many Kora peoples of Kora Para of Dhalla Village about the settlement of the village. Everyone told a whole new different story about the history of settlement. At first, Bishu Kora said that his grandfather migrated here from Ramnagar, Mithilgarh Birbhum and bought land here and started living here and now they are settled here. On the other hand, Kalu Kora says that his ancestors came here from somewhere in Birbhum where they live and have landed here and make houses here and settled properly. And at the end, Namita Kora said his husband's ancestors came here when the land was a jungle then and collectively form a group and started making settlements here and creating the settlement pattern. Other than these statements most people are said that inside the **Chou Pahari Jungle** they lived before but they came here because of that place an Epidemic occurred. Those who survived there eloped from there and came here beside the Mayurakshi Canal and developed this settlement.

### Duration of Stay

Almost all of the Kora people in Dhalla Village are from the Kora para. During the fieldwork days, it was discussed. Some claimed to have lived in this area for three to four generations, some claimed to have been here since the beginning of the settlement, while still others claimed to be recent arrivals that had moved here from somewhere else. We might in far from their statements that the Kora people of Kora para have been at Dhalla Village for close to a century.

### Security of Tenure

Security of tenure means the people where they are staying now is this place secure enough for them to live in peace here. I asked many people but the answers were more or less the same. I asked them about the security of the settlement, as well as told them if they had any documents which provide them legal security to their settlement. They tell me that the land or settlement is their land and they don't need any legal documents for securing their land as well as they said that no government actions might be able to uproot themselves from their land for sure. Besides that, some of them have "**Patta**" of the lands where they live now as well as they submit Revenue to the **Bilati Gram Panchayet** at regular intervals.

## MARRIAGE

Any kind of community places a high value on marriage. It has a significant role in life cycles as well. A religious vow, a social union, or a formal contract can all be included in marriage. Men and women, two men and two women, one man and several women (polygyny), and one woman and several women are all possible scenarios (polyandry). In non-industrial communities, marriage is more of a group problem; when a person marries a spouse, they also take on obligations to a group of in-laws. It marks the start of finding a new family and having children.

### Marriage Practices

Over the past 150 years, both the anthropological study of marriage and the expectations of individuals for their marriages in many societies have undergone significant changes. Marriage customs are an important and widespread aspect of civilised civilization. The kinds of rituals differ from one community to another. It is the foundation for generating purchases. It serves as the foundation for an adult male and adult female's marital existence. The conjugal life of a pair gets its acceptance by marriage ceremony from their society. Offspring get their support from their legitimate parents. Society takes responsibility for the children if the parents of children are legitimated by marriage. On the other hand, marriage practices differ from society to society according to their material culture and social culture. The practices are changed over the years for acculturation and diffusion of their culture. As the Kora community of Dhalla village is closer to Hindu caste society, they follow the Hindu marriage system along their system.

### Types of Marriage Practice

All marriages in the Kora society are monogamous; this community does not practise polygamous marriage. In this community, both arranged marriages and love marriages have taken place, although there are specific requirements for marriage, such as the bride and groom having to come from the same group, according to my informants. They also had the restriction that they couldn't wed someone from the same clan. Remarriage is likewise displayed as a rarity in the village; only one couple in the community was depicted as engaging in the practice, but no one in the community ever voiced any opposition to marrying a widow.

### Marriage Registration/Formalization

As our informants described that there is no practice of marriage registration, except just about **Sindur daan**. But if someone does love marriage, he has to register his marriage for his security.

Application for the marriage registry completed on the requirement form with the bride and groom's names and addresses.

- The bride and groom's signatures.
- Three attesting witnesses' signatures, along with their names and addresses, must be present at the time of the marriage.
- The bride and groom's joint photo, each with a signature over it, should be brought to the marriage registry.

The application's information will then be verified by the marriage official before being submitted as a record of their marriage. If he believes the records supplied are accurate and in compliance with the law, he will issue a certificate of marriage.

### Marriage Ceremonies

A marriage is a ceremony where a male and a female are united. Marriage traditions and customs vary greatly between cultures, ethnic groups, religions, countries, and social classes. The majority of marriage rituals include the exchange of vows by the couple, the giving of a gift (offering, rings, symbolic item, flowers, money), and the public announcement of the union by a celebrant or official. The ceremony is frequently followed by a wedding reception, and special wedding attire is frequently used. The event frequently includes music, poetry, prayers, or readings from religious scriptures or literature.

According to the informant they have similarities to Hindu marriage rituals.

### Details of Marriage Ceremonies for Male

In the house of the male person of the wedding, there are many rituals to be followed; some of them are *Ashirbad*, *Aiburo Bhat*, *Gaye Halud* etc. The **Ashirbad** is performed approximately one month before the marriage. **Aiburo bhat** is performed during the day before the marriage. After that, they wake up early in the morning on the day of the wedding and eat rice before sunrise. Then, at dawn, they applied raw turmeric on the groom's body and sacrificed a hen in honour of their god to fulfil their wish. Following that, the groom arrives at the bride's home, where the wedding ceremony officially starts.

### Details of Marriage Ceremonies for female

In the house of the female person of the wedding, there are also many rituals to be followed; some of them are *Ashirbad*, *Aiburobhat*, *Gaye Haludv* etc. The **Ashirbad** is performed approximately one month before the marriage.

**Aiburo bhat** is performed during the day before the marriage. After that, they wake up early in the morning on the day of the wedding and eat rice before sunrise. The bride's body will be brought from the home of the groom after which they apply raw turmeric to it in the morning. They then sacrificed a hen in honour of their god to fulfil their dream. The

wedding ceremony then started after the groom arrived at the bride's home.

### Match Maker and Match Making

Match making is the process of matching two or more people together, usually for the purpose of marriage. In some cultures; the role of the matchmaker was present and is also now quite professionalized. In cultures where arranged marriages were the rule, there is a man who does matchmaking called Matchmaker.

In this village, the Kora people said that the matchmaker is a relative of the family whom they say "*Kutum*". They thought they would provide the finest matches out of everyone else. When a boy or girl reaches marriageable age, they begin telling their kutums about finding a suitable bride or groom who will be the ideal fit for them.

### Marriage Consideration

Marriage consideration is the process of selecting a bride or a groom in the context of society. They mainly choose the bride/groom after seeing some qualities in them, like how they look, what they do, and how their family is this type of qualities they see in each other family.

### Marriage Priest

A marriage priest is a person who will perform the marriage. As they said that there is no marriage priest here who performs marriage but the elder person of the house performs the acts.

### Marriage Payment

In the majority of countries, weddings have a strong impact on how property is divided both within and across families. This has social, political, as well as economic, ramifications. The most common ways to transfer a marriage are:

- **Bride wealth** is a substantial donation made to the bride's family by the groom or his family in goods, cash, or both.
- **Dowry** is a bequest made by the bride's parents to the family that she creates with her husband, typically under his rule.

The "groom fee," "bride service," and the groom's endowment of the bride are other types of transactions. Property swaps often follow one of these methods or the other, but occasionally they are combined. For instance, the Old Testament refers to dowry and bridal prices in terms of ancient Hebrew society. A woman's family's dowry in early mediaeval England was supplemented by an endowment from her husband, who also gave "morning presents" the morning following the wedding.

In between Kora peoples, they said that in their society they practice marriage payment as the form of

bride price. They said that they give the groom bride price according to their capacity of how much they can be paid in the form of cash, ornaments and kitchenware.

## DIVORCE

Divorce is the process of ending a marriage or marital union. It is also referred to as the dissolution of marriage. The legal obligations and responsibilities of marriage are typically cancelled or rearranged as a result, which dissolves the bonds of matrimony between a married couple under the laws of the specific nation or state. Divorce is not a common occurrence in the community. The Kora people only engage in such an exceptional and infrequent occurrence in their daily lives.

### Attitudes towards Divorce

No one in this village considers divorce a good practice but sometimes if such cases occurred, they do settle in the presence of villagers and the leader of the community.

### Frequency of Divorce

As described by our informants the frequency of divorce is near zero because they believe in very much compromise rather than divorce.

### Grounds for Divorce by Male

There are many reasons which can be led any marriage life into divorce. The main reasons for divorce by the male are extra marital affairs of the wife with another man, and the wife's elopement with another man.

### Ground for Divorce by Female

There are also many reasons for divorce in the context of females. The main reasons for divorce by the female are extra marital affairs of husband with other woman, wife beating after drinking addictive liquors, and the husband eloping with other women.

### Social Status after Divorce

As described by them divorce is not happening in real-time but if happens the leader of the community (Morol of the village) gathers all the villagers and then makes the decision if the husband isn't guilty then he has the clearance certificate and if the husband is accused for divorce then husband need to pay penalty to the wife and have to return any bride price taken at the time of wedding plus have to pay the price of later life expenses and after marriage, the villagers will talk bitter things about them and dispraise the family.

### Post Marital Residence

All the peoples of the families of the village prefer to stay in the house of the groom house with the

bride, but after marriage in many families, the son and father are divided into two houses for the reason of quarrel between the wife and mother-in-law.

## CONCLUSION

Marriage is a common custom of a society the Kora of Dhalla village also practices this custom, but the procedures of the marriage are getting changed over time. They are leaving the system of their own and acculturation of the procedures is being held between the Hindu caste system and their own custom.

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