

PAROJA

A Hill Tribe of South Odisha

**Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes Research
and Training Institute (SCSTRI)**
CRPF Square, Bhubaneswar

2023



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**Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes Research
and Training Institute (SCSTRTI)**

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FOREWORD

The Paroja are a major Scheduled Tribe of Odisha. They are also found in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal and Assam. The tribe inhabits the hills and valleys of southern Odisha having larger concentration in Koraput district followed by Nowrangpur, Malkangiri, Kalahandi and Rayagada districts.

In south Odisha they are well known as Paraja, Parja or Poraja- 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 times. 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 horse riding, 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.

'Parji' is their mother tongue. It 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 some similarities with the neighbouring tribes i.e., the Gond, the Kandha and the Gadaba. They are in general, strong, stout and hardworking people. They are simple, friendly and hospitable, but like to remain aloof from the people of other communities as they feel shy of them.

Socially, they are divided into two broad divisions i.e., Bada Paroja and Sana Paroja. The former section is more hinduised and abstains from taking beef whereas the latter are still primitive and take beef. The Bada Paroja has sub-sections like Sodia Paroja, Jhodia or Jhodia Paroja, Bada Jhodia Paroja, Penga Paroja and the

latter is composed of endogamous groups like Konda Paroja or BarengJhodia Paroja, Selia Paroja or Chhelia Paroja who were goat breeders during the past.

Paroja are hill cultivators who practise settled cultivation as well as shifting cultivation which is the mainstay of their subsistence economy. In the modern times in spite of the influence of planned changes and modernisation, they have retained their core elements of culture.

This monograph depicting their life style is the outcome of a research project funded by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India. Dr. Manoranjan Acharya, Project Consultant has drafted this monograph with technical assistance from Shri S.C. Mohanty, Consultant and Ms. Moushumi Nayak, Assistant Director (Research), SCSTRTI. I am grateful to Prof. (Dr.) A. B. Ota, former Advisor-cum-Director, SCSTRTI and Special Secretary, for his support and guidance in this exercise. All of them deserve my sincere thanks. I express my gratitude to Sri Samarendra Bhutia, Officer on Special Duty for his effort in facilitating the publication.

I hope interested readers may find this book useful.

SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar
October 31, 2023

Indramani Tripathy
DIRECTOR

PREFACE

The State of Odisha claims a prominent position among the States and Union Territories of India for having the largest varieties of tribes i.e. 62 in number including 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). These tribes live across the length, and breadth of the State. They exhibit wide divergence among themselves in their social, cultural and economic patterns. Every tribal society representing pre-literate, encysted and simple society characterized by endogamy, patriliney, patrilocality and distinct identity has its unique social system. Almost all, except the small tribal groups have sub-divisions based as territorial distribution, occupation etc.

Most of the tribal communities possess a well-knit socio-cultural system, strong kinship bonds, a stable village organization, strong supernaturalism and high level of folk traditions rich in art and crafts, dance, song and music with high degree of sophistication and complexity. They have a vast repertoire of songs and dances linked to ritual performances, ceremonies and festivals. Such finer aspects of their life styles reveal a sense of gratitude for the fact of being alive and a mood of acceptance of life on its own terms almost in an existential way. Thus, a high level of social and cultural expression co-exists with the economic backwardness, deprivation and isolation in tribal Odisha.

These culturally divergent groups live in different eco-cultural settings, pursue different kinds of life styles and speak different languages and subsidiary dialects. Obviously their socio-cultural values, life-styles and level of development vary widely. At one end, there are isolated Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups lying at a pre agricultural stage of hunting, food gathering and shifting cultivation and at the other, there are settled cultivators and urbanized industrial workers, almost assimilated into the mainstream of Indian society. Due to their contact with the non-tribals, socio-economic differences are observed among them.

For historical reasons the tribals have remained socially, economically and educationally backward. The problem of tribal development has long baffled the social scientists, policy makers and administrators in British India as well as in Independent India.

The uniqueness of the tribal culture, which enriches the country's cultural mosaic, is fast disappearing and even getting distorted under the powerful influence of development, modernisation and the dominant cultures. Thus, preservation and promotion of tribal culture has become the prime concern in formulating various development programmes for the wellbeing of the tribals. Along with various development policies and programmes to improve the socio-economic conditions of tribal people, there is also an urgent need to explore, document, preserve and promote various aspects of tribal culture and heritage. To meet this need this institute has made a monographic study on the Paroja tribe of southern Odisha.

The Parojas are numerically a major Scheduled Tribe of Odisha and are also found in Andhra Pradesh, undivided Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Assam. The tribe has its largest concentration in Odisha which they regard as their homeland. The Paroja inhabit the hills and valleys of southern Odisha with the bulk of their population found in Koraput district followed by Nowrangpur, Malkangiri, Kalahandi and Rayagada districts in the descending order.

Whatever may be the origin of these people, they are a class of aboriginal tribal people who have settled down in Koraput from a very early period. According to District Gazetteer, Koraput (1966), the Parojas are hill cultivators found in the districts of Ganjam and Koraput. They seem to have been inhabiting this country from about the second century of the Christian era. They practise settled cultivation as well as shifting cultivation which is the mainstay of their subsistence economy.

Socially, they are dichotomized into two broad subdivisions

i.e., Bada Paroja and Sana Paroja. The former section is more hinduised and abstains from taking beef whereas the latter are still primitive. The Bada Paroja has sub-sections like Sodja Paroja, Jhodia or 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.

Paroja is a Dravidian speaking tribe. Their mother tongue Parji is a form of Gondi language which varies according to locality influenced by the local tongues like Odia or Telugu. Some authorities have mentioned that Parojas have come to Odisha from Bastar of Madhya Pradesh and hence there is an influence of Hindi in their language. But now most of them living in undivided Koraput district speak the regional language called "Desia".

They live in big and small settlements in company of other communities. Their villages lie in the plains, at the foothills and near forests in close proximity to hill streams. They were practising shifting cultivation extensively in the past. Gradually they took up settled cultivation. Their dress and ornaments are more or less similar to those of the neighbouring tribes like the Kandha, the Gond, and the Gadaba etc. Their artistic talents find expression in Dhemsa and Dungdunga dances and laga songs. The most significant and colourful Paroja festivals are chait parab and pus parab observed with much pomp and ceremony during December-January and March-April respectively.

The Paroja have many socio-cultural features in common with the neighbouring major tribes namely, the Gond, Kandha and Gadaba. In Koraput, they live with other communities like Rana, Paik, Mali, Domb, Gadaba and Kandha. They are in general, strong, stout and hard-working. 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 feel shy of them.

This monograph is based on an exploratory and explanatory ethnographic study that has attempted to cover most of the ethnological aspects of the tribe namely nomenclature, identity, origin and history, physical characteristics, demography, literacy, language, dwelling, dress and ornaments, material culture, economic life, food and drinks, social organization, life cycle, social control mechanism, inter community relationship and welfare and development. The research team has very meticulously recorded all the facets of Paroja life and culture covering six villages two from each, in the districts of Koraput, Jeypore and Nowrangpur.

This monograph has nine chapters. The introduction chapter includes information about the location, administrative divisions and demography of the state of Odisha ; the profile of Scheduled Tribes of Odisha ; location, history, physiography and demography of the undivided Koraput district - the homeland of the Paroja tribe followed by review of literature, objectives and methodology of the study, study villages and quantitative data on households, population & family size, community category wise population distribution, house types, marital status, educational status, work participation, household income and expenditure presented in Tables.

The second chapter presents the profile of the Paroja tribe. It deals with the tribe's demographic profile, origin and identity, habitat, settlement and housing, inter-community relationship, disease and treatment etc.

The third chapter describes the elements of social organisation such as social divisions and kinship groupings, kinship usages along with status of women and the past institution of youth dormitory that is defunct now due to the impact of modernization. The fourth chapter presents data on life cycle rituals starting from pregnancy and child birth to death.

The fifth chapter deals with their economic life and the sixth chapter describes about their magico-religious beliefs and practices including, pantheon of deities and functionaries and annual

cycle of festivals. The seventh chapter gives an account of their socio-political system.

The eighth chapter is on their socio-economic development. It has described development interventions in various sectors of infrastructure development, livelihood promotion and social security.

In the ninth one i.e. the concluding chapter, some suggestions have been given for the socio-economic development of the tribe focussing on promotion of improved agriculture, horticulture, dairy farming, goatery and poultry, indigenous crafts and cottage industries, housing, education etc. to enable them to change their life and prevent exploitation.

It is expected that this monograph will be carefully studied by interested social scientists and also by research scholars, administrators and social workers working for the welfare and development of marginal tribal groups.

Authors

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We express our sincere thanks to the Project Consultant Dr. Manoranjan Acharya and Shri Sharat Chandra Padhihary, Research Assistant who carried out this stupendous task of conducting the field study, process and analyze the primary and secondary data and prepare the first draft of the manuscript within the limits of time and resources.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Shri Sarat Chandra Mohanty, former Joint Director and presently Consultant (Research) of SCSTRTI and also the Nodal Officer of the research project for his constant technical guidance and intellectual support without which the study as well as drafting of the monograph would not have seen the light of the day. In spite of his preoccupations, he has burnt his midnight oil to read and rewrite the document by adding data wherever required. Prof. A. B. Ota, the former director of SCSTRTI has taken pains to edit the manuscript to give it the final shape.

Our heartfelt thanks go to Dr. Mihir Jena, Lead Consultant, Sri Trilochana Sahoo, Consultant and Ms. Moushumi Nayak, Assistant Director of SCSTRTI, for their unstinted support in helping our team to complete the study on time. Ms. Nayak has also contributed in drafting the manuscript. Besides we take

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Indramani Tripathy
DIRECTOR

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INTRODUCTION

Odisha or Kalinga, the land where emperor Ashok renounced war has always held an important place in India's history. The riverine state is also known as Utkal which means excellence in arts. The state extends from 17.49' north to 22.34' North latitude and from 81.29' east to 87.29' East longitude on the eastern coast of India. It is bounded by West-Bengal in north-east, Bihar in the north and Madhya Pradesh in the west, Andhra Pradesh in the south and Bay of Bengal in the east. The State of Odisha came into existence on 1st April 1936 and capital city of Bhubaneswar was established in 1956.

The state has three revenue divisions, 30 districts, 59 sub-divisions, 114 tahsils, 314 blocks, 125 towns and cities with 50,972 villages. The total land area of the state is 1,55,707 square kilometers and the total population is 41,974,218 (census 2011). Though the total area of the state is 4.74 percent of total area of India, it accommodates only 3.73 percent of the total population of the country and ranked eleventh as far as its total population is concerned. Odisha is more rural and 86.57 percent of its population lives in villages and only 13.43 percent in towns and cities which is less than the concentration of urban population in the country. Further while the population density in India was 267 per square kilometer, that of Odisha is 203 and the state ranked twenty second in India as far as population density is concerned. The total literacy rate of the state is 48.55 percent as against the national average of 52.11 percent. The percentage of literacy among males is 52.5 and females, 29.1. Males and females in Koraput district are the least literates (26.4 percent males and 11 percent females). The percentage of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes to the total population of the state is 17.13 and 22.85 percent respectively.

Odisha is one of the fascinating ethnographic states in India. It is one of the few states in India with a heavy concentration of tribal population. The state is the epitome of as many as 62 different scheduled tribes including 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) numbering 95,90,756 that accounts for 22.85% of the total population of the state and 9.17% of the total tribal population of the country. In terms of both Scheduled Tribes and PVTGs, Odisha has the highest number amongst all the States, in the entire country. Next to Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, the state comprises the largest tribal population in the country. In other words, about one in every four citizens in Odisha is a tribal and they form a major minority. Each of the tribal community has their own indigenous customs and continues to practice these even today.

Profile of Scheduled Tribes of Odisha

The distribution of Scheduled Tribes population in different districts of the state is uneven. As per Census 2011, district wise their largest concentration is in Mayurbhanj district i.e. 58.72 percent of the district's total population followed by Malkangiri (57.83%), Rayagada (55.99%), Nowrangpur (55.79%), Gajapati (54.29%), Kandhamal (53.58%), Sundergarh (50.75%), Koraput district (50.56 percent). The remaining districts have less than 50 percent ST population. The smallest concentration is in Puri district i.e., 0.36 percent of the district's total population. The tribals concentrate in the areas of high relief and high slopes which sociologically suit their environment.

As regards their Geographical distribution, the tribal communities of Odisha are spread in its four geo-physical zones such as the (i) Northern Plateau (25.5%), (ii) Eastern Ghats Region (29.2%), (iii) Central Table Land (24.1%) and Coastal Tract (21.2%). The Tribal Sub-Plan areas of the state lies in the first and second geo physical section which covers about 55 percent of total geographical area of the State. Predominant Tribal Communities of Northern Plateau are Santal, Kolha, Munda, Bhuyan, Oraon, Gond, Bathudi, Kisan and Bhumij ; of Eastern Ghats Region are Kondh, Saora, Paraja, Koya, Gond, Gadaba ; of Central Table Land are Gond, Kisan, Desia Kondh, Savar and Coastal Tract are Santal,

Ho, Munda, Savar, Kondh who had come from the districts like Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundergarh, Koraput, Gajapati, Kandhamals mainly to derive their livelihood from the construction and road works, earth works, rickshaw pulling and industrial labour etc.

The decadal growth rate of STs of the state between 2001 and 2011 is 17.75% which is more than the growth rate of total population of the state e.g., 14.05%. Their sex ratio in census 2011 was 1029 as against 979 for all population which means among the STs, females outnumber males.

The percentage of literacy among Scheduled Tribes in the state is 52.24. For males it is 63.7 % and for females, 41.2% according to 2011 census.

The languages spoken by the Scheduled Tribes in the state are broadly classified into three categories, namely (1) Indo-Aryan, (2) Dravidian and (3) Austric. Twenty-six of the tribes are Munda (Austric) speakers, fourteen of them, Dravidian speakers and twenty-two of them, Odia (Indo-Aryan) speakers.

The tribes of Orissa are at various stages of socio-economic development. At one extreme are the group which lead a relatively secluded and archaic mode of life keeping their core culture intact more or less while at the other extreme there are communities which are indistinguishable from the general agricultural communities.

Area : The Undivided Koraput district

The Paroja tribe on which this monographic study has been made is largely concentrated in undivided Koraput district.

Location and Boundaries:

The district of former undivided Koraput derives its name from its headquarters the present town of Koraput. Situated in the backdrop of green valleys contemplating immaculate freshness and decorated by forests, waterfalls, terraced valleys and darting springs of Eastern Ghats. It was established on 1st April, 1936. It was the southernmost district of Odisha geographically located

between 2003' and 17050" north latitudes and 81027' and 8401' east longitudes. It was bounded by former undivided Kalahandi district of Odisha and Raipur district on the extreme north, by Bastar district of former undivided State of Madhya Pradesh on the west, by East Godavari and Visakhapatnam districts of Andhra Pradesh in the south, by Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh and former undivided Ganjam district of Odisha on the east. It was the largest district of Odisha covering an area of 10498.95 square miles. The undivided Koraput district with headquarters at present town of Koraput was chosen by the British in 1870 AD for better health prospects and its soothing environment.

History

The history of Koraput goes back to 3rd Century BC and history reveals that it originally belongs to the dreaded and valiant Atavika people. In ancient times, when the Nalas were ruling over this tract, pushkari, the modern Umerkote was the capital city. In course of time the region was ruled by several dynasties like Satavahans, Ikshvakus, Nalas, Ganga Kings and Kings of Surya Vansha. In the medieval period, Nandapur developed as the capital under the Silavamsi kings and later under the kings of the Surya Vansha. At that time, it was known as Nandapur Kingdom.

The whole of the undivided district of Koraput comprised the ex-zamindaries of Jeypore and Kashipur. Vinayak Deo, the founder of the present Jeypore Raj family, inherited the kingdom of the Silavamsis by the middle of the 15th century A.D. The capital of the kingdom, however, lost its independence in 1571 when it became a feudatory of the Qutub shahis of Golkonda and the Nandapur kings started paying annual tribute to the Sultans. During the time of Balaram Deo III (1711–1713) large number of Zamindars and feudatories seceded from the Nandapur kingdom with the help of the Marathas. Vikram Deo I, the then ruler, held back those territories in lieu of an annual rent of Rs 40,000/- of which no more than three-fourths were ever paid. It was during the rule of Vikram Deo II that the capital of kingdom was transferred to Jeypore in mid-17th century before the arrival of British. The kingdom came under the direct administration of British in

1863 when an Assistant Agent was appointed at Jeypore with jurisdiction over Malkangiri, Nowrangpur and Koraput sub-divisions. Vikram Dev – the Maharaja of Jeypore played a crucial role along with Maharaja Krushna Chandra Gajapati of Paralakhemundi in the freedom struggle as well as in the process of unification of Odisha Province. On 1.4.1936, the erstwhile District of Koraput came into being. Mr. R.C.S. Bell was the first District Magistrate and Collector of Koraput.
(koraput.nic.in/history)

On 1st April 1936 when Odisha became a separate province, Koraput was formed a separate district with headquarters at Koraput with two subdivisions namely Rayagada and Koraput. From 1941 a new sub-division called Nabarangapur sub-division, consisting of the taluks of Malkangiri, Jeypore and Nabarangapur was created and above three sub-divisions continued till 1962. A separate Malkangiri sub-division was created during 1962 and the sub-division of Jeypore was created on 1st January 1966. Area of undivided district of Koraput is 27,020 sq kms. It was the largest district during the creation of Odisha Province. On 1.10.1992, the erstwhile District of Koraput was divided into four Districts–Koraput, Rayagada, Malkangiri and Nowrangpur. For its preponderant tribal population the entire undivided Koraput district is declared as Scheduled Area which accounts for 39.40 percent of the total Scheduled Area of the state.

According to Mr. R.C.S. Bell the first district collector of Koraput, the name of the district headquarters town is 'Kora-Putti' or "the hamlet of the nux-vomica" and it is derived presumably from a tree or trees that must at one time have been prominent near the site. According to second theory, Koraput is corrupted form of 'Karaka pentho'; Karaka literally means 'hail-stone'. It is also believed that one 'Khora Naiko' laid foundation of the village during the time of Nandapur kings. He hailed probably from Ranpur and served under the Nandapur kings in the Militia, and for his faithful and meritorious services the King had permitted to establish this village which was named after him as Khora Putu, and later on the name has been abbreviated to 'Koraput'. (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koraput) Also, another theory says that, the word Koraput is derived from "Khora" - a sect of people who still resides in the district.

Topography:

As already stated, large portion of the district is a mountainous terrain of the Eastern Ghats. In this district there are number of peaks ranging from 1500m to 1600m. The Eastern Ghats give rise to range after range of hills ultimately rolling down to the east coast. There are number of plateaus and minor valleys in the district. East Jeypore plateau or Koraput plateau is 900 m high whereas North Jeypore plateau is 600 m high and is clearly distinguished from Koraput plateau. Malkangiri sub-division comprises of low plains. The main rivers of the district are Machkund, Sabari, Kolab, Sileru, Vansadhara, Muram, Porgar Nadi, Indravati, Tel, Bhaskel etc. Since these rivers flow through hilly terrain having steep slopes, they form scenic waterfalls at several places on their routes and as such none of them is navigable.

Climate:

The mountainous terrain has a mild climate compared to the plains of the district. In the hills the summers are cooler, rainfall higher and the winter prolonged than the main Deccan plateau. The low plains of the district are hotter and drier and are quite uncomfortable in the summer season. The normal rainfall at Koraput which is the headquarters of the district is 1521.8 mm in about 76 rainy days in a year. Nearly 80% of the annual rainfall occurs in monsoon i.e., from June to September. The distribution of rainfall is largely influenced by the Eastern Ghats running south-west to north-east. Areas to the east of the ghats receive less rainfall than those on the ghats and to its west.

Flora :

The district is mainly a rugged hill and forest dominated tract. The total forest area covers 9217.55 square kilometers which constitute 34 percent of the total geographical area of the district. Over the years, the size of the forest area is decreasing because of several factors such as illegal felling of trees by contractors and archaic practice of 'Podu' or shifting cultivation by tribals, establishment of several development projects like Hydro-Electric Projects, Dandakaranya Rehabilitation Project for East Pakistan refugees, Industries – HAL, NALCO, BALCO etc.

Geographically, the vegetation of the district can broadly be divided into four types: (i) the central plateau mostly consisting of Koraput, Pottangi and Kasipur tahasils and its vegetation is dominated by Toona-Garuga series except Kasipur, (ii) the Jeypore and Nowrangpur plateau that is mostly a moist peninsular type with dominating flora of Sal (*Shorea robusta*), (iii) the Malkangiri plateau consisting of a peculiar type of vegetation; from Motu to Malkangiri the vegetation is dry teak and from Mathili to Malkangiri, moist Sal with a “tention belt” devoid of either types and form a “miscellaneous deciduous forest”, and (iv) ranges of Rayagada and Gunupur consisting of *Shorea-Syzygium Nervosum-Toona-Symplocos* series. The forests of this zone are mostly moist evergreen types.

However, the deciduous trees, most commonly found in the area are Sal (*Shorea robusta*), Asan (*Terminalia tomentosa*), Piasal (*Petrocarpus marsupium*), Mahua (*Madhuka Latifolia*), Gambhari (*Gmelina arborea*), Dhaura (*Anogessua latifolia*), Tamarind (*Tamarindus indica* L.), Amla (*Phyllentbus emblica*), Teak (*Tectona grandis*), Rose wood (*Dalbergia latifolia*), Mango (*Mangifera indica*), Jackfruit (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*), Bamboo (*Bambusa vulgaris*), Simili (*Bompax malabaricum*), Chara (*Buchanania latifolia*), Haldu (*Adina cordifolia*). etc. The forest is an asset to tribal people's economy. The primitive tribal economy revolves round it which provides 13.3 percent of their income. Apart from providing firewood and wood and bamboo for making implements, household utilities and house constuction; the forest provides edible roots and berries, mushrooms, tubers, mango, jackfruit, tamarind, mohul and medicinal plants as well as fodder for domestic animals.

Fauna :

Apart from rich flora, varieties of birds, jungle fowl, quill, snipe, pigeon etc. are found in abundance with spotted deer, sambhar, wild-boars, tigers, and cheetah. Many poisonous and non-poisonous varieties of reptiles are widely found. In course of time, the density of forest and the number of animals has been reduced due to man's encroachment of forest and hunting of animals. Some rare species are on the brink of extinction. However, till now tigers, leopards and panthers are seen in all parts of the district. Other

animals of this family such as the Civet cat (*Niveticula indica*), the Toddy cat (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*) and the Common jungle cats (*Felis chaus*) etc. are also found in the jungles. The Dhole or Wild dog (*Cuon alpinus dukhunensis*), the Hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*) and the Jackal (*Canis aureus*), the Black sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*) are found throughout the district. But the Indian fox (*Vulpes bengalensis*), Bison (*Bibos gaurus*) and Wolf (*Canis lupus*) are occasionally seen. Elephants are not seen. Spotted deer (*Axis axis*), Sambar (*Cervus unicolor*) and barking deer (*Muntiacus muntjak*) are also found. The Four-horned antelope (*Tetraceros quadricornis*) and Swamp deer are rarely seen. Wild bears are found in almost all parts of the district. During winter the cases of injury caused by wild bears are reported in many places of the district. Common langur (*Semnopithecus entellus*), Bandar (*Macaca mulatta*) and the Bonnet monkey (*Macaca radiata*) are found in good number. The common Indian crocodile is found in the rivers. Common striped squirrel, large Indian Squirrel (*Ratufa indica*), Porcupine, Hare, Grey mongoose, Long-tailed mongoose are also commonly seen. The Honey badger (*Melivora capensis*) and the Otters (*Lutrogale perspicillata*) are occasionally found. Pea-fowls, red and the grey jungle fowls are common. Green pigeon and blue imperial pigeon are seen throughout the district. Duck and Teal are very rare. Snipe and painted snipe are mainly seen at high altitude near Padua and Nandapur. On the whole, the rich natural environment of the district accommodates a good variety of birds and animals, which should be preserved for maintaining a healthy ecological balance. (District Census Hand Book, 2011, Koraput)

Forest Produce:

Important forest produce of the district are timber, fuelwood and bamboos. Other minor forest produce includes Tendu leaves, Sal and Siali leaves, wood charcoal, Mahua flowers and seeds and various types of grasses used for fodder and broom making. Lac is also obtained from the forest areas. In addition to that there are other minor forest produce like medicinal plants, honey, soap nuts etc.

Geology and Rocks:

Hilly tracts of this district are composed of Archeans which

have been completely altered by process of metamorphism. Since their original nature is obliterated, they are commonly known as crystalline or metamorphic belonging to Archean Era. These Archeans consist of Charnockites and various gneisses, schists and banded haemntite quartzites. Above these Archeans are the Cuddapah formations which comprise of shales, slates, dolomitic lime stones, quartzites etc. There are also Cuddalore sand stones belonging to tertiary age in this district. Large areas are covered by laterites. Alluvium of recent origin is found along the river banks at some places.

Soils:

Parent rocks and materials influence the soils of this district very much. Ancient crystalline and metamorphic rocks generally give rise to the red soil after weathering of the ferro-magnesian minerals. Even the Cuddapah formations contribute to development of red soil in places due to their iron contents. Laterite and lateritic soils are also found in this district at number of places. Black soils with kankar are found in some areas like Chandahandi. Alluvial soils are mostly found along the courses of the rivers and valleys of the Rivers - Indravati, Tel, Bhaskel etc. These four kinds of soils are mostly under cultivation and are hardly of any importance from forestry point of view.

Mineral Wealth:

This district is rich in mineral deposits. Iron ore is found near Pittatung and Malkangiri. Extensive deposits of limestones occur in this district. Kaolin deposits fit for manufacture of coarse porcelain also occur in some areas. Placer gold is found in small quantities in some of the tracts. Iron and manganese ores have also been traced in this district.

Demography (Census 2011)

The data on Demography (population, sex ratio and gender wise literacy rate) of Undivided Koraput district as per Census 2011 is given in the following statement which is self-explanatory. Since the year 1992, the former undivided Koraput district has been divided into four Districts – Koraput, Rayagada, Malkangiri and Nowarangpur. Hence, the demographic data on all these four districts have been provided.

Demography of Undivided Koraput district – Census 2011

Name of the District	All Population					SC Population					ST Population				
	Total Population	Sex Ratio	Literacy Rate			Total Population	Sex Ratio	Literacy Rate			Total Population	Sex Ratio	Literacy Rate		
			M	F	T			M	F	T			M	F	T
Koraput	1379647	1032	60.32	38.55	49.21	196540	1031	64.72	41.05	52.64	697583	1068	46.20	25.37	35.36
Malkangiri	613192	1020	59.07	38.28	48.54	138295	974	75.82	55.12	65.59	354614	1065	44.91	26.25	35.23
Nowrangpur	1220946	1019	57.31	35.80	46.43	177384	1010	67.73	47.60	57.61	681173	1033	49.46	28.02	38.54
Rayagada	967911	1051	61.04	39.19	49.76	139514	1050	66.19	41.46	53.48	541905	1092	47.87	26.72	36.69
Odisha	41974218	979	81.59	64.01	72.87	7188463	987	79.21	58.76	69.02	9590756	1029	63.70	41.20	52.24

People

The undivided Koraput district is inhabited by a number of communities including Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). Majority of its population belongs to STs. Out of total 62 STs of the State, more than 50 STs reside in this undivided district who accounts for 23.72 percent of the ST population of the state. The major tribes are Kandha, Gond, Paroja, Gadaba, Bhot-tada, Koya, Saora, Bhumia, Dharua, Holva, Jatapu, Omanatya etc. Among them there are four Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) namely Bonda, Didayi, Dongria Kandha and Lanjia Saora.

The people of the district follow their own tradition and culture. They are humble and contented. Their family ties are fostered by old age customs and they had supreme faith in a superior being manifested itself in their love for a tree, a stone, an animal, a hill, a river, a forest. Indeed Koraput is a museum of old and new in nature and human endeavour. To the flowering of such a culture, the tribes of Koraput speak a language of their own and have manners, customs and practices, dresses which are specifically distinctive of them.

The tribals who constitute the bulk of population of the district speak either the Austric or Dravidian language and also the local lingua franca – the Desia, a regional dialect of Odia. So, ethno-linguistically they are classified into three groups namely Munda (Austro -Asiatic), Dravidian and Indo-Aryan.

Most of the tribes inhabiting these new districts are primitive and simple in their living. Their hospitality, ability, warmth are also famous. They are rich in their cultural belief, traditions, ceremonies and celebrations. They live in relative isolation usually in hills and forests in interior areas. Their social identity is defined and redefined from time to time. They constitute simple societies which are socio-culturally homogeneous. They are endogamous and divided into a number of exogamous social divisions. Their socio-cultural history is un-written. They have their rich cultural tradition and heritage although their social organization is simple. They have less access to education and health care services.

The rich cultural heritage of the tribals has also undergone a major change over period of time. The art, dance and songs, religious beliefs, symbolic relation with forest and the like are gradually dying due to development interventions. Their traditional social institution like dormitory which was responsible for the development of a healthy society through the spirit of co-operation and mutual help is also rapidly fading away.

Review of Literature

Edgar Thurston (1909) and R.V. Russell & Hiralal (1916) are important among the early ethnographers who have written about the Paroja tribe. Thurston in his volumes on Castes and Tribes of Southern India has described them as hill cultivators found in the Agency tracts of Ganjam and Vizagapatam and the greater number of them are akin to the Khonds of the Ganjam Maliahs. According to him the term Parja is not a tribal denomination, but a class denomination, and it may be fitly rendered by the familiar epithet of ryot (cultivator). Porojas are not a compact caste, but rather a conglomerate, made up of several endogamous sections, and speaking a language, which varies according to locality. He has identified seven endogamous sections of the tribe among whom he has included Bonda Paroja and Didayi Paroja who are now separate tribes. He has given more footage on the socio-cultural characteristics of Bonda Paroja.

R.V. Russell & Hiralal (1916) in their volumes on The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India has had a different view on the affinity of the tribe. He has opined that Paraja are a small tribe, originally an offshoot of the Gonds, who reside in the centre and east of the Bastar State and the adjoining Jaipur zamindari of Madras. They were the original Gond inhabitants and rulers of the country, and were supplanted by a later immigration of the same tribe, who reduced them to subjection, and became Raj Gonds. The Parojas appear to be Gonds and not Khonds.

Prof. A. A. Aiyappan and G. Ramdas (1961) have endorsed the views of Russell & Hiralal that Parojas appear to Gonds not Khonds with whom the Parojas have resemblances. In their work they have given a brief ethnographic account of the tribe.

B. Choudhary (1963) has elaborated on the classification of Paroja without providing a complete list and has discussed in brief about Bareng Jodia Paroja, especially about their different types of marriages. S.P. Rout (1964) while discussing about Parojas have laid importance on the akinness of Parojas with that of Khonds and Gonds. He has also thrown light on their social divisions, exogamous septs, kinship and marriage, festivals, disposal of the dead with a narration of social customs. R.C. Ulaka (1976) has vividly dealt with the social life of Parojas. He has very minutely tried to discuss about their housing pattern, deities and shrines, dormitories, village council, clothing, dance and music, office bearers of the administrative structure of the Paroja village wherein he has talked about Ghatam that has not been clarified. He has talked about drinking habit of Paroja without a discussion on food habits. The narration of different types of marriages, child birth, death ritual and festivals observed by Paroja have found place in his article. K. Mohapatra (1985) has studied about Jharia Paroja and has stated that they enjoy highest position in the caste hierarchy and do not eat beef. As tradition goes, these Parojas had their original homeland in Bastar for which they also worship Danteswari, the tutelary Goddess of Bastar to which S.C. Mohanty (2010) has agreed in his study report of ethnic status of Jodia Paroja. Mohapatra has also opined that language of Paroja has got affinity to Halbi dialect of Bastar region. B. Panda (1976) has reported about the upsurge of Paroja from Bastar state originating from Dhruwa, derived from Dhur that refer to the body of Gonds and has also given importance on the classification of Paroja into Bada Paroja riding on the horse and Sana Paroja carrying the luggages of the former, referring to the story of Danteswari Devi.

S.C. Mohanty (2002 & 2004) in his articles on the tribe has stated that the nomenclature “Paroja” is derived from the local Odia word Praja or Paraja meaning the common people who are tenants or subjects or citizens under ex-feudal lords or Raja. They are one of the major tribes of southern Odisha, largely concentrated in the undivided Koraput district and the adjoining Kalahandi district. The tribe is divided into two broad sections: the Bada Paroja and

the Sana Paroja. They live in big and small settlements in company of other communities. Their villages lie in the plains, at the foothills and near forests in close proximity to hill streams. They were practising shifting cultivation extensively in the past. Gradually they took up settled cultivation. Their dress and ornaments are more or less similar to those of the neighbouring tribes like the Kondh, the Gond, and the Gadaba etc. Their artistic talents find expression in Dhemsa and Dungdunga dances and laga songs. The most significant and colourful Paroja festivals are chait parab and pus parab observed with much pomp and ceremony during December-January and March-April respectively.

S.C. Mohanty (2010) in his report on the ethnic status of Jodia / Jodia Paroja has reported that though Parojas are found in Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Assam they are largely concentrated in the undivided district of Koraput in Odisha which they regard as their homeland. They inhabit the hills and valleys of southern Odisha. To establish the fact that Jodia / Jodia Paroja is a section of the Paroja tribe he has described the socio-cultural characteristics of Jodia / Jodia Paroja very elaborately. A.B. Ota and S.C. Mohanty (2013) have focused on the socio-cultural life of Parojas. They have highlighted on their dress and ornaments, settlements, housing, livelihood, social life and vividly discussed about their life cycle rituals.

The present study, being an exploratory and explanatory one has covered all ethnological aspects of the tribe namely nomenclature, identity, origin and history, physical characteristics, demography, literacy, language, dwelling, dress and ornaments, material culture, economic life, food and drinks, social organization, life cycle, social control mechanism, inter community relationship and welfare and development. The research team has very meticulously recorded all the facets of Paroja life covering six villages two from each, in the districts of Koraput, Jeypore and Nowrangpur.

The Present Study

This ethnographic study on the Paroja is different in the sense that while some other scholars have relied on secondary

information that too on a macro approach, the research teams have conducted micro level empirical study and analysis of data in order to go into the details of the different facets of life of the tribe.

Objectives of the study

- To explore the nomenclature, identity, origin and history of the target tribe.
- To find out their affinity and physical characteristics.
- To record their demographic features such as population, distribution, sex ratio, literacy rate etc.
- To explore and document the distinguishing characteristic features of the target tribe in respect of their society, culture, customs, traditions, material culture, economic life, religious beliefs and practices and social control mechanisms.
- To study the processes of social, cultural and economic changes and development

Techniques and Methods of Data Collection

The present study is characteristically both exploratory and explanatory in nature. It has covered all the Paroja households of the six study villages of Koraput, Jeypur and Nowrangpur districts purposively selected for the survey. In these study villages, the minute details of socio-cultural life of Bada Paroja, Sana Paroja and Pengu Paroja have been recorded. In course of the study the data on the details of the households, infrastructure facilities available, provision of minimum needs such as road, drains, drinking water, electricity etc have been collected.

Collection of field data was based on an exhaustive open ended interview guide. Another structured schedule was canvassed to elicit information on occupation, literacy status, employment, ethnicity, earnings, arable land for cultivation including income and expenditure of target tribe's households in the study villages. The interview schedule was carefully designed to obtain tit and bits of their day-to-day life including different facets of their social cultural life. The queries of the study included relevant aspects of

socio-cultural life, in order to provide a holistic view of the Paroja at macro level. Case study method has been used as when required. The data collected from one village have been cross checked in other villages for authentication.

Limitation of the Study

The study was conducted for span of two months. In the six villages covered under the study we could find out only three sections of the tribe such as Bada Paroja, Sana Paroja and Pengu Paroja and not the other divisions like Jodia Paroja, Bareng Paroja, and Selia Paroja. However, study tries to project different facets of socio-cultural life of Paroja with a little variation. The study team has attempted to give a holistic view of the Paroja with limited variation and attempts may be made in future by the scholars to bring about the way of life of other divisions of Paroja in minute detail.

Selection of Study Villages

The undivided district of Koraput was chosen purposively owing to the major concentration of Paroja tribal population. Further the districts of Koraput, Jeypore and Nowrangpur were chosen purposively with selection two Paroja villages each in these districts to study in details the socio-cultural aspect of Paroja. Sufficient care was taken to select the villages outside the urban centres; mostly the remote villages have been selected for the purpose of study for finding out their original traits of socio-cultural life.

Six villages have been selected purposively to find out the different sections of Paroja inhabiting in these villages and also for comparison of their way of life. In Koraput district two villages namely Aminguda and Janiguda of Mastiput block has been selected considering their distance from the district headquarters. The Aminguda village is 20 kms away from Koraput town and is having 55 households, of which 10 households belong to other backward castes and the rest 45 are Paroja households. On the other hand Tala Janiguda village located at a distance 24 kms from Koraput town constitutes of 137 households of which 9 are scheduled caste households and the rest are Paroja households. Further two villag-

es namely Dumripadar and Narapadar Baghera of Jeypore block have been selected. Another two villages namely Dumripadar and P. Podapala of Nandahandi block of Nowrangpur district have been selected purposively. In these six study villages the study team has come across Bada Paroja, Sana Paroja and Pengu Paroja.

Location of the Study Villages

The villages like Aminguda and Tala Janiguda are located by the side of the main road running from Koraput to Rayagada and the distance of the villages are of 6 to 7 kms from the metalled road and are partially isolated. The neighbouring villages of Tala Janiguda and Aminguda are Banglaguda, Lendrimashguda, Ektaguda, Bariguda, Totan, Baguda, Tokaambaguda, Bagaraguda and Dungri. On other hand the study villages of Jeypore district namely Dumripadar and Narapadar Baghra are located at a distance of 8 to 10 kms from the main road that runs from Koraput to Jeypore. These two villages are surrounded by Dadapadar, Bedaguda and Charibaguda villages. Further the villages Dumripadar and P. Podapala of Nowrangpur district are located at a distance of 10 kms from district headquarters. Their surrounding villages are Rangamatiguda, Similiguda and D. Podapadar.

Quantitative Data

1. Households, Population & Family Size.

The following table reveals the demographic particulars viz Households, Population & Family Size of all study villages.

The total population of the study villages as shown in the above table is 1796 of which 856 are males comprising 47.7 percent, and 940, females comprising 52.3 percent. This reveals that the females out number males and therefore the sex ratio stand in favour of females. Children constitute 9 percent of the total population. The family size is 4.1 in case of Dumripadar village of Jeypore block and varies from 3.2 to 3.5 in other villages. The average family size of all villages comes to 3.5 which indicates existence of small nuclear families.

Table - 1: Demography of Undivided Koraput district – Census 2011

Sl. No	Name of the Villages	Name of the Block	No. of House-holds	15-60+ Adult		0-14 Children		Total Population			Family Size
				M	F	M	F	M	F	T	
1	Aminguda	Koraput	55	73	87	8	11	81	98	179 (9.9%)	3.2
2	T. Janiguda	Koraput	137	210	224	19	23	229	247	476 (26.5%)	3.4
3	N. Baghra	Jeypore	72	97	125	13	17	110	142	252 (14.0%)	3.5
4	Dumripadar	Jeypore	70	131	125	16	18	147	143	290 (16.1%)	4.1
5	P. Podapola	Nowrangpur	107	147	191	19	17	166	208	374 (20.8%)	3.4
6	Dumripadar I	Nowrangpur	64	116	93	7	9	123	102	225 (13.7%)	3.5
Total			505	774 (43.1%)	845 (47.1%)	82 (4.5%)	95 (5.3%)	856 (47.7%)	940 (52.3%)	1796 (100%)	3.5

2. Population Distribution according to Community Categories
Table No. - 2

S. No.	Name of the Village & (District)	ST			SC						OBC			Total			
		No. of House-holds (HHs)	Population (% to total population)			No. of HHs	Population (% to total population)			No. of HHs	Population						
			M	F	T		M	F	T		M	F	T	M	F	T	
1	Aminguda (Koraput)	45	65	81	146	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	10	16	17	33	55	81	98	179
2	T.Janiguda (Koraput)	128	214	232	446	9	15	15	30	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	137	229	247	476
3	N. Baghra (Jeypore)	54	74	106	180	18	36	36	72	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	72	110	142	252
4	Dumripadar (Jeypore)	70	147	143	290	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	70	147	143	290
5	P.Podapola (Nowrangpur)	74	116	143	259	27	42	51	93	06	8	14	22	107	166	208	374
6	Dumripadar I (Nowrangpur)	61	117	97	214	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	03	6	5	11	64	123	102	225
7	Total	432 (85.5)	733	802	1535 (85.47)	54 (10.6)	93	102	195 (10,89)	19 (3.9)	30	36	66 (3.76)	505 (100)	856	940	1796 (100)

The above table on distribution of population and households according to Community Categories reveals that in all the study villages scheduled tribes i.e. only the Paroja are present predominantly comprising the overwhelming majority of households (85.5%) and population (85.47%) followed by scheduled castes households (10.6%) and population (10,89%) who are not found in 03 villages and households (3.9%) and population (3.76%) of other backward classes also not found in 03 villages. The Paroja is the only scheduled tribe residing in 432 households in the study villages comprising numerically the largest group followed by SCs and OBCs.

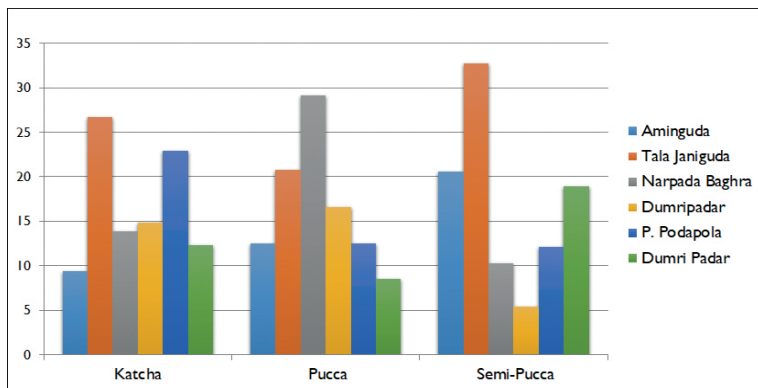
3. House Types in Study Villages

Table No. - 3

Sl. No.	Name of the Villages	Name of the Block	Total No. of House-holds	Katcha Structure	Pucca Structure	Semi- pucca Structure
1	Aminguda	Koraput	55	40 (9.4)	03 (12.5)	12 (20.6)
2	Tala Janiguda	Koraput	137	113 (26.7)	05 (20.8)	19 (32.7)
3	N. Baghra	Jeypore	72	59 (13.9)	07 (29.1)	06 (10.3)
4	Dumripadar	Jeypore	70	63 (14.8)	04 (16.6)	03 (5.4)
5	P. Podapola	Nowrangpur	107	97 (22.9)	03 (12.5)	07 (12.1)
6	Dumripadar I	Nowrangpur	64	51 (12.3)	02 (8.5)	11 (18.9)
Total			505 (100.0)	423 (83.8)	24 (4.7)	58 (11.5)

It is revealed from the above table that among the total 505 households in six study villages of Koraput, Jeypore and and Nowrangpur districts, the majority (83.8%) of the house structures is Katcha as against semi-pucca house structures comprising only 11.5 percent and the pucca structures comprising only 4.7 percent. The Katcha houses are found more in number in case of 113 households (26.7 %) in Tala Janiguda village followed by 97 (22.9 %) households of P. Podapola village of Nandahandi block. The semi-pucca structure is highest (10.3 %) in Tala Janiguda village

and the lowest in case of Dumripadar of Jeypore block i.e. 5.4 percent. The tradition bound Parojas are fond of maintaining their own housing structure as per their cultural traditions. The Chart is given below.



4. Distribution of Population according to Marital Status

Table No. - 4

Sl. No	Name of the Villages	Total Population	Married M-F	Un-married M-F	Widow/ Widower M-F	Divorced/ Separated M-F	Total Male-Fmale
1	Aminguda	179	59-73	20-21	1-2	1-2	81-98
2	T. Janiguda	476	187-204	34-39	5-2	3-2	229-247
3	N. Baghra	252	93-119	15-21	Nil-2	2-Nil	110-142
4	Dumripadar	290	123-121	21-19	2-1	1-2	147-143
5	P.Podapola	374	141-178	23-28	1-Nil	1-2	166-208
6	Dumripadar I	225	108-86	13-14	2-Nil	Nil-2	123-102
Total		1796	711-781	126-142	11-7	8-10	856-940

The table on marital status reveals that there are 1492 males and females comprising of 83.1 percent as against 14.9 percent of unmarried males and females. Importantly, females are the highest both in case of married and unmarried population. Further there is the highest number of 187 married males comprising 26.3 percent found in Tala Janiguda village and the lowest in Aminguda village

(8.3 %). The married females are the highest in the Tala Janiguda village and the lowest in Aminguda village. The unmarried population is 268 comprising 14.92 percent of the total population. On the other hand, 36 widows/widowers and divorced/separated persons comprise only 02 percent of the total population.

5. Distribution of Population according to Educational Status

The following table on educational status reveals that 1021 persons (56.8 %) are literates including 606 males and 415 females. As such among the illiterates the females outnumber the males. Among the persons who has received primary, secondary education and above that, the males outnumber the females. The dropout rate is 36.6 percent in case of males as against 40.4 percent of females.

Table No. - 5

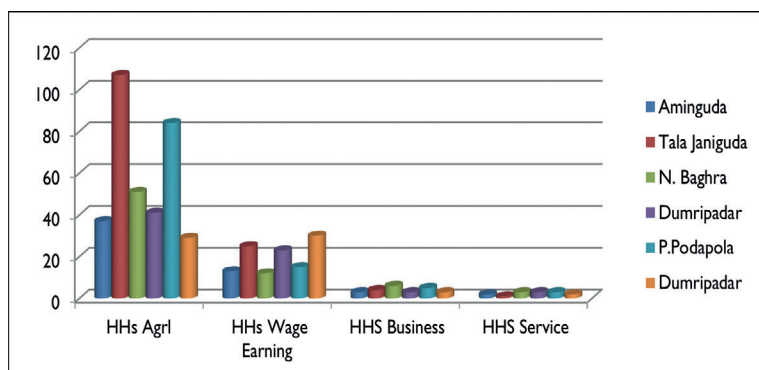
Sl. No	Name of the village	Total	Illiterate M-F	Literate M-F	Primary M-F	Secondary M-F	High School M-F	Above H.S.C M-F	Drop Outs M-F (%)
1	Aminguda	179	42-72	39-26	12-18	9-4	11-3	7-1	13-7
2	Tala Janiguda	476	62-70	167-177	118-142	31-28	12-5	6-2	68-78
3	N. Baghra	252	22-95	88-47	61-38	16-4	8-3	3-2	28-15
4	Dumripadar	290	46-101	101-42	88-33	7-6	3-2	3-1	31-13
5	P. Podapola	374	52-123	114-85	109-78	3-4	1-2	1-1	53-41
6	Dumripadar I	225	26-64	97-38	87-34	5-1	3-2	2-1	29-14
	Total	1796	250-525	606-415	475-343	71-47	38-17	22-8	222 (36.6)-168 (40.4)

It appears that the existing educational facilities have not attracted the tribals for several reasons. For example, it was found that in the U.P school in Dumripadar there is only one teacher who remains absent frequently. There is no motivation for tribals to take up studies. In each village only Anganwadi Workers impart pre-school education to the children.

6. Distribution of Population according to work participation

Table No. - 6

Sl. No.	Name of the villages	Total Households (HHs)	No. of HHs in agriculture	No. of HHs in wage earning	No. of HHs in Business	No. of HHs in Service
1	Aminguda	55	37	13	03	02
2	Tala Janiguda	137	107	25	04	01
3	N. Baghra	72	51	12	06	03
4	Dumripadar	70	41	23	03	03
5	P. Podapola	107	84	15	05	03
6	Dumripadar I	64	29	30	03	02
Total		505 (100)	349 (69.1)	118 (23.3)	24 (4.7)	14 (2.9)



It is revealed from the work participation table that the largest number i.e. 349 (69.1 %) households are practicing agriculture as their primary occupation as against 118 households (23.3 %) engaged in wage earning activities as they have no agricultural land excepting podu land. On the other hand 24 households comprising 4.7 percent are engaged in petty business activities in the village or in the vicinity for their livelihood and only 14 households comprising 2.9 % are engaged in service sector as auto or tractor drivers and miscellaneous works that on contractual basis for their livelihood. The households pursuing small business activities are doing it in addition to their agricultural and animal husbandry activities.

7. Distribution of Households according to Income

Table No. - 7

Sl. No	Name of the Villages	No. of House-holds	Income Range from all sources per annum				
			5,000/- to 10,000/-	10,001/- to 15,000/-	15,001/- to 20,000/-	20,001/- to 25,000/-	25,001/- & above
1	Aminguda	55	31	13	8	2	1
2	Tala Janiguda	137	85	21	15	9	7
3	N. Baghra	72	42	10	8	8	4
4	Dumripadar	70	41	13	6	4	6
5	P. Podapola	107	83	12	5	2	5
6	Dumripadar I	64	40	9	6	3	2
Total		505	322 (63.8%)	78 (15.5%)	48 (9.6%)	28 (5.6%)	25 (5.5%)

It is revealed from the above table that the majority i.e. 63.8 percent households are within the annual income range of Rs. 5000/- to Rs. 10,000/- as against 78 households comprising 15.5 percent are in the annual income range of Rs. 10,001/- to Rs. 15,000/-. 48 households comprising of 9.6 percent are within the income range of Rs.15, 001/- to Rs. 20,000/- and 28 households constituting 5.6 percent are within the income range of Rs. 20,001/- to Rs. 25,000/-. Only 25 households comprising 5.5 percent are earning Rs. 25000/- and above.

8. Distribution of Households according to Household Expenditure

Table No. - 8

Sl. No	Name of the villages	No. of House-holds	5,000/- to 10,000/-	10,001/- to 15,000/-	15,001/- to 20,000/-	20,001/- to 25,000/-	25,001/- & above
1	Aminguda	55	23	8	12	8	4
2	T. Janiguda	137	87	11	23	9	7
3	N. Baghra	72	43	7	8	6	8
4	Dumripadar	70	34	8	7	9	12
5	P. Podapola	107	66	17	12	8	4
6	Dumripadar I	64	22	6	15	7	14
	Total	505	275 (54.4)	57 (11.3)	77 (15.2)	47 (9.3)	49 (9.8)

It is revealed from the expenditure table that majority of 275 households comprising 54.4 percent of the total are spending between Rs. 5000/- to Rs. 10,000/- followed by 77 households (15.2 %) spending between 15001/- to Rs. 20,000/-, 57 (11.3%) households spending between Rs10,001/- to Rs 15,000/-, 49 (9.8%) households spending Rs. 25,001/- & above and 47 (9.3%) households spending between 20,001/- to 25,000/-

The memory of the Paroja is shallow for which they couldn't give the exact details of their household expenditure. The expenditure pattern of the Parojas reveals that to observe their festivals they spend money exceeding their financial capacity. Especially, during their weeklong major annual festival, Chait Parab, they spend lavishly for days together even incurring loans from the local Sahukars with exorbitant rates of interest. When their extent of indebtedness becomes high, they repay by serving as bond labourers under the money lenders. The tribals who borrow from their friends and relatives either pay no interest or less interest for their loan amount.

PROFILE OF PAROJA

Paroja/ Parja/ Paraja is one of the well-known major Scheduled Tribes (ST) of Odisha. They are also found in undivided Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra where they enjoy the ST status and also in West Bengal and Assam to which they have migrated from Odisha in the recent past but in these two states they do not enjoy the ST status. As compared to other states, the tribe has its largest concentration in Odisha which they regard as their homeland. They inhabit the hills and valleys of southern Odisha with the largest chunk found in the present Koraput district followed by Nowrangpur, Malkangiri, Kalahandi and Rayagada districts in the descending order.

Demographic Profile (Census, 1961 - 2011 of Odisha)

Sl. No	Parameters			Census Year					
				1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
1	Popula- tion	Total		159866	206699	267185	353336	317301	374628
		Male		79664	102652	131443	173127	155626	180122
		Female		80202	104047	135742	180209	161675	194506
2	Decadal Growth Rate				29.3	29.26	32.24	-10.2	18.07
3	Sex Ratio			1007	1014	1003	1041	1039	1080
4	Literacy Rate	Total		3.3	2.4	4.8	6.76	17.96	34.92
		Male		5.23	4.54	8.59	12.12	30.95	46.44
		Female		1.49	0.39	1.04	1.54	7.35	24.44
5	Workers	Total Workers	Total	88796	65392	144224	197962	170965	199885
			Male	53171	53862	87347	111998	90313	102161
			Female	35625	11530	56877	85964	80652	97724
		Main Workers	—	—	—	114509	163370	94447	101953
			—	—	—	29715	34592	76518	97932

6	WPR			55.54	31.64	53.98	56.03	53.88	53.36
7	Marital Status	Never Married		69360	102134	123775	144825	142611	176331
		Married		80956	94564	127425	189204	153863	171762
		Widow		8720	8863	14050	16818	18833	24235
		Divorced or Separated		795	1093	1858	2489	1994	2300
		Un-specified		35	45	77	—	—	—
8	Dependency Ratio			1.07:1	1.28:1	0.72:1	0.60:1	0.78:1	0.86:1
9	* Child Population	Population Ratio		59888	89635	27787	68475	59211	67589
		to Total Population		0.37:1	0.43:1	0.10:1	0.19:1	0.19:1	0.18:1
10	** Population in the working age group			77322	90543	155319	220508	17790	201939

Source : Demographic Profile of Scheduled Tribes in Orissa, SCSTRTI

The demographic profile of Paroja as per the census data presented in the above statement reveals that in all the censuses from 1961 to 2011 females have always outnumbered the males. Particularly in the census 2011 the females accounting for 52 percent of the total Paroja population have registered their numerical superiority over the males who comprised 48 percent bringing the sex ratio to 1080. This clearly reveals that in the Paroja society there is a preference for girl child who are treated as their economic assets.

Though their decadal growth rate has progressively increased from 1971 to 1991, the highest growth rate of 32.24 percent has been recorded in 1991. Very surprisingly, negative growth rate (-10.2 %) has been recorded in 2001. This may be due to defective enumeration. However, in 2011 it is found to be 18.07 percent.

Their total literacy rate has significantly increased from 3.30 percent in 1961 to 34.92 percent in 2011 owing to the spread of education. The literacy rate of females was very negligible in 1961 (1.49 %), 1971 (0.39 %), 1981 (1.04 %) and 1991 (1.54 %), but it has improved to 7.35 percent in 2001 and jumped to 24.44 percent in 2011.

The work participation rate is slightly lower among females than males. The 2001 and 2011 census data reveal that the work participation rate among females is 47.1 and 48.8 percent respectively. It is due to works of child bearing and rearing and domestic chores.

The data on marital status reveals that the unmarried persons have outnumbered the married persons in 2011. The number of widows has progressively increased from 1961 to 2011. In 1961 census it was only 8720 and it has increased to 24 235 in 2011. The ratio of child population to total population from 1961 to 2011 has varied from 0.37:1 to 0.18:1

District wise Distribution of Paroja Population in Odisha (1961 - 2011)

Sl. No.	Name of the Old & New District 1961		YEAR					
			1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Balasore	Balasore	-	03	47	67	1	139
2		Bhadrak	-	-	-	-	6	3
3	Bolangir	Bolangir	-	03	08	128	9	60
4		Sonepur	-	-	-	-	-	6
5	Cuttack	Cuttack	340	13	55		39	33
6		Jagatsinghpur	-	-	-	-	12	60
7		Jajpur	-	-	-	-	-	19
8		Kendrapara	-	-	-	-	8	0
9	Dhenkanal	Dhenkanal	04	03	23	81	-	3
10		Anugul	-	-	-	-	2	14
11	Ganjam	Ganjam			82	79	5	106
12		Gajapati	-	-	-	-	6	33
13	Kalahandi	Kalahandi	16410	12853	19451	28217	21456	21250
14		Nuapara	-	-	-	-	38	7
15	Keonjhar	Keonjhar	-	12	19	327	2	12
16	Koraput	Koraput	141694	193736	247304	322545	180446	221828
17		Malakangiri	-	-	-	-	29272	38726
18		Nowrangapur	-				65731	74253
19		Rayagada	-		-	-	19926	17099
20	Mayurbhanj	Mayurbhanj	113		11	317	11	2
21	Phulbani	Kandhamal	03		46	02	44	0
22		Boudh	-		-	-	-	44
23	Puri	Puri	08		43	759	3	29
24		Khurda	-		-	-	120	559
25		Nayagarh	-		-	-	20	4

26	Sambalpur	Sambalpur	74	38	34	145	12	23
27		Baragarh	-	-	-	-	9	14
28		Deogarh					1	1
29		Jharsuguda	-	-	-	-	8	3
30	Sundergarh	Sundergarh	1220	38	62	669	114	298
		Total	1 59 866	2 06 699	2 67 185	3 53 336	3 17 301	3 74 628

Source : Demographic Profile of Schedule Tribes in Orissa, SCSTRTI

The above statement indicates that the concentration of Paroja population is the highest in Koraput followed by Nowrangpur, Malkangiri, Kalahandi and Rayagada districts and the lowest in Deogarh district. No Paroja is found in Kandhamal and Kendrapara districts. Thus this tribe is largely confined to undivided Koraput district and adjacent Kalahandi district.

Physical Features

Parojas are not a homogeneous breed as they are composed of different ethnic groups. However in general they have broad heads and straight hair though wavy and even curly hair is also found. The complexion is usually of copperish hue and very dark persons are rare. Eyes are straight and nose is platyrrhine. Tall men are rare.

Origin & Identity

As regards their identity, origin and history most of the ethnographers agree that the Parojas are not a compact community, they belong to Dravidian stock and they have come to south Odisha from their homeland in Bastar region of Chhattisgarh State which is their original homeland. But the ethnographers differ about the affinity of the tribe. While Thurston, Carmichael, Bell and Aiyappan believe that they are akin to Kandhas, Russell & Hiralal, Chowdhury and K.S. Singh hold them as an offshoot of the Gonds.

Thurston (1909:207-08) described that "The Porojas or Parjas are hill cultivators found in, the Agency tracts of Ganjam and Vizagapatam... There is no doubt, however, that by far the greater number of these Parjas are akin to the Khonds of the Ganjam Maliahs. "They are thrifty, hard-working cultivators, undisturbed by the intestine broils which their cousins in the north engage in, and

they bear in their breasts an inalienable reverence for their soil, the value of which they are rapidly becoming acquainted with.... Their ancient rights to these lands are acknowledged by colonists from among the Aryans, and, when a dispute arises concerning the boundaries of a field possessed by recent arrivals, a Parja is usually called in to point out the ancient land marks."

According to Russell & Hiralal (1916: 371-73), Paroja is "A small tribe, originally an offshoot of the Gonds, who reside in the centre and east of the Bastar State and the adjoining Jaipur zamindari of Madras. They number about 13,000 persons in the Central Provinces and 92,000 in Madras, where they are also known as Poroja... perhaps, that the Parjas were the original Gond inhabitants and rulers of the country, and were supplanted by a later immigration of the same tribe, who reduced them to subjection, and became Raj Gonds....The Parjas appear to be Gonds and not Khonds."

Poroja presence is essentially a matter of the central and higher-level agency; the four taluks of Padova, Pottangi, Koraput and Jeypore yield nearly 80 per cent. of the total and with Naurangpur, 95 per cent....The Porojas seem to have been inhabiting Vizagapatam Agency from about the 2nd century of the Christian era, if not before. ...items of evidence go to support the theory that the real sons of the soil were the Porojas and other hill tribes. (Census of India, 1931: 197)

Whatever may be the origin of these peoples, Gonds (according to Russell & Hiralal), or Kondhs (according to Carmichael & Bell), they are a class of aboriginal tribal people who have settled down in Koraput from a very early period and have been acculturized to a great extent by the Aryans of that region. (Mohapatra, 1985 :299)

The Poraja are a hill tribe inhabiting the agency tracts of Visakhapatnam district in Andhra Pradesh and adjoining areas of Orissa State. They are chiefly agriculturists and cultivate lands on the high-level hill slopes...Porajas seem to be akin to the Khonds of the Ganjam...A majority of Poraja people live in Orissa of chiefly

concentrated in Koraput district. In Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh, some Poraja are found. Majority of them have migrated from Orissa State about 200 years to Andhra Pradesh in search of cultivable land. (Encyclopedic Profile of Indian Tribes, Vol, III, 1996: 832)

As per our study the Parojas say that their original name is 'Bastaria' as they have migrated from Bastar area of Madhya Pradesh (now Chhattishgarh) for which they remember and invoke their Paroja ancestors who have in the distant past migrated from Bastar region of the Middle India. During observance of rituals their traditional community priest - Jani recites incantations to invoke the spirits of their ancestors. In his verses he mentions the names of places in which their ancestors lived in the past such as "Bastar (Chattishgarh), Junagarh (Kalahandi), Mahadalpur (Nabrangpur), Kotapali (Kotapad)" and also the rulers and their kingdoms such as Jaipur Patta Raja (Raja of Jeypur ex-state) under whom they lived as subjects (Parjas). He also utters the name of the female deity of Dantewada of Bastar who is known for her protruding teeth (Danteswari). It indicates Bastar in neighbouring Chhattishgarh state as their place of origin from where they have moved to adjacent Koraput and Kalahandi districts of Odisha.

According to Russell & Hiralal (1916:372-73), "In Bastar... the Parjas were formerly dominant in this tract. They themselves have a story ... to the effect that their ancestor was the elder brother of the first Raja of Bastar when he lived in Madras, to the south of Warangal. From there he had to flee on account of an invasion of the Muhammadans, and was accompanied by the goddess Danteshwari, the tutelary deity of the Rajas of Bastar. In accordance with the command of the goddess the younger brother was considered as the Raja and rode on a horse, while the elder went before him carrying their baggage. At Bhadrachallam they met the Bhatras, and further on the Halbas. The goddess followed them, guiding their steps, but she strictly enjoined on the Raja not to look behind him so as to see her. But when they came to the sands of the rivers Sankani and Dankani, the tinkle of the anklets of the goddess could not be heard for the sand. The Raja therefore looked behind him

to see if she was following, on which she said that she could go no more with him, but he was to march as far as he could and then settle down. The two brothers settled in Bastar, where the descendants of the younger became the ruling clan, and those of the elder were their servants, the Parjas. The story indicates, perhaps, that the Parjas were the original Gond inhabitants and rulers of the country, and were supplanted by a later immigration of the same tribe, who reduced them to subjection, and became Raj - Gonds. Possibly the first transfer of power was effected by the marriage of an immigrant into a Parja Raja's family, as so often happened with these old dynasties. The Parjas still talk about the Rani of Bastar as their Bohu or 'younger brother's wife,' and the custom is probably based on some such legend. The Madras account of them as the arbiters of boundary disputes points to the same conclusion, as this function is invariably assigned to the oldest residents in any locality....the Parjas, in Bastar at any rate, must be held to be a branch of the Gonds, they may have a considerable admixture of the Khonds, or other tribes in different localities, as the rules of marriage are very loose in this part of the country."

Chowdhury (1963-64: 27) has reported that "The tribe is originally an offshoot of the Gond tribes. One of their main traditions states their original home to be in Bastar (now in Madhya Pradesh) and their migration to present Koraput and the adjoining, areas of the Andhra Pradesh" (which were previously included in the Madras Presidency).

Mohapatra has opined that "As tradition goes, these Parajas had their original home-land in Bastar region and for that they till now worship Danteswari, the tutelary Goddess of Bastar. The affinity of their language with the Halbi dialect of Bastar region gives evidence to this tradition." (1985: 299)

Nomenclature

"The term Parja, as Mr. Carmichael has pointed out, is merely a corruption of a Sanskrit term signifying a subject, and it is understood as such by the people themselves, who use it in contradistinction to a free hill-man.'Formerly, says a tradition that

runs through the whole tribe, 'Rajas and Parjas were brothers, but the Rajas took to riding horses (or, as the Barenja Parjas put it, sitting still) and we became carriers of burdens and Parjas.' It is quite certain, in fact, that the term Parja is not a tribal denomination, but a class denomination, and it may be fitly rendered by the familiar epithet of ryot (cultivator)."

"The name Poroja seems to be derived from the Oriya, Po, son, and Raja, i.e., sons of Rajas. There is a tradition that, at the time when the Rajas of Jeypore rose into prominence at Nandapur, the country was occupied by a number of tribes, who, in return for the protection promised to them, surrendered their rights to the soil, which they had hitherto occupied absolutely. I am informed that the Porojas, when asked what their caste is, use ryot and Poroja as synonymous, saying we are Porojas, we are ryot people." (Thurston, 1909:207-09)

This view has been endorsed by many other ethnographers including Russell & Hiralal. According to them "The name Parja appears to be derived from the Sanskrit Parja, a subject. (1916: 371)

The term 'Poroja' in its Agency origin connotes the idea 'subject' or 'subjected' as opposed to rule and epitomizes the history of Vizagapatam Agency and its people.... (A Sanskrit literature) ...says that a prince of the Gangs family of Orissa came southwards and established a throne at Gudari near Gunupur. This prince is said to have had an army of hill tribes...The rulers were immigrants who brought along with them some Oriyas and gave them holdings of land, free of rent in some cases but mostly on feudal tenure. The Oriyas having become the lords of the land, the sons of the soil had to seek service under them, became 'prajas' or ryots. The Poroja was practically reduced to slavery. He lost his independence but the usurping ruler maintained the conditions of his original contact with the original inhabitants to observe the religious rites and festivities of the sons of the soil. (Census of India, 1931: 197)

Their name is said to be a corruption of the Sanskrit word 'Paroja' which means 'people' (also subject or simply rayats). (Chowdhury, 1963-64: 27)

The term Paroja or Poroja, as Thurston suggested, has been derived from the Oriya words po, meaning son, and raja, meaning king. They are the sons of the raja. There is another view, according to which the root word is the Sanskrit paroja or sons of the soil. (Singh, K.S. 1994: 996-97)

The term 'Paroja' is a local Oriya term sometimes pronounced as Paraja, Parja or Poroja. It appears to be derived from the Sanskrit word Praja, which 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 times. 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 Oriya language, namely the tenant (peasant) or Royat. (Mohanty, 2004: 249).

Language

According to Chowdhury (1963-64: 27), linguistically they are included in the Dravidian group, their original language being 'Parji'. Now most of them including woman speak Oriya, although the traces of their original tongue can be picked up from their talk and song.

The Parji language which literally means the language of the Parajas is the mother-tongue of only a particular section of the Parajas who are found in Koraput district of Orissa and in some parts of Madhya Pradesh and it belongs to the Dravidian family of languages... As tradition goes, these Parajas had their original home-land in Bastar region and for that they till now worship Danteswari, the tutelary Goddess of Bastar. The affinity of their language with the Halbi dialect of Bastar region gives evidence to this tradition. (Mohapatra, 1985: 299)

The Parji language as stated by Mr. G. A. Grierson, have "hitherto been considered as identical with Bhatri. Bhatri has now become a form of Oriya. Parji, on the other hand, is still a dialect of Gondi." (Thurston, 1909: 209)

According to Russell & Hiralal (1916 :373), Their sept names are Gondi words, and their language is a form of Gondi, called after them Parji. Parji has hitherto been considered a form of Bhatri, but Sir G. Grierson has now classified the latter as a dialect of the Uriya (Oriya) language, while Parji remains 'A local and very corrupt variation of Gondi, considerably mixed with Hindi forms.

Singh (1994: 996) has stated that Parji, a Dravidian language, is their mother tongue. Oriya and Telugu are used for inter-group communication and either the Oriya or the Telugu script is used by them depending upon the area they inhabit.

We also found that, the Paroja had a traditional language of their own called Parji that belongs to Dravidian family of languages. In course of time, the Parojas of Koraput have forgotten this language and picked up a dialect called Desia - a regional variant of Odia language. Now there are few Parji speakers mostly belonging to older generation. However, traces of this old language can be found in their present dialect.

Habitat and Settlement

The typical Paroja villages are situated on hill tops or slopes or on valleys amidst hills and forests all around. The garden enclosures and chinapathar (Menhirs) are the first signs of the location of Paroja village. The villages or hamlets are usually found near the forest or in the foothills adjacent to a permanent water source like a perennial stream or river and are linked to footpaths from various directions.

The Paroja inhabit large or small settlements, either exclusively or with other communities like the Domb, Rana, Kondh, Sundhi and Gauda, etc. In large heterogeneous villages either they live in separate wards inside the village or in a separate hamlet a little away from the main village maintaining social distance from other ethnic groups. In certain areas a large Paroja village may have small hamlets which are locally known as guda. These hamlets are virtually small villages having its own headman and institutions. It has its own separate identity in almost all matters except certain religious festivals which are observed jointly with the main village.

For example, one of our study village Narpadar Baghra has one hamlet from where they take wives as it is a bandhu clan village.

The Paroja villages are more or less permanent in nature. But they change the place of settlement for compelling reasons like repeated outbreak of epidemics or attack of wild animals and occurrence of natural calamities by which people suffer from loss of lives and property. These are sufficient reasons for Parojas to abandon the village site and shift to a nearby place or at a little distance in consultation with the village Disari and Gurumain. While searching for a new settlement site, they mostly prefer a place where forest, perennial stream and land for cultivation are available nearby because they were formerly mostly depending on shifting cultivation. When the forests become thin by repeated clearing and burning the village is abandoned and a new site near virgin forest is selected for settlement. The village site with surrounding land and forest belongs to the founder clan. But there may be in the same village people of other clans from whom wives are taken. They perform purificatory rites before shifting to the new place.

In some villages houses are scattered here and there, while in other villages individual houses run in two parallel rows facing each other along a common street. In the open spaces between houses, sheds are built to accommodate domestic animals like cattle, sheep, pigs and fowls. Individual households have small kitchen gardens in front of the house. In the village there are two important places called Berna Munda and Nissan Munda. Berna Munda also called 'Kutum' is a centrally located place inside the village comprising a constellation of circular stone slabs where the village headman, leaders and elders gather and sit down to discuss and decide village affairs. Sometimes, this place is in front of the headman's house and otherwise called Munda Dand. This is also used as the dancing arena. The Nissan Munda lying in the center of village street is another landmark of Paroja village where a circular stone slab is kept encircled by menhirs standing erect. This is the seat of the village deity called Hundi Debta. Traditionally, in every village the social institutions of two youth dormitories, one for grown-up maiden

and other one for unmarried young men were functioning. These dormitories provided opportunity to both young men and women to meet, sing and dance together and learn the lessons of life. The institution is obsolete now. The village burial ground is always situated at a distance from the village to keep away the ghosts and spirits (Duma) from the village.

The number of houses in a Paroja village varies from thirty to one hundred fifty. With the gradual decline in practice of shifting cultivation the villages are getting more densely populated than before. Each family has a single dwelling to live in. When the sons get married the parental house is not big enough to accommodate their wives and children. In such a situation they build new houses of their own near the old one and live separately in their own house maintaining relationship with their natal family members.

Housing

The traditional individual housing pattern of the Paroja is more or less the same, irrespective of the difference in the social or economic status of the household. 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 typical Paroja houses are low roofed, the average height varying from 8 ft to 10 ft. They use indigenous raw materials like soil, mud, cow-dung, bamboo, wood, straw (piri) or country-made tiles (jhikar) for house construction. The walls are made of a frame of 'Jhati' (small tree branches) plastered with mud. The roof is gable shaped and thatched with paddy straw or a kind of jungle grass called 'piri'. The walls, veranda and floors are regularly maintained by plastering with cow dung and decorating with coloured soils. The Paroja are fond of using red or white coloured soil mixed with cow dung or ashes to colour the house. The roof is maintained by thatching the house once a year, preferably after the harvest when paddy straws are available. In order to protect the low thatched roofs from the cattle, wattle fencings are made around the house.

The common feature of Paroja housing is that, like those of agricultural tribes like the Kandha, Bathudi, Gond and Santal, Paroja houses, besides having a kitchen garden, have a veranda raised higher than floor level and a spacious courtyard on either side of the house. The veranda is used as a place for sitting, gossiping and sleeping. There is a single front door that is smaller in dimension but coloured and decorated with carvings. No exit is provided at the back of the house. Thus, the front door serves both as entrance and exit. Inside the house, partitions are made for the hearth and the kitchen, store and sleeping spaces. A space lying preferably at the eastern corner of the house and strictly prohibited for outsiders is earmarked as the sacred seat of family deities and ancestral spirits. Livestock is accommodated in a separate shed beside the house and poultry is kept inside a small cabin either inside the house or on the veranda. Adjacent to the house there is a small kitchen garden fenced with bamboo splits.

The Paroja houses although, 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, strong, spacious houses having more than two rooms. Some progressive people construct brick walls and semi-permanent roofs using country-made tiles and providing multiple doors instead of one common entrance door. Affluent landowners among the Jodia and Penga Paroja living in Kalahandi District have large double-storied houses locally known as Dhaba Ghar. The Dhaba Ghar usually has country-made tile roofing. The upper storey is smaller in height and used for storing grains, implements and other household assets. (Mohanty, 2004: 250-51). Now-a-days, some Parojas have pucca houses allotted under government housing schemes.

Household Assets

The household assets of Paroja are scanty. Their utensils are comprised of earthen wares, gourd vessels to store drinking water and few aluminum utensils. Their cooking pots and accessories are earthen pots (patul, nismandi, doka), cooking pots (liatandi), earthen lid (tanga), strainer/sieve (hamen), metal ladle (hatwa),

gourd ladle (anka), grinding stone (jata), winnowing fan (hetchi), measuring pot (maan), wooden oil press (dheki) etc. Besides, they have broom stick (badni), pitcher (gagri), bamboo baskets (hangan and mori), small baskets (chatna), sleeping mat (paltati), bird's cage (pandiguda), cot (katel), lamp (kupi) etc. Their winnowing fans, some bamboo baskets and wooden mortar and pestle are kept in the living room. The wooden husking and pounding lever is apparently big in size and at a time two women take part in pounding the food grains. Hunting weapons like bows and arrows (apkubin), knives (katri), spears (barcha) and axes (tangi), pellet bow (gucha), pellet bag (bodimuna), rat trap (tupi), sword (kanda), cage for catching birds (pandkigud), knife for cutting wood (gagat) 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.

At present, due to the impact of modernisation, Parojas are using stainless steel, aluminium and plastic utensils and accessories as well as modern furniture. Some of them have electric fans and lights, torch lights, radios, televisions, mobile phones, bicycles, motor bikes.

Dress and Ornaments

Their dress and ornaments are more or less similar to those of the neighbouring tribes like Kondh, Gond and Gadaba etc. 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 old clothing (koupin) which barely covers their loins. Adult males generally wear a small napkin or loin cloth (langoti / kachha) leaving the entire body bare. Often they tie a turban around the head. A young man wears one or two metal rings on his left wrist and some garland of color beads round his neck. 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 on the left shoulder. "The Paraja woman adopts a special manner of wearing cloth. She uses three-fourths of her

cloth to cover the portion from the waist to the knees and rolls the remaining one-fourth of the cloth round her breast and back and ties the end of the cloth by means of a knot which rests on the upper side of her left shoulder.” (Ulaka, 1976:21-22) This typical wearing style makes it convenient for women to work in fields as well as to participate in dancing. The clothes are not washed regularly except for certain important social occasions. Now-a-days, due to external contact, modern dresses like shirts, banyans, pants for males and coloured sarees, blouses, ribbons, etc. for females are becoming popular. These dresses are preferably worn during festive days or while visiting the market, fairs, friends and relatives.

Paroja women are fond of adorning themselves with varieties of ornaments to beautify themselves. Common ornaments worn by Paroja women are bangles, armlets, bracelets, necklaces, rings, hair pins, etc., usually made of silver, aluminium, brass and sometimes, gold. 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 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 bun at the right of back side. They exhibit great skill in getting themselves dressed and adorned. They form the locks of the head hair into the shape of

flat bun and use a number of hair-pins on either side of the bun in order to keep it in position. This adds to the beauty to their hair-dressing.

Paroja women love to tattoo their body engaging skilled women of Kela community with beautiful designs such as kumbana, sikidibana, udulibana, hulbana, danbana and topa, etc. to enhance their beauty and charm. Such women experts are also available in their own community. The services of tattoo makers are hired on payment of remuneration in form of grains. Bodily decoration is not the only motive behind this practice. It is a religious belief of the Parojas that after death one will leave everything behind in this world and to appease the God of death 'Yama' one will have nothing but indelible tattoo marks carried with the body. Girls above five years of age have tattoo marks on their faces and hands. Now, the girls of younger generation dislike tattooing.

Food and Drinks

The Paroja are non-vegetarians. Rice and ragi are their staple food supplemented by millets, maize, vegetables they grow themselves and other seasonal edible fruits, roots, leaves, and tubers collected from the forest round the year. They consume several kinds of minor millets such as kangu, kosla, khetjanna, maize, vegetables like sim, bamboo shoots, pumpkin, mango, cauliflower and leafy vegetables as well as mango kernel, sago palm stem powder and tamarind powder. Non-vegetarian items, cakes, sweets and other delicacies are eaten during festive occasions and whenever available.

They relish on non-veg foods like fish, chicken, crabs, snails, lizards, mouse, and goat meat. 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.

Parojas consume boiled rice with rice gruel as their mid-day meal. They also take gruel of parched rice and millets as added item. They hardly use spices and oil; rather they use salt and turmeric powder and add these to the boiled vegetables. They use til

oil, if available for preparation of special dishes. They are fond of taking cakes prepared out of millet flour and millet gruel for which they boil water in a container and pour millet flour and gruel with rice flour, maize flour adding salt to their taste. The Andri cake prepared with mixture of rice, millet or maize flour is a favourite food item of the Parojas. They also take Alsi cake with fried chilly. For this purpose they put Alsi and millet flour, molasses, salt in boiling water and prepare a pulp and thereafter cakes of the pulp are again prepared and boiled in separate containers covered with Sargi (sal) leaves. They mostly consume these Alsi cakes during festive occasions. Parojas also take boiled curry by mixing bean, gourd, tomato and brinjal after pus punei owing to their belief that taking of such items before pus parab may become disastrous for their society. They take mango kernel during taku parab.

The Paroja are fond of alcoholic drinks and beverages. Both males and females consume country liquor (mohuli), rice beer (landa), millet beer (pendum) and sago palm juice (salap). Landa and salap are their most favourite drinks. The Landa is taken on festive occasions. If a Paroja reaps a good harvest he squanders the produce in preparing pendum and landa. Use of liquor is customary in all magico-religious rituals, feasts and festivals. Apart from social and religious importance of liquor it occupies important place in Paroja life. Mohua liquor is used both as preventive and curative medicine. It is also used to mitigate conflicts. It has high social value as guests are entertained with it and it is used as a food substitute during food scarcity.

Both the Paroja men and women chew and smoke tobacco. Males smoke locally available country made (biri) and handmade cigars (pikka) made by rolling dried and processed tobacco leaves.

Daily Routine

Parojas wake up very early in the morning as they are required to go to their fields to work. They gather either at the middle or end of the village and brush their teeth with twigs of different locally found plants. Usually they prefer twigs of Sal, Date-palm, Neem and Karanja plants for this purpose. It is also a traditional practice to brush their teeth with cow dung ash and

clean the mouth with water. The women brush their teeth while taking bath in the stream. Male members prefer to take bath in the nearby streams, pond, ditches before taking their lunch. Women and girls take bath in groups before noon also in the nearby streams or at the tube well. They prefer to take bath in the other side of stream and not in the place where males take bath. The women use cow dung ash and dried ridge gourd to clean their hair and body. Now-a-days, Parojas have started using tooth brush, tooth paste, soap and other detergents to brush their teeth and wash their body and clothes.

The Paroja housewife along with the assistance of her grown up daughter (s) fetch water from the water source for domestic consumption, cooks food for her family and washes the cooking pots and utensils every day. Traditionally, food is eaten in leaf cups made of sal leaves by the women and these are thrown away after use. She keeps the house and its surroundings clean by sweeping the floors, courtyards regularly as a matter of her daily routine. If required, she repairs and maintains the dwelling house complex by plastering the floors, walls and courtyards with a liquid solution of mud and cow dung.

Inter-community Relationship

The Parojas inhabit large or small settlements, either exclusively or with other communities like the Domb, Rana, Mali, Sundhi, Gauda, Teli, Kammar, Dom, Ghasi, Gond, Kandha, Bhottada, Gadaba, Kondadora, etc. In large multi-ethnic villages either they live in separate wards either inside the village or in a separate hamlet a little away from the main village there by maintaining their separate ethnic identity and distance from other communities.

Since, they have been inhabiting a tribal dominated region along with other tribes like Kandha, Konda Dora, Bhottada, Gadaba, Gond, etc. since the hoary past, into which few caste communities like Brahman, Gouda, Kumbhar, Teli, Sundhi, etc have migrated in not-too-distant past, the evils and the inequalities of the caste system like the stigma of untouchability are non-existent except a nominal and superficial social hierarchy that is due to the influence of the caste society.

As found in our empirical study, the position of Paroja in the local social hierarchy as perceived by them is given below in the descending order.

Brahman
Khandayat
Paik
Rana
Gouda
Gond
Bhottada
Paraja
Gadaba
Kondadora
Kandha
Pengo Kandha
Teli
Sundhi
Kumbhar
Kammar
Domb (SC)
Ghasi (SC)

As shown above, the Paroja along with other tribal groups hold a respectable middle position in the existing social hierarchy below the high-ranking Hindu castes and above the low ranked tribes, castes and scheduled castes from whom they maintain social distance in respect of acceptance of cooked food and house entry. On the other hand, the castes ranked above them maintain similar kind of social distance from them. However, they freely interact with other tribal groups in a footing equality. (Mohanty, 2010)

It has come to surface that the Paroja have free social interaction with Gadaba in the Koraput region, with the Bhottada and Gadaba in the Nowrangpur region and with Bhumij, Koya, Bondo and Didayi in the Malkangiri region. In all socio-cultural and economic activities inter and intra tribal help is exchanged among them without any inhibition. The tribals help each other

in the economic field. Since, all the tribal people inhabiting in the area are poor, they help each other as per their might, both in agricultural and other social and religious activities. Inter and intra tribal relationship of Paroja are based on mutual cooperation and understanding. There is no bar against dancing with people of other tribal communities. In festive occasions even the non-tribals participate in the dance.

Disease and Treatment

Paroja being simple minded, hard working and living in their own natural habitat for ages, they rely on their own traditional ethno-medicine and at times in acute cases of serious ailments they are compelled to visit modern medical centers for treatment. They believe that the diseases are caused by the magico-religious practitioners of other villages having enmity with the person concerned. They also believe that these diseases occur due to the past bad deeds of the affected person, for which they very often approach the Gurumain who instructs the person to lie prostrate before the village deity and dead ancestors and apologize for his / her past deeds with a commitment not to do the same in future.

If someone is sick due to measles and small pox they take vow and make sacrificial offerings to appease the Landi Debta and Jhakar Devta, the earth Goddess who are responsible for orderly social life and healthy life. They believe that these deities have caused the disease because they have not been propitiated properly. For the treatment they apply the ashes of the resin of Sal tree (*Shorea rubusta*) on the body of the patient and offer a goat and fowl to the deities. This is done by Gurumain, the traditional magico-religious healer. The patient is kept in a separate room and nobody is allowed mix with him/her to avoid spreading of the disease. On application of the ashes of the resin for 5 to 10 days the patient gets cured. On the ninth day, the patient takes bath in luke-warm water mixed with turmeric powder. Gurumain performs a puja on the road side by offering banana, coconut and parched grains to the Jhakar Devta and Landi Devta to appease them.

If a person is affected by ring worm disease, he/she consults Gurumain and Disari for medicinal prescriptions. Disari gives

some sanctified turmeric powder, bark of Siali plant and some herbs to take it in the morning and evening by making a paste of it. The Gurumain utters some incantations by holding the wrist of the patient. The patient gets cured within three to five days.

When some persons have nausea and headache in the summer season, Gurumain is called for and she puts a bowl made of Siali or Sal leaves known as Chakni containing some castor oil on the head of the patient and stirs the oil by a fowl's feather chanting mantras by murmuring till the castor oil gets yellowish in colour and becomes thick. The process is continued for some days with the belief that the patient will be cured.

In case of other ailments like boil, scabies, eczema, gangrene, they consult Gurumain and Disari. They treat the patient by appeasing the deities Jhakar Devta, Nisan Devta with sacrificial offerings. In addition, the Gurumain prescribes some herbs, shrubs and roots (the names of which they declined to disclose).

The Parojas have expertise in curing serious ailment like diarrhoea and jaundice. Gurumain chants mantras holding the head of the patient by her palms and also prescribes hena or manjuati herbs to consume it by making a paste mixed with uncooked rice at least two times a day. The affected persons are not allowed to take hot and spicy foods during the period of treatment. The patient is advised to take boiled water, coconut, drinks of sagu and crystal jaggery (misri) to keep the stomach cool.

Parojas take spinach juice and black pepper powder to check dysentery. They take juice of pasaruni leaves or gandri saga with the powder of black pepper for instant relief. For headache they take the juice of aparajita leaves that clears the sinus pain and the patient gets relief. To treat the burn injury, they apply a paste of plantain leaf and potato on the affected part. If the burn is an old one with pus they apply the solution of turmeric powder, neem leaves and marigold flower on the wound. For the cure of epilepsy (pihula) they give the patient five bel leaves with black pepper at regular intervals at least for three months.



A Paroja Couple in front of their house.



A Paroja Grandmother taking care of her Grandson



A Paroja Man with his son.



A Paroja Father taking Care of his Child while Mother is in Field



A Paroja Man showing a Wild Mushroom collected from local forest.



A Paroja Farmer going to put Fertiliser in his Field



A Paroja Boy posing to Hunt



A Paroja Boy while making catapults



A Paroja Boy with a Dead Bird
after hunting



A Paroja Boy with Catapult and
Stone Pellets



A Paroja Father
taking Care of his Child



A Paroja mother with her baby &
wild mushrooms collected from
nearby Forest



A Paroja woman going to field.



A Paroja woman with traditional daily wear



An Old Paroja Man



Use of Tube Well



A Paroja Farmer going to Beda Land



A traditional Paroja House at P.Podapalla



Children playing in village lanes



Village Street



Entrance of P.Podapalla Village



Family gathered around the fire soon after returning from Farmfields



A Community Dugwell of P.Podapalla Village



A Cowdung Pit besides the cowshed



A Cowshed and a Cowdung Pit by its side



A group of Paroja Adults assembled in Club Premises to Spend Leisure Time



A Man of P. Podapalla returning with his Goats



A Tubewell in Aminguda.



Agriland of P.Podapalla Village



An Wooden Stand used to keep Heaps of Straw



BLOCK OFFICE JEYPUR



BLOCK OFFICE NANDAHANDI



Charcoal Processing Pit



Charcoal Processing



Children of Dumuripadar Village Playing
together in the AWC verandah



Community People breaking Stones at nearby Hills to Earn Money



Community Tubewell at the entrance of
Narapadar Baghera, Jeypore, Koraput



Discussion with Community Members of Dumuripadar
in the presence of Primary School Teacher



Paroja men going to plough



Villagers of Dumuripadar assembled for Focus Group Discussion

SOCIAL ORGANISATION

Social Divisions

Various authorities hold the view that Paroja is not a compact community but a conglomeration of various endogamous sections that differ from each other in points of language, customs, and traditions and speak languages, which varies according to locality. It is just not possible to have a complete list of these sub-divisions due to variation in names.

As reported by Thurston (1909:207-10), it is noted, in the Madras Census Report, 1871, that “there are held to be seven classes of these Parjas. These sections, according to Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao, ...are as follows.

- (1) Barang Jhodia, who eat beef and speak Oriya!
- (2) Pengu Poroja, subdivided into those who eat the flesh of the buffalo, and those who do not. They speak a language, which is said to bear a close resemblance to Kondhs.
- (3) Khondi or Kondi Poroja, who are a section of the Kondhs, eat beef and the flesh of buffaloes, and speak Kodu or Kondh.
- (4) Parengi Poroja, who are a section of the Gadabas. They are subdivided into those who eat and do not eat the flesh of buffaloes, and speak a Gadaba dialect
- (5) Bonda, Bunda, or Nanga Poroja, who are likewise a section of the Gadabas, call themselves Bonda and speak a dialect of Gadaba.
- (6) Tagara Poroja, who are a section of the Koyas or Koyis, and speak Koya, or, in some places, Telugu.

- (7) Dur Poroja, also, it is said, known as Didayi Poroja, who speak Oriya.

Prof. A. Aiyappan (1961) has endorsed this classification.

In the report of Census of India (1931: 197) it has been stated that the Porojas are divided into twelve tribes and each tribe is called after the region in which that tribe lives. But generally, they are divided into the Bodo Poroja or Sodja, the Sano Poroja, the Jodia Poroja and the Perang Poroja.

According to R. C. S Bell (1941), there are eight (08) types of Porojas living in Koraput district. They are Parenga Poroja, Parenga Gadaba Poroja, Kondh Poroja, Pengo Poroja, Jhodia Poroja, Bareng Poroja, Soda Bisia Poroja and Bondo Poroja.

Chowdhury, (1963-64: 27-28) has given a fourfold social division of the tribe. According to him the ... "tribe is sub-divided into several sections. It seems improbable, ... to find out a complete list of these sections due to variations in names in different areas. In the adjoining areas of the Koraput town the Porojas of the following sections are found.

- a) Sodja Poroja or Bada Poroja
- b) Bareng Jodia Poroja
- c) Bada Jodia Poroja or Penga Poroja
- d) Konda Poroja or Selia (chhelia) Poroja.

S.P. Rout has also mentioned about the same four subdivisions of the tribe with the comment that "The term Paraja is so broad a term that it includes, in a very loose sense of the term, a number of other communities. At times the Bondas and Gadabas also refer themselves to be Bonda Porojas and Gadaba Porojas, respectively. Hence, it is very difficult to give a complete list of the various sections of the Parajas." K.S. Singh, (1994: 997) has endorsed this four-fold social division of the tribe.

In the Encyclopaedic Profile of Indian Tribes (Vol.III, 1996: 832), six subdivisions of the tribe has been reported namely (1) Parangi Poraja, (2) Jodia Poraja or Barengi Jodiya, (3) Konda Poraja or Barangi Poraja, (4) Gadaba Poraja, (5) Didayi Poraja and (6)

Pengu Poraja, However, several synonyms exist for the same group at different locations.

According to Mohanty (2019), “The tribe is divided into two broad sections: the Bada Paroja and the Sana Paroja. Each section is further divided into two sub-sections: Bada Paroja or Sodja Paraja and Bada Jodia Paraja or Panga Paraja under the former, and Bareng Jodia Paraja and Konda Paraja or Selia Paraja under the latter. The major distinction between both the sections is that the Bada Paroja are more Hinduised than the Sana Paroja. The former does not take beef. They observe elaborate purificatory rites in the event of the death of a cow or buffalo in their household while the latter are said to be beefeaters. Among all the four sub-sections the Selia or Chhelia who were goat-breeders in the past are given the lowest rank.”

“Among all sections of the tribe the Selia (Chhelia) Paroja or Konda Paroja are considered to be more primitive than others. The name Sella or Chhelia is a local term meaning people who live from goat-breeding. This section of the tribe were goat-breeders in the past. Now they do not like to be called Chhelia and instead identify themselves as Konda Paroja. Hence, R.C.S. Bell, in his Koraput District Gazetteer, 1945, has equated them with another tribal group named the Konda Dora and thus excluded them from the bulk of Paroja.” (ibid, 2004). May be due to this reason we could not find the Selia or Chhelia Paroja in our study area during our study.

Social Groupings: Clans / Septs

Existence of exogamous totemistic clans named after villages, mountains, plants and animals is essentially a tribal characteristic common to the majority of tribal communities residing in different parts of India. Conforming to this the Paroja have a number of exogamous totemistic clans named after trees, birds, animals and celestial bodies. The accounts of various ethnographers bear testimony to this.

The (Paroja) tribe have exogamous totemistic septs, such as Bagh - a tiger, Kachhim- a tortoise, Bokda- a goat, Netam - a dog,

Gohi- a big lizard, Pandki- a dove and so on. (Russell & Hiralal, 1914: 373). Amongst the Porojas, there are many Gotras or totems. Bag (tiger); Nag (serpent); Phulu (flower) Goru (cow); Matshu (fish). The Poroja does not kill or eat the thing that is the emblem of his totem. (Census of India, 1931: 198). Among them (Paroja) there are several clans such as Khil (Tiger), Hantal (Snake), etc., and marriage within the same clan is strictly prohibited. All the members of a clan believe in the descent from a common ancestor and hence are brothers and sisters. (Chowdhury, 1963-64: 28). The Paroja claim that they are descendents of Surya (Sun). Each endogamous sub tribe (of Paroja) has several clans and totemic symbols derived after Chandra (moon) Gradda (vulture), Matsya (fish), Puli (tiger), Yelugu (bear), Peyya (cow), Naga (snake), etc. They respect their clan deities. (Encyclopaedic Profile of Indian Tribes, 1996, 833). They (Paroja) have a number of totemic clans including Bagh (tiger), Nag (cobra), Mandl (cow), Kachhim (tortoise), Bokda (goat), Nagam (dog), Godhi (Bengal monitor), Pondi (dove). (Singh, 1994: 997). The Paroja have exogamous totemic clans such as Bagh (tiger), Kachhim (tortoise), Bokda (goat), Netam (dog), Gohi (lizard), Pandki (dove), Bedia, Moria, Sodria, Halkaria, Chemia and so on. They highly respect their respective totemic species and observe taboos against killing or harming them. (Mohanty, 2004: 254)

As per our findings, the Parojas have different types of totems. The totem is considered to be their ancestor. It is ascertained that different types of birds, animals, trees, flowers, hills and other natural objects are revered as their totems. Some of their exogamous totemic septs / clans are Bagh (Tiger), Yelugu (Bear), Nag (Serpent), Kachchim (tortoise), Bokda (Goat), Netam (Dog), Gohi (Big Lizard), Pandki (Dove), Sulia (Eagle), Hikori (Jackal), Castor tree, Phulu (Flower), Goru (Cow), Mastu (Fish). They never harm their totemic objects or animals, rather they propitiate them and they never make marital relationship with the members of the same totemic clan, thinking them as their brethren. The members of Bagh and Nag clan claim themselves superior to Kandia (Flower), Sulia (Eagle), Hikori (Jackal) and they never keep marital alli-

ances with these clans. Paroja revere their ancestors and worship them regularly in different rituals and festivals. In household level they offer prayer and sacrificial offerings in the name of their clan ancestors on every auspicious occasion.

Family

Like other tribal communities of the State, among Parojas, family is the basic social unit and it forms a cultural infrastructure resting on a biological foundation. In one form or other it is the primary unit of the Paroja society where the customs and practices are put to action. It grows out of biological need and depends for its sustenance on the exploitation of natural resources. It comprises both young and old of either sex bound together by kinship ties and marriage rules. The family functions as (1) a legitimate sexual unit, (2) a controlled reproductive unit, (3) an educational unit and (4) an economic unit, which are essential for survival and perpetuation of individuals. It is an institution, which gives shape and moulds the character and personality of an individual in conformity with the customs, traditions and values of the society through the process of socialization.

The Paroja family is mostly of nuclear type composed of the biological parents and their unmarried off springs. Joint or extended families are very rarely seen. The ideal form of 'generationally enlarged' or 'extended' families where a man and his wife live with married sons, unmarried sons and daughters; grand children or great grandchildren are not seen among the Paroja. When the parents grow very old or become sick and incapable of doing hard work, it becomes obligatory for the sons to take care of them and provide food and other necessities required by them. The general practice is that the burden of maintenance of the old parents is shared equally among the sons.

Although in Paroja society a son after marriage establishes his separate home and hearth, this does not mean the breaking of the family tie. The family members remain attached to each other forever by kinship bonds, reciprocal economic ties and above all, love affection and emotional feelings by sharing each other's

sorrow and happiness. The other reasons, which discourage growth of extended families among the Paroja, are lack of space in the house to accommodate the married sons and individualistic attitude of the Paroja which forces them to lead an independent and care free life.

In patrilineal and patrilocal societies, as that of the Paroja, the family is patriarchal where the male members enjoy a considerable freedom, liberty and authority both in the management and decision making process at the family, clan and village levels. In the family, the senior most male member is vested with the authority to act as the head of the household. Ideally, the father holds the position till he is alive and after his death the eldest son succeeds him. Although he has the power to take decisions in family affairs, yet while doing so he seeks the views of other family members particularly that of his wife. He works hard and shoulders higher responsibilities for the well-being and economic upliftment and raising the standard of living of the family. He always keeps watch over the children and regulates their activities. He represents his family in outdoor functions and external affairs. He receives due respect from his family members and his decision is obeyed by one and all in the family. His dominance and authority continue even when he grows old, but gets transferred to his eldest son when he is not mentally and physically to discharge his duties and responsibilities.

The Paroja family functions as an institution of socialization of children. The parents not only care and rear children, but also more importantly they guide children when they learn to make their own living in conformity with the customs, traditions, ideals, values and attitudes of society. The child grows in close association with adult members in the family and in his attempt to get along with others develops his/her basic personality structure. To a child the father represents a model of adult male behavior and mother a model of adult female behavior. By observing the behavior of his father, a male child learns what is expected of him as a man, husband, father and a member of the society. Similarly, a female child learns what is expected of her as a woman, wife and mother by observing

her mother. In the family through the process of socialization and enculturation the child gets the basic informal training and learns to regulate his/ her behavior to become a responsible member of the society. Thus, through a rigorous training in the family from infancy to adolescence, the child on attainment of adulthood finds it easier in making adjustment to society as a whole.

Children are considered as gifts of God and on attainment of parenthood the Parojas burst into joy. Be it a son or daughter the child is brought up with utmost care and fondness. The children are served with best available food in the home and more frequently than others. They are seldom rebuked or beaten for their notoriety. On the other hand, the children are also very obedient, show deep respect to the elders and assist their parents in different works both inside and outside home. In this process they acquire skill and expertise in different avocations, which enable them to lead an independent life later on.

Lineages

The Paroja society being patrilineal the families are grouped into patrilineages. Parojas cannot trace their genealogy beyond two generations above and below. As such the structures and boundaries of their patrilineages are limited within this. Dead ancestors within living memory, are considered to be founders of the lineage. In actual practice their patrilineages are unilineal descent groups which are the extension and association of parilineally related families, the members of which are related to each other by virtue of their descent from a known common male ancestor. In other words, these are exclusive patrilineal descent group forming agnatic lineages. The patrilineage regulates marriage, inheritance and succession, religious and social activities. As the lineage members share common blood ties for their descent from common ancestors, marriage or sexual relationship among them is strictly prohibited because it amounts to incest. Violation of this incest taboo is a serious sin. Lineage exogamy is strictly practised.

The lineage members stand together at the time of crisis. Mutual exchange of help and cooperation at the time of need, like

house construction, shifting cultivation; performance of rituals among the lineage members is a remarkable feature of Paroja social organization.

Kinship

The kinship is the structured system of relationship that binds the people of a society in a close circuit. The Parojas are no exception to it. Parojas are in the habit of using denotative and classificatory terms. The kinship terms of Paroja along with its English equivalent is given here under.

Abba - Father and Father-in-law

Aaayaa - Mother and Mother-in-law

Nuni- Elder sister and Father's brother's elder daughter

Dada - Elder brother and Father's brother's elder son

Toki- Younger sister, Father's brother's younger daughter

Nini- Daughter and Brother's daughter

Koi- Son and Brother's son

Kadiagat or Buari- Younger brother's wife, Son's wife,
Brother's son's wife and Son's son's wife

Atta- Father's sister and Mother's brother's wife

Kogle- Wife and Wife's sisters

The term of address and term of reference are almost same in case of many kinds of kins. The relationship of respect and avoidance is prevalent between persons of both sexes such as his/her father-in-law and mother-in-law who do not call each other by their personal names but as father or mother of so and so. Joking relationship is prevalent among grandparents and grandchildren, brother-in-law and sister-in-law. The grandfather used to tease the grand-children even with slang or filthy words in their process of socialization to make them perfect.

Every society provides a set of concepts for reviewing the situation of reproduction, care for the young and passage from generation to generation. All this is known as kinship. Kinship relationships have several referents which are biological, behavioural and linguistic in nature. People who are biologically and genetically related to one another are kinsmen. There are two types of

biological relationship - one is descent and the other is sex and the relationship by adoption is quasi kinship.

The structure of kinship relationship with kinship behavior has helped the Paroja society to maintain its orderly life with its perpetuation. The principles of differentiation of kinship relationship as developed by Kroeber and R. H. Lowie is maintained to some extent though not fully. The criterion of generation is based on biological foundation. Ego's own generation includes brothers, sisters and cousins with the 1st ascending generation embracing parents, siblings and cousins. The first descending generation includes sons, nephews and nieces. Since marriages in most societies occur normally between the persons of same generation, affinal relatives tend to be aligned in the same manner by the generation as consanguineal relatives. For example, the ego, his brothers and sisters, father, brothers are the consanguineal kins whereas ego's wife and wife's relatives are affinal kins of the ego.

The criterion of sex is derived from biological difference between males and females. It is ignored in case of cousins. Criterion of affinity arises from universal social phenomena of marriage and incest taboo. Paroja recognize it by having consanguineal kins and affinal kins. They ignore it in the term uncle which includes husbands of aunts as well as parents' brothers. Similarly, the aunts are wives of uncles as well as parents' sisters. It is ignored in Paroja society in case of cross cousin and parallel cousin marriages wherein father's sister's daughter and mother's brother's daughter is called as wife and their fathers are addressed and referred as father-in-laws (*sasra*). Criterion of co-laterality of biological relationship is based on the fact that among consanguineal relatives of the same generation and sex, it will be more akin to ego than others. Siblings and cousins differ from lineal kinsmen of the first ascending generation.

Criterion of bifurcation (forking) applies only to secondary and more remote relatives and rests on the biological fact that they may be either linked to the ego through either a male or female connecting relative. Paroja system ignores it while calling grandfather or grandmother irrespective of whether he is father's father or

mother's father. Uncle and aunt regardless of the sex of the parent through whom the relationship traced is found.

The criterion of polarity arises from the sociological fact that it requires two persons to constitute a social relationship. Linguistic recognition of this criterion produces two terms for each kind kin relationship, one by which the participant can denote the other when polarity is ignored the relationship is treated as a unit and both participants apply the same classificatory term to each other. It is recognized in Paroja kinship system with the exception of the term 'cousin'. For example, two brothers, two sisters, two brothers-in-law or two sisters-in-law or two sisters apply the same term to each other.

Criterion of relative age-reflects the biological fact that the relatives of the same generation are rarely identical in age and one must be older than the other. For example, there are elder and younger siblings of a parent and spouses and children of an elder or younger siblings.

Criterion of speaker's sex is ignored as Paroja employ the same term of criterion of decadence that rests on the biological fact of death whether that relative is dead or alive. For example, with the death of an elder brother the status of his widow's relationship to his husband's younger brother may undergo a change to lead to levirate.

Kinship Usages

In a family whether it is primary or secondary or extended family or joint family there are certain coactive behavior pattern which exhibit regularly a more or less permanent and definite structure. Such types of behaviors, verbal and non-verbal, constitute kinship usages. The individuals are classified into certain categories each one of which observes a particular set of social rules.

In every society differentiation of behavior patterns of kinship relationship has marked significance. Distinction in behavior has a functional value. For example, relationship between spouses is a tender one. As suggested by Levy Struss, the relationship between brothers and sisters is of avoidance. It is prevalent in Paroja

society where grown-up brothers and sisters are not allowed to sleep in the same room. But relationship between father and son is of love, respect and care.

Avoidance between Daughter-in-law & Parents-in-law - Anthropologists have classified the interpersonal relationships under a few psychological heads. At the opposite poles are reverential avoidance vis-à-vis licensed familiarity and respect. Avoidance between Daughter-in-law & Parents-in-law is a mechanism to maintain peace in family. A woman is a wife as well as a daughter-in-law. The loyalty between the two kinds of relationships i.e. as wife and daughter-in-law may collide with that of the husband destroying the peace in the family. That is why the avoidance between daughter-in-law and parents-in-law is observed.

Avoidance between Son-in-law & Mother-in-law - The Parojas have avoidance relationship between a man's wife and her mother-in-law and between a man and his wife's mother i.e. his mother-in-law. While interacting they never speak their names. The son-in-law can speak to his mother-in-law through his wife. The mother-in-law herself is supposed to find herself in the position of daughter and she may overcome the incestuous feelings and hence the mother-in-law and son-in-law avoidance is there in Paroja society.

Avoidance between blood relations - Generally individuals are so socialized that the family members are not sexually attracted to each other. This kind of relationship prevents violation of incest taboo for biological dangers of close inbreeding. The Parojas have attributed that the avoidance between brothers and sisters is a sheer instinct. In a Paroja family, one is not sexually attracted to a person of opposite sex with whom one has grown up in same household from childhood. It is a social fact that restrains the family members from violating such taboos.

Joking Relationship - Sociological & Psychological interpretation

The relationship of avoidance is a rule of behavior that one has to maintain which involves respect and complete or partial

avoidance of physical contact, sight and speech as against the joking relationship which is a license to make fun and tease each other. In joking relationship, one may play practical joke and tease the other or publicly mock and taunt him. It is important to distinguish two kinds of such relationships found in Paroja society.

1. If the relationship is symmetrical two persons tease or make fun of the other (brother-in-law and sisters-in-law of the same age group).
2. If the relation is asymmetrical jokes and teasing with good humor are accepted without retaliation. This relationship is indicative of equality and mutual reciprocity. They may also be indicative of potential sexual relationship that is for example, between man and his wives' younger sisters, between a woman and her husband's younger brothers. A joking relationship when not mutual attracts the rules of social control by way of social ridicule.

Status of women

In the Paroja society the women enjoy a high status on account of their hard work and sustained efforts for the growth and maintenance of family in particular and society in general. They are not only held in high esteem but also considered as an equal half of men. When a girl child passes her stage of infancy in the lap of her mother, she rises to the occasion and engages her tiny hands in some work or other which contribute to the economic upliftment of the family. She is an invaluable asset to her natal family and after marriage when she leaves her family of orientation with tears in her eyes, she pays back the price by way of customary bride price to her parents of being born to them and nourished by them. There in the new surroundings of her husband's family amidst alien persons she never shrinks; rather, in the company of her child and husband, toils hard to lay the economic foundation of her family of procreation.

However, the Paroja women suffer from certain social disabilities resulting from various taboos and restrictions. They are tabooed to climb the roof of the house for thatching and till the

land because they believe that Dharni Devta will get angry and they may not have a good harvest. During their menstrual period and childbirth pollution period they are considered impure and kept confined inside the house. At this time, they are subjected to some prohibitions such as they are not allowed to enter into the cowshed and the main living room of the house where household deities reside, to do any sort of household activities excepting nourishing infants, to participate in the agricultural operations, to visit relatives and market place alone, to participate in rituals and the like. The Paroja women are also not permitted to participate in village council meetings except as a party or witness. They can watch the proceedings only from a distance. In religious practices the women are not direct participants excepting designated women like Gurumain. They can only participate in dance.

After marriage the chief duties of the women are to take care of the household, prepare meal and perform household chores. Besides these, they work to supplement family income by the collecting minor forest produce and wage earning. In agricultural activities they perform works like clearing, burning, sowing, weeding and harvesting. All the produce earned by them remains in their hand and they control and make proper use of the products. Marketing for the household is preferably done by them.

Life is not a bed of roses for the Paroja women. They work hard both at home and outside to provide economic support to their male counterparts who often idle away their time under sago palm trees in a drunken state. In case of some families where the husband is absent for long, the wife shoulders the entire burden of maintaining the family by discharging the dual role of father and mother. It is for their devotion and commitment they always occupy a special place in the hearts of men. On the whole, a Paroja woman is not merely an obedient daughter of her parents or sexual partner of her husband; she is also a faithful and obedient wife, an efficient house manager and an affectionate mother.

Since the Paroja society is patriarchal and patrilineal in nature, their customary rules do not permit women to inherit

immovable property. However, in the male dominated Paroja society, women are treated as living assets belonging to their parents, brother's or husband's families because of their substantial contribution to the livelihood of their families. The social prestige and value of Paroja women are derived from the fact that, they are hard workers less addicted to liquor than men, more active than men, obedient to men, they make homes, give birth to continue family line. Therefore, Paroja women are not treated as second-class citizens. They are taken as equal partners of men and enjoy greater freedom in matters of selecting their mates and of their work and movements.

Although Paroja women cannot inherit immovable properties, they are entitled to take over the management of their deceased husband's family and property and claim maintenance out of their parent's and husband's properties as long as they continue to stay with the concerned families. As daughters and sisters whether unmarried, widow or divorced, they are maintained in the family of their orientation or procreation according to their place of residence. As wives, daughter-in-laws, and mothers they are maintained in their husband's family even if, they are widow, barren, old, sick or handicapped. Their rights to claim maintenance from their paternal properties or husband's properties are forfeited when they leave the family to elope with and marry or remarry another person. However, when a widow remarries outside her ex-husband's family, the family members of her ex-husband claim a token bride-price from her new husband to compensate the loss of the woman as an economic asset for whom they had paid bride-price to her parents.

Theoretically a Paroja woman may not inherit paternal or husband's properties but by virtue of her right to claim maintenance from her husband's or paternal properties as the case may be, they practically enjoy some residuary rights over the properties indirectly. For example, a widow manages her husband's properties and a girl who is the only child of her parents can claim a share from her parent's properties even after her marriage if she and her husband continue to stay with her parents.

Though Paroja men are owners of family properties it is the women who control the family purse behind the curtain. Their participation in all kinds of economic activities and their contribution to the family budget is quite substantial as compared to the males. Therefore, they play a decisive role in economic affairs of their respective families.

Paroja women are economically self-dependent. They are not dependent on the male folk for their survival. Rather the opposite is true. They depend on their male kins only when they become old, invalid and sick. Children are more attached to their mothers than the fathers. So, mother's words are respected and obeyed by children. Although they suffer from certain social disabilities resulting from various taboos and restrictions and they are theoretically deprived of inheriting properties, in actual practice they possess, control and manage their family assets indirectly behind the curtain.

Youth Dormitory

Till the recent past the striking feature of Paroja social organization was the existence of youth dormitory organization, functioning in every village which like that of the Kondh tribe, was called 'basaghar', one each for the unmarried boys (dhangda basaghar) and another for girls (dhangdi basaghar). The dormitory institutions represented one of the traditional aspects of their culture and were central to all their activities relating to social, economic and cultural spheres. The institution played a very significant role in guiding the youths to maintain social solidarity and loyalty in conformity with their customs and traditions.

These institutions acted as a matrimonial agency. The boys and girls were spending the night in their respective dormitories and enjoying the liberty of knowing each other and get a scope to become more intimate while they were meeting at the communal dancing ground at the center of the village called Berna Munda and rejoicing by singing and dancing together in competitions. The songs were mostly romantic love songs of question answer type known as 'Lagu Gita' through which, the boys and girls commu-

nicated their ideas and feelings. The music and dance that often followed the song competition were making the atmosphere lively and attractive. Sometimes, the whole night is spent in dancing. During festive days, the groups of boys and girls visited neighboring villages and held dance competitions with the groups of opposite sexes there. These sessions helped in creating an intimacy between boys and girls of different villages which culminated in love affairs leading finally to the selection of a marriage partner. Now-a-days, the youth dormitories have lost their significance and are gradually dwindling away. Now, in most of the Paroja villages this age-old institution is almost non-existent.

LIFE CYCLE

A Paroja individual in the course of his mundane life between birth and death passes through several successive phases and crises of life. They have their own rational view that human life begins in the mother's womb and terminates with death. They are quite aware of the fact that conception results from the sexual union of adult men and women with the blessings of deities and ancestors.

Pregnancy & Child Birth

In Paroja society, pregnancy and child birth are welcome events and barrenness is looked down upon. The couple without any issue after three or four years of marriage consults their Disari and Gurumai. The Disari in consultation with Gurumai prescribes the remedial medicines and rituals. If not successful the wife persuades husband to go for a second marriage for continuance of the family line.

On the cessation of the monthly cycle of the wife, the couple apprehends conception and waits for two to three months anticipating repetition of the monthly cycle. If it does not happen, the husband and family members get confirmation of pregnancy by observing the symptoms like nausea, vomiting, craze for eating sour items and laziness, and later, the protuberance of the abdomen of the wife. Thereafter, the family members with the help of Gurumai perform a ritual by sacrificing and offering a white cock and some rice to the ancestral spirits to keep the baby protected in the mother's womb from 'dunea' (evil spirit).

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. She is not allowed to go to forest during evening hours

and to carry heavy loads. However, in actual practice, pregnant women remain engaged in their daily chores till an advanced stage and often up to the moment when her labour pains starts because of their cultural habits as well as economic necessities.

They observe pre-delivery ritual- gotuja / artiuja on the ninth month of pregnancy conducted by their traditional female shaman - Bejuni or Gurmain to appease the benevolent and malevolent spirits and ancestral spirits to avoid ill omens and mishap for the pregnant mother and the baby in her womb by sacrificing a pigeon, fowl or a pig and offering arua rice, turmeric water, jhuna (resin) and sindur (vermillion). In case of complications, the services of traditional witch-doctor cum medicine man i.e. Bejuni or Gurmai is sought for.

At the time of child birth the woman is confined to a room or an enclosure and no male members are allowed inside. Only elderly and experienced women and traditional mid-wife attends the mother. In case of further complications in delivery the Bejuni or Gurmain is called for to diagnose the cause and prescribe the remedy for facilitating smooth delivery of child. After child birth the umbilical cord is cut by the mid-wife by an iron blade and the child is given bath near a pit dug in the courtyard of the house for the purpose. Then the mother takes bath and change clothes.

Birth pollution for mother and child lasts for nine days or until the naval cord of the infant dries up. During this period, the mother and the baby remain polluted and secluded inside the house. At the end of this period, the midwife throws the dried-up naval cord into a pit that 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 and the newborn. Thereafter, the family undergoes purification of birth pollution. 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. For her services the midwife is remunerated in kinds

of a new sari, some food stuffs like rice, ragi, turmeric, oil and vegetables.

On that day, the family observes the name giving ceremony (dumbaladatar) for the newborn and hosts a feast for the lineage members. The village priest 'Jani' performs the puja to detect the ancestor who had taken rebirth in the child and accordingly, a temporary name is given to the baby. They generally select the names of their ancestors using rice divination method conducted by their traditional astrologer-Disari and the female shaman Gurumain.

They observe 'duadiharba' ritual for first cereal feeding, after one month of baby's birth. On this day, the new born is given a ceremonial bath and they prepare a paste using arua (unboiled) rice, jhudanga (a pulse) and kumuda (pumpkin) etc and offer it first to a cow. They put a little paste into the mouth of the new born.

The regular name-giving and the first hair-cutting and ear-piercing ceremonies of the child are held within a year on the auspicious dates fixed by the traditional astrologer (Disari). For regular name-giving the father names the child after the day of week in which he/she was born. For example, a male child born on Monday is named Somra and a female child, Sombari and those born on Tuesday are named Mangla. For tonsure the father shaves the hair of the baby with a blade. In the ear-piercing ceremony both the ear lobes of the female child are pierced with a brass pin provided by 'Jani' after conducting the purificatory rite. This ritual is called as 'mudrapotnake'. For all these observances, their Disari and Gurumai, the maternal uncle and grandparents of the new born baby play a major role and the family hosts a non-veg feast for the kinsfolk.

The child is breastfed till 2-3 years of age. When parents work outside, the elderly persons like grandparents or grown-up children, who remain in the house, take care of the baby. If there is no one to look after, then the mother carries the child to work site. Parents and seniors love the child very much and rarely admonish him/her for naughty behavior. The child grows up in an atmosphere of fondness and affection. Till ten years of age the child

does nothing but plays with other children. Then he/she gradually learns to assist the parents in indoor and outdoor activities.

Puberty Rite

Paroja boys and girls attain puberty between 12-14 years of age. After puberty a girl enters into womanhood and is considered fit for marriage. The Paroja observe puberty rites for adolescent girls attaining their first menarche. At the time of her first menstruation, a girl is considered impure and unclean and she remains in seclusion in a remote corner of a room for seven days. During this period, she is subjected to many taboos and restrictions. She is tabooed to look or talk with males and to perform any household chores. She must abstain from eating non-vegetarian and spicy food items and should not move outside alone. She should not use oil, soap or cosmetics.

On the dawn of the eighth day, she takes ceremonial bath in the nearby hill stream anointing her body with turmeric paste. The Gurumain performs a purificatory ritual in the bathing ghat. Then she wears the new cloth and cosmetics presented by her family and worships the deities to get rid of pollution. On this occasion family members and relatives bless the girl to have good fortune and she is gifted with utensils and some money. The puberty ritual is considered as half marriage and it gives the impression that the girl is not a child and is fit to start her own family on being fertile. In the evening, the family entertains the kinsfolk with a non-vegetarian feast and country liquor (mohuli).

After this the Paroja girls enter into the colorful world of youthdom. Their female friends and relatives train them to become good girls and good wives. The secret of love and sex are also taught to her.

Marriage

The most significant event in a Paroja's life is marriage. It is also an important ceremony in the Paroja villages. Paroja boys after 18 years of age and girls after puberty are considered fit for marriage. In olden days child marriage was prevalent in Paroja

society. Of course, now-a-days adult marriage and monogamy has become the common the practice. The Parojas being an endogamous tribe do not establish matrimonial relations with non-Parojas. They follow the rules of clan exogamy as the boys and girls of the same clan are treated as brothers and sisters. Among the Parojas cross-cousin marriage is preferred in which a man may traditionally claim to marry his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter. Junior levirate and junior sororate are permitted 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 socially permitted.

Like other tribal communities, the Paroja have various ways of acquiring mates such as (i) marriage by negotiation (maga/haribol/ kudianata), (ii) marriage by capture (jhikianata), (iii) marriage by service (garhaon) and (iv) marriage by elopement (udilia). Among these they regard, marriages arranged through formal negotiation (kudianala / haribol / maga) is considered ideal and prestigious for which it is commonly practised

Marriage by negotiation (Haribol / Maga)

This is a ceremonial type of marriage involving elaborate procedure and greater expenses, which only the well-to-do families can afford. In this type of marriage, the authority of father to settle the marriage of his sons and daughters is undisputed. When the boy is considered to be an adult and capable of earning his livelihood he is taken to be fit for marriage and his parents look for suitable match for him. A good girl with a sound physique, an attractive appearance and capacity to undertake hard work is preferred. The parents or guardians of the boy take the initiative to seek a bride and arrange the marriage by observing their customary rules and procedures.

In this process before finalizing the matrimony, the consent of the boy and the girl is obtained by respective parents. The consent of the girl is very important in this matter, because if she marries against her will she may desert her husband after a few days,

thus causing disgrace and economic loss both to her husband and her own parents, which may finally lead to divorce and separation.

Generally, the arranged marriages are held in the month of Magha (January-February), because by this time all crops are harvested and food is available at home in plenty. The formal negotiation for marriage starts from the month of 'Kartik' (September-October). In this type of marriage, a matchmaker (Raibaria or Malabaria) is engaged to find a suitable mate. On receipt of the information about a suitable bride, a day is fixed for the groom's party to visit bride's house. The party carries a bamboo pole and some wine with them to the bride's village. On reaching the bride's house, they keep the bamboo pole inclined to the middle wall of the bride's house hanging from it all the wine bottles which they carried with them. The bride's father makes enquiry as to their purpose of coming. In reply the bridegroom's party reports that they have come with 'Malabaria' or 'Raibaria'. If the bride's father does not accept the proposal, he asks them to remove the pole from his house and indicates to the Raibaria or Malabaria to take away the wine bottles. On the other hand, if the bride's father is in favor of the proposal, he or the bride's brothers accept the wine bottles and all present there including the Raibaria drink the wine and invite the boy's party to come again. This is indicative of the consent of the bride's father to the proposal.

In the next visit the bridegroom's party carries bottles of wine, some rice, ragi other eatables and some money to the girl's house. They are received and entertained with wine by the bride's family. It is followed by the next visit when the bride's father receives and entertains them with wine in the presence of village headman. The village headman graces the occasion by his presence. He mixes some wine with the wine brought by the Raibaria, offers the same to the bridegroom's party and initiates the marriage negotiations with them. On this occasion, a grand non vegetarian feast of rice, rice beer and goat meat is hosted for the guests, kinsmen and influential persons of the village. This is the occasion when the negotiations are confirmed and the amount of bride price (jolla) to be paid by the boy's side to the girl's side is finalized. Then the boy's

party pays another visit to fix an auspicious date for the marriage in consultation with the 'Dissari' that would be convenient to both parties.

In all regular modes of marriages payment of bride price (jholla) is obligatory. The amount of bride price paid for maga marriage varies from place to place. However, it is paid in both in cash and kinds. Generally, a few heads of domestic animals (usually cows or buffaloes), a huge amount of rice or millet (ragi or mandia), clothes for the girl and her relatives, rice beer (pendum), mandia beer (landha), palm wine (salap) and some cash above a hundred rupees are paid. The day on which the bride price is finalized, both the parties celebrate the occasion by entertaining their guests in a small feast in which rice, meat and wine are served. (Mohanty, 2004) In the past, the bride price included Rs.5/- to Rs.500/- in cash, clothes for bride and her mother, three 'puttis' (three mounds approximately) of unhusked rice or millet (mandia), three bullocks and cows, goat or fowl and some jars of rice beer (pendum) and mandia beer (landha). Now-a-days, the amount of bride price in cash has increased to more than Rs. 20,000/-

The wedding ceremony is held at the boy's house. One day before the day fixed for the wedding, the bridegroom accompanied by his friends, relatives and villagers proceeds to bride's house in a procession to escort the bride with song and music to his village. While returning with the bride and before crossing the boundary of bride's village, the mother's brother of the bride is given a pig and some wine in token of gratitude to him. The bride's brother is also paid something which is known as 'Sala Khedia'.

Before entering into the boundary of the groom's village, the 'Jani' performs a ritual by sacrificing a fowl to the village deity in order to admit the girl into the village and to obtain her blessings. Then they are welcomed by the groom's people with music and dance. They are provided with a separate house to take rest. Now the bride's party demand the bride-price (jolla) as fixed earlier which the boy's father is bound to comply with. At this time as per tradition, the bridegroom's father pays the 'bride price' (jolla) to bride's father.

In the groom's village the marriage is celebrated with pomp and ceremony. On the wedding day, the bride is led to the bridegroom's house with her female relatives. Disari and Jani conduct the wedding rituals. This is followed by feasting and drinking, dancing and singing accompanied with sound of musical instruments that continue for the whole day and night.

A curious type of gymnastic performance known as 'Kumudamara' is made at the time of marriage and it is arranged by those who can afford it. In this event two long bamboo poles are set apart and fixed upright on the ground and another pole is tied to them horizontally at the height beyond reach and a watermelon is kept suspended from it. The upright bamboo poles are anointed with castor oil and made slippery. The bride's party is given chance first to climb up and cut the melon with one stroke. If the bride's people succeed in doing so, they are given a pot full of millet beer (landha) with some meat in recognition of their success. If the bride's party fails, the groom's party comes to make an attempt. Success on their part means a reward of pot of wine and some meat from the bride's party.

A folk dance known as 'Surcha' is held on the wedding day, in which a man dances wearing a long coat, a turban and two or three scarves thrown loosely over the shoulder. Strings of little bells are tied to his feet and garland of beads hangs around his neck. Sometimes men and women dance separately and sometimes together in long line or circle to the tune of music played by bamboo flutes, drums and iron instruments. Dance songs sung in the form of question and answer between men and women, usually are of an indecent nature.

Man- if you will go with me, we will both follow officer's elephant. If I go back without you my heart can have no rest.

Woman- Who dares to take me away from my husband while the company is reigning. My husband will beat me and who will pay him the compensation.

Man- You better make up your mind to go with me. I will ask the treasurer for some money to pay it to your husband.

Woman- Very well, I will make ready some food and will run away with you in the next bright fortnight.

These dialogues lead to quarrels between husband and wife, as he can't rebuke his wife in the assembly, he bears it. Sometimes a woman falls in love with a man during dance and runs away with him.

The newly wedded couple visits girl's parent's house with food and other eatables, after one month of marriage or so. This is known as 'handibahudani'.

Marriage by Capture (Jhika Utra)

Those who cannot afford the expenses of the arranged marriage prefer other types of marriages wherein the expenditure is comparatively less. One such type of marriage is known 'Jhika Utra' or marriage by capture.

In this type of marriage boys and girls meet each other in several places and occasions, such as in weekly market, in different fairs and festivals, especially the chait parab. When young men go on expedition to neighbouring villages and especially during marriage ceremony when maidens and boys escort the bride to bridegroom's house and in some cases, a mediator (sutrakari) acts as a liaison between young men and women of the bride's party and the groom's party. These occasions provide scope for the boys to select girls for capture. In most cases the capture is mutually pre-arranged by the boy and the girl and / or by their parents who direct their sons and daughters to go to a particular place for staging the act of capture. Physical capture rarely takes place.

When the girl has been captured, the girl's parents accompanied by influential persons of their village namely Muduli, Jani, other traditional village council functionaries and relatives come to abuse and threaten the boy's family and induce the girl to come out of the house. If the girl is not willing for marriage, she may come out and surrender herself. She is then taken back to her home and compensation is demanded from the boy's family for the nuisance committed by the boy. If the girl remains adamant and

does not agree to come out on being induced by her parents then the girl's party demands the bride price. When the girl is captured with the consent of her parents and the girl herself, only the bride price is demanded. In this occasion when the girl's party would be busy in shouting and making catcalls, the boy's parents would be busy in preparing festive meals with meat and liquor to pacify the guests. Influential people of the boy's village come to the rescue of the boy's family. When the tension cools down, both the parties sit down to settle the quantum of the bride price including the compensation, if any. In this case the bride price is less and is not required to be paid immediately. When everything is finalized, the guests are entertained with a grand feast with liquor. The bride and bridegroom are given new clothes to wear in an auspicious moment as advised by 'Dissari'. A fowl is killed by striking it against the heads of the bride and bridegroom. The wedded couple cooks it and shares it in a feast.

Another version of Jhika marriage is also noticed among Parojas. A mediator (sutrakari) acts as mediating link between the girl and the boy. The capture takes place in the market or in festive occasions. On the scheduled day, place and time the boy along with his friends captures the girl and brings her to his place by force. The curious element in this process of capture is that if the girl gives blows to the groom's friends, it is indicative of her consent to the proposed marriage with the particular boy. Within few days after getting the news, some people of the girl's village visit the boy's village in search of the kidnapped girl. One member of the search party acts as the leader (khojban) of the party and other members accompany him. The Khojban is distinguished from Raibarias by his iron-plated bamboo pole which he carries with him on this occasion. They enter the boy's village on the plea of searching for their 'lost cow'. It is needless to say that the people of the village involved in this capture are aware of the visit of the girl's people in advance. On reaching the destination, the party goes straight to the house of the village headman Muduli and enquires in whose shed their cow is tied. In reply village Muduli informs them that their cow is confined in someone's cowshed and has been fed gruel and

water properly and there is no question of returning the same. The headman also adds that price of the cow will be paid duly. Then the headman on behalf of the boy's family assures 'Khojbana' that bride price will be paid in their next visit.

After a few days the girl's father sends information through 'chalan' (village messenger) to the boy's father regarding the day of their proposed visit. As soon as the girl's party led by the khojban reaches the boy's village, they are respectfully greeted and led to the boy's house. The married women of the boy's side with all submissiveness anoint the feet, knee, shoulder and forehead of 'Khojban' with turmeric paste mixed with water and then salute with folded hands. Thereafter they proceed to someone's cowshed where they all sit and start their discourse with exchange of words and arguments. On that day, the boy's father hosts a feast of rice and wine for the guests. Thereafter, the girl's father receives the bride-price and returns home with his party on being satisfied. The last ritual is the wedding ritual that is performed by anointing turmeric paste on the body of the bride and bridegroom on an auspicious day fixed by 'Dissari' and the union is solemnized.

Marriage by Elopement (Udilia)

This type of marriage results from mutual love between boys and girls that leads to elopement. Boys and girls meet in the weekly markets and in communal dances in the occasions of marriage and festivals. When a boy and girl love each other and decide to marry, they run away from their houses to another village, where some relatives of the boy or girl live. There they spend a week or so and then return to the boy's village. Then they are socially recognized as husband and wife and can't be separated by their parents. The bride's parents accompanied by their kith and kin visit the house of the boy and induce the girl to come back which hardly happens. Her parents and relatives are pacified by the boy's side with offer of food and drinks. Thereafter, they demand bride price and a feast. After the settlement of the bride price, the guests and other influential persons are entertained in a feast. In this type of marriage bride price is less and can be paid in several installments.

Marriage by Intrusion (Pasnamundi or Pasanmedi)

This is another type of love marriage in which the girl takes the initiative to marry a boy of her choice. When she fails to allure the boy to marry her, she enters his house and stays there. The girl or women on reaching groom's house asks for some rice, ragi or gruel. The boy's mother being aware of the girl's intention welcomes her with a leaf-cup full of gruel. After taking it, the girl puts the leaf cup under water pot and boy's mother asks her to fetch water in a jar to have confirmation about her intention. The girl does it and boils the water brought in the jar to make it tepid warm. As soon as the boy comes to the house, she anoints turmeric paste on his body and baths him in tepid water. In some cases, she is abused, ill-treated, refused food and also put to several ordeals. If she remains unperturbed and silent then she is accepted as daughter-in-law.

The bride's father gets annoyed at self-indulgence of his daughter and sends some of his relatives to claim bride price from boy's parents. The bride price is low in this type of marriage. On the day of the payment of bride price the groom's father arranges a feast to entertain the bride's party and the marriage is solemnized and consummated as advised by village priest Disari'.

Marriage by Service (Gharjwain / Garhaon)

In this type of marriage bride is acquired by service. When a poor Paroja boy fails to raise the required amount of money and materials for bride price for a regular marriage he takes resort to acquire his wife by means of rendering free service to the girl's family for a specific period of time. By prior arrangement, the young man goes and lives with the family of the girl to whom he wishes to marry. During his stay with the girl's family, he works on the farm and does all other works that is assigned to him by the girl's family. The term of service generally varies from two to five years. After completion of the stipulated period, the father of the girl gives his daughter in marriage to the boy. In this type of marriage, no bride price is paid and all the expenses of marriage are borne by girl's father. After marriage the couple if they so desire,

may return to boy's original village or may continue to stay in the girl's place either with the girl's parents or by setting up a new home. If the girl's parents can afford, some farm land is allotted to the boy for sustenance.

Widow Remarriage

Widow marriage is also prevalent in Paroja society mostly in the form of junior levirate. A man can marry his deceased elder brother's wife with her consent. In this kind of secondary marriage the man is saved from the expenses including payment of bride price required for regular marriage. If the widow does not agree she is also permitted to remarry a man of her choice outside her deceased husband's family with the approval of the traditional village leaders. The marriage is solemnized in a simple ceremony. In this case her new husband pays a small compensation to her deceased husband's family and her children are taken care of by the family or relatives of her deceased husband.

The Paroja society also permits junior sororate (tada) types of marriages and remarriage of widowers and divorcees in which also no bride price is paid. These types of marriages are solemnized in a simple ceremony.

Divorce

In Paroja society divorce is permitted. Either party can divorce his / her spouse, on the grounds of misconduct, cruelty, extramarital relationship, suffering from chronic and incurable diseases and disabilities etc.

Divorce cases are settled with due approval of the traditional council. The family members and kinsfolk of both the sides hold a meeting in the groom's village. If a man seeks divorce, he gives a small compensation to his spouse. After divorce all their children excluding the breast-feeding ones, remain in custody of the husband. If the divorced woman remarries, her former husband claims the jholla (bride price) from her new husband as his compensation. The same customary rule of compensation applies to a married woman who deserts her husband and lives with another man of her choice.

Death

In Paroja's life cycle death is regarded as the most dreadful event. They were practicing burial in the past and in present times, cremation to dispose off their deads. But the corpses of pregnant women, children, and victims of leprosy and small pox are buried. Formerly, Paroja used to bury their dead with their head to the east and feet to the west. It was their belief that kingdom of dead lies in the west and with their feet buried in this direction, it will be easy for the dead to make the journey to the domain of deceased souls. These days, Parojas either bury or cremate their dead placing the body in a North-South direction (feet to the south)

The dead body is given a bath anointed with turmeric paste and clad with a new cloth after which the pallbearers (malbadia) belonging to their own community carry it to the cremation ground for the funereal. While carrying the corpse they also carry a potful of gruel known as 'Pendchopa'. After cremation the pot containing the gruel is pressed under a piece of stone in order to break it. The relatives of deceased family contribute one rupee each and with this they buy some wine which they drink together after taking the purificatory bath after cremation. All the personal articles of the dead such as his used cot, clothes, walking stick, tobacco container, umbrella etc. are taken to the crematoria and are burnt or thrown away near the funeral pyre. The eldest son of the deceased puts fire on the funeral pyre. After the cremation/burial the lineage members including the pallbearers take bath in nearby hill streams, eat the mango leaves and resin and sweep their bodies using brooms to protect themselves from the wrath of the departed soul and for their ritual purification. To express their mutual sorrow and fellow feelings the lineage members and pallbearers eat the gruel from their respective families and dine together for one and a half-day in the house of the deceased.

Death pollution is observed for three days. During the mourning period, observance of rituals, festivals, worship of deities, visiting sanctum sanctorum of the holy shrines, giving alms to beggars, sexual union, eating of non-vegetarian dishes, sweet

meats, oil, onion, garlic and consumption of alcoholic drinks are strictly tabooed. Agricultural activities, during this period are also prohibited. The bereaved family do not cook food in their kitchen. The neighbouring families of their lineage supply them vegetarian food during this time.

On the second day the lineage members and pallbearers come to the house of the deceased to get themselves cleansed and clothes of the members of the house washed. The pall-bearers go to the cremation ground and collect the ashes into a heap and cover it with a large piece of stone kept under three pieces of stone in a triangle. Then they go to the nearby river or hill stream, catch some fish and reach the place where the clothes of deceased's family are washed. They take out their own clothes for washing and wear leaves of a tree called 'Kan Kada Patar'. After washing their clothes, they throw away the leaf dress, wear the wet clothes and proceed to the house of the deceased with the fish caught from the river or stream. On reaching the house they start cooking seven fistful of rice with fish and divide the cooked food into seven shares and make seven packets with sal leaves which are enjoyed by the bereaved family members. This food is known as 'Pitakhia' or 'Pitahchua'. Thereafter, they collect all the cooking vessels, ladle, strainer, wood and ashes from the hearth and throw them near the cremation ground. In the evening a fowl is sacrificed at the place where the person died, and some rice, ragi, money, oil and turmeric are given to pall bearers, who in their turn anoint the oil and turmeric over their body and get themselves purified.

In the night two people go to the cremation ground with a packet of cooked rice held suspended from a carrying pole and call aloud the deceased person by shouting his or her name and ask him/her to eat cooked rice which is called 'Pitabhat'. In the meantime, some ragi flour is spread over a leaf plate in the house of the deceased and covered under a basket. Nobody is allowed to remain present in the place. The members of the deceased family come out of the house. The pall bearers soon return home and on their way back to home they keep uttering loudly the name 'Bhagabat'. They stand in front of the deceased's house and someone from inside the

house asks the reason of their coming. In reply pall bearers say “we have brought happiness in place of sorrow”. Thereafter the pall bearers get into the house and examine the ragi flour kept covered therein. If any foot print of a person is marked on the flour it is suspected that some sorcerers have eaten up the deceased person. If foot prints of any bird or animal is noticed, it is believed that some deity has eaten up the deceased person. If no foot print is shown on the ragi flour then it is believed that Yama or God of Death has taken away his life.

On the third day i.e. the day of the purificatory rite they throw away all their used earthen wares, clean the walls and floors of the house by plastering with coloured earth or cow dung paste. The eldest son conducts the mortuary rites presided over by their traditional community priest the Jani. On this day the deceased's family arranges a feast and invites all villagers. It is obligatory for the Paroja people to take part in this communal feast. A family having moderate means arranges the feast on the third day in less sumptuous manner and is treated as the last purificatory rite of death whereas an affluent or family arranges a sumptuous feast in the month of Pausa or Magha.

Duma

The term used by Paroja for the soul is Duma. The soul of a person killed by the tiger is called Baghdaduma. The places of abode of Duma are those where death occurs as a result of falling from the tree or drowning in water or falling from a hill or attack by a beast in the cave. No one is allowed to visit such lonely places. If someone attacked any time by a Duma, he or she takes the help of sorcerer or Gurmain to get rid of the evil effects. It is the tradition of each Paroja family to solemnly invoke the spirits of Dumas of the deceased members during feasts and festivals. They worship them first and thereafter perform the necessary rituals.

ECONOMIC LIFE

The Parojas inhabiting the forest clad hills, highlands and valleys of undivided Koraput district thrive on a land and forest-based economy. Thurston (1909) has classed them as “Hill Cultivators”. By their adoption to the natural environment, shifting and settled cultivations are the mainstay of their subsistence economy. According to S.C. Mohanty (2004: 255), formerly, the Paroja subsisted from shifting cultivation which now-a-days, is reduced to a secondary or tertiary means of livelihood. In present times, they mainly depend on wet (settled) cultivation, which is supplemented by shifting cultivation and other allied economic pursuits like the collection of forest produce, wage-earning, animal husbandry, etc. Now, cultivable land is in short supply as compared to the growth of their population over period of time and therefore, majority of them are either landless or marginal and small farmers.

Paroja settlements are located amidst hills and valleys in which flowing perennial hill streams are channelled to irrigate their terraced farmlands on the gentle hill slopes and wet lands in the hill bottoms. In these irrigated lands they cultivate high yielding paddy, maize and varieties of vegetables like, potato, brinjal, cabbage, cauli-flower, sweet potato, tomato, sesame and chilly, onion and garlic etc. In their unirrigated up and dry lands (guda) they raise draught resistant crops like ragi, niger (alasi), dangardhan, bajra (kedjanna), kandul, biri (black gram), kating, kolthi, kosala, chana and mustard.

The Parojas divide their cultivable lands into four major categories. First type is known as Beda or wet land, which is best for wet cultivation of paddy. Second variety is known as ‘Hada / Guda’ which is plain unirrigated up and dry land where dry short

duration paddy and small millets are grown. Third category of land is known as 'Dongar' meant for shifting cultivation. Fourth type is the kitchen garden called Badi situated behind the house which is planted with different kinds of vegetable plants and other cash crops. They take good care of their kitchen garden.

Shifting Cultivation - (Dongar Chas / Podu Chas)

This archaic type of "slash and burn" cultivation is known as Podu Chas or Dongar Chas in Koraput district. It starts with the felling trees and clearing of bushes on hill slopes during the months of February to March. The dried up fallen trees and bushes are burnt and ashes are spread over the cleared area and then tilling of land is done by hoes. In lower slopes ploughing is done by plough and bullocks. Mixed cropping is practiced with sowing of 10 to 12 types of crop seeds in the same plot of land whose period of ripening and harvesting differs over a long period between September and December. The Paroja mostly grow highland paddy, early paddy, ragi, minor millets, black gram, suan, jowar, niger, maize, arhar (kandul) and beans in their Dongar lands. Naturally, the preserved fertility of the virgin soil or the long lying fallow lands yield a rich harvest for a period of two to three years at a diminished rate. Then this particular patch of land is left abandoned for a couple of years to recuperate and be cultivated again. During this fallow period other patches of Dongar lands are cultivated. Thus, the cycle of cultivation continues among several patches. In these days, the magnitude and extent of shifting cultivation have decreased to a great extent owing to the stringent Government regulations for preserving and maintaining the forest eco-system. Now the Paroja, though practising shifting cultivation to a little extent do not feel bad about the stringent Government restrictions.

Up and Dry Land (Hada / Guda) Cultivation.

Their non irrigated uplands called Hada are located in the lower parts of hills. Here they only raise draught resistant crops such as cereals including small millets and pulses like Dangardhan, maize, Ragi, Bajra (Kedjanna), Niger (Alasi), Kandul, Biri (black gram), Kating, Kolthi, Kosala, Chana, and mustard. However,

harvest from this kind of lands like that of Dongar land are unpredictable because of vagaries of nature.

Ragi is mostly grown in these dry fields and no manure is applied to these lands. The lands are ploughed more than once and ragi seedling are transplanted after one or two showers of rain. Mustard is grown after ragi is harvested. The Parojas are aware that such rotation of crops helps in maintaining fertility of the soil. The other crops grown in the uplands where ragi is grown are horse gram (Kulthi) and Til.

Terraced and Wet Lands (Beda) for Settled Cultivation

The Parojas inhabit near the river or hill streams on the foot hills where they develop wet lands and terraced farm lands. Generally, terraces are done on flat or gently sloping lands in areas where water of perennial hill streams is available nearby and can be channeled to terraces for irrigation. Besides there are low level hill bottom wet lands. These wet lands are called Beda whose level of production is higher than that of the Dongar and Hada lands. These kinds of lands are suitable for paddy cultivation. They usually grow high yielding varieties of paddy in these Beda lands. Besides other crops like ragi, suan, jowar, niger etc. and varieties of vegetables are also raised in this land.

The Parojas grow early variety and late variety of paddy. The former type is grown in terraced land and the latter variety, in low lands. They transplant paddy plants rather than sowing and cow dung manure is applied to the paddy fields. Transplantation takes place in the month June to early July and paddy is harvested from September to November.

No modern agricultural practices such as application of fertilizers and pesticides are done for growing paddy. They use bio-fertilizers to get a good harvest not for causing any damage to the soil fertility. It has been reported by the Muduli of Aminguda village of Koraput block that once they applied pesticides to their crops but they found that it did more harm than good to agriculture. The adverse effects of use of pesticides were that the earth worms which loosens the soil enabling luxuriant growth of plants were

killed. Similarly, the small fishes, crabs and snails that lived in paddy fields during monsoon were also killed.

For farming, the Paroja use very simple agricultural implements, namely the plough, spade, hoe, axe, etc. Tilling 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 seen.

Kitchen Garden (Badi)

The Paroja raise kitchen gardens called Badi situated behind or beside their dwelling houses where they grow maize and different kinds of vegetables like, potato, brinjal, cabbage, cauliflower, sweet potato, tomato, sesame and chilly, onion and garlic etc. The harvest is mostly used for domestic consumption and the surplus is sold in local markets to procure the items of daily needs. These are protected by wattle fencing. They take regular care of their Badi by weeding and manuring with cow-dung annually.

Recently new high yielding varieties of crops such as potato, arhar, wheat, sugar cane, and vegetables like cabbage, cauliflower, brinjal, tomatoes, etc. have been introduced by the development agencies. Now some responsive Paroja farmers are cultivating these new crops with great enthusiasm and getting better returns. But they are not very keen to use modern chemical fertilisers and pesticides.

Engagement in different agricultural and allied pursuits keeps the Paroja farmers occupied throughout the year. In the month of January long-duration paddy, maize, small millets (suan) and a few other crops are harvested. During the months of February and March the people amuse themselves with feasts and festivals, as there is very little work to be done in the fields. However, the collection of mahua, jungle grass, hunting of games and group fishing are some important gainful activities pursued during these months. From the month of April the seasonal agricultural operations start and the farmers prepare their lands and raise maize and vegetable crops in the kitchen garden. Mangoes and oil-seeds are collected from the forest. May and June are the busiest months

when small millets and paddy are sown in the up and dry lands. In these months the fields for shifting cultivation are cleared and twigs are burnt. Ploughing of the fields and clearing of stumps are also completed in these months. In the month of July the sowing of wetland paddy and millets and raising of some vegetable crops and maize are completed, followed by different routine agricultural operations in the months of August and September. These two months are considered to be the lean months, when the people live on forest produce and sometimes incur loans either in cash or kind. The months of October and November bring hopes and happiness when the people harvest short-duration paddy, ragi and small millets. They celebrate new crop-eating festivals (Nuakhia) and perform magico-religious rites for eating beans. Otherwise, watching over and caring for long-duration paddy and sowing of oil seeds keep them engaged during this month. December and January are the main harvesting months, when the long-duration paddy is harvested and the crops are stored. After selling a part of the harvest, the outstanding debts are redeemed.

Animal Husbandry

Parojas are fond of cattle wealth. Rearing of livestock comes as a supplementary source of livelihood. They rear bullocks, cows, buffaloes, goats, pigs and fowls. The bullocks and buffaloes are used as agricultural drought animals. The cows, she-buffaloes and she-goats are not milked. The Parojas believe that cows' milk is meant for the calf so, they don't take milk for the belief that the cow and calf will starve. Now-a-days, some of them have started milking their cows and selling the milk to manage their difficult periods. It is observed that sometimes, they barter milk for country liquor with local 'Sundis' (wine vendors). In all other seasons except summer, cattle are sent outside for grazing under the care of herdsmen. Castration of male calf is done in a late period. Cattle dung is stored carefully in a pit and used in manuring the agricultural lands. Cattles are also presented in bride price transactions that brings prestige. Goats, pigs and fowls are sacrificed in rituals and ceremonies and also used for entertaining guests and relatives. At the time of need these are sold for cash.

Collection of Minor Forest Produce (MFPs)

The Parojas lived with the forest for centuries inhabiting clusters of villages mainly in the hilly areas, dependent primarily on shifting cultivation and minor forest produce (MFP) and thus built up a symbiotic link with forest in context of their social, cultural and economic life. Forest has remained an important resource base for them. They depend on the forest flora and fauna for their livelihood and collect various kinds of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) in different seasons. So, in the tribal economy, forests occupy a central position.

Being denizens of forest the Parojas derive a part of their subsistence out of forest-based activities. Since, their agricultural produce does not meet their food requirements for the whole year, their consumption needs are met to a large extent from seasonal forest collections round the year. Their diet is greatly supplemented by fruits, roots, tubers and leaves collected from the jungle and thus food gathering still forms an indispensable part of Paroja subsistence economy. No one dares to eat the seasonal fruits collected from the forest before offering the same to the deities and ancestral spirits.

They collect a large variety of seasonal minor forest produce like small timber, bamboo, thatching grass, fodder, fruits, roots, seeds, tubers, mushrooms, leaves, flowers, fibers, barks, herbs, etc to supplement their diet and other requirements. Items like honey, mohua flowers, and edible insects, eggs are collected from the forest for domestic consumption. Surplus items are sold or bartered in the local weekly hats. Mohua flowers are eaten raw and the surplus is stored for distilling liquor. Mohua seeds are used for extracting oil. They bring head loads of firewood from the jungle regularly for their own use and some of them earn a part of their livelihood by selling firewood and charcoal in the nearby urban centers and markets. They also get timbers, bamboo, siali fibre and leaves, sal leaves, palm leaves, kendu leaves, lac, resin, thatching grass etc. mostly for their own use and often at the time of need they sale these forest produces in the local markets to buy their requirements. All of them depend on MFPs for a major portion of their food and for their cattle fodder and other needs. In present

times, with depletion of forests these items are in short supply and there are also other difficulties being faced by them.

Fishing

The tribal habitat and subsistence activities cover many traditions in which fish is an integral part of tribes' food habit since time immemorial for all areas including the region of undivided Koraput district. The lives of tribes mainly depend on naturally available foods. In this natural livelihood system, fishing is another subsidiary occupation of the Parojas. Their fishing instruments consist of a few bamboo traps, fishing rods and nets. They go out for fishing in all seasons and they catch different varieties of fishes for their own consumption and for sell in the local markets. Freshly caught fish and dry fish when available form the part of their diet. Dishes of fish are a delicacy for them. They take up fishing in nearby water bodies like ponds, streams and rivers using their indigenous fishing rods, traps and nets.

Bonded Labour

Some Parojas work as agricultural helpers under neighbouring land-owning peasants. They are engaged to clear the hill slopes and carry-on shifting cultivation on their behalf. The harvests are enjoyed by the land owner who in turn gives the helpers food, clothing, some money and paddy or ragi weekly for his maintenance. This kind of arrangement is made by the Paroja to repay the debt and continues till the principal amount of debt is paid back.

Wage earning

The Parojas work as daily wage labourers in a group under a contractor for the construction of roads and such other works. They take the work from the concerned contractor and get their payment after the work is done. They distribute the money among themselves. They also earn wage by working as labourers in agricultural operations under their neighbouring peasants.

Division of Labour

Paroja society is governed by a division of labour based on age and sex as well as working capacity. Small boys and girls are not

assigned any work. Older boys and girls are trained to help their parents in indoor and outdoor economic activities. Usually hard works like hunting, tree felling in swiddens, ploughing, cattle tending, priestly activities, house building and thatching of roofs are done by men. Routine domestic chores like house cleaning, plastering, fetching water, husking and processing of food grains, cooking food, care of children as well as minor agricultural operations and seasonal forest collections are performed by women. Paroja women are more hardworking, meeker and milder than the men. Paroja women though meek and mild, are more labourious and hardworking than their male counterparts. Both men and women cooperate and work hand in hand for all economic activities.

Annual cycle of work

The Parojas pursue different livelihood activities in different months in a year which are presented below.

Sl. No	Month	Paroja's term for the month	Works
1.	January	Pus	Repairing of houses and fencing of kitchen garden.
2.	February	Magh	Collection of fire wood and ploughing in the wet land.
3.	March	Phalgun	Harvesting of turmeric, ploughing in wet land.
4.	April	Chait	Collection of Mahua (<i>Basia latifolia</i>), setting fire to dried matter in swiddens: ploughing and manuring.
5.	May	Baisak	Collection of fire wood, sowing in swidden and ploughing in wet and dry land.
6	June	Landi	Preparation of seed beds, collection of mango, jack fruit etc. from forest and work in kitchen garden.
7.	July	Ashad	Transplantation of paddy and collection of mushrooms.
8.	August	Bandapan	Weeding in wet and dry lands, work in kitchen garden. Harvesting and collection of roots and tubers from forest.
9.	September	Asin	Harvesting of paddy and ragi from dry lands, watching crops on swiddens, sowing mustard in dry lands.
10.	October	Dasra	Harvesting of paddy from dry land, watching crops in swidden, harvesting of green gram, ragi, klulthi etc.

11.	November	Diali	Harvesting of paddy from low land, repairing and thatching house, collection of firewood.
12.	December	Pond	Repairing of houses, fencing of gardens, cutting of grass and thatching of houses.

So far, the Parojas have retained their own way of life which distinguishes them from other tribal and non-tribal communities. Their traditional economic organization have changed to some extent with the changing time and environment. By and large, they have remained socio-economically backward as compared to their counterparts of general population.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Pantheon

The Parojas follow their own autonomous tribal religion. They profess animism mixed with elements of Hinduism. Their pantheon is not very elaborate. Yet they have a hierarchy of gods and deities at the base level of household deities (mostly including the ancestors), followed in ascending order, by village deities, regional deities, deities of nature, the patron deity, deities of celestial bodies and supreme deities. They propitiate them in different occasions to appease them to grant them a happy and prosperous life free of misfortune, diseases and calamities.

Goddess Danteswari - the Tutelary/ Patron Deity

For their legendary association with the ex-Raja of Bastar of Chhatishgarh they worship, Goddess Danteswari with great devotion. She is propitiated with sacrificial offerings of cock, goat, during festive occasions. They believe that the Goddess was with them in Bastar of Madhya Pradesh who has guided them in showing the path of their migration to undivided Koraput district.

Hundi Devta & Nissan Devta – the Village Patron Deity

Nisan munda is the abode of village patron deity, Hundi devta. She is seated at the shrine of Nissan munda in the center of the village street is who is worshipped regularly by the village priest during all important rituals and festivals. The shrine is surrounded by large menhirs in the middle of which Hundi Devta resides in one earthen pot with one permanent iron pillar and iron chopper. The Hundi Devta is worshipped three times a year during Bandapan Parab in the month of Sraban, Nukhia Parab and Chait Parab. The earthen pot and iron chopper is changed on these

occasions excepting iron pillar. They sacrifice animals like goat, fowl and birds with this chopper which is offered to Hundi Devta. She protects the village from the attack wild animals, diseases, calamities etc.

Jhakkar Devta- the Earth Goddess – a Village deity

She is a female deity who is the goddess of agriculture and protects the crops. She is represented by a stone placed under a tree at the outskirts of the village. She is worshipped on festive occasions of Chait or Baikh Parab (Bihan Thapa or Bihan Puja festival) in the month of April. Disari announces an auspicious date for the festival and collects a small quantity of paddy seeds from all households. He performs the Puja at Nisanmunda of the village in honour of Jhakkar Devta, where he purifies the seeds by sacrificing a pig. These seeds are mixed with other remaining seeds for sowing in the fields on the auspicious day fixed by Disari. On other occasions routinely they offer some cooked food in the honour of Jhakkar Devta and also before the household deity.

Gods and Spirits of the village boundary

Parojas worship the Gods and Spirits both male and female living on the village boundary for protection of villagers from epidemics and from the attack from wild animals. These gods and spirits are worshipped by Jani and Gurumain on the event of marriage ceremony and especially during epidemics or any person killed or hurt by the attack of wild animal. The offerings include sacrifice of a goat, rice and salop (sago palm juice) to appease the deities with a prayer to forgive them for their mistakes.

Bhim Deo- the Rain God

The rain god is invoked by Disari with the help of Gurumain to shower sufficient rains for growing of crops and also in protecting the crops them from draught and wild beasts.

Besides, there are some deities of nature residing in hills, forests, streams and rivers namely, Dongar Devta (Hill God), Janikudi, Khandual etc. Like other tribes, they conduct animal sacrifices to appease their deities in their religious functions.

Dongar Devta

He is the Forest God. The Disari and Gurumain in consultation with Muduli perform a ritual at the entrance of forest at least three times in a year to please him for abundant collection of minor forest produce, firewood and medicinal plants and for a successful annual ceremonial hunting and for saving them from the attack of wild animals.

Tiger Goddess

They worship the Tiger Goddess who is appeased by offering animal sacrifices. The puja is performed in the caves of the mountains by Disari in dry season preferably before their annual hunting ceremony. All the villagers during dry season, go to the cave, sacrifice a goat or buffalo or fowl and prepare food and offer these to the tiger goddess. The cooked materials are consumed by all the attending male members. Then they drink liquor and dance to the accompaniments of drums till night fall and then return to village. The village maidens prepare cake of mango kernel powder known as 'Takupitha' and offer it to the earth goddess at the end of the village in the honor of the Tiger Goddess praying her not to harm their people. They believe that tiger will not attack the villagers on being appeased.

Duma Devta - the Household Deities

Like other tribes of this region, they have the cult of ancestor worship. Ancestors called Duma are revered as household deities. They believe that ancestral spirits have influence on crops and in all walks of their life. They are worshipped regularly preferably on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and on all family level rituals and ceremonies by the household head or his wife. They offer fowl, new cloths, cooked food and holy water (guakudur) to please them. Routinely, they take their mid-day meals after offering the same to Duma Devta, who looks after the good health and prosperity of their family and lineage members. More often, they name their children after their ancestors.

Rahu Ketu – the Heavenly Bodies

Heavenly bodies are also worshipped. During solar and

lunar eclipses they offer prayers to the planets with the help of Gurumains and sorcerers to get rid of their evil effects. It is called Rahu - Ketu Puja. The animals like pigs, goats and fowls are sacrificed to appease them.

In course of time, due to culture contact with Hindu castes, the Paroja have incorporated some Hindu Gods and Goddesses into their pantheon. They are Hindihuta (Lord Siva), Lord Jagan-nath of Shabar Srikshetra of Koraput, Maa Laxmi, the Goddess of wealth etc.

Laxmi Devi - the Goddess of Wealth

She is worshipped by Gurumain in consultation with the Disari during the pre-harvesting period at the household level and also at the village level. The Goddess is offered a new saree and some cooked foods to appease her.

Sects

They are not very keen to follow the various Hindu sects. A few members of the tribe belong to 'Ramanandi' sect and they are respected. They are afraid to be members of Kabirpanthi sect. It is said that a few years ago a man of their community became a Kabirpanthi, but he subsequently became blind and his son died. Since then, this sect is without any adherents in their tribe.

Divination

During agricultural operations, they sacrifice a fowl putting some rice before it in the field on the day of sowing seeds. If the fowl eats the rice, they anticipate a good harvest. When they need rain, they fix a piece of wood on the ground, calling it 'Bhim Deo' or 'King of Cloud' and pour water over it, praying for rain. When a man intends to build a house, he performs a divination by putting on the site three grains, one resting over the other two in different places each set covered by leaf cups and then by earth. Next morning the grains are inspected and if the top one has fallen down, the site is considered auspicious and suitable for house construction. House should face east or west and not north or south.

Omen

After harvesting of crops they worship rivers and streams adjacent to village. Before starting a journey if they see a snake, jackal, hare and dog wagging its ears it is treated as bad omen. They do not kill wild dogs who are considered to be good omen, because tiger leaves the forest where the wild dogs are living. Wednesday and Thursday are lucky for starting journey and sowing, threshing, harvesting.

Most villages have a man called 'Sirha' who on religious occasions is possessed by deities and his advice is taken in religious matters. Another functionary is called 'medhaghantia' who by calculating on fingers finalizes the day of wedding and fixes up the auspicious days for house construction or commencement of sowing.

Magico-Religious Functionaries

The Paroja have their own magico-religious functionaries designated as Jani - the traditional village priest who conducts rites and worships to appease their gods and deities, Disari - the astrologer who fixes the auspicious dates and moments to celebrate the rituals, Chalan, the village messenger-cum-assistant to Jani and Gurumain- the magico-religious specialist. Gurumain is the female shaman and witch doctor who deals with the deities, ghosts and spirits. There is also another magico-religious specialist called Gunia who acts as the sorcerer-cum-medicine man. Besides, they have Bhattanayak - an important functionary in the Paroja village who purifies ritually polluted persons who have been condemned for committing socially disapproved offences. All of them belong to their own community. The offices of the Jani and Challan are hereditary and carry high social prestige. The positions of Disari, Gurumai and Gunia are acquired by specialisation in respective fields.

Jani is the priest who is responsible for propitiation of village deities on different occasions. He is also the person, who worships village goddess on the occasions of rituals or festivals. Gurumain acts as the traditional magico-religious healer who treats patients

by prescribing appropriate medicines and rituals. Disari besides practising astrology also acts as medicine man. Sometimes, he diagnoses the diseases and prescribes as well as administers the remedy jointly with Gurumain. In addition to that, both of them play their respective roles in community level rituals and life cycle rituals in individual families. Gunia - the sorcerer-cum-medicine man, also tries to cure illness of people by the determination of causes through uttering incantations and then by administering herbal medicines.

Bhattanayak comes into action to purify those who, are ostracised for having, committed certain sinful acts or for suffering from ritually polluted conditions. (Ulaka, 1976:22). Some of the ritually defiling conditions are cow-slaughter, injury or wound caused by attack of tiger, formation maggots in sore of the body and illness and suffering caused by any contagious disease especially, the leprosy. The concerned person, is expelled from the society and until he is made free from ritual pollution by undergoing purificatory rites prescribed by the Bhattanayak, he is not readmitted into the tribe.

In this kind of purificatory ritual the Bhattanayak takes the out-caste to the confluence of the river or hill stream, shaves his head clean, sprinkles over him cow-dung diluted in water and bathes him in river. After bathing he touches a hot gold ring with his tongue. These actions are believed to make the person ritually clean and facilitate him to be re admitted into his society. After performing the ritual the out-caste has to contribute a pig, a goat, three fowls and some rice for the village feast which is arranged and enjoyed by all the villagers. In this feast the Bhattanayak is served food at first. At this time a five rupees note is kept by concerned person under the leaf-plate from which Bhattanayak eats his food. After taking of the meal by Bhattanayak, others present in the ceremony enjoy the feast. For his services, the Bhattanayak receives a new cloth, five rupees, half-a-kilogram of rice and half-a-kilogram of ragi from the concerned person as his remuneration.

This finding is endorsed by Mohanty (2004: 257). He has reported that, Jani functions as the village head-priest. There are

other magico-religious functionaries in the village called Disari, Gurumain, Gunia and Bhattanayak. The Disari acts as the village astrologer and determines auspicious dates and auspicious moment for holding marriage ceremony, communal festivals, rituals, seasonal agricultural operations and so on. He also finds names for the new born and forecasts the future of match-making activities in matrimony. The Gurumain is the priest-cum-witch doctor, whose duty is to worship village goddess on different festive occasions and to ensure the recovery of the sick. The Bhattanayak purifies the ritually polluted persons condemned for conducting socially disapproved activities.

Rituals and Festivals

Being an agricultural tribe the Paroja observe a number of rituals and festivals in different months of a year most of which are connected with different stages of agriculture as well as related subsistence activities. Among them the important ones are given in the following,

Bihan Thapa or Bihan Puja or Bihan Parab

In the month of Chait or Baisakh (March - April), they observe Bihan Thapa or Bihan Puja festival. The village Disari announces an auspicious date for holding the festival. On the scheduled day, the village priest, Jani collects a small quantity of paddy seeds from each and every household and performs a ritual at the Nisan munda of the village in honour of Jhakkar Devta (the Earth Goddess), where he purifies the seeds by sacrificing a pig. The ritualized paddy seeds are distributed among different families of the village. These seeds are mixed with the remaining seeds for sowing in the field on an auspicious day fixed by Disari.

According to our findings, on this occasion the Parojas observe Bisputni Jatra. Bisputin is the god of paddy. To observe this festival, the Paorjas dig a big pit of sufficient width and pour water in to it to make it muddy. Jani sits by the side of mud pit and anoints his entire body with mud. The village maidens pour a container full of fish, frog, crab, mud and water on the head of Jani and run away from the place. During this time the Gurumain collects

paddy packets wrapped in small pieces of cloth from each and every household. All these paddy packets kept in the bamboo containers are placed near the mud pond. Jani wearing a white cloth anointed with mud all over his body asks each one of the household heads to sit there being rubbed with mud on their bodies. Jani worships the paddy seeds with the sacrifice of a pig and the Paroja participants enjoy the curry of cooked pig meat with rice, dal along with alcoholic drinks, landa and pendum. Thereafter, Jani distributes a fistful paddy to the household heads. The attending villagers carrying Jani on their shoulders, go round the village in a procession, collect rice and money from each household and leave Jani in front of his house. Then Jani performs a rite before the village deity to bring the occasion to an end. Jani also sprinkles holy water (mantura pani) on the members and cattle of all households. On the next day, all the villagers enjoy a community feast with drinks arranged from the amount of rice and money collected from households during procession.

Asadh Parab

It is observed in the month of Asadh (June - July) and consists a series of two or three rituals performed one after another namely Mandia rani, Laduchapu or Taku Parab. These are performed for worshipping millet plants and new eating of mango kernel respectively after offering the same to the village deity and ancestors.

The date of Mandia rani ritual precedes the major State level festival of Srigundicha - the famous Car Festival (Ratha Jatra) of Lord Jagannath of Puri. The village Chalan informs the people of the village about this festival on the previous day. Each household keeps its house and clothes clean to perform this ritual. Jani brings a ragi (millet) plant from his own field after performing necessary rituals. Then offering lamp and incense to the plant he keeps it straight at Nisan munda and sacrifices a fowl. After performance of this ritual, the Jani puts the ragi plant in a basket and brings it to his house. During the transit from Nisan munda to Jani's house, people sing and dance amidst sound of music. The ragi plant represents the Goddess Laxmi and Jani worships her by offering lamp, incense

and vermillion. After the puja starts, Jani's wife takes some turmeric powder, rice and marks these on the foreheads of persons who came in the procession from Nisan munda to Jani's house. The same procession is repeated in each and every Paroja family for bringing a ragi plant from their own fields straight to house where it is worshipped. The wife or daughter-in-law of the man, who brings the plant marks turmeric and rice on his forehead.

Mandia rani is followed by Taku parab in which Jani prepares cakes by roasting mango kernels (Taku) mixed with molasses and offers it to Jhakkar devta. Other people also follow Jani and celebrate the occasion by feasting, drinking, singing and dancing. Non-vegetarian meals are forbidden on this occasion. Cakes are prepared on this day and offered to the Jhankar Debta and eaten sumptuously. After Bahuda festival, the Parojas again offer incense and lamp to the ragi plant already brought home previously. They keep them at the place where seeds of crops are stored.

Langaladhua Punei or Bandapana Parab

It is observed during the month of Sraban (July-August). In this occasion Paroja families perform certain rituals. Agricultural implements are cleaned, decorated with red coloured earth and covered with new white cloth. Those who have ploughs observe this festival and those who don't observe it by only preparing cakes and eating them. They also wash the equipment called 'Badani' which is used at the time of sowing seeds and put a crab inside it.

Thereafter, they proceed to the forest to collect some flowers called 'Baghanakhi' and a kind of tuberous plant called 'Toinladandi' with its leaves and roots intact along with some branches of Bela and Amla trees and keep all these on plough and yoke which are decorated with a kind of yellowish brown soil called gerumati. They also cover the plough with a new piece of cloth. They prepare some sweets and offer these to the plough and the yoke. At sunset, when the cattle return home, the headman of the family covers his body with the new cloth that is covered on the plough. The family members gently brush the Baghanakhi flowers on the bodies of cattle and beat them with 'Toinladandi' plant. This is done to protect their cattle from the attack of tiger. Thereafter,

the household head keeps a handful of cooked rice in the Badani in which the crab is kept previously and worships it by offering incense. Next day, the crab is released in the field. After this, people rejoice by eating cakes and sweets, dancing and singing. Next day, the festival comes to an end by soaking a bunch of grass in turmeric water and sprinkling it over the place of ritual. Now-a-days, with the depletion of forest this festival is not observed in many villages.

Bhod Parab or Nachuni Parab or Nuakhia

This festival is celebrated in the month of Bhadrap (Bhod) or Ashwin (August - September) for first eating of new rice. On this occasion, they clean their houses and courtyard to observe 'Nuakhia' ritual for eating of new rice, or paddy leaves, certain kind of minor millets and a kind of tuber. They cook new paddy or rice and newly collected roots and sacrifice a cock to the household deity. Animals are also sacrificed before the village deities. Feasts and dances are organized on this occasion. This festival ends with a feast of meat and wine enjoyed by all members of the household. The Jodia Parojas call this Parab Bhada baduani.

Boulani Jatra

In some Paroja villages 'Boulani Jatra' is held during this month of Ashwin (August - September) to appease 'Thakurani' - the Goddess of epidemics like small pox or cholera and the village deity (Hundi Devta) and also for purifying the village. On this occasion, they perform a ritual before the Hundi devta at Nisan munda. The food and other ritual items offered to the deities are thrown away at the boundary of the village in the name of evil spirits near three chariots made of cotton wood plant with wheels. Jani while throwing these materials invokes the Dumas or evil spirits to leave the village and make it free from all dangers with a promise of sacrificing fowl, goat, sheep and offering of landha. Thereafter, the Jani puts some thorny branches at the entrance of the village to avoid entry of Dumas and spirits into the village.

Diali Parab

Diwali the festival of lights held in the month of Kartika (September-October) is a famous Hindu festival. The Parojas have

adopted it and observing it in the name of Diali Parab. They observe this festival before or after two days of Diwali celebrated by their caste neighbours.

On this occasion, each Paroja family prepares a curry of watermelon and some edible green leaves and vegetables and offer it to the god of fire, the Duma Devta and also put it in other places of the house. They put a small quantity of cooked food on the roof and pray god of life to protect their life and property. The cattle are washed, given food and worshipped in this festival. Similarly, each family keeps some portion of the cooked vegetables and green leaves in the basket in which crops and seeds are kept and then they worship the Goddess Laxmi. The other household articles like mortar and pestle and grinding stone are ritualized with the belief that all these articles may be in use for all the time. The broomstick and all agricultural implements are also offered with a portion of the curry with a prayer that agricultural operations will go on smoothly. On this occasion, the 'Dumas' of their agnates are remembered and offered food for their kindness in providing them with food and drink. At night each Paroja family kills a fowl, cooks it and eats the meat with wine.

Laxmi Puja

Following the neighbouring castes, they observe 'Laxmi puja' in the month of Margasira (November – December) in which the village priest Jani collects a fresh ragi plant that represents the goddess. The plant is worshipped at Nisan munda after which he keeps it in his house where seeds of crops are stored. Thereafter, individual families follow the suit. They enjoy the occasion by preparing and eating cakes and sweets, singing and dancing.

Harit Parab (Worship of God of Death)

The propitiation of God of death is done at the community level. This is observed during the month of Magh (Dec-Jan). On this occasion Paroja women assemble at Nisan munda. The male folk construct one altar with branches of trees. The ritual is performed by the Jani and Gurumain. They offer white gourd, fowl, goat and sheep for appeasing the God of death. The female folk prays the God to protect their husbands and children from untimely death.

Pus Parab

The 'Pus parab' is held in the month of 'Pausa' (January-February) to celebrate harvesting of paddy and other crops. The celebration of this grand communal festival starts few days before the end of the month and ends on the full moon day (Pus punei). To celebrate the festival, they buy new clothes for all family members by selling their agricultural produce. It is noticed that in this month price of their farm produce goes down and price of their daily necessities goes up. This festival is a kind of 'Nuakhia' i.e. new eating of the seasonal crops and other edibles like mango, mohua, kandul and many kinds of fruits, roots collected from forest. It is observed for four or five days. People wear new clothes on this occasion.

On the first day, the women folk clean their houses in the early morning and married women get busy in grinding ragi and husking rice. The male folk in different groups go to the forest to collect firewood for the following eight days. In the evening the married females go to the river to collect water in their earthen vessels. They keep the vessel called Dumapani at the shrine known as Devta Gandhi and also in their own houses. During night time, they recollect the Duma pani, by offering incense and lamp and sacrificing a fowl.

The piled up big logs of firewood brought by men from the forest in front of Berna munda is set fire one after another and villagers gather round the fire. The unmarried youths start playing their stringed instruments (Dudunga) and maidens start dancing in groups. After a few hours the youths and maidens under the guidance of their chosen leader (mula dhangada) start the action called 'Pusachora'. Their elderly supervisors ensure disciplined conduct of the groups. The youths and maidens get into the backyard or kitchen garden of any family of the village and steal potato, pumpkin, cabbage, brinjal etc. without any obstacle. Whatever vegetables they get, they roast them in fire at Berna munda and eat them with wine in great delight. The fire which is lighted at Berna munda is called 'mandukod'. In the meantime, a fowl is sacrificed at the house of the village chief and thereafter they sing and dance together moving from ward to ward in the village.

The Landi devta is one of their most important deities who is believed to be appearing once every year to go round the dwelling place of the tribe. All people of the village participate in the ritual of Landi deity. They sing Landi songs with devotion. The Paroja women with village Jani spend the whole night at Berna munda in this occasion.

On the second day, all households of the village prepare cakes from ragi and alasi, cook rice and prepare meat curry. They invite each other for partaking of food. The unmarried women of the village remain busy in distributing the food in the neighbour's house.

On the third day, a community feast is arranged for which all people in the village contribute rice, dal and vegetables. When food is cooked, the rice is served in two big mats, one for males and the other for females. All men of the village sit around the mat and eat together. The women follow the suit. Sometimes, one feeds the other and if someone refuses to eat and gets away, others follow him/her and bring him/her back to the place. The tradition of eating together and singing songs for Landi devta reinforces fellow feelings. On this occasion all inter personal conflict and tension are forgotten and all people of the village are bound together by mutual love, affection, friendship and mutual obligation.

Inter village visits take place among relatives and friends. The villagers move from door to door and enjoy whatever food and drinks are served to them. The maidens collect some money from each other and arrange a feast and invite unmarried boys of village. It is also reciprocated by unmarried boys and old men and women. All these activities continue for four to five days. On the last but one day which is called as 'Denamapa', all households deposit their respective shares of 'Landa' wine in the courtyard of Jani. On this day they abstain themselves from taking wine.

A symbolic episode takes place on this occasion to warn persons contemplating sexual offences. Imaginary sexual maniacs are brought to book in an interesting manner. A dramatic scene of a man and woman living in illegal relationship and of the social

punishment inflicted on them is enacted. Three of the bachelors of the village tie long strings to the legs of two fowls. All people irrespective of sex assemble at *Berna munda*, where *Jani* and *Muduli* are made to sit and two fowls are tied to their legs. The offending couples who have already enjoyed their married life for three or four years are summoned and are fined one rupee each. With this money some tobacco and 'bidi' are purchased and all people get their respective share of it. The next work is to strip the wings off the dead fowl tied to the leg of the *Jani* and tie it to a bamboo pole. The symbolic meaning of this act is that community disapproves such moral lapses on the part of the unmarried boys and girls. This also means a submission of the latter before elders present at *Berna munda* with promise not to commit such sexual illegalities. The maidens get the wingless fowl and the other is taken by *Jani* and *Muduli*. In the same place the fowls are roasted and all present there enjoys the meat with *landa* wine. The festival comes to an end with great merriment throughout the night.

Chait Parab

The most significant and colourful festival of the year is *Chait parab* held in the month of 'Chaitra' (March-April), which is a month of scarcity for *Parojas* and this month marks the end of the year. Their stock of food stuffs is nearly exhausted by their extravagant expenses for observing various festivals and also repayment of debts and domestic consumption. Whatever little stock of food left with them is spent for *Chait parab* rendering most of the families bankrupt and they are forced to incur debts.

The day previous to the day of festival is the day of cleaning. Each household cleans its house and levels up their surroundings. In the evening the married women of the village go to nearby river in procession with their vessels to fetch water called *Duma pani* (*Duma* water). The water is brought in the midst of chanting of the names of 'Dumas'. They place these vessels at the altar of the household deity of each house. At night women cook rice and dal mixed together and offer it to *Dumapani* with great respect. All people wear new clothes irrespective of their economic condition.

On the second day the women do the home cleaning and go to forest for collection of some flowers and fruits including mango, mohua and plums. In every household plenty of rice, dal and curry are cooked and distributed among kith and kin. In the evening the unmarried youths start playing their 'Dudunga' and maidens join them in singing and dancing, and they move on from ward to wards in the village. They receive handful of cooked rice and curry while moving and they entertain the households with their dance and song, as a sign of gratitude. No drinking is allowed on this day, but chewing tobacco and bidi is not forbidden. During this time, the village Jani moves from door to door and collects some 'Kandula' from each family which he fries at Nisan munda or Jhakkar Devta after offering prayers. Thereafter people are allowed to eat the same.

From the third day onwards community revelry starts. Food is cooked in every house and brought to Bernamunda. Then men and women sitting in two separate rows dine together. They share the common pile of food items and feed each other.

Next morning all able-bodied male members proceed in a hunting expedition except the village head man and priest. The party will not return to village without the body of the hunted animals. If anyone stays behind, he is humiliated by ladies who throw dirty cow-dung over him and virtually push him out of the village. No one escapes such humiliation. It is the duty of the married women to carry food into the forest for the hunters. The married women collect varieties of flowers on their way back to home and they adorn the non-Paroja youth with the flowers. During this time women in the village decorate themselves and spend time in dance and play. The unmarried girls in the village go on singing loudly and their voice resounds in the village with music. In this time the young maidens are wooed and selection of brides is made. The hunting expedition goes on for two or three days. On getting the message of animal being killed, the women proceed to the edge of the forest and await arrival of men. The carcass of hunted animal decorated with garland of flowers and peacock feathers, is carried on a litter on a man's shoulder and women dance and sing

in front amidst drum beating and blowing of flute. The procession comes to the village where the carcass is flayed and quartered. If it is eatable the flesh is distributed among all villagers.

Success in hunting foretells well-being and prosperity of village community in the coming year. The animal so hunted is brought to the village and kept at Nisan munda. The whole night they spend on singing and dancing. On the next day morning, the animal is cut into pieces for distribution. The Jani and Muduli get a larger share, including the head of the animal. The remaining portions are equally distributed among all villagers.

Jani performs a puja under a tree at the outskirts of the village, with that leaf up of rice cooked in his house and he hangs the same from the tree after sacrificing a fowl. Then he comes to Nisan munda to perform the last rite of the festival. The villagers assemble there, each one of them carrying with him some crops in winnowing fan. The Jani mixes all crops brought by villagers and throw the same around the village uttering some incantations. Thereafter the villagers lift their winnowing fans up to see that if some grains have fallen therein. Finding grains in their winnowing fans, they mix some more seeds and sow the same in their fields. On this occasion the villagers carry the Jani and Disari on their shoulders from Nisani munda to their houses with accompaniment of dance and music.

Kamini Puja (Ritual for water sources)

Parojas believe that a female deity resides in water sources like river, stream and pond. The deity is known by different names such as Pani Kamini, Patala Kamini and the like. She is worshipped during the events of puberty rite, marriage, death, transplantation and weeding of paddy, etc. On such occasions, Jani prays the Kamini deity offering black objects namely black beads, black powder, black glass, mirror, comb, turmeric and vermillion.

Raji Sustha Puja

This festival is connected with heavenly bodies. If the Parojas see the Lanjiatara or Dhumaketu (the comet) or Ulka (falling

star) in the sky, they apprehend that the country will be visited by calamities, famine and scarcity. They go round village after village and collect alms from the families in different groups accompanied by Gurumain. When these stars disappear from the sky they consult the village Disari, who finds out an auspicious day in which the rice collected from the villages is cooked and eaten by all attending persons.

Indra Puja & Rahu-Ketu Puja

Besides, they also perform a puja for invoking the Rain God - Indra to bless them with abundant rainfall and to protect crops from draught and also from attack of wild animals. During solar and lunar eclipses, they offer prayers to the planets with the help of Gurumain and sorcerers to save them from their evil effects. The rites observed on this occasion are called Rahu-Ketu puja. The animals which are sacrificed to appease planetary bodies are pigs, goats and fowls. At the time of eclipses herbal medicines are also collected by the traditional healers and the people.

In addition to these festivals, they observe dassera (to worship the Goddess Durga) during the month of Aswin (September-October) and anakakara (to make new gourd spoon for offering wine to procure piri grass for house thatching) during the month of Margasira (November-December), jakeri puja and kandulbhaja (new eating of kandul) in the month of Magh (January-February).

Aesthetic Life – Song, Dance & Music

The rich tradition of folk dance, song and music are integral part of tribal life and culture that distinguishes them from others. Paroja is no exception. They have a rich folk tradition of song, dance and music like other tribes, by which they rejoice in all festive occasions. Dance, song and music are characteristic features of Paroja aesthetic life, without which they feel their mundane life are meaningless.

They are expert in all these performing arts. Their natural talents find expression in dances and songs like Dhemsanacha, Dungdunganacha, Lagagita etc. Songs and dances are performed

as an indispensable part of all individual and communal ceremonies and festivals. They also enjoy themselves through songs and dances whenever they wish to do so. When the boys start playing musical instruments and singing songs, the villagers, men and women young and old rush to the *Berna munda* and enjoy themselves by dancing and singing. In their dance they imitate the peculiar movements of animals like snake's crawl, frog's jump, bird's chirping and the like. They compose their own songs suitable for particular occasions, set the tune and rhythm of the dance and song. The finer and beautiful elements of nature i.e. the sky, stars, sun, moon, wind, hill, hill stream, trees, flowers, birds, animals, influence and appear in their song and music. (Mohanty, 2004: 257-58)

They are talented singers, musicians and dancers. The common form of dance is *Dhemsanach* (Serpentine dance), which is also commonly performed by other tribes of Koraput. They perform '*Ranikheta nacha*' during *mandia rani parab*, *bhadaninach* during *bhadabaduni parab*, *Dhemsanach* during *pus parab* and *turulimaga nacha* during *chait parab*. Both male and female joyfully dance to the tune of the drum and *mohuri* played by *Domb* musicians.

As soon as the *Paroja* males play their stringed musical instruments in accompaniment of self-composed songs, all others, young and old assemble and get ready to dance. As a matter of habit, young girls, the matrons and old women are grouped together separately according to age groups, and start dancing. Competitive songs are generally sung at the time of marriage ceremonies and *Chait parab*. They forget their woes of life and feel relaxed after hard work by devoting every evening to these recreational and cultural activities.

W. Francis wrote that *Paroja* dance consists of a dancing party of those cherry maidens dressed all alike with clean white clothes with borders or checks reaching barely half way to the knee, great rings on their fingers, brass bells on their toes, their substantial but shapely arms, and leg tattooed from wrist to shoulder and from ankle to knee, their left forearms hidden under a score of heavy brass bangles and their feet loaded with brass anklets weighing perhaps

a dozen pounds. The orchestra which consists solely of drums of assorted shapes and sizes, dashes into an overture, and the girls quickly grasp themselves into a couple of groups and dance under a danseuse who moves the team with a baton, suddenly drops to a muffled beat and each group springs out into a long line. (W. Francis, Gazetteer of Visakhapatnam district, 1907)

The tune, the lilt of the song and the kinds of dances known to the Paraja community are various. They compose verses and set the tune of the dance and music in imitation of the manner in which the snakes crawl, the frogs jump, and the birds sing. The presence of mind and common sense of the Paraja are remarkable. They compose songs in conformity with different situations and apply rhythm appropriate to the music. The clouds, the wind, the ripples, the sound of the stream have considerably influenced the tune of their music. Living freely under the sky and in the recesses of the hills, the Paraja enjoy, without inhibition singing and dancing all the year round. It is true that the authors of the Paraja songs remain obscure, but their compositions are replete with life and pleasure, the mysteries of the dark hills, the grandeur of the forests and the sublimity of the sky. Their folk-songs and indigenous musical instruments are unique contribution. The life of the Paraja is clouded by poverty and indebtedness, on the one hand, and brightened by jollity and the spirit of comradeship, on the other. The true charms of community life are enjoyed by them. (Ulaka, 1976, 32)

In a Paroja dance all girls and younger married women of the village form themselves into a chain, each maiden ties herself by her right hand passing behind the next girl's back and grasping the left elbow of the third one. The girls arrange themselves carefully according to size. The youngest, who are generally nine and ten years old stand at the tail end and at other end there is the leader i.e., the corps de ballet who carries a baton of peacock feathers in her right hand to mark the time. Three or four young males take their stand in the middle of the dancing floor and sing songs accompanied by the music of their mandolins while long chain of girls linked together move in dancing steps following

the team leader swaying the baton, through an intricate series of sinuous lines, curviest spirals, figures of eight and then unravel themselves back into the line again and again. They wind in and out like a snake, never halting for a moment, moving backwards and forward first slowly and decorously, then faster and, until suddenly someone gets out of the step and the chain breaks amidst laughter. All the while young men in the centre continue to sing, improvising the words as they go along and frequently sending the dancers into barest of merriment by their personal allusions, subtle and poetic. The leader of the troupe varies the step in half a dozen different ways and the dancers now sway to the music with their bodies, now clink their heavy German silver bangles together in time. The chain of young maidens dressed in their hair neatly oiled and decked with flowers and all in the light of good humour is a picturesque and pleasing sight. (R.C.S. Bell, *Gazetteer of Koraput* quoted in *District Gazetteer, Koraput*, 1976:137).

SOCIO-POLITICAL SYSTEM

Society is an ordered arrangement of human beings. It provides solutions to all human problems. It is a complex network of institutionalized inter-human relationships, and not simply an aggregate of individuals. But the maintenance of social system depends upon the political forces of the society to secure discipline. There would be no coherent social life unless the social relationship, which binds people together are ordered and institutionalized. The alternative to orderly social life is chaos. To maintain an orderly system of social relations, people have to be subjected to some degree of compulsion, they cannot at all times do, exactly what they like. Because often self interest may incite behaviour incompatible with the common good, and therefore every society have some rules and enforcement mechanisms for constraining people's behaviour. This is called political organization of a society.

The socio-political organization of a community is generally taken as that aspect of total organization which is concerned with the control and regulation of relations between groups or members of different groups within the society at large. By political organization, we understand the institution by which law and order is maintained in society with social harmony and the integrity of the group is also maintained with other communities of similar nature. In all human societies some rules and some kinds of constraints on people's behavior are acknowledged and adhered to in daily life. Where the social control and political organization are strong, a greater degree of social order is maintained. There are various categories of functionaries who enforce order and harmony in society. (Husnain, W. 1990: p.55).

All the tribal societies of Odisha had their well-organized political organization in the past, through which they used to reg-

ulate their social life. But after independence with the introduction of the statutory and democratic Panchayatiraj institutions, the traditional system of political organization among the tribes has become weak, but yet, it continues with limitations to serves their social interests as people has not lost their faith on it.

The traditional political organization of any tribe has three components, namely, (i) norms, customary laws and social sanctions, (ii) functionaries and (iii) territoriality. All of these are culture specific. But among the tribes, there are many commonness in this regard.

Norms governing proper conduct, customary laws relating to social, economic, religious and political organisations, and social sanctions relating to regulations of sex, community natural resources and social solidarity do not show much difference from one tribe to another in Odisha. However, the traditional political organization of the Odishan tribes, in spite of the broad similarity, can be divided in to three types, namely (I) northern, (II) southern and (III) north-western. Each of these is coterminous with the local revenue administrative unit of the area. The northern type is known as 'Pirha', the southern type as 'Mutha', and the north-western type as 'Pargana'.

Tribes in Odisha mainly inhabit the Eastern Ghat hill ranges, which run in the north-south direction. Most of the areas in which various tribal communities traditionally lived in the past were parts of different feudatory states of Odisha. As such the traditional political organisations of these tribes were influenced by the revenue administrative organisation of the concerned States. For instance the political organisations of the Santal, Munda, Ho, Bhumij, Bathudi etc., who lived in the Ex-State of Mayurbhanj, were influenced by the revenue territorial organisation of that State.

Thus among the Odishan tribes the hierarchical order of the political organisation, from bottom to top, runs as (i) family, (ii) lineage and clan, (iii) village, (iv) pargana (inter-village/ regional) and (v) the king, in the ex-States. These organisations acted as the

guardians and custodians of tribal customs, norms and customary laws. The inter-village political organisation, that is, the Pragana /Pirha /Mutha as the case may be, used to be called into action or as and when required. The jurisdiction, powers and functions of the political organisation at each level represented a stage in the socio-cultural life of the concerned tribe. The traditional political organization from regional level to the village level is still functional among many tribes. After the introduction of the Statutory Panchayati Raj system the traditional tribal political organizations though are gradually becoming weak, yet they are considered as important socio-cultural institutions to regulate the socio-cultural life.

The roles of all the tribal traditional functionaries are important, for the maintenance of social order. The traditional leadership among the tribes is basically corporate in nature. The joint authority system still exists. This means that the traditional leadership pattern continues to exist alongside the modern democratic leadership pattern. The traditional village level tribal panchayat is a corporate body of village elders as well as the secular and sacerdotal leaders. Besides, there is the village messenger who along with his other duties, assists the priest and the secular headman to discharge their respective duties and responsibilities. Only the tribal males constitute the Panchayat as all the tribal societies of Odisha are patrilineal and patriarchal in structure.

By and large, the positions of village priest, headman and the regional headman are hereditary. The village headman is invariably from the original settlers' clan of the village, which is obviously the dominant clan. Punishments or corrective measures are proportional to the gravity of the breach of norms or offences which range from simple oral admonition to other measures, such as corporal punishments, imposition of fines, observance of prophylactic rites and excommunication from the community. Truth of an incident is determined by oath, ordeals and occult mechanisms.

Customary issues as well as matters of public interest of the tribe are resolved in the presence of all elderly members of the

village tribal panchayat in an open assembly in which they meet and discuss the problems of the village or the cluster of villages. The village headman assisted by the council of elders oversees the administration of the village. Any decision taken with regard to an offender is deemed to be collective decision of all the villagers. Besides, these, council of elders also maintain law and order in the village and settle disputes between villagers on one hand and between one village and another on the other. Most of the village disputes in the village are resolved by these traditional panchayats.

Coming to the Paroja tribe, their village has a well-organised socio-political institution called Panchayat or Kutum, which functions as an independent and autonomous unit. It has its own set of traditional functionaries who remain in charge of the different internal and external affairs of the village. It is headed by the secular headman called Naik or 'Muduli'. The other traditional leaders are Jani' - the village priest, Disari or Gunia - the medicine man-cum-sorcerer and astrologer of the village and the Chalan - the errand man or messenger of the village and 'Bhattanaik' - the ritual purifier of out casted persons.

Traditional Leaders

Muduli / Naik – the Secular Chief

The Muduli is the secular head and the de facto chief of the village and he is assisted by an assistant called Challan. In the feudal administration of the past, Muduli was deciding civil and criminal disputes, collecting land and forest revenues, organizing communal functions, receiving and entertaining guests and officials coming to his village and acting as the spokesman of his fellow men with external agencies. His assistant Challan conveys the decision of the Muduli and Jani to their people. The offices of the Muduli and Challan are hereditary and carry high social prestige. Muduli presides over the meetings of traditional village panchayat and in some Paroja villages he also acts as the priest.

After the death of the Muduli or Naik his eldest son succeeds him. If his eldest son is incapable to discharge the duties of his father, the members of the Panchayat choose the ex-Naik's next

son to the post if he is found to be capable. When the ex-Naik has two wives, then the eldest son of the first wife succeeds to the post of Naik failing which the eldest son of the second wife inherits the post. In case the Naik is survived by a minor son, the panchayat may decide and choose the younger brother of Naik to take over till the former Naik's minor son becomes adult. In case the Naik has no male heir to succeed him, the panchayat chooses the son of his brother as headman. If the Naik has no brother, then preference is given to any of his nearest agnatic kin. When no such kin is found then Jani is appointed to officiate as Naik in addition to religious duties. If the Naik during his life time, desires to relinquish his office due to old age, sickness or inability then the panchayat is convened to choose a new village head. When a new Naik is selected, a ceremony is held. The new Naik is taken to the village Goddess by the Jani to perform certain rituals. Then the Naik just like the Peda of the Koya tribe serves liquor to his fellowmen.

The institution of Muduli had also been recognized by the king of Jeypore ex-State. When the Muduli was chosen by the village community, a 'Pagri' or head turban was offered to him as a mark of recognition by the revenue officer of the State on behalf of the king. The Muduli was being rewarded by the ruler by way of exemption of half of the amount of the annual tax and revenues. The powers and functions of Muduli were vast. During the rule of the king Muduli was the chief representative of the village who executed the orders of the king. He was required to arrange labourers for the works of the State and to help in criminal investigation in his area. He was answerable to the authority if any of his villagers were involved in law breaking activities.

The office of Muduli or Naik is indigenous to the tribe. With the march of time and even after independence and establishment of statutory panchayats, the institution of Muduli carries a considerable amount of importance and prestige. No important social function can take place in the village unless he is present to validate it. When he presides over the traditional village panchayat meetings to decide the disputes and offences, he is paid some fees out of the penalties collected from the offenders. On the occasion

of marriage, he is given some amount. Although, he does not participate in hunting during the Chait Parab and such other occasions, he is given a major share of the meat of the hunted animal. He also enjoys a high social status for his roles and responsibilities. The important functions of the Naik or Muduli are -

- a) To maintain discipline and orderly social life in his village
- b) To preside over the meetings of the village council and to adjudicate the cases concerning his village.
- c) To see that the decisions taken in the panchayat are implemented.
- d) To announce decision of panchayat and to collect the fines imposed on the offender.
- e) To receive guests including government and non-government officials and local leaders and public representatives as well as the representatives of other external agencies and liaison with them in the interest of his village.
- f) To collect contributions from villagers for village functions and festivals.
- g) To supervise and co-ordinate the observance of rituals and festivals in his village.
- h) To act as the custodian of panchayat fund.

Sometimes, the Naik / Muduli and the Ward Member of Gram Panchayat are one and the same person. But when these two posts are held by two different persons, the Naik supervises the day-to-day administration of the village and the Ward Member functions as the liaison man between the village and the external authorities.

It is interesting to note that in the Paroja society the traditional village headman, Muduli / Naik has still retained his position by the consent of his fellowmen. The governance of the village lies with him. His authority stands out prominently for which the village life is managed smoothly and the villagers feel a sense of security.

Jani - the Village Priest

The Jani is the sacerdotal head of the village who functions as the village head priest. His physical presence in all important events of the village is indispensable. His words are honoured in the village. His roles, responsibilities and social prestige has remained unchanged in the present times.

Jani's position comes next to that of Muduli. His post is also hereditary. But when it is found that the Jani's son is incapable of discharging the duties and responsibilities of the post, the village panchayat choses another capable person. In case the Jani dies without a male issue, his brother or the brother's son assumes the post with the approval of the village panchayat. For his induction to the post the new Jani undergoes a series of rituals.

Jani commands respect as a traditional leader of the Paroja society. In their own phraseology it is said that the fate of the village lies in his hand. Being the religious head, he is the custodian of all religious articles of the village. During the religious festivals in the village, he observes some rituals personally. He remains in fasting till the worship is over and he is the first man to eat after offering foods and sacrifices to Gods and Goddesses. If any epidemic and natural calamity like smallpox, cholera, drought etc occurs in the village then Jani worships to appease the village deity as the Parojas believe that village deity protects them and their village from any engulfing danger.

The Jani must be a married man to be able to perform worships and rituals. All village rituals are performed by him and he performs the ritual to lay the foundation of individual houses. He conducts the animal sacrifice in village rituals. Besides his religious duties and responsibilities, he also attends the meetings of the panchayat when it is convened to decide any matter and he participates actively in the decision-making process.

Disari – the Medicine man-cum-Witch Doctor and Astrologer

The Disari also known as Gunia or Sira is a magico-religious functionary. He also occupies an important position in Paroja

society. His post is not hereditary but acquired by one's skill and expertise to perform the job. The Paroja respect him for their belief that he is bestowed with supernatural powers. The Disari is believed to performs miracles. The Disari also worships the spirits of the ancestors to keep them pleased.

The Parojas believe that the Disari is capable of moulding and keeping under control the supernatural beings and the apparitions (Duma). A man affected by any supernatural danger seeks the help of Disari for from the crisis. The Parojas believe that the Dumas are responsible for all evils and try to satisfy them by means of worship and by offering sacrifices. During the worship of 'Duma' the presence of Disari is a must.

As the village astrologer he determines auspicious dates and times for holding communal festivals, rituals and seasonal agricultural operations. Besides, he gives names to the newborn babies and predicts the future of match making and matrimony. He finds out auspicious dates for weddings.

Disari also acts as a medicine man. He tries to cure the illness of the villagers by applying herbal medicines or by uttering incantations or magical formula. He also attends the village council as and when convened. The Gurumain, an elderly woman also acts as medicine man and treats patients by magico-religious methods and prescription of herbal drugs.

Chalan / Barik – the Messenger-cum-Assistant to Muduli and Jani

The Chalan/ Barik is the errand man of a Paroja village. He hails from the Dom (SC) caste and is appointed by nomination. He assists the Muduli/Naik and Jani for discharging their roles and responsibilities in their respective secular and sacerdotal domains. Whenever the meeting of the panchayat is fixed by the Naik, the Chalan announces the date and time to the villagers. In the matter of inter village meetings he goes to other villages carrying the message of the village headman. In the traditional village panchayat meetings, he participates actively. For matrimonial alliances, he

liaisons between both the parties for exchange of information. Similarly, the dates for observance of various village level rituals and festivals and the contributions of villagers for holding these events as fixed by the Jani, Muduli and the village panchayat is announced by him. Before the observance of these events, he goes round the village to inform the people. In some villages he acts as the custodian of the traditional panchayat fund. In addition to these, his other important functions are as under -

1. He informs the police in case there is a murder case in the village.
2. He organizes the group of villagers when they go for communal hunting during Chait Parab and leads them to forest.
3. Like the village headman he acts as a liaison agent between Paroja and the outsiders.
4. He keeps the villagers informed about what are happening outside their area.

Bhattanayak

There is another important traditional functionary called Bhattanayak who have a specific role and function. He purifies the ritually polluted persons who are condemned or excommunicated for committing socially disapproved sinful acts, by conducting prescribed rituals to restore their social and ritual status. For his services he is remunerated in cash and kinds by his client. After his ritual purification, the concerned person is required to entertain his villagers and kith and kin by hosting a feast.

Traditional Councils

The Parojas manage their own customary affairs and enforcement of customary rules through their traditional socio-political institutions of social control functioning at the village and inter-village i.e. regional levels. These traditional community councils act as the guardians of their norms, customs and traditions and adjudicate cases relating to family disputes, rape, theft, adultery, incest, divorce, extramarital relationship, formation of

maggots in the wound (biltada), killing of cow (gohatya), death by tiger attack, slapping with shoe (chapalmada) as well as intra and inter community rifts.

Inter-village Council – *Bisi Bernamunda / Mahasabha*

They have inter-village or regional council known as Bisi Berammunda and also as Mahasabha constituted of Muduli, Jani, and Challan of ten to fifteen constituent villages headed by Naik, whose post is hereditary. The council sits for resolving inter-village disputes and the cases which are not resolved in the component traditional village councils and its decisions are taken unanimously by consensus. The council sits as and when required and especially on Pus Punei to decide cases. Its chief, Naik is held in high esteem and his judgment is treated as final. He has the power to ex-communicate the offender and also readmit him into society.

Traditional Village Council – *Bernamunda or Kutum*

The Paroja village has a well-organised socio-political system, which functions as an independent autonomous unit. Their traditional village council is called Bernamunda because it sits at Berana munda. Centrally located inside the village, the Berna Munda is a constellation of circular stone slabs. It is the seat of traditional village council, Kutum 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. Their traditional secular chief Muduli, priest Jani, astrologer Disari and messenger Challan and all the family heads of the village are members of this corporate body.

Any kind of customary affair relating to the village is first discussed and then finalized in a meeting of Kutum held at Bernamunda and its decisions are respected by all the Parojas in the village. Formally, the Kutum meets several times in a year in specific occasions as well as when so required. It functions in a democratic way, where all the members are free to give their opinion at the time of discussion. Though they are not answerable to any authority but they have to follow their customary law. So, their decision regarding any matter of the village taken by consensus is final.

Disputes of different kinds that arise in the village are settled by the village panchayat. The cases those are referred to village council for settlement are of two types- legal and non-legal. The legal cases are further divided into criminal and civil cases.

(A) Legal Cases

Criminal Cases

- Kidnapping and elopement of girls.
- Incest
- Rape
- Molestation of women
- Disputes relating to minor and major injuries.
- Theft and burglary.
- Destruction of crops by animals.
- Physical assault

Civil Cases

- Marriage outside the tribe
- Marriage and bride price disputes
- Unresolved dispute between husband and wife.
- Divorce
- Adultery
- Re-marriage of widows, widowers and divorcees
- Land disputes like partition of house /land/plot/site etc.
- Disputes relating to sharing of crops.
- Disputes relating to non-payment of loans.
- Maintenance of poor and orphans of the village.

(B) Non-Legal Cases

- Disputes between elders and the youth.
- Cases relating to breach of village morality.
- Disputes over observance of village festivals.
- Mixing with a socially-boycotted person.
- Refusal to go for ceremonial hunting during 'Chait Parab'

- Non-payment of contributions for celebration of village festivals.
- Selection of village headman and religious head.
- Selection of candidates for panchayat elections
- Control of epidemic and calamity.
- Practice of black magic, witchcraft, sorcery etc.

Procedure for the Village Council / Panchayat Meeting

In case of any problem or any dispute that arises in a Paroja village, the case is usually referred to the panchayat for settlement. The concerned party brings the matter to the notice of Naik / Muduli. The Naik consults the Jani and Disari and if they agree, the matter is brought forward to village council for settlement and accordingly a date and time is fixed for adjudication of the same.

The services of the Challan – the village messenger, is used to inform the elder members of panchayat and the concerned parties to remain present at the 'Bernamunda' on the scheduled date and time. The Challan goes round the village informing all members of the village or he goes to the centre of the village and from there he gives a call in loud voice requesting all members of the village to assemble at Bernamunda at the time of meeting. If all the members are present for the meeting except the Naik, the Challan goes to call him as he is to preside over the meeting. After his arrival all panchayat members sit in a circle on the circular stone slabs and the Naik, Jani, Disari and Challan sit in front of them on stringed cots. The local government officials, women, children and outsiders can watch the proceedings of the meeting keeping themselves at a distance as they are not allowed to have a direct participation in it. If so required, they can attend as witnesses.

The Challan starts the proceeding by explaining the purpose of the meeting. Both the contesting parties are asked to describe the incident and the accused is given the opportunity to put forth his arguments in his/her defense. The witnesses, if any, are also called to speak in support of any party. It is interesting to note

that the Naik, just like a judicial magistrate, does not intervene in the proceedings. He speaks, listens and gathers information and opinion of others. After hearing arguments from both the parties and the statements of witnesses, he summarizes the deliberations and consults the elderly member like, Jani, Disari and some leading members for a while and arrives at the decision. After the decision is taken, the Naik pronounces the verdict on behalf of the panchayat, awarding punishment to the guilty person by imposing fine either in cash or in kind or both. If a heavy fine is imposed on the offender, a portion of the same goes to the village common fund.

The Panchayat meetings are usually convened in the morning when all members will be available in the village. If the Naik or Jani or Chalan has some engagement in the morning, the meeting is convened in the evening. The decisions, so taken are sacrosanct and binding.

The Paroja thus settle disputes in a simple and direct manner without involving mediators. Disputes are resolved by direct negotiation, arguments and consensus. As they do not tell lies, they do not resort to oath and ordeal for establishing the truth. They do not judge, who is right and who is wrong, rather they look for the magnitude of deviation of social conduct and its implications.

The members of the traditional panchayat are respected by all Parojas. Invariably sanctity is accorded to what is decided by them. Even the punished ones do not grumble over the decision. It is a fact that traditional panchayat are agencies of social control and are democratic and free of prejudice. The Parojas have a strong belief that if they follow the customary pattern of behavior, the God will bless them otherwise they have to face the consequences of the wrath of the deities and ancestors. To avoid this the panchayat makes it obligatory for everyone to adhere to its decisions. The concept of 'Panch Parameswar' is the core of the panchayat system of the Paroja.

Few cases decided by panchayat are described below. (Names and places are fictitious)

Case Study -1

A case of marriage dispute was settled by traditional panchayat in the village Khadagpur located 6 kms away from Nandapur Block and 58 kms away from Koraput district headquarters. One Madan Laguri married to Gurubari a year ago. A few months after marriage, quarrels and conflicts started between the couple and they were not pulling on well with each other. One day Gurubari deserted Madan and went to her father's house. After a few days she got married to another person named Manguru of the nearby village Tanitar. On the other hand, Madan also brought a second wife named Dana. One day when Gurubari was working in the field alone, Madan went to her and asked for the reason of her leaving him. Madan misbehaved her using filthy language and Gurubari also retaliated.

Gurubari brought the incident to the notice of Naik named Dhanurjaya Jangudia. The meeting of the panchayat was convened. Gurubari attended the meeting with her second husband and Madan attended the meeting with his supporters. The panchayat listened to the whole episode from Gurubari and asked Madan as to why he misbehaved the wife of another man. Madan refuted the charges of misbehaviour by saying that he has only asked her the reason of leaving his house and in turn Gurubari rebuked him. After listening to both the parties the members of the panchayat discussed among themselves for a while and disapproved the behaviour of both. Madan was imposed with a fine of Rs. 50/- and Gurubari was also fined Rs. 30/-. Both of them agreed to pay the fine.

Case Study-2

A case of social boycott to an offender has been found in the village of Guntaguda under Boipariguda block of Koraput district. The villagers had purchased a goat for celebration of 'Chait Parab'. It was observed that goat had sustained injuries and so they decided to replace it. One Pita Barik of the village wanted to take the goat and promised to provide another goat for sacrificial offering. One

the eve Chait Parab, Pujari, Madhu Naik reminded him to bring the goat. Pita Barik rebuked the Pujari in filthy language. The Pujari felt insulted and reported the matter to the panchayat. A meeting was convened and Pita Barik was summoned to explain his conduct. He explained that the injured goat died immediately after it was taken by him and emphatically refused to provide a goat for ritual sacrifice. Village elders were aware of the arrogance of Pita Barik on earlier occasions. Hence, the panchayat imposed a fine of Rs. 50/- on him for his misdeed and socially boycotted him for his arrogant behaviour with the issuance of warning that if any member of the village who keeps relationship with Pita Barik will face the same consequence.

Case Study -3

There was a case pertaining to inter-community marriage in the village Damapat Parojagoda under Jeypore Block of Koraput district, where one Paroja girl named Lepa, the daughter of Mukunda Paroja, had eloped with a scheduled caste boy Arjun Harijan of nearby village Ghumar. The village headman Lalit Naik convened the meeting of the panchayat to discuss the issue. The girl's father, Mukund was summoned. He attended the meeting and apologized for the mistake committed by his daughter and agreed to pay the fine to be imposed by the panchayat. It was agreed upon by all members that Lepa had violated the Paroja norms and customs. The panchayat therefore decided to impose the punishment of social boycott to Lepa and her paternal family for the offence and that under no circumstances Lepa will be re-admitted to Paroja society. However, the panchayat gave the verdict that family members of Mukund Paroja will be readmitted to Paroja society during observance of Chait Parab by observing certain purificatory rituals and contributing a goat, a pig, one bag of rice and some liquor to the panchayat for arranging a feast on the occasion.

Case Study-4

A theft case was reported to the panchayat in a village under Korkunda block of Malkangiri district. Three male members of

the village namely Adit, Raghu and Chaitan had stolen a goat of Hari Gouda and killed the goat at a distant place. The owner Hari searched for his goat but could not trace it. When the three youths were bringing the goat's meat to the village in dark evening, they were caught red handed by the members of the 'Yubak Sangha' of the same village.

The case was reported to the village headman. The panchayat met immediately on the same evening. Since it was a clear case of theft, the panchayat held the three persons guilty. They admitted their fault before Naik. The panchayat imposed the cash fine of Rs. 900/- (Rs. 300/- on each). Out of the amount realized, Rs. 600/- was given to the owner towards the cost of the goat and Rs. 100/- was given to the Yubak Sangha to keep the amount in their fund. The rest amount was kept in the panchayat fund. The three accused touched the feet of the elder members of the panchayat and took a vow not to repeat such crime in future.

DEVELOPMENT & WELFARE PROGRAMMES

The Indian tribes are at various stages of socio-economic development. At one extreme there are advanced agricultural, industrial and urbanite groups, more or less, acculturated, assimilated and indistinguishable from the general population. At the other, there are small, secluded, pre-agricultural and pre-literate primitive groups leading an archaic life at the subsistence level, being cut off from the mainstream civilization, as they are confined to the remote and inaccessible hill areas.

It has so happened because, these people have been the victims of centuries of neglect, isolation, exploitation, malnutrition and stagnant economy. This has been responsible for their maladjustments with the larger society and have caused despondency and organizational difficulties in their respective social systems resulting in slow pace of growth and development.

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India who was an ardent admirer of tribals laid down the foundations of tribal development policy of independent India. He said that while extending the benefits of development to the tribals, every effort should be made to preserve their unique and distinctive lifestyles and vitality, their traditional rights in their land and forests should be respected; they should be trained and educated to take up the job of their own administration and development as well as to take part in the national development and nothing should be imposed on them in the name of modernization and development. It is called the Nehruvian policy of Panchsheel for the welfare and development of tribals announced in his foreword to Elwin's book "A Philosophy for NEFA" in 1957. These principles implied chiefly three goals: culture-specific and need-based development programmes for tribals, participation of people in both planning

and implementation and finally their empowerment leading to self-identity and self-esteem.

The broad national policy for tribal development in free India took shape following the Nehru's ideas. It sought a middle path between two extremes of complete isolation and free interaction for all-round socio-economic upliftment of the neglected tribals and their national integration. In pursuance of this policy, the welfare Government showed its deep concern for the plight of the downtrodden tribals and took keen interest in planning and execution of various protective, promotional and welfare measures to bring them into the national mainstream.

The glimpses of genesis of tribal development intervention in the post-independence period reveal that it had humble beginning with the community development (CD) block approach and then special effort with SMPT, TD and TSP which were gradually introduced and the TSP had commitment for fulfilment of Constitutional mandate along with socio-economic development of tribal people.

The concept of Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) adopted during Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79) was so tenacious that it continues even today. It is called Sub-Plan as it is a part of the overall plan of State or Union Territory and it is primarily meant for the welfare and development of Scheduled Tribes. It emphasized on area development of tribals (areas of tribal concentration, dispersed tribes outside the area covered under Sub-Plan and Primitive Tribal Communities) as also ensuring protective measures to safeguard their vital interests. The TSP concept envisioned a wider canvas to engulf as many tribal people as possible.

In nutshell, TSP concept is the harbinger of new hopes and aspirations for the tribal world and a milestone as a conceptual frame with the bifacial objectives of narrowing the hiatus between the levels of development of tribal and other areas and to improve the quality of life of tribals. Further, elimination of all forms of exploitation is explicitly ingrained in the above objectives, in order that the tribals become self-reliant and self-confident in their way of life.

Government of India has stipulated the strategy and objectives of TSP in the beginning. Such objectives were of two types; (1) to narrow the gap between levels of development of tribal and other areas and (2) to improve the quality of life of tribal communities and these were construed as long-term objectives. Besides, the immediate objectives were elimination of exploitation in all forms, acceleration of processes of socio-economic development, building up of inner strength of tribal people and the improvement of their organizational capabilities. In other words, prevention of exploitation, income generation, employment generation and provision of basic infrastructure were considered as essential ingredients of TSP strategy.

The strategy further envisaged some unique problems in tribal areas, such as land alienation, bonded labour, indebtedness, sale of surplus agricultural produce (SAP) and minor /non-timber forest produce (NTFP/MFP), supply of essential consumer commodities, etc and sought for their solution. The expected outcome of the tribal development initiative are social mobilization and enhancement of educational status, health status, economic status and establishment of self-governance and the like which would lead to tribal empowerment.

During 75 years of Independence of the country and over five decades of implementation of Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) approach, adequate constitutional, legislative and legal provisions have been done and huge investments have been made for the protection, welfare and development of the tribes. There is no denying the fact that barring few exceptions the present condition of our tribal brethren and their areas are much better than that before independence. This exercise has made considerable impact on the tribes and the overall achievements in furthering the interests of the tribal population have been appreciable.

Socio-Economic Development and Welfare of the Paroja

The Paroja are no longer isolated from the world outside. The undivided Koraput district – the habitat of Paroja being a tribal dominated area is covered under the Scheduled Area as well

as the Tribal Sub-Plan area of the State. Hence, since past decades like the other tribes of Koraput, the Parojas are being benefitted by a package of various development and welfare programmes being implemented by several government and non-government agencies which have increased their exposure to the developing world has made impacts in their traditional way of life. Parojas being simple, mild and shy in nature have accepted the inputs provided by the development agencies as fait accompli without any grumbling.

Development schemes in tribal areas can be divided into broad categories like (A) Infrastructure Development, (B) Livelihood Promotion and (C) Social Security.

(A) Infrastructure Development

• Education

The level of education in tribal areas has always been low as compared to the mainstream. The literacy rate of Paroja though found to be low, it has significantly increased from 3.30 percent in 1961 to 34.92 percent in 2011 census due to the spread of education.

To enhance the educational status of tribals, government has taken many initiatives like setting up residential and non-residential Sevashrams and Ashrams, Educational Complexes, Higher Secondary Schools, Ekalavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS), Model Schools, Hostels along with the provisions of pre-matric and post-matric scholarships and stipends etc. both for tribal boys and girls students. The schools also provide mid-day meals to students to address their hunger and malnutrition related problems.

Especially, the Sevashrams and Ashram Schools have brought educational opportunities for tribal children as their parents are poor and cannot afford to send their children to distant schools because of financial burden that may affect their traditional livelihood pattern as well as division of labour. Poverty is inextricably interwoven with educational backwardness.

There are Anganwadis under ICDS scheme which provide pre-primary education to tribal children in their early pre-schooling age with the responsibility of providing nutritious food to

mother and children to check MMR & IMR. Along with it they also keep demographic and anthropometric records of children.

In our study villages in four out of six there is either a Sevashram or a Primary School.

Sl. No.	Name of the Village	Name of the Block	Sevashram/Primary School
1	Tala Janiguda	Koraput	Sevashram
2	Aminguda	Koraput	Primary School
3	Narapadar Bagra	Jeypore	None
4	Dumuripadar	Jeypore	A Class Room
5	P. Podapala	Nandahandi	Primary School
6	Dumuripadar	Nandahandi	None

In Tala Janiguda village there is a Sevashram running in good condition with required number of teachers. All the teachers are trying their best to enroll students in the school after completing six years of age. As the Sevashram is functioning in the village, children prefer to go there and complete their primary education successfully. But after that, they are finding it difficult to attend the high school located far away i.e. nearly ten kilometers away from the village and the connecting road is very bad. Even though some students enrolled in the high school, their attendance are irregular which ultimately hampered their performance and demotivated them. The same is observed in case of the villages Aminguda and P. Podapala.

In Narapadar Bagra there is neither any Primary School nor Sevashram. The nearest primary school is about four to five kilometers away. Children don't agree to go to that school due to distance and lack of communication facilities. Only few children of well-to-do families attend the school that too being motivated by the teachers.

The Dumuripadar village Jeypore block and Dumuripadar village of Nandahandi block are more remotely situated and there is no Primary School. In Dumuripadar village Jeypore block only one

class room is being operated by a primary school with a primary teacher to teach the students which is far from the village. Though most of the students have successfully completed their primary education, they find it difficult to attend high school located far from the village as the connecting fair weather road is rough and pass through a jungle. The children of Dumuripadar village of Nandahandi block depend on the primary school of P. Podapala village for their primary education which is eight kilometers away. The road from Dumuripadar to P. Podapala is densely forested and it is not safe to move alone in this road. Hence, children try to go to school in groups riding their cycles or by walking.

• **Anganwadi Centers**

All the study villages are covered under Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). Anganwadi Workers are working in all the villages. They are looking after education of pre-primary school children and nutrition of children and women including parturient mother and child, apart from assisting ANMs and health workers for promotion of immunization programmes. The pregnant women, nursing mother and children below 6 years of age have been covered under the ICDS programme. Though there is the provision of mobile health units to visit the villages for health checkup of the people including women and children they hardly come to these villages.

By the Anganwadi Centers the children belonging to the age group of 07 months to 3 years are provided with 1 packet chatua, one packet of suji and three eggs per week. The children within 3-6 years of age group are provided with 2 kg rice, 750 gms of dal and 5 eggs per week and 75 gms of oil, 75 gms of sprouted green grams for 25 days. The pregnant and lactating mothers are provided with 4 kg 75 gms chhatua, 25 groundnut ladus and three eggs per week. Further, the infants are given vaccinations such as B.C.G, Hepatitis B and Polio just after birth. The new born children within the age group of 9 to 12 months are given measles vaccine, vitamin supplements with DPT booster. Tetanus drops are given to them two times, once in five years and on attainment of 16 years of age.

In addition to these, the Anganwadi worker makes efforts to bring the children to the center through the Anganwadi helper thrice in a week, where they are taught the alphabets with figures and about the surrounding environment through playful method. It is quite a disgrace to mention here that the Anganwadi Supervisors including the CDPO as well as the ANM pay casual visits to these villages. It has also been alleged by the Anganwadi Workers that the mothers and children suffer from malnutrition due to delayed and irregular supply of medicines and nutritional foods. It has also been alleged that the chhatua packets have lesser than the prescribed quantity.

• **Health**

The Paroja considers ill health as a short-term phenomenon and as a body condition that requires rest and food supplements greater than the usual intake and which either impairs a part of the human body or the whole body to perform its usual chores and requires the administration of medicines and fortification of mind or soul with verbal or symbolic communication with the unseen forces i.e. the Gods, Goddesses and Spirits. The demarcation line between the ill health and disease being very thin and fragile, the Paroja considers both as the state of body that causes the non-performance of manual work. They do not consider deficiency as a form of disease but as the curse of the supernaturals.

The major health problems of the Paroja of our study area are malnutrition, skin and eye diseases, malaria, gastro-intestinal disorders, worm infection, cuts and wounds, bronchitis and unsafe child birth. They also suffer from seasonal diseases like common cold, cough, fever, headache and diarrhoea due to change in environment. Many of them suffer from corn, roughness of skin, ringworm, crack on heels or lips, boils and septic wounds. Lack of safe drinking water increases the vulnerability of several diseases to a great extent. The pregnant ladies and children also suffer from vitamin and mineral deficiencies. They think that such deficiencies are momentary and go away as the children advance in their age. However, they believe that intake of sufficient food removes all sorts of deficiencies. They consider these ailments to

be the companion of their daily work and never consider them as diseases or ailments. Now-a-days, in the changing circumstances, the elite Parojas attend to these ailments through modern health care systems.

Most of the pregnant women rely mainly on elderly women or the traditional midwives for delivery of baby. Services of private or government doctors and nurses are rarely sought for as a result of which traditional tribal folk healers and village quacks get the advantage. With the introduction of ASHA and TBA the situation has shown some improvement.

There is a Dispensary in Tala Janiguda village of Koraput block which remains open for some time in day time. Villagers of Tala Janiguda and other neighbouring villages depend on it to get treatment for common ailments but they generally prefer to go the district headquarters hospitals in case of serious health problems.

The Parojas generally ignore the symptoms in the early stage of the disease. They only consult doctors when the health conditions become serious. In most of the death cases the causes are unknown which indicates that they rarely consult doctors to diagnose the cause of the disease. They possess strong tolerance to bear pain and believe in the actions of supernatural beings for the cause and cure of the disease. Adolescent girls and women hide their health problems to some extent due to financial constraints, shyness and shame. Children's health issues are mostly addressed by Disari and Gurumai. Elderly women and men endure their sufferings silently and rarely consult doctors except in emergency only.

Traditionally, Parojas have been managing their own health issues with the help of their traditional healers and are at times forced to visit Government hospitals not on their own but on constant persuasion of the village elite, Anganwadi Workers and ASHA. As revealed from the respondents, they are illtreated and neglected by the doctors and the health staff of the local health institutions. Very often they are scolded for their negligence. The free of cost government supply medicines as per the prescription are hardly given to them on the plea of non-availability of stock and they are told to buy the same from medicine stores. For

their poor financial conditions, they are unable afford the cost of treatment and so, bear the sufferings facing its worst consequences silently as a fait accompli. The mobile health camps are conducted in the study villages. But it has been ascertained from district public health office that they have organized the camps once in every month with distribution of free medicines. That has been denied by the Paroja respondents.

• **Road Communication**

All the study villages are well communicated by all weathered pucca roads. One will not find any difficulty in reaching these villages. The internal village roads which were muddy and rough earlier have been developed as Cement Concrete (CC) street roads. It is an accepted fact that as per government guidelines the road work is to be done by engaging the village's able-bodied persons on payment of wages as prescribed under MGNREGS scheme, but the same norm has been followed more in breach. The results are seen in poor quality of road construction works.

• **Housing**

Traditionally Parojas were dwelling in thatched mud houses. The typical Paroja houses are low roofed, made of indigenous raw materials like soil, mud, cow-dung, bamboo, wood, straw (piri) or country-made tiles (jhikar). The walls are made of a frame of 'Jhati' (small tree branches) plastered with mud. The roof is gable shaped and thatched with paddy straw or a kind of jungle grass called 'piri'. The size of the house and number of rooms vary according to the need and economic status of the individual household.

In the present times, they are being provided with pucca houses under different government housing schemes like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Biju Puccaghar Yojana, Mo Kudia Yojana etc. The beneficiaries of these schemes are provided with a single roomed house to accommodate a nuclear family. The joint families having sound financial condition, have built additional rooms attached to it to get more space. Some of these attached houses are either kuchha or pucca depending on the financial condition of the family.

Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India has been renamed as Pradhan Mantri Grameen Awaas Yojana. The house-less families and those living in less than two kutchha rooms as per SECC-2011 Survey are eligible for availing housing assistance to construct minimum of 25 Sq. mtr. of pucca house. The amount of assistance per beneficiary is Rs. 1.30 lakh in IAP Districts and Rs. 1.20 lakh in Non-IAP Districts. Besides, through convergence with MGNREGS, the beneficiary avails Labour Component of 90/95 days (IAP – 95 and Non-IAP - 90) and Rs. 12,000/- for construction of toilet out of Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)/MGNREGS.

Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana is the State's own flagship programme. The scheme was launched during the financial year, 2014-15 replacing the old scheme "Mo-Kudia Yojana" with a view to achieve the objective of converting all the kutchha houses to pucca houses. It is observed in the study villages that there are discrepancies in the distribution of houses under these housing schemes. The probable reasons are non-availability of required documents, political rivalry, lack of awareness, etc.

The Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana has provision for financial assistance of Rs. 1.20 lakh released in successive instalments in the stages of plinth level, roof level and completion of the house. The money is directly transferred to the beneficiary's bank account. The beneficiary selection is done by Gram Sabha in the presence of the block or panchayat executive. The list of beneficiaries approved by Gram Sabha is hardly given any priority by the development authorities who make changes in the list according to their will and pleasure thereby ignoring the deserving ones and benefitting the privileged. Further, the bankers also play foul games in releasing the amount to the beneficiaries often with the motive for illegal gratification. It has been learnt from the respondents that they have been paid less than the sanctioned amount but they are not in a position to complain, as the bankers used to obtain their thumb impression much earlier to the sanction. Though the guidelines of the scheme are very transparent but in the process the beneficiaries are very often exploited by the key development executives owing

to their illiteracy and ignorance. Further there is incentive of Rs. 20,000/- for the beneficiary who completes the house within four months and Rs. 10,000/- for the beneficiary who does it within six months. But this incentive hardly reaches the beneficiaries. The development practitioners in charge of the scheme enjoy the benefit in addition to the incentive meant for them.

In addition, the beneficiaries are entitled for convergence of potable drinking water supply system, electrification under Deendayal Upadhyay Gram Jyoti Yojana / BGJY and wage for land development under MGNREGS and social security under AABY/RSBY.

Different types of Houses built under different Govt. Housing Schemes

Sl. NO.	Name of the Village	Total Paroja House-holds (H.Hs)	Paroja HHs provided with Houses under Govt. Housing Schemes				Paroja H.Hs not provided Houses under Govt. Housing Schemes
			IAY	PMAY	Bijju Pucca Ghar	Total	
1	Tala Janiguda	137	21	16	12	49	88 (64.23%)
2	Aminguda	55	13	09	07	29	26 (47.27%)
3	Narapadar Bagra	72	17	12	09	38	34 (52.78%)
4	Dumripadar I	70	19	08	06	33	37 (52.86%)
5	Paroja Podapala	107	28	35	17	80	27 (25.23%)
6	Dumripadar II	64	12	15	11	38	26 (40.63%)
Total		505	110	95	62	267	238 (47.13%)

It is revealed from the above table that a little more than 50 percent (53 percent) of the Paroja households of our six study villages have been provided with pucca houses under Govt. Housing Schemes and the rest i.e. 47 percent have been left out. Among the left outs, the highest number of households (64.23%) are found in Tala Janiguda village and the lowest, in (25.23%) in Paroja Podapala village. Though these left out households have been enlisted under these schemes they are waiting to avail the benefit owing to paucity of funds as stated by the concerned development authorities.

• Rural Electrification Programmes:

Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutkaran Yojana (RGGVY): This is the flagship programme of Govt. of India for providing electricity facilities to the rural people living Below Poverty Line (BPL). It is implemented by a Central Government organization i.e. by Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) in whose favour the total fund required for the scheme is released and 90% of the same is provided to Central Public Sector Undertakings namely, NTPC, NHPC and PGCIL for execution of the scheme. This scheme is being implemented since April, 2005 for the attainment of National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP). The primary objective of the scheme is to provide electricity to un-electrified villages/wards having population of 100 and above along with the BPL households.

Biju Gram Jyoti Yojana (BGJY): In order to ensure “Electricity to all”, Govt. of Odisha have launched this scheme in the year 2007-08 to electrify villages/habitations having less than 100 population which are not covered under RGGVY. Now there is a new dimension of this scheme under which Development Programme for Electrical System Improvement (DESI) has been recently launched by the Govt. for Rural Electrification work.

The present status of house electrification of Paroja in the study villages is shown as under.

Name of the Study Village	Total No. of Households (HHs) in the Village	No. of H.H.s Having Authorised Electric Connection	No. of H.H.s without Authorised Electric Connection
Tala Janiguda	137	124	13
Aminguda	55	36	19
Narapadar Bagra	72	57	15
Dumripadar	70	58	12
Paroja Podapala	107	93	14
Dumuripadar I	64	51	13
Total	505	419 (83.00%)	86 (17.00%)

As revealed from the above statement that majority (83.00%) of Paroja houses have been electrified. The progress under these schemes is satisfactory.

• **Drinking Water:**

Provision of safe drinking water supply is found, more or less, in all our study villages. The sources are open wells, tube wells, solar powered water tanks etc. Still there are some people who like to consume the fresh water from natural springs and streams as they have been doing since the past.

In summer season, they sometimes face difficulties when the ground water level goes down and as a result, streams, ponds, open wells and tube wells become dry. There is also the complaint that water from some tube wells are not worth consuming because of hard and muddy water with iron contents and foul smell. Moreover, the tube wells provided to villages are not adequate to meet the water consumption needs of all the families of the village. Therefore, they have to depend on their good old source, the hill streams.

Presently, under government's rural drinking water supply schemes the 'Rural Pipe Water Supply' project covers villages where 100% sanitation coverage has been achieved, under various schemes of the Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Departments of Odisha Government. The project aims to ensure permanent drinking water supply in rural areas and to mobilise the village community for active participation in the implementation process. It involves drilling bore wells, digging sanitary wells, tapping perennial springs or streams for sourcing water, setting up pumping system in wells by electrification through solar or conventional power, construction of overhead water tank, laying of the distribution pipelines and providing three water taps for each household. It includes creation of the maintenance fund for meeting operational costs, building community capacities to plan, implement, operate, maintain and manage the piped water supply (PWS) in the village.

There are eight PWS set up in our six study villages. These tanks are remaining functional during sunny days as they are being operated by solar power. Many a times they are non-functional due to lack of power. There are two to three common taps in the village from which villagers collect water. Every household has not been provided with three taps as per the provisions of the scheme.

The following statement indicates the existing drinking water facilities in study villages.

Name of the Studied Village	Total No of Households	PWS through Solar Powered Tank	Tube well	Open well	Pond
Tala Janiguda	137	1	2	0	0
Aminguda	55	1	1	0	1
Narapadar Bagra	72	1	2	0	1
Dumripadar	70	2	2	0	0
P. Podapala	107	2	2	0	0
Dumuripadar	64	1	1	0	1
Total	505	8	10	0	3

• **Sanitation:**

There is no drainage system in Paroja villages. The appearance Paroja villages at first sight indicates their callousness towards sanitary conditions within and around the village settlement. All over the village, the sight of the uncleanness is the commonly found. The dungs of pigs, goats, dogs, cows and buffaloes are found littered in the village streets as well as the front and backside of the house.

The open space in the front and backside of house is meant for tethering the cattle as a result of which these places become very unclean. In the absence of the drainage system, the villages become dirty, damp and muddy during rains with small pools of dirty water get accumulated here and there inside the village creating a breeding ground of mosquitoes and also creates health hazards for the residents especially for the children and the aged.

• **Hygiene:**

(a) Toilets (Latrines)

The data of the study villages on the toilets constructed under Swacha Bharat Mission is presented in the following statement.

Name of the Study Village	Total No of Households (HHs) in the Village	No of HHs having Toilets	No of HHs not having Toilet	No of HHs having Toilets but not using it
Tala Janiguda	137	123 (89.78%)	14 (10.22%)	103 (75.18%)
Aminguda	55	43 (78.20%)	12 (21.81%)	35 (63.64%)
Narapadar Bagra	72	63 (87.50%)	9 (12.50%)	52 (72.22%)
Dumripadar	70	59 (84.28%)	11 (15.71%)	47 (60.14%)
P. Podapala	107	94 (87.85%)	13 (12.15%)	87 (81.31%)
Dumripadar I	64	33 (51.56%)	31 (48.44%)	26 (40.62%)
Total	505 (100%)	415 (82.2 %)	90 (17.82%)	350 (69.31%)

The above table reveals that under Swacha Bharat Mission in our study villages the majority of Paroja households i.e. 415 (82.2 %) have been provided with toilets/latrines leaving only 90 (17.82%) households yet to be provided with this facility. The success of this scheme leaves much to be desired as it is found that among the toilets provided to 415 households, 350 (84.33%) of these are not in usable condition for certain reasons as stated below.

- Lack of awareness about the hygienic benefit of use of sanitary toilets
- Age old cultural habit of people to defecate in the open-air village surroundings
- Not in usable condition for substandard quality of construction of the structure done by engaging contractors but not by active participation of beneficiaries

The latrines constructed out of the fund of Swacha Bharat Mission entails for the beneficiary to contribute labour for which wage is to be provided by the concerned development authority but this provision has been followed more in breach as thumb impressions of the beneficiaries on the papers have been taken prior to the construction of latrines. It has been found that these latrines are mostly being used for storing firewood.

(b) Bathrooms

This statement below reveals that out of total 505 households of our study villages only 14 comprising only 2.7% of the total households have been provided with bathrooms leaving the remaining majority of 97.3% households not provided with this facility. As a result, the members of the left-out households go to the nearby pond or stream for bathing. It is quite satisfactory to know that unlike the case of use of toilets, the individual bathrooms provided to very small number of households are being used by their members.

It is apt mention here that government has also constructed common bathrooms in all study villages except P. Podapala and Narapadar Bagra. The common bathrooms in all villages are presently in damaged condition and no maintenance and repairing of the structures are done by the concerned authority even after receipt of complaints from the villagers.

Name of the Study Village	Total No of Households in the Village	Bathrooms Available	Not Available	Available but not in use
Tala Janiguda	137	02	135	0
Aminguda	55	02	53	0
Narapadar Bagra	72	04	68	0
Dumripadar	70	01	69	0
P. Podapala	107	03	104	0
Dumuripadar I	64	02	62	0
Total	505 (100%)	14 (2.7%)	491 (97.3%)	0%

• Other Public Infrastructure Facilities

Name of the Study Village	CC Road	Street Light	Solar Powered Water Tank	Crematory
Tala Janiguda	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Aminguda	Yes	No	Yes	No
Narapadar Bagra	Yes	No	Yes	No
Dumripadar	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
P. Podapala	Yes	No	Yes	No
Dumuripadar I	Yes	No	Yes	No

The above statement indicates that, CC Road, Solar Operated Water Tank is there in all our study villages. Street Light and Crematory are found in one village each.

(B) Livelihood Promotion

Access to and Benefits from Government's Poverty Alleviation Schemes:

The schemes like Annapurna, TPDS, NREGS, IAY, SGRY, SGSY, OTELP and other schemes are in operation in our study villages, but there is the need for transparency and accountability for their improvement.

• Development of Agriculture:

IFAD-IPAF (Indigenous People's Assistance Facility) is taking initiatives to develop agricultural production in tribal areas. It is supporting and investing in activities which are contributing to agriculture production, entrepreneurship promotion and market linkage for people's economic upliftment in the wake of global food insecurity and health emergencies like the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. Its prime focus is on enhancing knowledge and skills of tribal youths in new innovative farming techniques and reviving traditional food productions systems by forming youth clubs. Tribal youths between the age of 15 to 35 years are being encouraged to participate in this initiative in large numbers.

The rationale behind such initiative is that the majority of farmers in the Indian context are more than 35 years old and they are not able to adopt new technologies/methods due to lack of education and awareness. Rural youths have not only the potential to make agriculture sustainable but they are also assets in their rural communities, and with proper guidance they can be game changers by leading the pathway to future food security. To create an ambience of learning among the youth and to promote inter-generational exchange of knowledge with focus on sustainable agriculture practices, IFAD-IPAF taking various initiatives to empower them. Youths are being trained on different improved agriculture practices such as system of crop intensification, vegetable cultivation, package of practices for root and tuber crops and

organic farming along with practical demonstrations and exposure in the related fields.

Besides crop production, the youth have been exposed to the allied sectors like livestock rearing, mushroom cultivation, pisciculture, etc. The trainings encompass ground level implementation of organic farming, knowledge on seed varieties, use of renewable energy for irrigation and management of crop diversity through demonstrative models for ensuring future food and nutritional security. The youth are being provided with critical inputs including seeds, planting materials, farm equipment and organic kits with drums, tubs and water jars to encourage them to adopt modern agricultural practices. The schemes and programmes appears to be appreciative but the ground reality is different for the Parojas because of the apathetic attitude of the development practitioners who have failed in persuading tribal youths to overcome their shyness to interact with the external agencies.

• **Development of Horticulture : Mo-Upakari Bagicha:**

With a vision to reduce under-nutrition among children, women of reproductive age groups (WRA) and adolescent girls, Odisha Livelihoods Mission (OLM) in partnership with Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives (APPI) is implementing a nutrition project called 'Mo Upakari Bagicha' (MUB) in Odisha since the year 2018. The partnership envisages to enhance the knowledge of nutritional outcome from dietary diversity by promoting formation of nutrition gardens in the rural/tribals households. For this purpose, a separate nutrition vertical was established within OLM to achieve the goals such as improving nutrition knowledge and practices of women across the state, promoting dietary diversity at family levels, build nutrition capacities of community cadres and functionaries in OLM.

In June 2020, convergence between OLM and MGNREGS was established. Simultaneously, Nutrition Garden, a component of the MUB project was scaled up to cover 314 blocks of the state which was initially implemented in 107 blocks. An additional budgetary allocation of 500 crores from Govt. of Odisha to reach 5 lakh households in the financial year 2020-21 was also envisaged.

In convergence with MGNREGS, the focus is on households with the beneficiaries of ICDS and land-owning SC, ST, BPL households, beneficiaries of rural housing, small and marginal farmers, etc. Landless beneficiaries, left out by MGNREGS convergence project, are planned to be covered separately in the 2021- 22.

Parojas are traditional agriculturalists. Their habitat is generally surrounded by farmlands and dongars. In the study villages some households have got assistance through this scheme but it has not been implemented as per the guidelines as the Parojas grow vegetables in Beda and Dongar lands in kharif season. The concept behind Mo Upakari Bagicha doesn't match their socio-cultural behaviour and need. Rather they need more and more technical support and assistance to improve their Dongar cultivation by which the goals of the Mo Upakari Bagicha can be fulfilled.

MGNREGS:

The purpose of the Scheme MGNREGS is to give the legal guarantee of work, by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed employment to every rural/ tribal household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work subject to the conditions of this Act. Wage seekers need to apply for registration to obtain a Job Card (JC). While applying for work, job seekers can give choice of time and duration of the work applied for. During the process of application they obtain a dated receipt. They get work within fifteen days of application or from the date when work is sought in the case of an advance application, whichever is later. Wage seekers get facilities of crèche, drinking water, first aid etc. on the work site.

They are entitled to get 10% extra wage in case of employment provided beyond 5 km radius of their place, to check their Muster Rolls (MRs) and to get all the information regarding their employment entered in their JCs. Disbursement of wages are made on a weekly basis but not later than a fortnight after the date on which such work was done. Right to get unemployment allowance; in case employment is not provided within fifteen days of submitting the application or from the date when work is sought in the case of an advance application, whichever is later. Medical

treatment in case of injury in the course of employment including cost of hospitalization if required and ex gratia payment in case of disability or death in the course of employment is provided.

There is marked variation found in these studied villages in the provision of employment to those seeking MGNREGA work. Employment outcomes are lower in the villages with higher poverty levels. It is realised that MGNREGA implementation depends on the supply of work rather than demand for it. Improving employment outcomes requires strengthening the demand-driven aspects of MGNREGA through a focus on local level social audits, funding and tracking of outcomes. States should be provided with support to improve their capacity and be allowed a degree of flexibility in MGNREGA implementation.

The following statement shows that in case of our study villages out of total 776 workforce population, the majority i.e. 469 (60.4%) have got job cards as against 230 (29.63%) persons who do not have of job cards excluding the 77 (9.92%) persons who are not interested to join this scheme. This is to mention here that the procedure for getting the Job Card is a complicated one and the hobnobbing done during the process of registration disheartens the Paroja job seekers. It has been opined by the respondents and endorsed by the village councils that they should be allowed to be involved in the process to check exploitation of Paraja job seekers. Further, persons working under the scheme are very often cheated regarding payment of wages and they are paid less than the amount of prescribed wage.

Name of the Study Village	Total work force	Persons having Job Card	Persons not having Job Card	Persons not interested in MGNREGS
Tala Janiguda	165	85	67	13
Aminguda	89	46	34	09
Narapadar Bagra	129	72	46	11
Dumripadar	133	89	37	07
P. Podapala	171	123	25	23
Dumuripadar I	89	54	21	14
Total	776 (100%)	469 (60.4%)	230 (29.63%)	77 (9.92%)

- **Women Self Help Groups (WSHGs):**

SHGs were created among rural/tribal women of poor social and economic backgrounds to make them socio-economically self-sufficient, independent and empowered. To become financially stable, they pool their resources, from government's financial assistances received at different times; take loans from their collective bank savings and from micro credit agencies and use it at the times of need. The group members use collective wisdom and peer pressure to ensure proper end-use of credit and timely repayment.

In India, RBI regulations mandate that banks will offer financial services, including collateral free loans to these groups, on very low interest rates. This allows poor women to meet the challenges of exclusion from institutional financial services. This system is closely related to lending by micro-finance institutions. Beyond their function as savings and credit groups, SHGs offer their poor women members a platform to come together and act on issues related to their own lives including health, nutrition, governance and gender.

In the studied Paroja villages, most of the families live below the poverty line as most of them are landless or marginal farmers. To support them a number of Self Help Groups have been formed by Odisha Livelihood Mission (OLM). OLM has provided every possible support to these groups including training for capacity building as per the guidelines. It is found that very few SHGs have been successful by their collective efforts but most of the SHGs are not functional. Among the non-functional SHGs, some of them are still indebted and struggling hard to pay the remaining loan amount to the banks. The reasons behind the failure are many. Most important among them is lack of cooperation among members, low level of financial awareness, inappropriate investment planning which have led the to the failure. This failure has affected social relationships among members.

The SHGs thus formed in the study villages with a view to accumulate wealth through small business and self-enterprising activities have almost failed owing to lack of farsightedness,

managerial skills and familial support as well as mindset of the patriarchal society. Further proper market linkage has not been provided to these groups for their products for which they are not in a position to carry on their economic activities.

Name of the Study Village	Total Registered SHGs	Functional SHGs	SHGs - Non-functional or Struggling to Survive
Tala Janiguda	4	1	3
Aminguda	2	1	1
Narapadar Bagra	5	2	3
Dumripadar	3	1	2
P. Podapala	5	2	3
Dumuripadar I	2	1	1
Total	21 (100%)	8 (38.1%)	13 (61.90%)

It is clearly evident from the above statement that out of total 21 registered WSHGs, the majority i.e. 61.90% of are non-functional, leaving the rest 38.1% of them who are functioning and managing their activities facing several socio-economic hurdles. This shows that this scheme for empowerment of women is not very successful in our study villages.

(C) Social Security.

Ration Cards:

Ration card is an important multi-purpose document that entitles the resident of a state to obtain essential goods at highly subsidised rates through the Public Distribution System (PDS). It is one of the necessary documents to be considered as identity and residence proof for the whole beneficiary family. It can also be used to apply for other certificates. In addition to that, the benefits of various other government schemes including the State (Biju) Health Card, the cash befits under KALIA and such other many State level Yojanas can be availed with the help of the ration card.

In Odisha, the 'Ration Cards' issued by the State Government to poor families, act as an instrument of social security as well as food security entitling them to purchase subsidized food

grains from authorised PDS outlets. The BPL families have been issued ration cards by means of which they get rice, wheat, sugar and kerosene on monthly basis at a very nominal price from PDS shops. There are divisions in PDS schemes like Annapurna Yojana, Antodaya Yojana etc. under which the concerned beneficiaries get different quantities of subsidised goods. In some of our study villages some poor families are deprived of this benefit due to some technical difficulties like not having proper documents or due to rivalry with local political leaders, family divisions and so on.

The term development indicates the overall improvement in the quality of life. However, development in tribal regions has remained a challenge since time immemorial. The anthropological school of thought in reference to tribal development says that any development for tribal communities should be along the lines of their genius and that programmes implemented in tribal areas should have a 'tribal touch' or tribal bias' (Jaradalt, 2001). Nevertheless, the contradiction between isolation and assimilation has affected tribal communities, thus obstructing the implementation of tribal development programmes. It was understood that the progress of social development can be observed in the form of empowerment, equitable distribution of income and wealth or in the broader context socialisation of natural resources, which can be possible only with the involvement of tribals in project formulation and implementation by working through the traditional system. The present tribal development process gives a different scenario. Instead of involving tribals in the planning and implementation of development programmes; they are rather blamed for failure of developmental schemes and programmes. The concern remains with the administrative system itself as the multiplicity and complexity of the administrative machinery helps in confusing innocent tribals. For example, tribal development schemes and poverty alleviation projects, which are implemented by ITDA and DRDA having common beneficiaries, frequently fail to pull resources together for formulating integrated action plans since both agencies tend to work parallel to each other and in isolation. It results in benefiting a handful people rather than actually reaching the mass population.

Initially, the pursuance of economic development programmes and modus operandi of development agencies were in no way disruptive to the socio-cultural and community life of the tribal people. Instead, development personnel were enthusiastic about their goals and remained engaged with local people when problems arose. Politically, tribal areas were relatively quiet. The development policy plan, the project personnel, people and politics seemed to be in harmony with each other. The result of the development activities undertaken in tribal areas was slow and steady with tangible results and lasting effects.

The neo-development strategy of the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) has been designed on the basis of an ambitious review of early approaches to tribal welfare in post-independence period. Although the anthropological perspective of tribal development had been given due consideration, the area development approach coupled with demographic criteria, played a major role in formulating TSP strategy. Macro-coverage of tribal areas, delineating Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDPs) on the basis of survey and sampling and implementing development programmes in haste without paying adequate attention to the felt needs of the tribal villages in tune with their cultural and human resource bases clearly had its limitations. The desire to achieve development goals sooner rather than later prompted the development strategists to insist on rapid action at whatever cost. As their optimism shrank, they shifted their attention from covering one section of tribal people to as many sections as possible, thereby making it explicit that they had covered the entire tribal mass. It gave the development practitioners a great feeling of satisfaction. Without taking a pause to evaluate this development undertaking or to sort out the problems that had arisen from such an approach they continued and extended this trajectory, introducing yet more multiple packages for the benefit of a few. Showing the number of beneficiaries and calculating the money spent at the end of the scheme was assumed to be evidence enough of their development achievement. Emphasis on quantity dominated on quality.

However, in recent years, the Paroja culture and economy have undergone transformation under the impact of external agencies and internal inventions. Changes are more conspicuous and striking in the economic front than social sphere. Their social life, which is guided and regulated by their deep-rooted customs, traditions and values, has more or less remained unaffected from the modern trends of civilization. However, they have changed considerably in their attitude and outlook. Yet they possess many virtues and good qualities required to be an ideal individual in the society.

CONCLUSION

For the advancement Paroja community the following suggestions may be taken into consideration.

- (a) The Paroja should be given maximum help and assistance in order to increase their income through improved agricultural practices.
- (b) Irrigation should be provided with modern inputs to improve cropping pattern, increase agricultural production and provide continuous employment opportunities. Where irrigation is not possible dry land agriculture should be promoted on scientific lines.
- (c) Promotion of horticulture, dairy farming, goatery and poultry should be given due importance for the development of Paroja community.
- (d) Improvement of indigenous crafts and cottage industries should be made to provide employment and income to the people.
- (e) Paroja youth should be trained to assume development responsibilities through early and continuous involvement in youth programmes and activities and all-round village development.
- (f) Paroja should be colonized with proper facilities like house, agricultural land etc.
- (g) Legislative safeguards should be implemented to prevent their exploitation and special care should be taken for enforcement of these laws.

- (h) The Paroja are shy and illiterate people leading an isolated life in the hills and forests away from the mainstream of civilization, which prevent them from coming in contact with advanced people. They are looked down upon with contempt. This sort of outlook should be changed for betterment of Parojas.
- (i) Organized assistance should be given to families to convert their increased income into better living.
- (j) Village leadership should be responsive and responsible and so also village organizations and institutions.
- (k) They should be made aware in the matters of sanitation.
- (l) Different welfare organizations like youth welfare organizations, women welfare organizations, children welfare organization etc. should function in the village.
- (m) Proper medical facilities should be provided for the Parojas.
- (n) Extensive credit societies should be set up from which the people can get loan easily. This will save them from clutches of local 'shylocks'.
- (o) Extensive as well as intensive educational programs with proper facility should be undertaken to make illiterate Parojas educated. Adult education programs should be given wide publicity.
- (p) Last but not the least tribal economy should be radically changed. It has been said by Gunar Myrdal that economic development depends on two factors, altitudinal change and institutional change. Suggestions for institutional change have already been made. But on attitudinal improvement, it is essential to think of. No institution can work unless people are interested to make them work. If we have to prevent the isolation of the tribal people and to make them an integral part of the economic progress of the country, we have to create awareness among them regarding their

rights and duties, their responsibilities, involvements and changing pattern envisaged for them and the works they have to do in bringing about such changes. All this can be done provided they are sufficiently educated, both literally and functionally, so as to understand the challenges and to take up the management of development programs with rigour and enthusiasm.

- (q) A conscious and willing tribal community can change their life and prevent exploitation much more quickly than an ignorant and unwilling community. Productive education is therefore, a key factor in the process of development.

Excise and Forest Policy

The excise policy for tribal areas is being formulated at the national level. The policy for the state should form as a tribal part of sub-plan and be reflected in the plan of the development projects as well.

The forestry programmes are crucial for development of tribal economy in many areas. The basic policy question should be settled in the tribal sub-plan itself. Necessary follow up action should be taken at the project level. The forest resources of the region should be identified and be reviewed in the context of its impact on tribal economy. The various rights of the people in the forests and its products should be documented and procedure for making use of those benefits may be reviewed to see whether these concessions are in fact available or not. The practice of collection of minor forest products should be documented. The problems of forest labour should be examined and addressed. Benefits of organized labour in other sectors should be available to the forest labourers also. Forest department may also take suitable steps to give regular employment to forest labourers. The planning of man-made forests has to be done with greater caution and after taking the people into confidence. The working of the forest and its policies in the project areas should be so formulated that it helps in strengthening the local economy.

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Women while Disssussing with Anganwadi Worker of
P.Podapala AWC



Young Girls Roaming in Streets



Village Side Agriland of Dumuripadar Village



While discussion with community members of Talajaniguda in presence of staffs of Talajaniguda Shevashram



The Field is shown with Suan



The Remnant of Bamboo Shoot after Processing



Talajaniguda Cremation ground



Talajaniguda Dispensary



Sevashram at Tala Janiguda



Straw stands in the backyard of the house



Rectangular Cowdung pits at the end of the village



Road Map to Baghra Village, Jeypore, Koraput



Present Paroja Housing



Present Paroja Housing



Present Paroja Housing



Present Paroja Housing



Patterned Fencing made by Paroja Farmers for Protection of Crops



Ploughs used by Paroja Farmers



Paroja women watching cattle grazing



Paroja young girls fetching water from the tubewell



P.Podapalla Primary School



Paroja women gossiping in the evening



Nisanimunda of Dumuripadar



Nissan Munda



New housing of Paroja Community.



Nisani Munda of Talajaniguda Village



Hill Side Agriland of N. Padar Baghra



Maize farming by Paroja Community



Grazing Ground of N.Padar Baghra



Health & Wellness Center in Tala Janiguda



Paroja men constructing new roof



Discussion with community members of Talajaniguda in presence of staff of Talajaniguda Shevashram

The Paroja are a class of aboriginal tribal people who have settled down in Koraput from ancient times. They inhabit the hills and valleys of southern Odisha. They have many socio-cultural features in common with the neighbouring major tribes namely, the Gond, Kandha and Gadaba. 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 feel shy of them. They are hill cultivators who practise settled cultivation as well as shifting cultivation which is the mainstay of their subsistence economy. In the modern times in spite of the influence of planned changes and modernisation, they have retained their core elements of culture. This monograph presents the findings of an exploratory ethnographic study on Paroja.



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