

# PAROJA

**Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute  
(SCSTRTI), CRPF square, Bhubaneswar – 751003**

**2013**



## FOREWORD

In south Odisha they are well known as Paraja, Parja or Poroja- a localized version of the Odia term Praja literally meaning the common people, i.e. subjects as distinct from the former ruling chiefs called the Raja or the Zamindar in pre-independence period. A legendary tradition of the tribe says that formerly the Rajas and the Prajas lived like brothers. Later while the former took to luxury and comforts like riding horses, the latter accepted the hardship of carrying burdens. Another meaning of the term 'Paraja' in Odia language, is the tenant (peasant) or Royat. They say that their original name is '*bastaria*' as they have migrated from Bastar area of Madhya Pradesh.

They are a major Scheduled Tribe of Odisha and are also found in Andhra Pradesh, undivided Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Assam. The tribe inhabiting the hills and valleys of southern Odisha with the largest chunk found in Koraput district followed by Nabrangpur, Malkangiri, Kalahandi and Rayagada districts has its largest concentration in Odisha which they regard as their homeland.

Their mother tongue *Parji* is a form of Gondi belonging to Dravidian family of languages. But now most of them living in undivided Koraput district speak the regional language called "*Desia*"

Their socio-cultural features have many commonalities with the neighbouring tribes i.e, the Gond, the Kondh and the Gadaba. They are in general, strong, stout and hardworking. Compared to other tribal communities, they show some cultural differences, especially in respect of their settlement pattern, dress and ornaments, economic life, belief and worship, manners, customs and folk traditions. They are simple, friendly and hospitable, but like to remain aloof from the people of other communities as they are shy by nature.

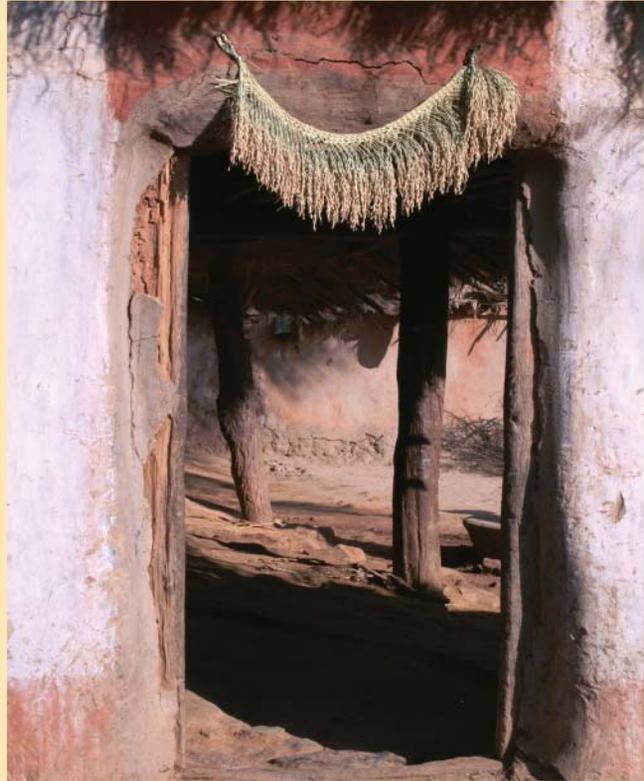
Socially, they are dichotomized into two broad subdivisions i.e., Bada Paroja and Sana Paroja. The former section is more Hinduised and abstain from taking beef whereas the latter are still primitive and reportedly take beef. The Bada Paroja has sub-sections like Sodia Paroja, Jhodia Paroja, Bada Jhodia Paroja, Penga Paroja and the latter is composed of endogamous groups like Konda Paroja or Bareng Jhodia Paroja, Selia Paroja or Chhelia Paroja who were goat breeders in the past.

They are hill cultivators with expertise in settled cultivation and shifting cultivation which is the mainstay of their subsistence economy.

This photographic documentation of their life style is a part of the series on the tribes of Odisha. Prof (Dr) A.B. Ota, Director and Shri S.C. Mohanty, O.S.D. (Research) of SCSTRTI have taken all the pains in preparing this colourful booklet. I thank them sincerely and hope that it will be useful for all who are interested in the tribal culture of Odisha.

Commissioner-cum-Secretary  
ST & SC Development Department  
Government of Odisha

# PAROJA



**A.B. Ota**  
**S.C. Mohanty**

**Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute**  
**CRPF Square, Bhubaneswar - 751003**

2013

## IDENTITY

**Paroja/ Parja/ Paraja** is one of the well-known major Scheduled Tribes (ST) of Odisha. They are also found in Andhra Pradesh, undivided Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra where they have been enlisted as scheduled tribe and in West Bengal and Assam to which they have migrated from Odisha in the recent past but do not enjoy the status of ST.

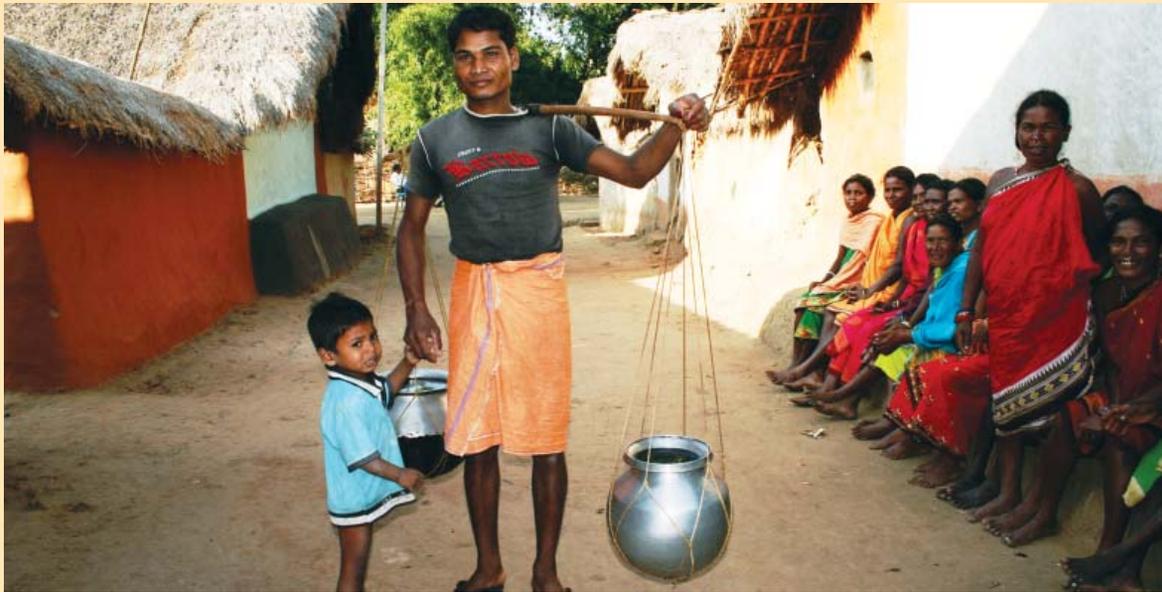


As compared to other states, the tribe has its largest concentration in Odisha which they regard as their homeland and where they number 3 17 301 persons (1 55 626 males and 1 61 675 females) accounting for 3.89 percent of the total ST population and enjoying the rank of the 10th largest ST of the state as per 2001 census. Their population has registered a decadal growth rate of 10.20% when compared with the 1991 census. Their literacy rate is 17.96% which is very low. Their male literacy is 30.95% and their female literacy is appallingly low i.e., 7.35%.

They inhabit the hills and valleys of southern Odisha with the largest chunk found in Koraput district followed by Nabrangpur, Malkangiri, Kalahandi and Rayagada districts in the descending order.



The Parojas are hill cultivators found in the districts of Ganjam and Koraput. The Parojas seem to have been inhabiting this country from about the second century of the Christian era. (*District Gazetteer: Koraput. 1966: 103*). Earlier ethnographers defined them as offspring of Dravidian stock. They say that their original name is 'bastaria' as they have migrated from Bastar area of Madhya Pradesh (now Chhatishgarh). Paroja is conglomeration of various endogamous sections and is not a compact community.





The term Paroja is a local Odia term sometimes pronounced as Paraja, Parja or Poroja. It is a impure form of Sanskrit word *Praja* literally means the common people, i.e. subjects or citizens as distinct from the former ruling chiefs called the Raja or the Zamindar in pre-independence period. One of the legendary traditions of the tribe also states that formerly the Rajas and the Prajas lived like brothers. Later the former took to luxury and comfortable living like riding horses, while the latter accepted the hardship of carrying burdens. The term 'Paraja' also has another meaning in Odia language, namely the tenant (peasant) or Royat. In the Madras census report 1871, Carmichael stated that Parja is a class denomination, the familiar epithet of *ryot* (cultivator).

Their mother tongue *Parji* is a form of Gondi belonging to Dravidian family of languages which varies according to locality influenced by the local tongues like Odia or Telugu. But now most of them living in undivided Koraput district speak the regional language called "Desia"





The Paroja have many socio-cultural features in common with the neighbouring major tribes namely, the Gond, the Kondh and the Gadaba. In Koraput, the Paroja live with other communities like the Rana, the Paika, the Mali, the Domb, the Gadaba and the Kondh.



They are in general, strong, stout and hardworking. Compared with other tribal communities, they show some cultural differences, especially in respect of their settlement pattern, dress and ornaments, economic life, belief and worship, manners, customs and folk traditions. They are simple, friendly and hospitable, but like to remain aloof from the people of other communities as they are shy by nature.



## DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

Their traditional dress pattern is plain and simple. Little children hardly wear any cloth but after reaching seven to eight years of age they wear a small piece of discarded clothing (*koupin*) which barely covers their loins. Adult males generally wear a small napkin or loin cloth (*langoti / kachha*) leaving the entire body completely naked. Females wear loom made coarse *sarees* purchased from local weavers or from weekly markets, which cover up to the knees and tied in a knot in the left shoulder. The saree and its typical wearing style makes it convenient to work in fields as well as to participate in dancing. Now-a-days, due to external contact, modern dresses like shirts, banyans, pants for males and blouses, coloured *sarees*, ribbons, etc. for females are becoming popular. These dresses are preferably worn during festive days or while visiting the market, fairs, friends and relatives.





Women love to adorn themselves with varieties of ornaments to beautify themselves. They put *kanjika*, *sikidiguba* and *suju* on their head, *phasi* and *jilligut* and rings on their earlobes, *dandi* on the helix of their nose and *mundra* on their nasal septum. They also wear *kagada*, *khadimadi* and *adalimadi* and coloured bead necklaces around their neck, *bajubandh* on their arms, coloured glass bangles around their wrist, varieties of finger rings such as *kumudaati*, *takahajer* (coin finger ring), *hitudhajer* on their finger and *godbada*, *painjali*, and *jetra*, etc on their anklets.



In their society use of nose and ear rings is a customary practice for the married women. A married woman must wear these rings lest she be subjected to social criticism. Silver rings called *shamka*, often studded with coins, are also worn around the fingers. On the toes they wear silver rings known as *bakuli* and *gungur*. The *khagla*, a kind of heavy and broad silver ring is used as a necklace, while a thinner type called *khadu* adorn the forearm and upper arm. Wearing *khagla* and *khadu* is compulsory for married women.

Their ornaments are simple and are usually made of silver, aluminum, brass and are available for purchase in local markets. The well-to-do families among them buy gold ornaments. Women comb their hair applying oil and style the bon at the right of back side. Females are fond of tattooing their body by skilled women belonging to Kela community with beautiful designs such as *kumbana*, *sikidibana*, *udulibana*, *hulbana*, *danbana* and *topa*, etc. to enhance their beauty and charm.



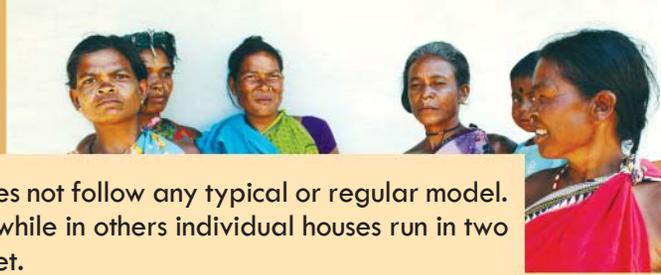


## SETTLEMENT & HOUSING



Paroja settlements are exclusively homogenous and unclan in structure and are usually located near foothills where perennial hill streams are flowing down the hills to provide them drinking water throughout the year. In multi ethnic villages they live in separate hamlets keeping social distance from other ethnic groups and maintaining their own cultural identity.





In typical Paroja habitations, the settlement pattern does not follow any typical or regular model. In some villages houses are scattered here and there, while in others individual houses run in two parallel rows facing each other along a common street.



In the village there are two important places called Berna Munda and Nissan Munda. Berna Munda is a centrally located place inside the village comprising a constellation of circular stone slabs where the village headman, leaders and elders sit down to discuss and decide village affairs. Sometimes, this place is in front of the headman's house and otherwise called Munda Dand. The Nissan Munda is another place where a circular stone slab is encircled by menhirs standing erect. This is the seat of the village deity called Hundi Debta.





The Paroja use indigenous raw materials like soil, mud, cow-dung (*lappy*), bamboo, wood, straw (*piri*) and country-made tiles (*jhikar*) for house construction. Laying the foundations of a new house involves elaborate rituals conducted by the village priest. Animals such as pigs or fowls are sacrificed to appease the deities and ensure hassle free construction of the house as well as the well-being of the family. The walls, verandah and floors are regularly maintained by plastering with cowdung and painting with red or white coloured soils. The roof is thatched with paddy straw or *piri* grass once a year. To protect the low thatched roofs from the cattle, wattle fencings are made around the house.



The typical feature of Paroja housing is that, like those of agricultural tribes namely the Kandha, the Bathudi, the Gond and the Santal, the Paroja houses, besides having a kitchen garden, have a verandah raised higher than floor level and a spacious courtyard on either side of the house. The verandah is used as a place for sitting, gossiping and sleeping. The doors are smaller in dimension but coloured and decorated with carvings. Inside the house, partitions are made for





the hearth and the kitchen, store and sleeping spaces. Generally, the houses are two roomed having no windows for ventilation. The bigger room near the entrance is usually used as living room-cum-store to stock their food stuffs whereas the smaller one is used as kitchen. In the kitchen a sacred space lying preferably at the eastern corner of the house is earmarked as the seat of family deities and ancestral spirits which is tabooed for entry for the outsiders.

Livestock like cattle, sheep, pigs and fowls are accommodated in separate sheds beside the house mostly in the open spaces between individual houses and the poultry is kept inside a small cabin either inside the house or on the verandah. Adjacent to the house there is a small kitchen garden fenced with bamboo splits.



Although the houses are similar in type, the size of the house and number of rooms vary according to the need and economic status of the individual household. Nowadays, well-to-do families are constructing big, spacious houses having more than two rooms. Some of them now have houses with brick walls and semi-permanent roofs using country-made tiles, asbestos sheets and multiple doors.



Affluent landowners among the Paroja living in Kalahandi district have large double-storied houses locally known as *Dhaba Ghar*. The *Dhaba Ghar* usually have country-made tile roofing. The upper storey is lower in height and used for storing grains, implements and other household assets.





The Paroja possess scanty household assets. Their utensils are comprised of earthen wares, gourd vessels to store drinking water and few aluminum utensils. Their winnowing fans, some bamboo baskets and wooden mortar and pestle are kept in the living room. The mortar is apparently big in size and at a time two women can take part in pounding the food grains. Hunting weapons like bows, arrows, knife, spears and axes are hung on the

walls of the living room. Grass mats, pillows made of wooden slabs are kept in a corner of their house and clothes are hung on a bamboo pole inside the room. A flat stone disc and a stone pestle are put aside the doorsteps to grind the spices and condiments.



## LIVELIHOOD

The Paroja are primarily hill cultivators. Settled cultivation as well as shifting cultivation is the mainstay of their subsistence economy. They live near perennial hill streams amidst hills, valleys and use the spring water to irrigate their terraced agricultural fields on hill slopes and valleys. They cultivate *dangardhan*, *ragi*, *alasi*, *khetjanna* (*bajra*), *kating*, *kasala*, *kandul*, *biri* (blackgram), *chana*, etc in their up lands, high yielding paddy in their low lands and maize, chilly, tobacco (*dhungia*), garlic, onion, cucumber, *kumuda* (pumpkin), *lau* (gourd) and varieties of vegetables in their kitchen garden.

For cultivation, the Paroja use very simple agricultural implements, namely the plough, spade, hoe, axe, etc. Cultivation of land, manuring, sowing, weeding, reaping, harvesting are done carefully and systematically. In all phases of agricultural operations mutual co-operation and coordination between people are striking features.

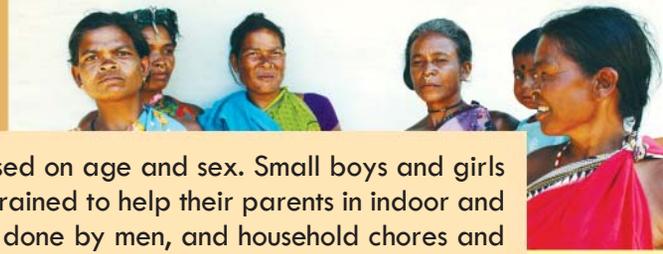




Besides cultivation, they supplement their livelihood with allied activities such as seasonal forest collection, hunting, fishing and livestock rearing. They rear domestic animals like cows, buffaloes, goats, sheep, pigs and fowls. They are skilled in carpentry, mat making, and in making country made tiles (*khapar*) and bricks.



Paroja society is governed by a division of labour based on age and sex. Small boys and girls are not assigned any work. Older boys and girls are trained to help their parents in indoor and outdoor activities. Usually hard work like ploughing is done by men, and household chores and minor agricultural operations are performed by women. Paroja women are more hardworking, meeker and milder than the men.



## FOOD HABITS

The Paroja are non-vegetarian. Rice and ragi are their staple food. Besides that they also consume several minor millets such as *kangu*, *kosla*, *khetjanna*, maize, mango kernel, sago palm stem powder and tamarind powder and varieties of seasonal roots and tubers.





They relish on non-veg foods like fish, chicken, crabs, snails, lizards, mouse, pork and flesh of buffalo. They are fond of eating fish and therefore catch fish from the hill streams, rivers and reservoirs. Eating of beef is strictly tabooed for them. Violation of this taboo is a sin and the sinner is ostracized from the community Both males and females consume country liquor (*mohuli*), rice beer (*landa*), millet beer (*pendum*) and sago palm juice (*salap*). Both men and women chew tobacco and males smoke self made cigars (*pikka*).





## SOCIAL LIFE

The Paroja tribe according to their social traits are dichotomized into two broad divisions i.e., Bada Paroja and Sana Paroja. The concept of purity is a vital factor to make distinction between these two sections and the underlying reason is that the former section is more Hinduised and abstain from taking beef whereas the latter is still primitive and reportedly take beef. The Bada Paroja constitute Sodia Paroja, Jhodia Paroja, Bada Jhodia Paroja Penga Paroja and the latter is represented by endogamous groups such as Konda Paroja or Bareng Jhodia Paroja Selia Paroja or Chhelia Paroja who were goat breeders during past.



All these sections are again subdivided into several totemistic exogamous septs such as *angaria*, *atimundia*, *bageria* (tiger), *baria* (wild boar), *bedia*, *chahaderia*, *chahia* (Champak tree), *chalia*, *chemia*, *chikamia*, *chhembia*, *chindria*, *dabia* (piri grass), *dindia* (egg of a bird), *hachodia*, *hadria*, *halkeria*, *handia*, *haranginia*, *jiria*, *kadengia*, *kanwakharia*, *kutesia*, *narkia*, *gadadia* (banana tree), *ganuria*, *girilia* (girli tree), *hukesia*, *jamudia* (Jamun tree), *kaledia*, *kaleria*, *kaletia* (a snake), *kartaria*, *katedia*, *katia*, *kharlia*, *kochia* (a type of eel), *kodikharia*, *kodinga*, *kodiparia* (a hill), *kucheria*, *kuhuria*, *kundaria*, *lauria*, *lulia*, *maribtia*, *marlia*, *murkharia*, *nangeria*, *nerkeria*, *ornagaria*, *rengia*, *sanderia*, *sodia*, *tarighatia*, *fitosia*, *tuadia*, *tualaria* and *tumudia* etc. These clans are named after the names of villages, hills, plants and animals. They rever their totemic objects and observe taboos for their social well-being.





## LIFE CYCLE

### Pregnancy, Child Birth & Afterwards



In the course of his life between birth and death, a Paroja individual passes through successive phases and crises of life. They have their own rational view that human life begins in the mother's womb and ends with death. They are quite aware of the fact that conception results from the sexual union of adult man and woman but with supernatural blessings. A pregnant woman is subjected to many taboos and restrictions in respect of her diet and daily activities for her well-being and safe delivery. However, in practice, pregnant women remain engaged in their daily chores till a very advanced stage and often up to the moment when the labour pains start.

They observe pre-delivery ritual-*gotuja* / *artiuja* on the ninth month of pregnancy conducted by female shaman (*bejuni* or *gurumai*) to get protected from ill omens and evil spirits by sacrificing a pig or fowl and offering rice, turmeric water, vermilion and resin.





At the time of childbirth the woman is confined to a room. Only elderly and experienced women and the traditional midwife attend the mother. Gurumai, the female shaman is called to conduct rituals for smooth delivery in case of trouble. After the delivery, the umbilical cord is cut by the midwife, and the child is given a bath near a pit dug in the courtyard of the house for this purpose.

The mother and the baby remain polluted and secluded inside the house until the naval cord dries up and the birth pollution continues till that time. On this day, the midwife throws the dried-up naval cord into the pit. The pit is then filled up with earth after lighting a lamp and incense sticks near it to ward off evil spirits.

Then the mother and the baby take bath and change clothes. Family deities are worshipped for the well-being of the family the and the newborn. The family's earthen cooking pots, and the clothes and beddings from the delivery room, are thrown away and replaced with new ones. A ritual is conducted to purify family members from birth pollution.





The midwife is remunerated with a new sari and food stuffs. Then the mother resumes her normal activities. On that evening they observe the name giving ceremony conducted by their traditional astrologer-*dissary* and female shaman- *gurumai*; using rice divination method and selecting a name from the names of the ancestors.

They observe the first cereal feeding of the baby after one month. A special dish of rice and pulses is prepared which is offered first to a cow and then a little paste is put on the baby's mouth. On that day, they also observe the tonsure and ear piercing ceremony conducted by the maternal uncle, *dissary* and *gurumai* and the family hosts a non-veg feast to the kinsfolk. In these ceremonies, the maternal uncle and grandparents play a vital role.



The child continues to be breast-fed up to two to three years of age. The grandparents or elderly children who are unfit for outdoor activities, always act as baby-sitters and take care of small children while parents are working outside. If there is no one, the mother usually carries the baby with her to the work site. The child grows up in an atmosphere of fondness and affection.

## PUBERTY RITE

The Paroja observe puberty rites for adolescent girls attaining their first menarche. The girl is secluded in an isolated room for seven days and during this period she is tabooed to look or talk with males and to perform any household chores. Pollution period continues for seven days and the girl takes her purificatory bath on the dawn of the eighth day in the nearest hill stream anointing with turmeric paste. Her family and relatives present her new clothes and cosmetics and on the evening a non-vegetarian feast is served to kinsfolk and relatives along with country liquor- *mohuli*.



## MARRIAGE

In the Paroja community, adult marriage and monogamy is the norm. They regard, marriage, arranged through negotiation (*kudianala*) is ideal and prestigious and for that it is the common practice. In other cases they resort to other modes of marriages such as by capture (*jhikanata*), by service (*gharaon*), by mutual consent (*manaraje*), by elopement (*udilia*) and by exchange (*badulu*) etc.

Cross cousin marriage is a preferential mode of marriage in which a man may claim traditionally, to marry with his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter. Junior levirate and junior sororate are permissible by which a man can marry the widow of his deceased elder brother (*boudeurghar*) and deceased wife's younger sister (*tada*). Remarriage of widows, widowers and divorcees are permitted in their society.





In all regular modes of marriages payment of bride price (*jholla*) is obligatory which is paid in shape of cash and kinds, which includes Rs.5/- to 500/- in cash, clothes for bride and her mother, some rice, goat or fowl and some jars of country made wine. As the Paroja settlements are uniclans, village exogamy is the rule.

Divorce is permitted and either party can pursue divorce on the grounds of mis-understanding in conjugal life, misconduct, cruelty, extramarital relationship etc. Divorce cases are adjudicated in their traditional community council and if the conflict between the couple is not settled, they are approved to divorce, where after the divorce seeking person gives a copper coin or pebble (*chelo*) to his/her spouse.

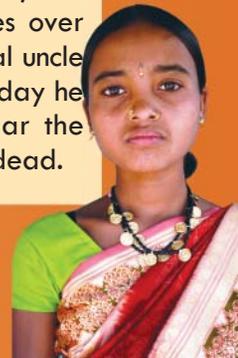


## DEATH RITES

The Paroja usually practice cremation to dispose of their dead, but corpses of pregnant women, children, and victims of leprosy and small pox are buried. The dead is given a bath anointed with turmeric paste and clad with a new cloth. The pallbearers (*malbadia*) carry the dead to the crematoria where the eldest son puts fire on the pyre. All the personal belongings of the deceased such as his used cot, clothes, walking stick, tobacco container, umbrella etc. are thrown away near the funeral pyre. The *malbadias* bath in the nearby stream and eat mango leaves and resin for purification and sweep their body in brooms to prevent themselves from the wrath of the departed soul.

Death pollution continues till they perform the minor purificatory rite *sanakama / duma misani* after three or five days after the death. Some well-to-do families conduct the major purificatory rite *badakama* or *dasa* on the tenth day of the death which is expensive. The bereaved family do

not perform any economic activities nor cook food during the mourning period but food is provided to them by the lineage families. During this period they observe certain taboos such as abstinence from non-vegetarian foods, observances of rituals and festivals, worship of deities, consumption of alcoholic drinks and sexual union, etc. Their traditional priest *Jani* presides over their mortuary rites and the maternal uncle acts as the barber. On the eleventh day he plants a vertical stone menhir near the cremation spot in the honour of the dead.

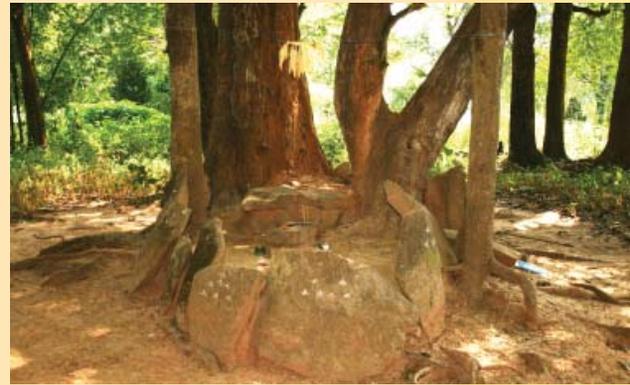




## MAGICO-RELIGIOUS LIFE



The Paroja profess their own tribal religion which is an admixture of animism with later addition of elements of Hinduism by external influence. Their supreme deity is *patrabuda* and his consort *jakar*, the earth goddess is installed under the shed of trees at the outskirts of the village and is revered as the deity of agriculture. Their village deity *Nissan munda* is seated in the centre of the village street and is worshipped by their traditional priest *Jani*. She is propitiated during all the rituals and festivals to protect the village from all calamities. They also propitiate some deities of nature residing in hills, forests, streams and rivers namely, *dongar devta* (hill god), *janikudi*, *khandual* etc.

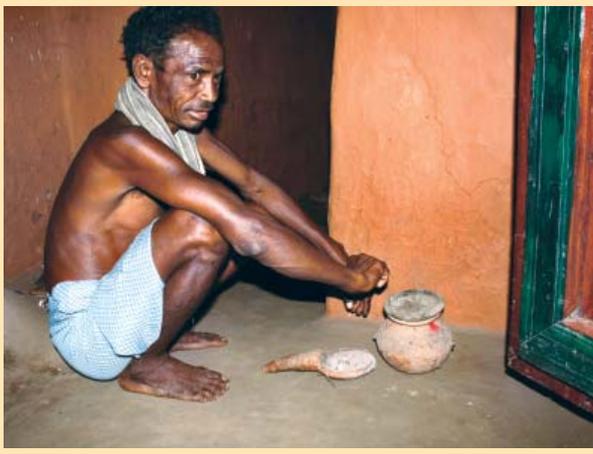




In course of time, under the impact of regional Hindu culture, they have incorporated some Hindu Gods and deities into their pantheon. They are *Hindhuta* (Lord Siva), Lord *Jagannath* of Shabar Srikshetra of Koraput, *Maa Laxmi*, the goddess of wealth and fortune etc. For their legendary association with the ex- Raja of Bastar and historical subjugation under the ex-Zamindar of Kashipur and the ex- Raja of Kalahandi they worship, Goddess *Danteswari*- the patron deity of Bastar and Goddess *Manikeswari* - the patron deity of of Kashipur, Thuamul Rampur and the ex-state of Kalahandi with great devotion.

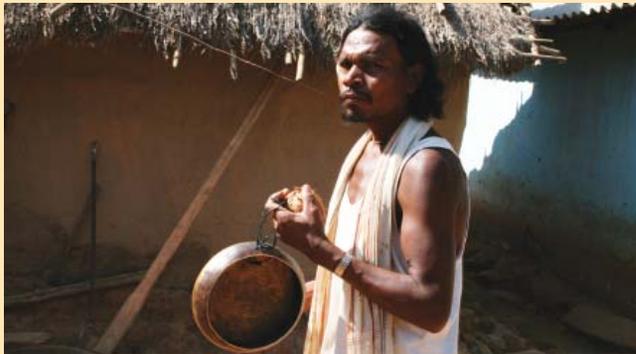


Like other tribes of this region, they have the cult of ancestor worship. They conduct animal sacrifices to appease their deities





Their majico religious functionaries are *jani*- the priest, *disary*- the astrologer, *gurumai*- the female shamanin and *chalan*- the messenger. Their major festivals during the year are *bihanpuja* during Baisakh, *mandiarani*, *baghraj*, *ladu chapu* (new eating of mango kernel during Asadh), *chitalagi*, *kendumunda topi* during Sravan, *bhad baduani* in the month of Bhod, *dassera* during Aswin, *diwali* during Kartik, *anakakara* (to make new gourd spoon for offering wine to procure *piri* grass for house thatching) during Margasira, *pus parab* during Pus, *jakeri puja* in Magh, *kandul bhaja* (new eating of *kandul*) during Phagun and *chait parab* in the month of Chaitra.



The Paroja have a rich folk tradition of song, dance and music within which they rejoice in all festive occasions and whenever they find time to celebrate. They are talented singers, musicians and dancers. Their common form of dance is the famous *demsa* (serpentine) dance which is the common dance of Paroja, Gadaba and other tribes of undivided Koraput district.





They perform *ranikheta nach* during observance of *mandiarani parab*, *bhadani nach* during *bhadabaduni parab*, *jaruna nach* during *dassara parab*, *sailori / demsa nach* during *pus parab* and *turulimaga nach* during *chait parab*. Both male and female folks joyfully dance with the tune of the drum and *mohuri* played by the Dom musician.





## SOCIAL CONTROL

The Paroja have their own traditional community council at the village level held at *bernamunda* headed by the *gauntia/ muduli*. Their traditional priest *jani*, astrologer *disari* and messenger *challan* are respected members and all family heads of the village are members of this body.



All the functionaries hail from their own community. The post of *gauntia /muduli*, *jani* and *disari* are hereditary. They have another village messenger called *barik*. He is from the Dom (SC) caste and carries messages to distant villages. Both *challan* and *barik* are appointed by nomination.

They have inter- village council known as *bisi berammunda* constituted of *muduli*, *jani* and *challan* of ten to fifteen Paroja villages and headed by a *naik* whose post is hereditary.





These councils act as guardian of their customary affairs and adjudicate cases of family disputes, rape, theft, adultery, incest, divorce, extra-marital affairs, formation of maggots in the wound (*bittada*), killing of cow (*gohatya*), death by the tiger attack, slapping with shoe (*chapalmada*) and intra and inter-community rifts. The unsolved cases of the village councils are referred to inter-village council. The council sits to decide especially on *pus punei* to organize seasonal festivals and rituals. The *naik* is held in high esteem and his judgment is final and binding. He holds the power to ex-communicate the offender and readmit him into their society.





## CHANGING SCENARIO

The Paroja are no longer isolated from the world outside. In post independent scenario being declared as a Scheduled Tribe of the State, they are influenced by a package of development and welfare programmes and their varied exposure to the developing world has made impacts in their traditional way of life.



Yet, by and large, the Paroja have more or less retained the core elements of their age-old traditional way of life, which distinguishes them from other tribal and non-tribal communities. Though their traditional economic organization, marriage and kinship system, political system, magico-religious life, folk culture and world view, have externally changed to some extent with the changing time they still continue to function effectively. But by all standards and parameters, they have remained socio-economically backward as compared to the national mainstream.





**Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute  
(SCSTRTI), CRPF Square, Bhubaneswar - 751003**

Web Site- [scstrti.in](http://scstrti.in) E mail – [scstrti@yahoo.co.in](mailto:scstrti@yahoo.co.in) Tel. Nos.– 0674 – 2563649 / 2561635

*Acknowledgements*

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>PHOTOGRAPHY</b>               | - SCSTRTI   |
| <b>CONCEPT &amp; COMPILATION</b> | - Shri S.C. Mohanty, O.S.D. (R), SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar |
| <b>DESIGNING &amp; PRINTING</b>  | - CBSC, Bhubaneswar                                   |

**ISBN: 978-93-80705-14-9**