

## A Study on Changes in Traditional Economy among the Kora-Mudi tribe of Ledabera Village of Purulia, West Bengal

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**Abstract:** Economy is an integral part of human life. Economy refers to all activities which are related to production, consumption and trade of goods and services in an area. Economy is mainly divided into four categories. Traditional economy is most old economy. It is depends on goods services and work all of which follow some established trends. Tribe means people of ethnic group who are belong to the homogenous society. They are identified by their own culture, language, well-structured political boundary using of primitive technology and living in a definite territory. Kora Mudi peoples belong to the Dravidian ethnic group. They primarily live in three eastern provinces. Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal are three main states of their living. The present paper focuses on their present economy system with their traditional economy system and all changes of their economy system in this village. Data sample is taken by purposive sampling. Ledabera is a Kora Mudi tribal people's village in Purulia district under CharraDumdumi gram panchayat of Purulia block II. In this study the primary data collected by interviews, structured schedule and observation method and secondary data is collected from books, articles internet etc.

**Keywords:** Economy, Kora-Mudi tribe, Ledabera, Traditional Economy, Tribe

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## Introduction

The economy is a lifeline for all human societies, without it nobody can survive. So, an economy is a systematic organization of production, consumption, and distribution of goods, materials, and services within a society or a country. Many tribal societies in India as well as other countries are still in the primitive stage, so they still practice the subsistence economy.

According to A.J. Brown, "An economy is a system by which people get living".

There are four basic types of economic system

1. A traditional economy

2. A market economy
3. A command (or planned) economy
4. A mixed (or hybrid) economy

The word 'Tradition' is very old. Tradition as a general term refers to the customs, rituals, belief, folklore, habits in a given ethnic group. When we speak about culture, the usual key concept is still on traditions because of the universality of the concept on the social experiences derive from that community. The traditional economic system is based on goods, services and work all of which follow certain established trends. It relies a lot on people, and there is very little division of labour or specialization. In essence, the traditional economy is basic and the most ancient type economy. Traditional economy system is found in the rural settings I second and third world nations, where economic activities are predominantly farming or other traditional income-generating activities. Karl Polanyi defined traditional economy in his article "The Great Transformation" (1944). According to him, the concept of a traditional economy which is one in which economic decision making fundamentally embedded within a larger socio-cultural structure or system. Tribe refers to an ethnic group of people who are belongs to homogenous society. They have their own common culture and language, they are using primitive level of technology, living in a definite territory, possess a well-defined political boundary.

According to D.N.Majumdar, "A tribe is a social group with territorial, endogamous, with no specialization of functions, ruled by tribal officers, hereditary or otherwise, united in language or dialect, recognizing social distance with other tribes or castes, without any social obloquy attaching to them, as it does in the caste structures, following tribal traditions, beliefs and customs, illiberal of naturalization of ideas from alien sources, above all conscious of homogeneity of ethnic and territorial integration."

According to G.A. Mitchell (1979) Tribe is a, "socially cohesive unit, associated with a territory, the members of which regard themselves as politically autonomous."

As per Lucy Mair, "A tribe is an independent political division of a population with a common culture."

The Kora are peoples of Dravidian ethnic group. 'Kora' people, live in the three eastern provinces of Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal. The Koras are the fifth largest tribal community in West Bengal. The majority of the Koras in West Bengal are found in the districts of Bankura, Birbhum, Burdwan, Hugli, PaschimMedinipur and Purulia. They have four endogamous groups: MudiKora, Kurmikora, Nagbanshikora and Dhangar or Orang kora. According to the census of 2011 their total population is around 1, 42, 789 in west Bengal which is consist 3.2% of the total tribal population of the state. The Kora peoples are not well known to the others. But their population is not less. In west Bengal in the all districts we can see the kora tribe's people (without Darjeeling). They are a part of astral class and a branch of the munda people. They are digging soil, and it is the main tradition economy among the kora people. The Bengali term 'KORA' means digging soil or "matikura". In their verbal description, in the past one time they were digging soil and get water, after this incident they are known as Kora and this is became their traditional work. Another opinion of the villagers is if Kora people dig a pond and worships that pond, so the water will holy water and the water that pond will use in the worshipping, birth ceremony, marriage and in death rituals. If kora peoples do not digging pond, so the water of that pond is not usable. At the present time we can found them as cultivator or agricultural labour and daily wage labour. This tribe's name Kora and its spelling are possibly originated from Mundari word for

earthworks “Koda”. The Kora are noted for their traditional skills and primary occupation in various earth works such as cutting soil and digging tanks.

As per Risley (1891), In Barabhum, the Kora as mentioned earlier are specialists in earthworking and are regarded as experts in the digging of tanks, embankments etc. They themselves claim it to be their caste britti or traditional occupation.

Risley’s observation may hold true for the kora of Barabhum and its adjacent area where they work mainly as landless labourers. In addition to earthwork, they are good field labourers. Some of them operate as petty cultivators on small plots of land. Very few of them are substantial agriculturist. But in other places they live as settled agriculturist and they work as day-labourers only to substantiate their agriculture income. Ledabera village of the Purulia district is selected for this study. Ledabera village is a kora-mudi populated village. From our Sidho Kanho Birsha University the distance of this village is 14 kilometres by road via PuruliaGoshalamore. This village is in the block II of Purulia under CharrahDumdumi gram panchayet. There are Total 152 families are living in this village. In this village their total population is 736, in which their total male population is 359 and their total female population is 377. Bhangra is situated in the east, Charrah and Khannadi is in the west side, Kustaur is in the north and Gengara, Durohi are present in the south side of this village. Charrah is the nearest railway station of this village. Kustaur is another station, which is not so far from this village. Sunribandh is the nearest bus stop of this village. Purulia-Barakar road and Purulia-Bankura road cover the communication of this village. From this bus stop ‘sunribandh’ to the village distance is 0.9 km. In this village hut, kachcha house and concrete houses are found. ICDS centre and one primary school is found in the village. For water resource there are three ponds (bandh), four tube wells and one water tank (solar). For grocery and other variety things three shops are also available in this village. The villagers worshipped many gods. As temple Ramkrishna temple, Saraswati temple and Manasa temple are found. In this village a concrete road is found which is constructed under the scheme named- CONSTRUCTION OF P.C.C ROAD, Year 2017-2018 and 2019-2020. In this village electricity is available and villagers using technology in their daily life. Motor bike, Television, Mobile etc. are the some technological things found in this village.

## Review of Literature

The earliest reference about the Koras was made by Risley in his monumental work. Castes and Tribes of Bengal, Vol.1, 1891 which states as follows: “The Koras are a Dravidian caste of earth-workers and cultivation in Chhotonagpur, Western and Central Bengal, probably an offshoot from the Munda tribe. The Koras of Manbhum and Bankura have well marked totemistic clans of the same as Mundas and the latter admit that some sort of affinity may at one time have been recognised. The Koras of Santalparganas claim to have come from Nagpur (F.506)”.

Rai Bahadur Sarat Chandra Roy, in his voluminous work, “The Oraons of Chotonagpur, 1915, while writing about this Oraon states: “A number of Oraons now living in the eastern parts of Ranchi district and in the adjoining district of Manbhum are known as Modis and sometimes as the name Kora. The name Modi like the name Kora has reference to their skill in working in earth, such as raising embankments, mud-walls etc. In this way different occupations followed by the Oraons in different localities have secured them from their neighbours different names and have in some cases created and in others as in the case of Modis are on the way of creating different sub-sections of the same tribe among whom inter-marriage is no longer permitted (P.10).

Kakali Paul (Mitra) in her article titled “Kora Religious Belief: A Fusion of Traditional Tribal Faith and Hinduism (2004)”, concluded about ‘kora’ that, “Their traditional occupation as earth digger is no longer been exists and now a days agriculture is their principal subsistence pursuit though the land holding of the Koras is very low. They have to depend on the neighbouring caste peasants either as share croppers or as agricultural labourers. So they are interspersed within the dominant Hindu caste population with whom they developed stable dependent economic ties”.

Raj Kumar Samanta wrote about the ‘kora’ in his article titled, “Recent Changes in Kora Tribal Society: A Case Study of DombandhiKora Village in Ausgram-II Block of Burdwan District, West Bengal, India (2015).” According to him, “they are day labours. At past, they were used to cut well, canal, levelling of undulating land etc. Previously they collect leaf from forest and make plates, basket, brooms. Now at off season they collect forest leaf and make plates with leaf. Besides they do agricultural activities, labours in brick field etc. There are 10-15 casual labours who everyday migrate nearby towns for factory works, mason’s job, rice mill labours etc. But now their prime job is agricultural labouring. Due to MGNREGS (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guaranteed Scheme). Yearly working days and yearly income of every families have been increased. So poverty has been eliminated in some cases”.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To find out the present economic status of Kora Mudi.
2. To find out the economic sources of Kora Mudi.
3. To find the factors of economic changes and their effects on Kora Mudi’s life.

### **Significance of the Study**

Economy is an important part of human life and we are depending on it. We can see effects of economy in this village. They are not following their traditional economy and doing some other economic activities. We can see all these effects by comparing their past life and present life.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the present economic status of the Kora-Mudi peoples of this village?
2. What is their present economic pattern?
3. What kind of changes occurs in their traditional economy?

### **Methodology**

#### ***i) About Study Area***

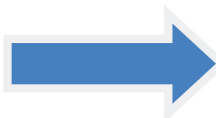
Ledabera village is one of the tribal populated villages in Purulia district. In this village Kora Mudi tribe are residing so we selected this village for our research. This village is situated in the right side of Purulia – Raghunathpur Road towards the Raghunathpur. Which is 11 km from the district headquarter Purulia. Ledabera village is in the Chharra Gram Panchayat under Purulia -II Block of Purulia District

#### ***ii) Map of the Research Area***





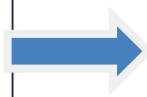
Map of India



Map of West Bengal



Map of Purulia



Map of Purulia Block II



Satellite Map of village Ledabera

## Data Collection Method

In this research work researches used contemporary as well as traditional research methods are applied. Qualitative and Quantitative data were collected from the different age groups of the informants. Different anthropological tools like Participate observation, structured schedule, Interviews, focused group discussion, Photography, books, journals, the internet, published reports, etc. were used to collect the Primary and Secondary Data.

## Primary Data

It was collected from the village through intensive fieldwork. Here researcher used participant observation, schedule, interview, and photography to collect information related to the economic status, daily economic activities, economic changing factors, etc. of the Kora Mudi tribe.

## Secondary Data

For the review of the literature and the conceptualization of research, secondary data was incorporated. For secondary data, we consulted books journals, the internet, and published reports.

## Major Findings and Discussions

Here researcher discussing the major findings of the research area. Work is a part of our daily life. Kora peoples are famous for their traditional soil related work, which is cutting soil or digging soil. Tank-digging, road making, agricultural land restoration, well digging, hut making, clay wall making are some characteristics of their profession. Koras are also working in seasonal agricultural field. The connection of koras with the land is from very ancient time. But now, in this village the peoples are not following their traditional economy. Due to Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation (LPG) above mention works are done by technical device or machines. Like tank digging, ponds digging, land restorations are done by technical excavator. JCB dozer doing these kind of work. In present time everyone wants to live in pakka (concrete) house, so they are not making hut for living. Clay wall making is also stopped due to concrete type house. Because concrete houses walls are made by burnt bricks. Due to all these reasons the human skills of koras are disappear in this village. Their new generation dislikes their traditional work. In the past time they easily get work in their local area. Their economy was depending on their traditional work. But in present time due to above causes, their economic system is changed. Now they are not doing their traditional work. Now their economy is depending on their daily work's wage. Most of the peoples are daily wage labour. Eligible person (both male and female) of this village is engaged in daily wage labourer work in many fields. They are working as labour mainly in Purulia town as mason or as a helper with mason. They also work as labour in the nearest cement factory. In labour most of them are working in cement factory, marble factory. During agricultural season they are working as labour in the agricultural field. Some peoples among them are went outside the village for earning the bread and butter. Total 40 male persons are working outside the village permanently. A few Govt. employees are also found in this village. In this village 3 persons are retired from Govt. job, in which 2 persons were primary school teacher and 1 was worked in the electric department.

As per above discussion here we find that the present status of their economic life as follows:

1. Daily Wage Labour
2. Government services
3. Agriculture Labour
4. Pastoralism (Domestic animals)
5. Government economic Assistance

**1. Daily Wage Labour:** A worker is a person who is able to do any kind of work and willing to work at the going wages and that person wait for the work on the daily basis contract or without contract are known as the daily wage labour. After imposing the LPG and the technological developments the labour market is opened for both skilled and unskilled labourers. Here we find that the Kora Mudi Tribe is left their traditional economy and working as an unskilled labour in the local and outside the village.

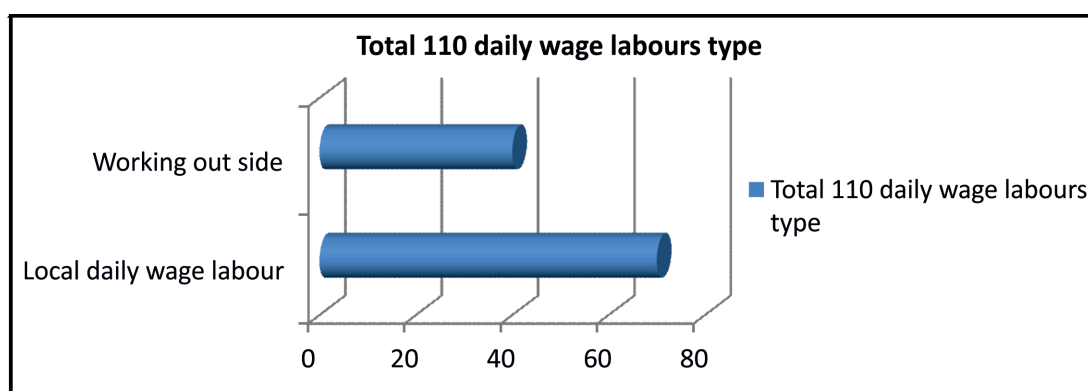
**Table 1: Daily Wage Labours**

Sl. No	Type of work	Total number
1	Local daily wage labour	70
2	Working outside the village	40
Total		110

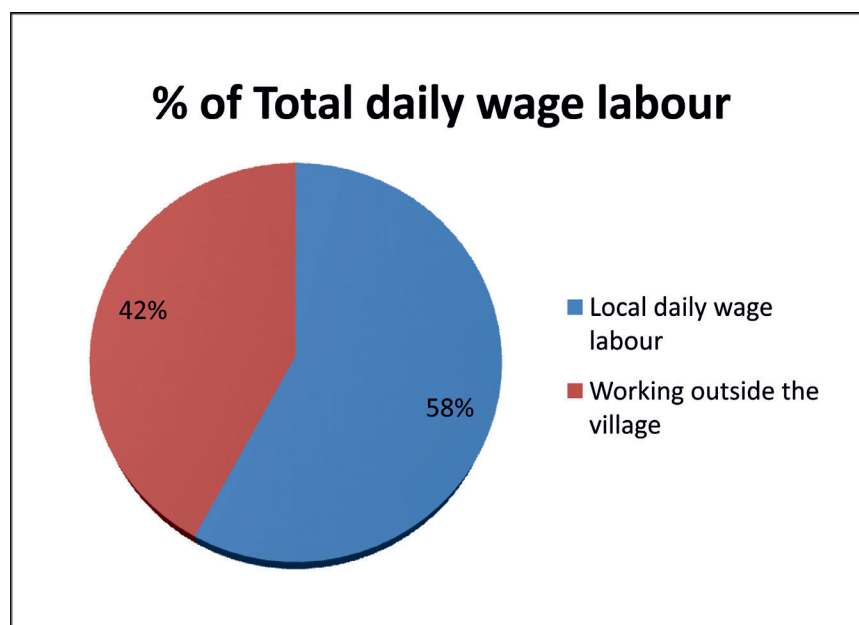
Source: Field data

This table defines total daily wage labours.

As per above table we find that the total 110 daily wage labours where 70 are local labour and the 40 are outside the village workers.



Bar chart of total daily wage labour



Pie chart of total daily wage labour

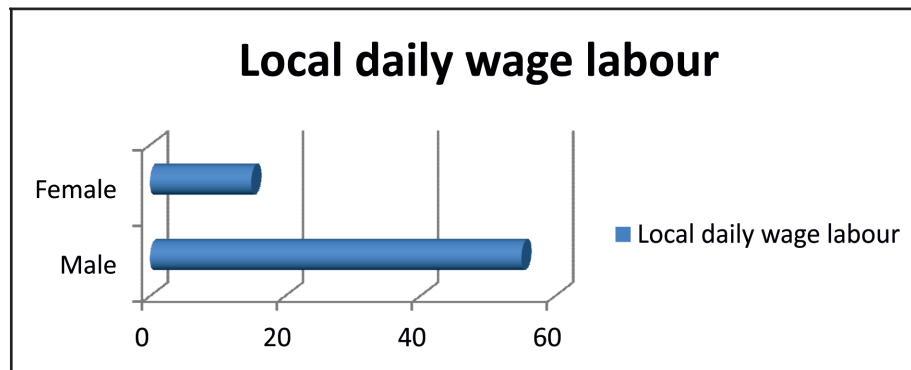
**Interpretation:** Considering the total 110 daily wage labour in Ledabera village, here 58% peoples are is local daily wage labour and other 42% are working outside.

**Table 2: Sex ratio of local daily wage labour**

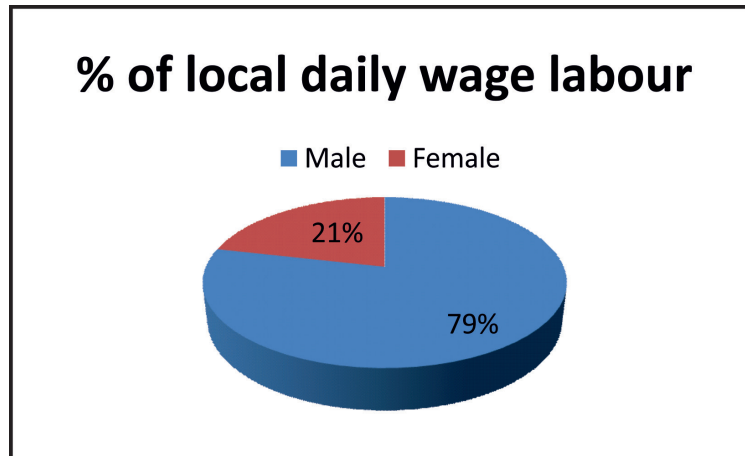
Type	Local daily wage labour
Male	55
Female	15

Source: field data

This table defines sex ratio of daily wage labour



Bar chart of local daily wage labour



Pie chart of local daily labour

**Interpretation:** Considering 70 local daily wage labours, in which 55 peoples are male and 15 peoples are female. The percentage of male labour is 79% and female labour is 21%.

**Table 3: Daily wage of a labour**

	Working field	Earning (in rupees)
1.	As a mason	350/- (per day)
2.	A labour with a mason	200/- (per day)
3.	A labour in factory	150/- (per day)
4.	Seasonal agricultural labour	180/- (per day, male female both)
5.	Working as labour in rail station	600/- (per day)

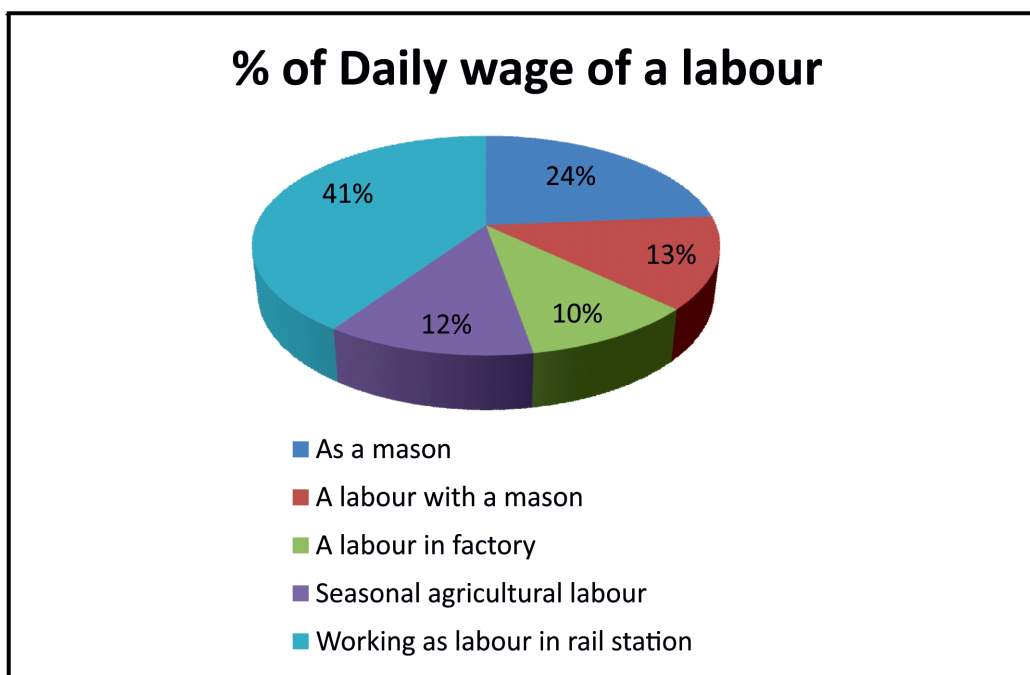
Source: Filed data



This table defines total daily wage of each labours



Bar chart of daily wage of each labour



Pie chart of daily wage of each labour

**Interpretation:** Considering the total daily wage of each labour in this village is, a mason’s wage is RS 350/- and the percentage of mason’s wage is 24%, a labour with mason getting RS 200/- and their percentage is 13%. A factory labour of this village is getting RS 150/- daily and their percentage

is 10%. During agricultural season an agricultural labour gets RS 180/- daily and their percentage is 12%. Among them who are working in rail station they gets RS 600/- daily and their percentage is 41%.

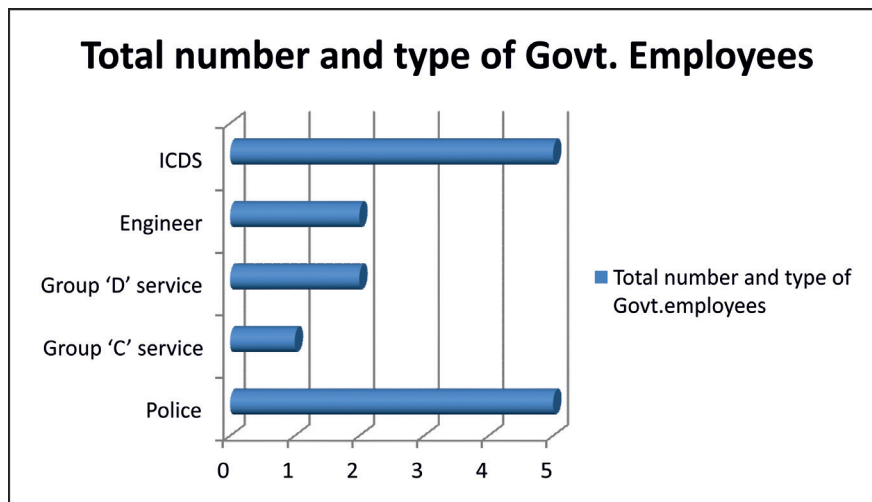
**2. Government services:** Due to getting education few family are aware for the government jobs. In this village we find the following person were got the Government job.

**Table 4: Total number and type of Govt. employees**

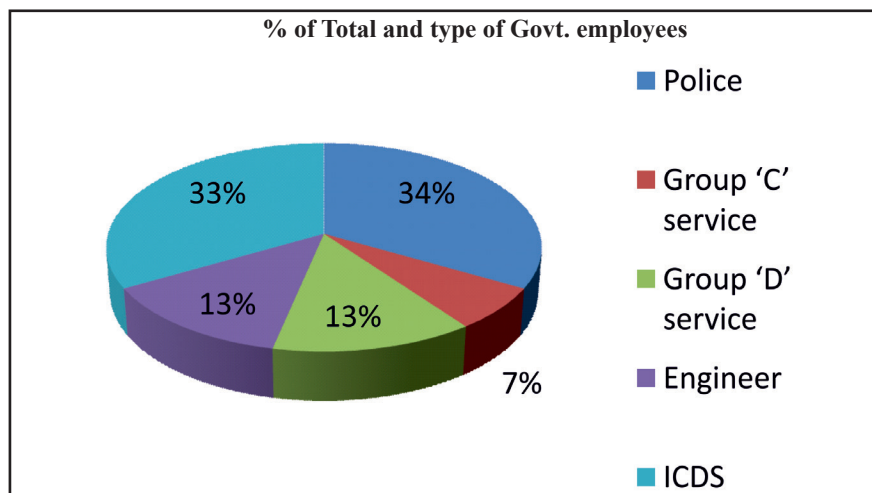
	<i>Work as</i>	<i>Total Persons</i>
1.	Police	5
2.	Group 'C' service	1
3.	Group 'D' service	2
4.	Engineer	2
5.	ICDS	5
Total		15

Source: Field data

This table define total 15 Govt. employees are found in this tribe.



Bar chart of total number and type of Govt. employees



Pie chart of total number and type of Govt. employees

**Interpretation:** Considering total Govt. employees in this village are 15, among them 5 persons are police and their percentage is 34%, among them group C service person is 1 and the percentage is 7%, among them group D service persons are 2 and their percentage is 13%. 2 peoples are Engineer and their percentage is 13%. Total 5 ICDS are there and their percentage is 33%.

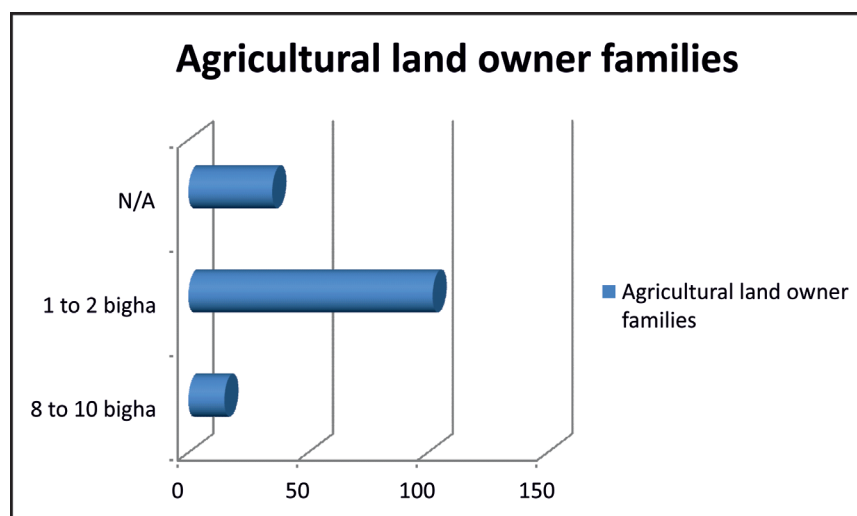
### 3. Agriculture

**Table 5: Agricultural land owner families**

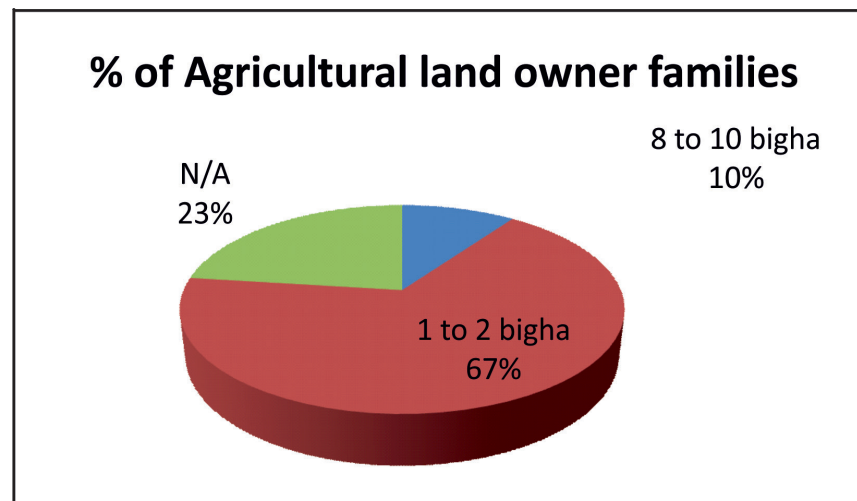
	Total family	Have land (Yes/ No)	Land quantity
1.	15	Yes	8 to 10 bigha
2.	102	Yes	1 to 2 bigha
3.	35	No	NA
Total	152		

Source: Field data

This table defines total 117 family members has land and 35 family were landless.



Bar chart of agricultural land owner families



Pie chart of agricultural land owner families

**Interpretation:** Considering total land owner families, total 15 families have 8 to 10 bigha agricultural land and their percentage is 10%, 102 families have 1 to 2 bigha land and their percentage is 67%. Among them 35 families have no land, and their percentage is 23%.

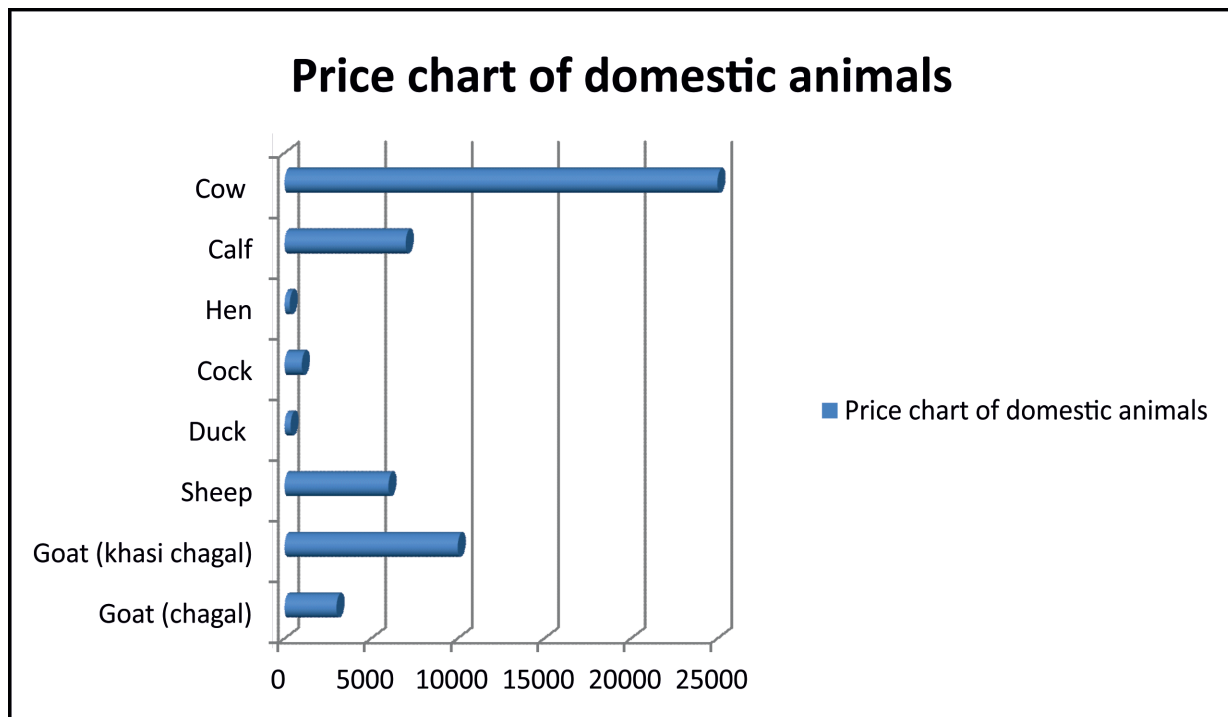
**Pastoralism (Domestic animals):** They are also engaged in the rearing of animals and whenever requires the money they sell those animals. It is also a means of their economy. In this village most of the families have duck. Otherwise goat, sheep, cock, hen, cow are the other animals. Here below given the animals name and their rate chart.

**Table 6: Price chart of Domestic Animals**

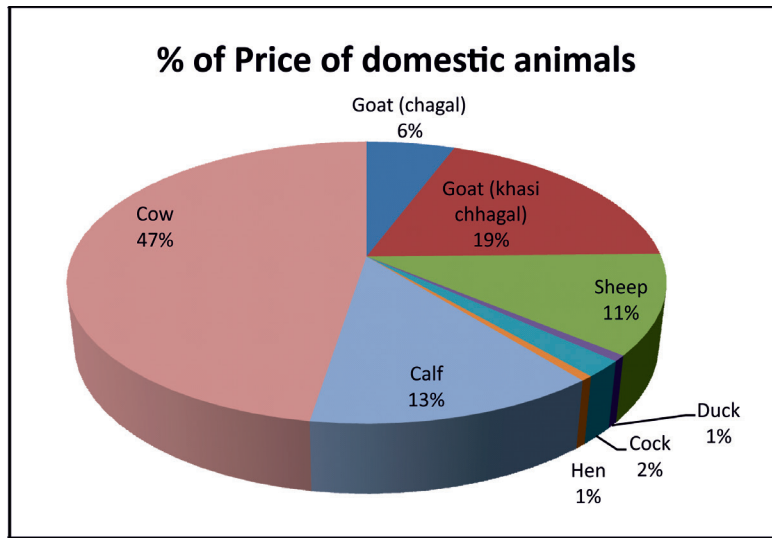
	<i>Name</i>	<i>Price (in rupees)</i>
1.	Goat (chhagal)	3000/-
2.	Goat (khasichhagal)	10000/-
3.	Sheep	6000/-
4.	Duck	350/-
5.	Cock	1000/-
6.	Hen	300/-
7.	Calf	7000/-
8.	Cow	25000/-

Source: Field data

This table defines the price of each type animals



**Bar chart of prices of each animal**



Pie chart of prices of each animal

Interpretation: Considering price of each animal is this village, Goat (chhagal) price is RS 3000/- and their percentage is 6%, Goat (khasichagal) price is RS 10000/-, and their percentage is 19%, each Sheep price is RS 6000/- and their percentage is 11%, each duck's price is RS 350 and their percentage is 1%, each Cock price is RS 1000/- and their percentage is 2%, each Hen's price is RS 300/- and their percentage is 1%. Among them each Calf's price is RS 7000/-, their percentage is 13%. Each cow's price is higher than other animal RS 25000/- and their percentage is 47%.

### 5. Government economic Assistance

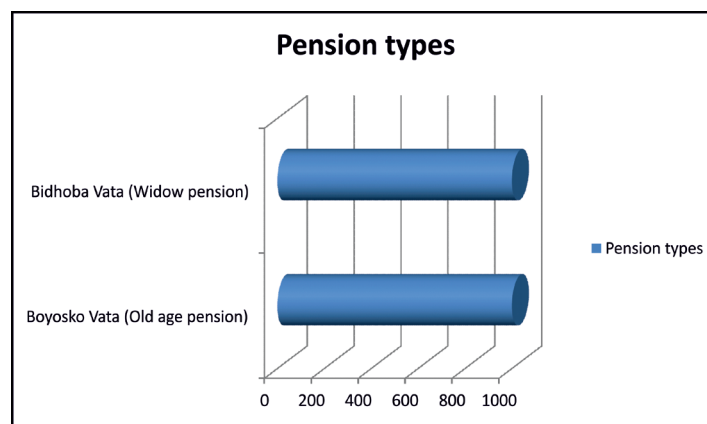
West Bengal Government welfare department provide the pension facility to the villagers.

Table 7: Pension types

	Name of the pension	Prices given (in rupees)
1.	Boyosko Vata (Old age pension)	1000/-
2.	Bidhoba Vata (Widow pension)	1000/-
3.	Jai Johar pension scheme (for ST)	1000/-

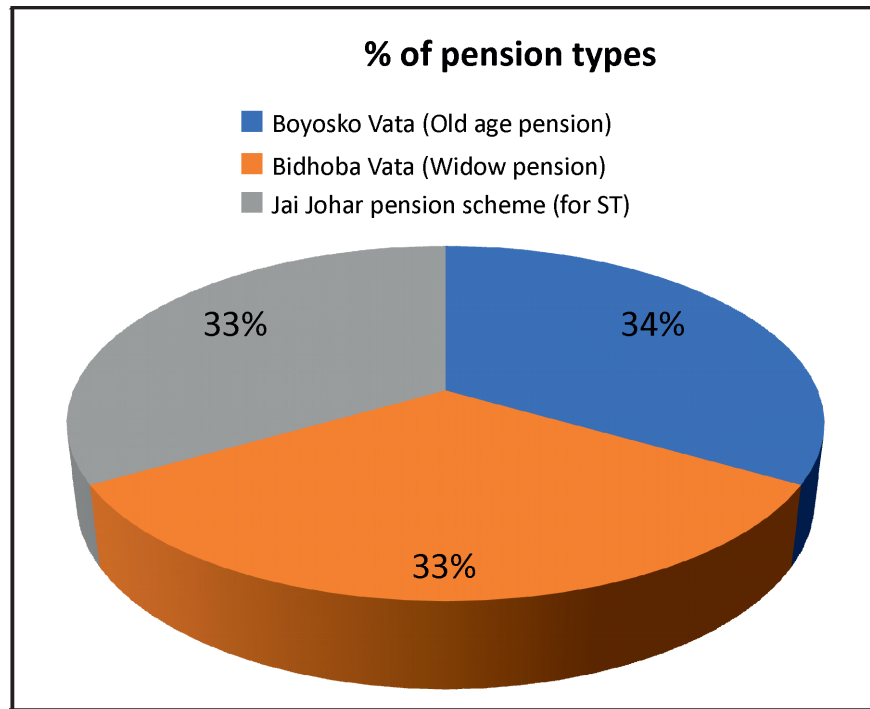
Source: Field data

This table defines Govt. pension facilities.



Bar chart of pension types





Pie chart of pension types

**Interpretation:** In this village, villagers get total 3 pension scheme facilities. Each pension scheme gives RS 1000/- to the eligible person. Old age pension holders gets RS 1000/- , its percentage is 34%, Widow Pension is RS 1000/- and its percentage is 33%, Jai Johar pension scheme holders gets RS 1000/- and their percentage is 33%.

### Conclusion

After this above discussion my conclusion is, now they are changed their traditional economy. They are not following their traditional economy in their daily life. They are mostly engaged in many other work places. They are working in the nearest marvel factory, as labour or with mason as a labour in many areas of Purulia. Some of them are doing govt. job. In the past they were doing work which was related to earthwork & soil connected work. But now they are not doing soil cutting like their previous time.

Following Reasons are responsible for their economic changes -

- In past time they got soil cutting or digging, pond cutting, well digging etc. so easily, but now they are not getting this type works.
- Now their family type (joint family to separated family) is changed than previous time, so they are going to do those works, in which they can earn more money.
- Their mentality is also changed, their new generations are not interested to do soil cutting or digging type works.
- At present time many tool technique, technology is available to soil cutting, like JCB dozer, for bore well boring machine etc. So by using these machines for work they lost the scope of their work.
- Changing in believe is also responsible for this change also. In the past day peoples believed that the pond or other reservoirs which are made by kora people (cutting/digging) and worshiped

by them, those pond's or reservoir's water is holy water and they used that water for religious work like in birth ritual, marriage time, death rituals. But now peoples use water from any pond or reservoir. So the kora people's work value is down and they are not interested to doing their past work. So they are loss their traditional economy day after day.

Economy is the very important thing to all of us. In this village area some peoples have govt. job. But the other peoples, means most of them are daily wage labour and engage in the field of hard work as labour in many places. Their daily wage or payment is not sufficient for their daily life survival. Govt. should do something for their economic improvement and development. Like:

When soil cutting/digging work is start as work/project, govt. should appoint them.

Avoid using a JCB dozer machine or soil digging machines or any other techniques, so they can continue their traditional economy and earn money.

If technological machines are using to soil cutting and digging, so in one side the kora peoples lost their traditional identity and another side the vacuum of opportunities is open to many technological and Multinational companies.

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