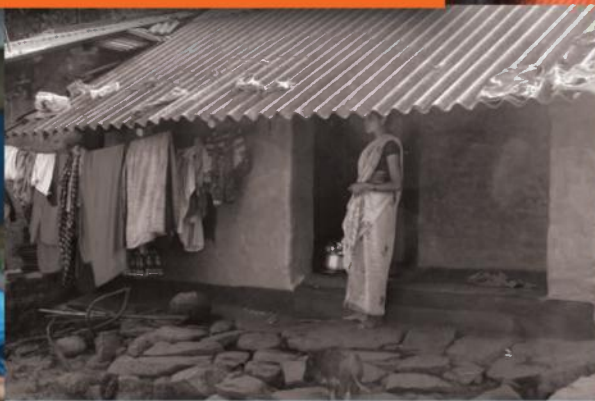




# PARENKA

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes  
Research and Training Institute  
(SCSTRTI), C.R.P. Square,  
Bhubaneswar-751003  
2018



# PREFACE

Odisha, is well known for its large variety of tribal communities dwelling in different parts of the State. SCSTRTI has taken an earnest Endeavour for publication of photo hand books on all the Odishan tribal communities, by presenting their illustrative short ethnography to show the readers a glimpse of their socio-cultural traditions, and customs, institutions, rituals and festivals, economy and changing life style.

The Parenga is a little known tribe of Odisha, mainly concentrated in Nandapur, Lamtaput area of Koraput district and are sporadically distributed in Malkanigiri, Kalahandi, Sundargarh and Bolangir districts. They are divided into two subgroups (bansha) such as vaishya and putuli. According to them, the nomenclature 'Peranga' has been derived from the term kerang, as they were preparing their apparels out of kerang fibers in the past. Thurston (1909) believed them to be a section of the Gadaba tribe, while R.C.S. Bellopined that they are a branch of Bonda or Didayi. They belong to Austro-Asiatic group and speak gorum, a dialect of proto Munda family. They are bilingual and conversant with the local lingua franca Desia (Odia) and Telugu for intergroup communication. As per the 2011 census their population in the State, is 9445.

Cultivation is the mainstay of their subsistence economy, which they supplement by allied pursuits like shifting cultivation, share cropping, wage earning, livestock rearing, seasonal forest collection, hunting, fishing, rope making, khali stitching and carpentry etc.

Their family is nuclear, monogamous and patrilineal. They are polytheists and their religion is an admixture of animism and Hinduism. They have their own traditional community council both at the village level (panchdi) and regional level to deal with their customary matters. Although modernization has influenced their traditional life style, they have kept their cultural identity intact.

I am thankful to co-authors Dr. P. Patel, the former Research Officer of ATLC and Shri B. K. Paikray (former R. A. of SCSTRTI) who have contributed immensely in producing this colourful Photo Hand Book. I also thank Shri S.C. Mohanty (Consultant) for his valuable inputs and editorial work to enrich this book. I hope that this book will be helpful to researchers, academician and general public.

**Prof. (Dr.) A.B. Ota**  
Director (SCSTRTI) &  
Special Secretary to Govt.

# PARENKA

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# IDENTITY

The Parenga is numerically a small and little known Scheduled Tribe of Odisha, mainly concentrated in Nandapur and Lamptaput area of Koraput district and are sparsely distributed in Malkangiri, Kalahandi, Sundargarh and Bolangir districts of the State. They claim to be the autochthones of their habitat. According to their annals, they were referred to as Kerang Poroja by their neighbouring communities during distant past as they used to wear apparels made of Kerang fibres, for which the name of the community has subsequently been changed into Pareng Poroja and lastly as Parenga. The term Poroja is conglomeration of several endogamous communities and Parenga is one among them. The epithet Parenga in local tongue Odia denotes rayats, signifying a class of people, who during distant past had their distinct existence as persons ruled by the then monarch of the kingdom. According to Thurston (1909) the Parenga are a section of Gadava while R.C.S. Bell opined them as a branch of Bondo or Didayi.

The Parengas have Proto-Australoid origin. Linguistically, they belong to Austro-Asiatic group and speak gorum- a Munda language as their mother tongue. It is a non literary dialect of proto Munda family of languages belonging to South Munda branch. Some linguists identify their language with that of the Gadaba. According to Prof. Ramamurti, their language closely resembles that of the Savaras of Parlakhemundi. Parengas can understand and speak Odia but most of them can speak Telugu and Desia.





## Population & Literacy :

As per 2011 census their population, in the State is 9445 among whom, 4532 are males and 4913 are females. The sex ratio is 1084 females per 1000 males. Their level of literacy is 32.78 percent of which male literacy is 46.95 percent and female literacy is 20.09 percent.





## Personal Adornments:

Dressing pattern of Parenga is very simple and is devoid of any distinctive cultural marks to distinguish them from other communities. As they like to live in isolation in remote area in early days, they struggle hard for their survival and subsisted by food gathering only. Their dress pattern was influenced accordingly to the barest minimum. At that time they used to wear only a short loin cloth made out of Kereng fibers to conceal their pubic regions only for which they acquired the nomenclature of *Parenga*. The old persons in *Parenga* villages often say that previously they used to prepare their own cloth called *kerang*. Such practices have gradually disappeared in course of time.

Traditionally, in their day to day life, the Parenga men wear loin clothes and their women wear a short piece of hand woven coarse cloth around their waist, leaving the upper parts of the body fully uncovered.

Presently, the trend of modernity has been reflected in their personal appearance. Now their males wear *dhoti*, *lungi*, pants, shirts, banyan etc. and females wear printed and coloured sarees with *saya* and blouse etc coping with the modern fashion.

Like all women, the Parenga women to enhance their beauty and charm adorn themselves with varieties of ornaments. They wear *jhuntia* (toe ring) in their leg fingers, *pati*, *pailu* and *goda khadu* in their ankle, *antadar* (waist band) around their waist, *tinki mudi* (finger rings) in their fingers, glass and brass bangles, *gajul*, *gendukadhi* and *kakhan* in their wrists, *bandaria*, *katuria*, *kalturi* and *baju* on their arms, *khagala*, *nan*, *khipimali*, *sadhasora*, *dhanmali*, *sadhamali*, *kaliyamali* and bead necklaces-*gunjumali* made of tropical bamboo or clumsy wood around their neck. They also wear *khanja*, *kanjaluli*, *hirabauli*, *julupi* and *nadiamodi* on their earlobes and *tamatilu* in their ear helix, *dandi*, *asguna*, *nat*, *mudi* and *labangakadi* in their nose septum and *khosojka*, *chipna* and *dimsuja* on their hair bun and also decorate it with seasonal wild blossoms to look beautiful and attractive. Usually their ornaments are made of gold, brass, copper, nickel, silver, aluminum, beads, glass or herbal seeds and are available in their local markets. Tattooing was an old fashion, done by experienced women of their own community which has been discarded by young girls now-a-days.

Men wear gold rings in their nose and ears and silver rings in their fingers. Some males wear small *malis* around their necks. They use castor and jasmine oil on hair.

# HABITAT SETTLEMENT & HOUSING

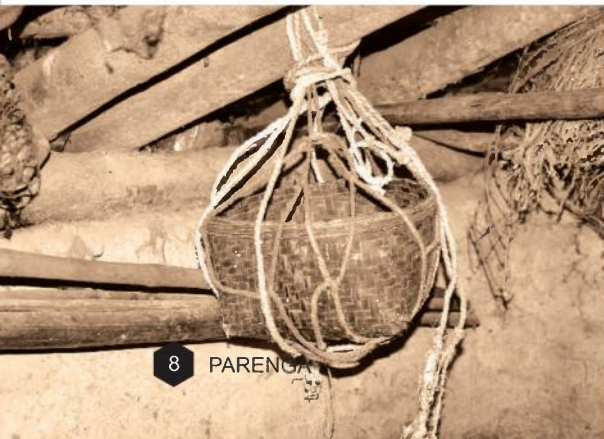




The undivided Koraput District which is the homeland of the Parengas, is a mini tribal Odisha. Lying above 3000' plateau, it has picturesque natural scenery with rolling mountains, meadows, roaring rivers, rapid waterfalls, lakes, water reservoirs, valleys and primitive and colourful tribal inhabitants. People here enjoy varieties of living in different seasons with its misty morning of the monsoon months, golden autumn, severe winter, thrilling spring and mild summer. The region has the largest tribal concentration. The geographical location still keeps this territory isolated from the coastal areas although these areas are fast opening to the outside world with development of communication facilities. One enters the elevating ghat roads spirally ascending the lofty hills and descending the steep valleys passing through many sophisticated railway tunnels through high range mountains touching different tourist spots of interest en-route.



The Parenga habitat is generally located amidst irregular topography with amazing landscapes of the Konda Kamberu mountain ranges of the great Eastern Ghats situated at about 3000 feet above the sea level, surrounded by lush green vegetation of deep forest. It has an intimate interface with life sustaining bountiful nature, found in hills and dales, rapids that swirl in the valleys of Koraput. It extends to the adjoining states of Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in the districts of Vishakhapatnam and Bastar respectively.







The Parenga houses are small and mostly have two rooms; one is the bedroom and other is the store. The house is built by using clay, mud for the wall and straw or a wild grass (*piri*) for the roof. The inner room i.e., the store room where material belongings are kept in the sanctum where the family deity is worshiped. Nobody except the clan members is allowed to enter the room. The house has a single door and no windows for ventilation. A wide verandah is provided at the front. The walls are made of split bamboos and wattles plastered with mud. The roof is thatched with straw. The domestic animals are sheltered in a shed lying close to the house. The *Disari* (the village priest) is consulted to fix an auspicious day for laying the foundation of the house.

In typical Parenga settlements, their houses lie in irregular clusters scattered here and there. Some ethnic deities are found settled in the middle of the village. At the center of the village, lies the community meeting place called *sadar* marked by laying of flat stone slabs for sitting. The dancing arena is located near the *sadar*, where ethnic dances are performed on different socio-religious occasions.



# SOCIAL LIFE



Parenga is an endogamous community which is divided into two sub groups namely as *vaishya* and *putuli* which are sub divided into various exogamous clans (*bansa*) that regulate their sex and marriage. As all the members of a particular *bansa* are regarded as siblings no marriage among them is allowed. The clans, which are of equal status, are totemistic and are named after various animals and natural objects such as *khila* (tiger), *khinbudi* (bear), *khora / surya* (sun), *ontal* (cobra), *golari / hanu* (monkey), *pangi* (vulture), *kankara* (crab), *machha* (fish) *pujari* and *sis* etc. they suffix their clan names after their first name, as their surname. They also use *majhi* and *muduli* as their surname.



Parenga families are nuclear, patrilocal and patrilineal in structure. Vertically extended families or joint families are found in rare cases. Inheritance of ancestral property follows the rule of equigeniture in male line only. In cases, where the family having no male successor, the daughters can inherit the parental property. Issueless families may adopt a male child from among the nearest patri-lineage, who can inherit the adopted father's office, title as well as property. In Parenga family the juniors respect the seniors. Relationships between the family members are very cordial.



# LIFE CYCLE

## Pregnancy:

After the seventh month of the conception of a woman, first her paternal family presents her delicious sweet meats according to her desire. This is followed by their lineage members and other relatives. During the ninth month of pregnancy, they observe the pre-delivery ritual *gotabangaba* conducted by their magico-religious specialist *Sisa* and his female counterpart *Gurumai* to appease the malevolent deity *Sani* and *Kamini* to avert ill omens that might harm the foetus and the expectant mother by offering vermilion, ragi powder, *mohua* liquor, egg and a fowl. The expectant mother is imposed with certain taboos like not to eat the meat of the ritually sacrificed animal, take alcoholic drinks, consume hard food stuffs which can affect digestive system, stomach and intestine, sleep alone, travel in darkness, visit cremation ground, expose during lunar or solar eclipses etc. She is also forbidden to take intoxicating drinks in any form, rice gruel, and flesh of wild boars, jackfruits and pumpkins. A pregnant woman has to perform all her routine activities except hard work right up to the day of delivery.

## Child birth:

The birth of a child is usually arranged in a separate hut or in a confined enclosure, specifically constructed in their rear verandah or backside of their living room to be used as lying in chamber. They engage an experienced woman as midwife (*sutrani*) from Dom, Gadaba or Jhodia community to help for easy and safe delivery of the baby. The most experienced woman of the village also remains present in the laying-in-room. The umbilical cord is cut off using a broken piece of earthen ware (*jhikirakati*) or by a knife or blade by the midwife and the placenta (*pou*) is buried in the backyard of the house near the fence, keeping it in an earthen pot covered by a lid. The baby is anointed with oil and turmeric paste and bathed after birth.



Birth pollution continues for five days (*chhutakipurudu*) and during this period the mother cannot enter into the kitchen. On the fifth day they observe the purificatory rite *handidharani*. They also observe name giving ceremony on the same day or on the tenth day conducted by their priest *Disari* and the new born baby is given a name according to the name of the week he/she has taken birth. They observe the first cereal eating of the baby after sixth month of the baby and the tonsure (*balutarani*) ceremony when the baby attains one year of age. Ear piercing ceremony (*kanbida*) and nose piercing (*nakbida*) rites are held for the baby after he/she attains five years of age.

### Puberty rite:

Parenga observe puberty rites for their adolescent girls, after onset of the first menarche. The girl is segregated for a period of seven to nine days in an isolated room and is looked after by an elderly experienced woman. During her seclusion, she is prohibited to look or be looked at by any male person. An earthen lamp is kept burning in the seclusion room uninterruptedly during her period of confinement. She also is imposed with certain prohibitions regarding brushing her teeth, using any utensils for her dining and sleeping on earthen floor. After the pollution period is over she takes her purificatory bath at the early dawn, in the nearby hill stream, accompanied by her girl friends, anointing her body with turmeric paste and *Kusum* oil and disposes all her used clothes there and wears new clothes presented by her family. When she approaches home, their *Disari* pours a pitcher full of holy water over her head and scarifies either a pig or a fowl for the girl after which the cleansing rite is over. Then her maternal uncle presents her new clothes and some cosmetics. In the evening the family hosts a non-vegetarian feast to lineage members and guests along with country liquor.





## Marriage:

The Parenga follow the rule of community endogamy and clan exogamy. In their society adult marriage and monogamy are the norm, but instances of polygyny are rare but allowed where the first wife is found to be barren. Child marriage was a past tradition. Residence after marriage is patrilocal.

Modes of acquiring mates includes *mangani biha* (marriage by negotiation), *udia* (marriage by elopement), *jhika* (marriage by capture), *bada* or *badal kaniya* (marriage by exchange), *rajiruja* (love marriage by mutual consent) and by *dhuka* (marriage by intrusion) and *gharjuian* (marriage by service).

They consider marriage, arranged through negotiation called the *mangani biha* or *raibadi*, as ideal and prestigious mode of acquiring a spouse. The groom's parents take initiatives to find a suitable bride for their son. They engage a mediator for the purpose. After selection of the bride, the groom's parents proceed to the bride's house to put forth the proposal. They take with them a jar of country liquor *mohuli* as present. If it is accepted by the bride's parents, then the proposal is considered to be accepted. The marriage is settled after both sides exchange several visits.

Payment of bride price *jholla/ jola* is obligatory and is settled during the process of negotiation. It is paid both in cash and kind consisting of dresses for the bride, a saree for the bride's mother (*guhuluga*), a cloth for the bride's mother's brother (*mamumada*), a ring for the bride (*chinamudii*, bead necklaces, vermilion and eye liner *kajal*, goats, sheep, rice beer (*chauji*), a fowl for girl's friends (*chinaluchm*). The bride is escorted to marriage *pendal* prepared in her paternal house in a procession accompanied by her parents and female companions, lineage members and guests, singing their wedding folk songs to the tune of melody provided by their drum beaters. The wedding rites are conducted there.

First, they observe the *lagini* rite in the auspicious moment as prescribed by the *Disari*. The women assembled there ritually bathe the groom and the bride anointing them with turmeric paste and oil. Then the bride and groom proceed to the marriage alter wearing their wedding costume and the crown made of mango twigs.

Their traditional priest *Disari*, officiates in the wedding ritual. He performs the rites by chanting hymns and sprinkling holy water over the bridal couple. Then they observe the *biribhat khiani* rite in a room, where a special dish prepared by mixing *arua* rice with black gram is served to the couple. The groom and the bride enjoy it by feeding each other. All the men present there rush there to have a share of the ritual dish. After that they observe the *kadahandi* rite in which all the guests smear clay on each other's face and make merry. Then they proceed to the nearest hill stream take bath and return. They are entertained with a sumptuous non vegetarian wedding feast accompanied by drinks of country liquor.

The newlywed couple stays in their in-law's house waiting for the auspicious moment as prescribed by the *Disari* to return to the patrilocal residence of the groom. The marriage is consummated in groom's home on the day fixed by the *Disari*.

Junior levirate, junior sororate and cross cousin marriages are allowed in their society, but not the parallel cousin marriage. A man can marry his father's sister's daughter or mother's brother's daughter but not his father's brother's daughter or mother's sister's daughter.

Similarly widows, widowers and divorcees are allowed to remarry. Divorce is allowed and either party can seek divorce on the ground of maladjustment in conjugal life, misbehavior, cruelty, poor maintenance, extra marital relationship, alcoholism and suffering from incurable diseases etc. The traditional community council decides the cases of divorce. If the divorced woman remarries another man then the second husband has to refund the bride price to her first husband which is called *sagarta*. In some cases the widow can remarry her deceased husband's younger brother.



## Death Rites:

The Parenga practise both cremation and burial to dispose of their dead. Dead body of small children and small pox victims are buried but in case of unnatural deaths occurred due to falling from tree, snake bite, tiger attack, child birth or suicide, their corpses are tabooed to be disposed of in their traditional crematoria and for that purpose they bury these dead bodies in an isolated place inside the forest, as they think that deceased's souls might become an evil spirit and can do harm to villagers. The body of an expectant woman is disposed of by cremation.

After the death of a person, the news (*mad a bartani*) is communicated the villagers and to all the relatives who after being informed congregate in the house of the deceased to take part in the crematory/burial rites. The corpse is placed in the court yard, keeping its head towards north and face upwards. It is bathed, anointed with turmeric paste mixed with oil and clad by a white cloth. The lineage members make a bier (*dangla*) using seven sal poles tied by *siali* fibers. The pallbearers (*maradandia*) carry the corpse to the crematoria and the Dom musicians play the music by beating drum in front of the procession, followed by the eldest son of the deceased who carries fire in an earthen pot to ignite the pyre. After disposal of the dead, they take bath in the nearest hill stream and return to the deceased's house, where they take mango barks with water (*pitachaba*) for purification.

Death pollution continues for ten days. During the pollution period, observance of rituals and festivals, visiting the deities, offering oblations, giving alms to beggars, relishing non vegetarian items, using oil and sexual union etc. are strictly tabooed.

They observe the first purificatory rite *pitabadon* the third day in which the pallbearers, the clan members along with the *Disari* visit the crematoria in dark night, where they sacrifice a fowl and offer cooked rice and chicken along with country wine in a leaf plate to the departed soul and eat it there.

The final purificatory rite *badbud* is observed on the tenth day near their bathing ghat where the lineage male members cut their hair, shave the beards and females pair off their nails. Then they take the purificatory bath and wear new clothes, provided by the bereaved family and dispose of their used clothes there. They also throw away all their used earthen wares and clean their home with cow dung water. In the evening the bereaved family hosts a non vegetarian feast to all the villagers, guests, relatives and lineage members along with country liquor.

They have no tradition for construction of monument on the memory of the departed soul nor for conducting the annual *sradha* rite for the deceased. However, on an auspicious occasion, they immerse the bones of the dead in holy water for salvation of the deceased soul.





A photograph of two women walking on a dirt path through a lush, green forest. The woman on the left is carrying a large white sack filled with sticks or branches on her head. The woman on the right is carrying a large, colorful, patterned bundle on her head. Both women are wearing traditional clothing. The path is shaded by the trees, and the overall scene is bright and natural.

# LIVELIHOOD

Cultivation is mainstay of their subsistence economy which they supplement with allied pursuits, such as shifting cultivation, share cropping, wage earning both in agriculture and industrial sectors, livestock rearing, seasonal forest collection, fishing, rope making and *khali* stitching etc.

Most of them practice shifting cultivation. Wet and settled agriculture is limited to those having some land. They supplement their income from land through forest collection and wage earning for which some of them temporarily migrate to work in major projects which are executed in the area. They grow vegetables like brinjal, pumpkin, tomato etc in their kitchen gardens and sell these things in the nearby weekly markets. They visit weekly markets and towns and at the same time they dispose of their produce at the door steps of the visiting Dom traders. Children start working right from the age of nine to ten years. No bonded labour is found among them.

They are settled agriculturalists and practice cultivation in whatever quantity of land they own privately. They have small patches of wet lands, located near foot hills which are irrigated by perennial hill streams. In the wet lands they produce their major crop paddy. In their uplands they usually cultivate *padadhan* (hill paddy), *ragi*, minor millets like *kangu*, *kosla*, pulses such as *kulthi* (horse gram), *biri* (black gram), *dangarani*, *bodhei* and red gram, *kandul* and maize etc. In their podu lands they grow *suan*, *khetjanna*, *janna* and oil seeds like *alsi*, mustard etc. Adjacent to their house, they possess small kitchen garden where they raise *ranikanda*, *langalkanda*, *kumuda* (pumpkin), cucumber (*kakudi*), ridge gourd (*janha*), *lau* (water guard), snake guard (*chhachindra*), *ghatu*, *jhudunga* (cow-pea) *semi* / *jhota* (pea), *tendka semi*, *buta*

*semi*, *jabasaru*, *sarukanda*, green leaves and varieties of seasonal vegetables like brinjal, cauliflower, cabbages, radishes, tomatoes (*patalghanta*), pumpkin (*kumuda*) and chili etc. Some among them know carpentry and house construction as well as house thatching. They can make and repair agricultural implements, doors and windows.

Parenga women contribute substantially to their family income by participating in cultivation, wage earning and by collection of forest products, such as seasonal fruits, roots, tubers like *pitakanda*, *serenda*, *tarekkanda*, bamboo shoots (*karadi*), green leaves, grasses, fodders, medicinal herbs, fire woods, varieties of mushrooms, flowers, fibers and bamboo and varieties of seeds both for consumption and extraction of oil for domestic consumption.





## Food and drinks:

Parenga are purely non vegetarian. Rice and ragi are their staple cereals. They relish on meat, chicken, eggs, fish, dry fish, beef and pork etc. Besides that they also consume different locally produced minor millets like *suan*, *khetjanna*, *janna*, *kangu*, maize, pulses and seasonal vegetables. During lean season, they mainly depend on varieties of roots, shoots, fruits, flowers, green leaves, mushrooms, mango kernel and bamboo *karadi* collected from forest, for their diet and survival.

In past their staple food was maize and ragi, but now they have started eating rice as their staple food. Salt is generally purchased by payment either in cash or in kind. Their cooking medium is *olsi* (linseed), mustard and groundnut oil. Whenever they can afford to they consume milk and milk products. Fruits are eaten as per the seasons. Mango is first eaten after the celebration of the *chait parab*, tamarind after *Osa Parab* and rice after *Dasera*.

They are addicted to alcoholic beverages like country liquor *mohuli*, rice beer (*pendum*), *ragi* beer (*kusuna*), *datepalm* juice *toddy* and *sagopalm* juice (*salap*) etc. Their favorite alcoholic drinks include *salap* and *pendum*, which they prepare at home or purchase from outside. Both men and women take alcohol. Both males and females are habituated smoking hand rolled. cigar (*pikka*, *bidi*) and chewing tobacco paste.



# MAGICO RELIGIOUS BELIEFS & PRACTICES

The Parengas are polytheists. They profess animism with admixture of few elements of Hinduism. Their pantheon includes a number of deities who are natural objects. *Dartani* (goddess earth) is their supreme deity. She and her consort *gudidevta* remain in the sacred grove at the village outskirts.

*Hundi* and *Nisani* are their village deities. *Mulamunda / Pidar* is their household deity, installed in the corner of their kitchen and is worshipped by their women. They also worship deities, such as *budhima*, *mauli*, *gangama* (water deity), *mermind* (rain god), *rangesari*, *patakhanda*, *darturula* (forest god) etc. Besides, they worship many Hindu deities like, *Siva*, *Durga*, *Ganesh*, *Jagannath*, *Laxmi* and *Hanuman* etc. in different festivals. They do not worship their totems. They also make pilgrimage to Puri to worship Lord Jagannath, Bhubaneswar to worship *Lingaraj* and Lord *Gupteswar* installed near river *Saberi* in *Baipariguda* area of Koraput.





They believe in the existence of spirits and ghosts, out of which some are benevolent and others are malevolent. They are called *duma*, *rakhas*, *pichasuni*, *daini* etc. In order to get rid of those evil spirits, they seek the help of their traditional witch doctor *sisal* and *uremia* who by conducting their magical practices appeases those evil spirits by offering periodical oblations such as eggs, country wine module, *koruna*, and by sacrificing fowls etc.

Sacred specialties known as *Disarm* and *Sisal* (Priest) officiate in various rituals. The *Sisal* is the village priest who worships the village deity as well as acts as a shaman to protect them from the evil spirits and deities. All the important festivals like *Pus Punier*, *Chait Parob*, *Baura*, *Bandapan*, *Osa Parob*, *Dasera*, etc are observed by them in which the *Disari* and the *Sisa* officiates.

*Jhakar Yatra* is their major festival, which they observe during the month of *chait* and *pond* (*magusur*). Other festivals they observe are *nuakhai* during *phagun*, *amnua* during *chait*, *asadh yatra* during *asadh*, *bandapan* during the month *bandapan* (*sraban*) , *dhannua* during *osha* (*bhod*) and *hundi yatra* during the month of *diwali* (*kartik*) etc. Besides that, they also celebrate many Hindu festivals like *raja*, *rath yatra*, *gamha*, *daserah*, *diwali*, *holi*, and *jagar* etc.

On the day of *Pus Punei*, they take great care of their cattle, washing them and anointing them with turmeric paste. A grand feast is also arranged in the village for all and good food is also given to the animals. In *Chait Parob* they worship *Nangseri*, on which goats and fowls are sacrificed to the deity. The festival continues for eight to ten days and during this time they pursue communal hunting in the nearby forest. This is also the occasion for eating the mango fruit for the first time. *Bandapana* which is observed in *Sravana*, is the occasion for taking the gaur twigs for the first time.

They possess rich folk traditions. Their folk songs include *khindiri geet*, *oli geet*, *kemta geet* which they sing while performing *dhemsa nat* during their marriage ceremony. Likewise they sing *salodi geet* and *bent geet* during their communal hunting ceremony. The other folk songs are *tode*, *budia*, *khatani*, sung during de-gassing in their cornfield. The females sing *ninjani geet*, *bali geet*, *tel geet* and *baina geet* etc.

Their folk dances include *kathinat*, *dhemsa*, *uansamunda* and *saimoldi* etc. They use drums, *tamaka*, *ghumra* and flutes while performing dances. They are known for *Chait Parob* songs and *Demsha* dance. Both men and women participate in the dance. The *Dhemsa* dance is performed during the *Chait Parob* and *lathidudia* during *Pus Parob*. In performing the *dhemsa* dance, a large number of women stand in a circle holding each other's hands and dancing in a rhythm to the accompaniment of the music. Other types of dance such as *gottar* and *ghumura* are also performed. In *gottar* they use swords and sticks while dancing. They get the services of the musicians during marriage and death rites and on the occasion of communal dances during celebration of festivals.





# SOCIAL CONTROL

The Parenga possess their own traditional community council both at the village level as well as at the regional level. Their village council is known as **Panchadi**. It is headed by the secular head-naik who is assisted by the sacred specialist-**disari**, the magico-religious specialist-sisa and the messenger-chalan. The village elders are the members of the council. Their meeting place is called *sadar*. The annual session of the council is held on *chait parab* in the month of *chait*. Their regional community council is called *mutha* and is headed by *mutha naik*, who is assisted by *pujari*-the priest and the *naiks* of member settlements and *barik*-their messenger.

The post of *naik*, *mutha naik*, *disari*, *pujari* and *sisa* are hereditary whereas the *chalan* and *barik* assume their offices through nomination. They are selected from Dom community and get remuneration in kinds from each individual Parenga family of the settlement on annual basis.

Their community council acts as the guardian of their traditional norms and customs and adjudicates cases pertaining to family disputes, theft, rape, premarital pregnancy, incest, molestation, partition of property, separation, divorce, inter village rifts and violation of customary norms etc. It also organizes their feasts and festivals.

Their office bearers are highly esteemed persons and the council is also empowered to punish the offenders or can ostracize for breaking their customary norm and traditions, after judging the gravity of the crime committed by the culprit. The *Naik* had traditionally been given a high place in Parenga society as he was the agent of the *Zamindar* at the village level for the collection of

land revenue. He was also responsible for the maintenance of law and order.

The Parenga village functions as an independent socio-economic unit. The festivals are observed in the village communally. They are expert hunters and all the villagers join in hunting together. Social observances like birth and death are communal affairs in which everyone participates. Unnatural death from tiger bites, falls from trees, burning or drowning are held to be the consequences of serious crime. The members of the household in such cases are out-casted. They are accepted into the caste and their normal social inter-course is restored only when they undergo penance. If anyone marries outside their tribe he is also out-casted. Such matters are usually referred to *Naik*.





# CHANGING SCENE

The Parenga are numerically a small tribe of Odisha who during the past usually liked to live isolated and undisturbed in their remote sylvan habitat, with their age old traditional subsistence economy. After independence, the Government has launched many developmental programmes for uplifting the socio-economic standard of the tribes. The implementations of various income generating schemes and development of infrastructures helped their exposure to the modern world and influenced them for development. With passage of time as they have come in close contact with the neighbouring caste Hindus, they have incorporated so many cultural elements for which changes are seen in their material culture.

The age old traditions, customary societal organizations are declining under culture contact and modernization. Their means of subsistence and occupational pattern have also changed. Their age-old tradition of barter system has changed to money system. The traditional exchange system was a key factor of solidarity but now it has totally disappeared. Change has been observed in many facets of their life like: their living pattern, social customs, food habits and dress pattern. There is increasing tendency of using modern articles such as T.V., radio, mobile phone, motor cycle; mill made cloths, cosmetics etc. The importance of religious functionaries has declined and in many cases the rituals are observed symbolically.







Through the interference of development plans and programmes, their existence, economical status, communication and living style has been changed. Government initiatives basically by establishment of ITDAs have created a lot of positive impact on overall development of education, agriculture, communication, drinking water, housing, health and sanitation. Initiatives have also been taken at Gram Panchayat and Block Level to create awareness among them about different development schemes so that they can reap the benefit out of it and become prosperous.

At present the Parengas have become one of the most progressive tribes in the district of Koraput. Predominantly in the field of cultivation, they are using fertilizers, pesticides, improved seeds and modern techniques and hardly suffer from indebtedness. Now they are going through a period of transition where in one end they continue their traditional life and in the other they are fashioning their life style as the mainstream world.



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