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Two Hatti Tribe Brothers Marry Same Woman in Rare Polyandrous Wedding in Himachal Pradesh

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In a rare revival of an age-old tribal tradition, two brothers from Himachal Pradesh's Hatti community married the same woman in a public polyandrous ceremony held in Shillai village, Sirmaur district. The marriage, based on mutual consent, follows the customary practice of "Jodidara", a form of fraternal polyandry unique to the region's tribal culture.

The brothers, Pradeep and Kapil Negi, wed Sunita Chauhan of nearby Kunhat village during a three-day traditional celebration attended by hundreds of villagers. The practice, while uncommon today, has historical roots in the Hatti tribe's efforts to preserve family unity and prevent division of ancestral land.

"We made the decision together," said Pradeep, a government employee. "This tradition allows us to live as one family, with shared responsibilities." His younger brother, Kapil, who works overseas, added that the arrangement ensures "stability and collective support" for their wife.

The wedding, which included local rituals, folk songs, and dance, was conducted with full community support. According to tribal leaders, such unions, although rare now, continue to be legally and socially accepted within the Hatti community. Under the "Jodidar Law," tribal customs like polyandry are recognized by the Himachal Pradesh High Court as part of customary tribal practice.

Kundan Singh Shastri, General Secretary of the Kendriya Hatti Samiti, explained, "This tradition was historically important for survival. It helped maintain undivided land holdings and strengthened joint families in remote hill regions."

While the practice of polyandry has declined in recent decades due to increasing literacy and urban migration, a few such weddings have taken place in the Trans-Giri region in recent years. Elders say it symbolizes the resilience of tribal identity amid modern societal shifts.

The Hatti tribe, which received Scheduled Tribe status in 2022, resides mainly in the Sirmaur district and parts of Uttarakhand. With their customs preserved under state-recognized tribal law, such ceremonies remain protected expressions of cultural heritage.