



Social Exclusion and Marginalization Among the Gadia Lohars (Bhuvariya) In Urban Agra: A Sociological Study with Special Reference to Life and Society

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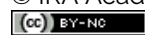
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ABSTRACT

Instead of constitutional guarantees, legal safeguards, affirmative action policies and welfare schemes and programmes for denotified and nomadic communities, the Gadia Lohars (Bhuvariya) community of Uttar Pradesh continue to experience persistent socio-economic exclusion and marginalization in multiple spheres of life. Historically stigmatized, pressure of urbanization & industrialisation, nomadic lifestyle and traditional occupation, the community faces systemic barriers in accessing education, healthcare, secure housing, stable employment, civic amenities, social status, and quality of life. The process of urbanization, decline of traditional iron based craftsmanship livelihoods, and forced or gradual settlement have further intensified their vulnerability, often without adequate institutional support. At the same time, deep-rooted kinship networks, endogamy, and community solidarity continue to shape their social organization, cultural continuity and coping mechanisms. The central research problem, therefore, is to examine how the processes of settlement, occupational change, and state intervention have transformed the life, society, and identity and caused social exclusion and marginalization faced by the Gadia Lohar (Bhuvariya) community in urban Agra, and to analyse how social, economic, cultural, and institutional factors influence their life chances, identity, and integration within mainstream society.

Keywords: Gadia Lohar, Denotified Tribes (DNT), Traditional Iron Workers, Endogamy, Community Solidarity, Social Exclusion, Social Inclusion.

Introduction

Social exclusion and inclusion, these two words are making inroads in policy discourse, particularly in developing nations (Dhakal, 2021). The idea of social exclusion emerged in France in 1965 A.D. with the publication of Jean Klanfer's *L'exclusion Sociale. Etude de la marginalite dans les societes occidentales*, which may be pronounced as an anthropology of poverty (Toffin, 2014). However, the concept only became more prominent and a major theme of political rhetoric with the 1974 publication of Rene Lenoir's book, *Les exclus* (The excluded), whose title is not very different in meaning from the term 'outcaste.' Lenoir was a high-ranking civil servant and future Secretary of State for the disabled in France, and his work met with uncountable success (Toffin, 2014). Exclusion is one of the ancient phenomena and excluded societies exist across places in historical periods and geographical locations. Such societies are characterised by unequal distribution of resources and socioeconomic well-beings. But on the other hand, included societies are marked by equal distribution of resources, social justice, equality, and collective response to the kinds of worldwide oppressions excluded societies exemplify and perpetuate (Allman, 2013). In the year 2000, there was an important mile stone in the history of inclusion and exclusion, the European Council, in its meeting, which was held in Lisbon, formally adopted the idea of inclusion and exclusion, and introduced common guidelines for their understanding and implementation (Toffin, 2014).

The term 'social exclusion' was initially referred in a narrow sense as it was used to the categories of people who remained outside the social insurance protection mechanism and at the time often perceived as social problems- mentally and physically disabled persons, suicidal individual and other socially marginalised. In 1980s, this stigmatizing and narrow interpretation of social

exclusion replaced by French polity and academic debates about the nature of the neo-poverty and changing pattern of deprivation. In this context, social exclusion was not simply paralleled with poverty but was broadened to describe to the dynamic process of social disintegration characterised by the progressive rupture of social bonds between the individual and society (Rao & Karakoti, 2010). According to the United Nations Organisation (UNO) social exclusion is a state in which people do not participate entirely in social, economic, political and cultural life, and the process leading to and sustaining such a state. It is not limited to material deprivation even though economic deprivation is an important dimension of exclusion, it is multidimensional (UNDESA, 2016). It is the rejection of equal opportunities in access to various socio-economic dimensions such as health, housing, education, employment and basic civil amenities, and socio-cultural and political participation (Mishra, 2024). Social exclusion is a procedure that limits contribution in society across life domains, and is associated with poor-quality of life (Dahlberg & McKee, 2018). Social exclusion is the result of poverty due to denial of equal opportunities in employment and properties (Clert, 1999).

The notion of social exclusion is explained through the capability approach also. Difficulty in accessibility of labour marketplace opportunities, health, housing, education, and socio-political participation are important dimension of social exclusion. Social and economic identity-based discrimination reduces the capability of excluded groups to live regular life in the community (Sen, 2000). It is associated with the lack of material resources in addition to competences, such as inadequate socio-community participation and integration and access to civil amenities- health and education, and necessary goods (Arnold, 2018). Social exclusion is an absence of access to resources and denial of opportunities to individuals and groups which are essential for growth and well-being of humankind. It states to the inability to utilise resources and amenities that are compulsory to meet the essential and developmental needs of the members of a community. It shows the vulnerability and hopelessness of an individual or groups that is pushed to the margins of society by social forces. It provides a significant dimension of the experience of some groups which are systematically set apart and restricted from meaningful participation in life (Kaushik, 2020; Kabeer, 2000).

In contrast, social inclusion is a process which aims to create an inclusive social for all. It guarantees human rights and dignity, promoting social justice and equality increasing the excellence of life of citizens and cultivating wellbeing among individuals. The dimensions of social inclusion are economic issues- mainly economic and financial, social issues- social relations with family, friends, neighbours, community, contribution in civil society, and political issues- relations between individuals and groups and the state, contribution in decision making, access to information and a self-governing judicial system and the rule of law; these are all. Socially- inclusive societies are safer and more stable, they fulfil the indispensable conditions for economic growth and transformation, productive employment and social harmony (Abbott et al., 2016). It is one of the multidimensional narratives that immediately refers to every form of injustice and their possible remedies, without making distinction or analysis (Toffin, 2014). A completely inclusive society is one which is characterised by individuals, groups and communities contribute in social interaction even though it is not compulsory that every citizen take a lively role in social activities (Therborn, 2007) it also guarantees that people and communities have contact to the resources essential to

benefit from occasions that supports their wellbeing to live a quality life (Sen, 1999). Inclusion is one of the fundamental aspirations of the 2030 Agenda (UNDESA, 2016).

The idea of exclusion and inclusion in Indian context was adopted in the 1980s. Initially the concepts of exclusion and inclusion were used to social categories such as the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), disabled, denotified & Nomadic tribes (DNSNTs), minority groups, and other marginal sections of society. The main objective behind such adoption was to develop a more inclusive society by reducing discrimination and insuring better economic facilities, quality schooling, social protection, and broader political representation for the underprivileged. In other arguments, inclusion aims at ensuring that everyone profits from equal opportunities and fundamental human rights (Toffin, 2014). The objective of inclusion is created an equitable society, at reducing poverty and recognizing diversities, one of its defining hallmarks is a wide variation in use and its application (Toffin, 2014). There are various fields in which the themes of inclusion were experimented with empowerment schemes, access to civic amenities including clean water, sanitation and hygiene, education, reservations and quotas, mechanisms of social protection, preservation of cultural diversity while promoting communal harmony, and many other so-called good practices relevant to a particular time and space (Toffin, 2014).

Instead of constitutional protections and welfare strategies, developmental projects and inclusion policies targeted for denotified and nomadic communities, the Gadia Lohars (Bhuvariya) of Uttar Pradesh continue to remain on the margins of socio-economic development. While this community is undergoing a complex transition from a traditionally nomadic, iron-working livelihood to semi-settled and semi settled urban modes of their life. They have been severely affected by the deterioration of traditional iron work because of mechanization and emerging market demands. Rapid industrialisation, urbanization, globalization, privatization have decrease spaces for informal workmanship artisanal occupations. It has further disturbed their traditional settled economic foundation, subsequently resulting in unstable incomes, uncertainty in employment, and occupational displacement. Limited access to educational facilities, healthcare, stable housing, secure employment and other civic amenities has negatively affected their quality of life, reinforcing intergenerational poverty, unemployment and socio-economic marginalisation. However, traditional kinship networks, endogamous marital relationship, collective traditions, shred coping mechanism and strong community solidarity continue to play a central role in maintaining social relations, preserving cultural identity, and providing informal support systems during economic uncertainty and other difficulties. A sociological perspective and interpretation of these dealings is necessary to examining how social, economic, cultural, and institutional factors come together to shape the life chances, identity construction, and degree of integration of the Gadia Lohars (Bhuvariya) within the broader agenda of mainstream society.

The inclusive society would not be an ideal nightmare, but somewhat a development that to fluctuating extents would more institutionalize theme tune of inclusion, acceptable rights, and the extent of adequate conduct (Allman, 2013).

GADIA LUHAR- A GHUMANT JAATI

Ghumant Jaatis include nomadic and semi-nomadic communities who traditionally live a mobile/nomadic life including moving from place-to-place instead of living permanently.

Historically, they continued themselves through occupations like animal herding, handicraft, itinerant trade, folk performances, and other mobile livelihoods. During the British period, many Ghumant Jaatis were prejudicially labelled and placed under strict control, which caused lasting exclusion, marginalization and economic deficiency. Subsequent to independence, these communities continued to face challenges such as poor and unsafe housing conditions, poor access to education, denial of health services, insecure employment opportunities, and weak acknowledgement in government records. At present, both government agencies and civil society organisation are working to their social inclusion, maintain self-respect, and simplify their integration into mainstream society while respecting and protective their cultural identity.

In urban localities of Agra, Gadia Lohars are known as Bhuvariya, signify a traditional constitute, a traditional nomadic iron-working Ghumant Jatti community whose social life and occupational identity is deeply influenced by mobility, artisanal skill, itinerant trade, and historical exclusion. Traditionally they used to live and travel in bullock carts (Bel-Gaadi), which served as both their shelters and workplace / homes and workshops, and earned their living by making and repairing of iron tools such as implements use in agriculture, knives, and various household items for rural and semi-urban populations. In the Agra region of Uttar Pradesh, a sizeable population of Gadia Lohars have transformed from a whole nomadic life to semi-nomadic or semi-settled / settled lives as a consequence of government development programmes and welfare policies interventions, urbanization, industrialization, weakening of traditional iron work livelihood, and economic challenges. From a sociological perspective, their lives demonstrate a complex change in occupational structure coexist with severe poverty, poor access to education, inadequate healthcare services, and insecure housing, and ongoing social exclusion instead of constitutional guarantees. As the same time, strong community kinship ties, endogamous marriage system, and continue dependence on traditional skills still play an importance in shaping their socioeconomic organizations and ethnic identity. A sociological understanding on social exclusion and marginalization of the Gadia Lohars (Bhuvariya) residing in urban Agra, therefore, provides a valuable insight into the challenges encountered by denotified and nomadic communities in navigating modernity, intersecting with state structures, and seeking social integration all while trying to preserve their distinct identity and asserting dignity within the wider perspective of Indian society.

The historical development of Gadia Lohar can be understood across the pages of the medieval history. According to various historians, ethnographers and authors, the historical narrative of them begins in centre of the Chittorgarh. They constitute a nomadic community originally belonging to the Chittorgarh of Rajasthan. Their earlier generations were involved in manufacturing iron tools and weapons for the armies of the Rajput king, Maharana Pratap of Chittorgarh, however, they moved away from the fort when it was attacked by the Mughals in 1568 AD and subsequently captured by Akbar (Ruhela, 1968). The Gadia Lohar, a wandering community, traces its origin to Chittorgarh of Rajasthan. By tradition, they practice the occupation of Lohar (ironsmith) to manufacture and sale iron utensils and domestic equipment and sustained livelihood by moving from place-to-place on their Gadia (bullock cart). The community once served as ironsmiths to the army of Maharana Pratap of Mewar. Following the Mughal conquest of Mewar, they took a collective oath that they to adopt a nomadic exitance and to return to their homeland

only after the revival of Maharana Pratap's authority (Govt of India, 2016-17). The olden city of Chittorgarh formally served as the capital of Mewar and the domain of King Sisodia Rajput. The city of Chittorgarh is located on the bank of river Gambhiri and this town stands on a hill and has an enormous fortification. The Mughals first attacked the city in the year 1303 A.D. and the attacks continued thereafter. The Rajputs protected the fort with great determination, till the Mughal armies finally captured it in 1568. The very groups later identified as the Gadulia Lohar, left Chittor when it fell to the Mughals. At the entering of the Chittorgarh fort states that the Rajput and Gadi Lohars, before departure the fort swore a pledge to simple lifestyle until Chittor is liberated. They took vows such as- they would not ascend the fort, would not live-in a permanent household, would not to sleep on a cot (bed), would not to practice lamps (light), and would not to use ropes for pulling water from wells (Misra 1977).

The term Gadiya Lohar, reflects the unique qualities of community- oxcart and iron smith (Rajan, Jaggi & Shah, 2011). The community is tightly organized in which all members of the household participate continuing their livelihood. Iron working continues one of the cores and the most important components of their production system (Tehrani, 2015). While males in the community are skilled in iron smithing manufacture iron utensils and tools made of iron; females step out to sell these handmade products. The responsibility of childcare and folk performances is largely handled by the elder women at home. The livelihood in this community is a collective endeavour of the household and both men and women actively participate in family business in iron related activities (Jain, 2016).

They are seen moving in several north, central and west Indian states like the Delhi, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, etcetera. They are recognized by different names in different states, e.g., Bhubalia or Bhuvalia in Punjab; Bhubalia, Lohpitta or 'Gadi Lohar' in Uttar Pradesh; Panchal Lohar, Chittoriya Lohar, Chitodi Lohar or Gadia Lohar in Madhya Pradesh; Belani, Dhumkuria, Kuwar Khati, Chittoriya Lohar or Rajput Lohar in Gujarat and Maharashtra (Rajan, Jaggi & Shah, 2011), Gadia Lohar in Delhi and Madhya Pradesh, Gaddi Lohar in Maharashtra and Bhuvariya in Uttar Pradesh. In Haryana these people are known as Bhubalia Lohar although in Rajasthan they are termed as Gadulia Lohar or Dhurkutia (Singh, 1998). Within the similar region, they are identified by different name according to their migration and location including Chittori Gadulia Lohar, Maliwi Gadulia Lohar, Malwa Gadulia Lohar and Mewar Gadulia Lohar (Misra 1975). They formerly from Mewar Rajasthan now spread all over India and at present they reside the neighbouring states including Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Delhi (Singh 1998).

Though, shifting in socioeconomic conditions and the demand of these emerging conditions, the community have wrecked some of its traditional oaths. They have slowly begun to settle in permanent locations in rural and urban settlements; however, they continue to experience social exclusion, marginalization and economic difficulties. They reside in small huts and tents constructed on vacant and unused lands near roads or railway lines and the few of them live in houses constructed through various government schemes. Even today, a majority of them continue to practice their traditional profession of ironwork. The old bullock cart is in a corner of their settlement, which was their identity and used by their ancestors still indicating the nomadic life of community. Women in community are engaged as micro entrepreneurs, and improve their lives

and enhances their livelihood to some extent. They play a crucial role in poverty reduction by operating small business undertakings, and they usually demonstrate their ability to manage and run enterprise even with limited support by men.

Review of Literature

Ruhela (1968) in a study presents a comprehensive sociological interpretation of the Gaduliya Lohars, a nomadic blacksmith community of Rajasthan. This is a fieldwork-based study conducted during 1959-1964. It systematically documented their origin, myths, migratory patterns, kinship organization, domestic units and nomadic life. The study provides a detailed empirical description of bands, occupational specialization, Panchayats and organizations of Gaduliya identity. Study also finds out that Gaduliya Lohars are within the broader framework of nomadism and modernity. In this study there was a special emphasis on birth, marriage, death rituals and religious beliefs revealing a tightly knit social system instead of spatial mobility. In this work he also traced the Rajput origin narratives of community, historical memories and their role in maintaining closed group solidarity and established a strong ethnographic credibility.

Tehrani (2015) in a study observes that during the first quarter of the century, the Gadia Lohars have experienced major transformation in their life. A major section of households has adopted permanent settlement in rural and urban settings, with only a small number continuing regular mobility and traditional practices. Mobility has significantly declined and is now limited to nearby village, towns and urban areas with daily commutation preferred for work and sell of iron products. Long-standing traditional promises, symbols, and practices such as the use of bullock carts, cattle keeping, and distinctive jewellery are no more. Joint families are transforming into small and nuclear families, traditional community gatherings have declined, and mobility is mainly undertaken by older members of the household. Although their traditional occupational pattern remains similar, technological shifts such as adoption of mechanical bellows and the decline in skills required for producing large tools have confined their work to small tools and repairs, leading to low income and reduced range of craftsmanship.

Chaudhry (2019) conducted a primary and fieldwork-oriented study on Gadia Lohars to enumerate and examine their settlements in NCR Delhi and their living and housing conditions. The study was carried out in close association with the community, beginning with a training workshop to raise awareness about the rights to adequate housing. Surveys and data gathering were carried out across 58 settlements in the year 2019, with an active participation of community women. The study aimed to address data gaps concerning living conditions, settlement patterns and cultural life. The results of the study reveal that the Gadia Lohars have resided in informal settlements for numerous decades without access to essential civic amenities such as proper housing, safe water, sanitation, education, and healthcare.

Sharma (2021) conducted a study on the relationship between space, illegality, and settlement. The study demonstrates how denial of legitimate dwelling spaces restricts migration and endangers Gadia Lohars. The study finds out that the Gadia Lohars are an indigenous nomadic people of ironworkers whose historical exile from Chittorgarh has formed their semi-nomadic identity. After independence, in 1955 All India Gadia Lohar Sammelan was symbolically celebrated their past history but it failed to provide fruitful rehabilitation for community. But such efforts for settling

down their community emerged as a politically motivated strategy rather than genuine welfare measures compounded by shifting caste classification such as Scheduled Tribe, OBC, and SBC. This study used various ethnographic evidence and reports and reached on the conclusion that the so-called emancipation of the Gadia Lohars amounted to spatial and social engineering that reproduced marginality under the rhetoric of upliftment.

Gulshan and Varghese (2024) in fieldwork-oriented research on Gadia Lohar households in National capital Delhi focused on the role of women as micro-entrepreneurs. The research finds that the Gadia Lohar community in Delhi constitutes a highly socially excluded and economically marginalized community. Manufacturing and marketing of iron goods remains their sole means of their livelihood and women contribute to sustain their livelihood. Instead of their responsibility as primary care givers, they are enthusiastically involved in manufacturing, finishing and selling the iron goods produced. Limited or even no access to formal education and skill training, poor health facilities, insufficient availability of clean cooking fuel, safe drinking water, and reliance on shared toilet facilities are some of the major concerns for women of Gadia Lohars in National Capital Delhi. The study emphasizes that both individual and collective empowerment of women are important sources of social transformation and economic inclusion.

Shah and Singh (2024) conducted an anthropological study to know the consanguineal kinship relations of Gadia Lohars of Lucknow. This study analysed the distribution of ABO blood groups and Rh factor among the Gadia Lohars to trace genetic tendencies and regional similarities. The results finds that O blood group was most common among the community members, followed by B, A, and AB, with 96 per cent of population being Rh-D positive (D-antigen present on red blood cells). This distribution pattern significantly aligns with populations in western India. In western India, O>B>A>AB is commonly observed rather than the northern Indian pattern. This consanguineal kinship analysis indicates a greater similarity of Gadia Lohars with Rajputs of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Jaiswal and Singh (2025) conducted a study on the Gadia Lohars of Uttar Pradesh in Unnao and Lucknow districts. Using anthropological framework, study employed a mixed-method approach with quantitative and qualitative techniques, snowball sampling and focused group discussions. The study finds that menstrual health and hygiene practices are significantly shaped by factors like age, educational level, income and prevailing socio-cultural norms. A generational change in the age at menarche was significantly observed, with younger girls reporting earlier onset, likely due to nutritional improvement and environmental factors. Menorrhagia was normally experienced by adolescent, whereas, older women reported hypomenorrhea, and menstrual discomforts such as abdominal and back pain, fatigue, dizziness, tiredness and sleep disturbance are often neglected because of inadequate access to healthcare access. The findings also shows that menstrual hygiene practices predominantly rely on the use of cotton cloth, limited use of sanitary napkins, unsafe disposal methods, and adherence to cultural taboos such as avoiding bathing during menstruation, underscore significant gaps in awareness, resources and infrastructure.

Singh, Haritha, Jhajharia, and Chand (2026), in a book chapter, explore the mental health issues faced by Gadia Lohar women in Rajasthan in the context of homelessness, using the frameworks of Social Determinants of Health and Intersectionality. The study is based on qualitative analysis of

30 participants from Thanagazi tehsil in Alwar district, the study stresses the urgency of targeted policy interventions that prioritized culturally appropriate healthcare services, economic empowerment, educational opportunities and social inclusion. The findings show that restricted access to healthcare, financial instability, low levels of education, and poor living conditions collectively contribute to adverse mental health outcomes.

Research Gap

The existing literature on the Gadia Lohar community provides valuable insights into their socio-economic exclusion, historical marginalization, changing mobility patterns, livelihood practices, housing insecurity, women's roles, health concerns, women micro entrepreneurship and even genetic composition. These studies lack an integrated approach that simultaneously examines the occupational changes, livelihood patterns, housing settlements, physical, menstrual, and mental health, gender relations and social transformation in their life as a result of state interventions, and access to state welfare, urbanization and industrialisation within a single analytical framework. Moreover, there is gap in linking with social exclusion, structural marginalization and economic hardship with policy implementation outcomes. Addressing to all these gaps is essential to develop a holistic sociological understanding of the preset time realities of the Gadia Lohars of urban Agra and to inform inclusive and evidence-based interventions.

Objectives of the Study

In order to sociological understanding all these issues, following objectives were formulated to conduct the sociological study on Gadia Lohars (Bhuvariya) of Urban Agra:

- To study socio-economic status of Gadia Lohar (Bhuvariya) of Urban Agra.
- To study the access of basic services (civic amenities) to Gadia Lohas (Bhuvariya) of Urban Agra.
- To study the inclusion and exclusion of Gadia Lohar (Bhuvariya) of Urban Agra.

Research Design and Methodology

The study is descriptive in nature since description is the foremost objective of the study. To fulfil the need of the objectives of this study, both primary and secondary sources of data were utilized. The primary data was collected through direct interviews with structured interview-schedules from the respondents, i.e., Gadia Lohar (Bhuvariya) of Urban Agra. The secondary data sources comprise of various published sources such as books, newspapers, magazines and journals. Urban Agra comprised with Agra Municipal Corporation, 5 Municipal Councils, and 7 Nagar Panchayats. All the Gadia Lohar (Bhuvariya) of Agra District comprised universe of the study. The snow-ball sampling method was employed to select the sample for the study. Based on various reports and surveys of Various NGOs, it was estimated that there were 1200 families of Gadia Lohar (Bhuvariya) are living in Urban Agra. A sample size of 60 respondents @5% families was selected through purposive snow wall sampling. Household head or senior most persons was selected as a respondent. The primary data from the respondents for the present work was collected over a period of 5 months, i.e., from May to December 2025.

Findings of the Study/ Data Interpretation

The major findings of the study derived from the data-collection through interview schedule from the respondents are as follows:

Table: I

Basic Information on Respondents

Age of the Respondents				Education of the Respondents			
S. No.	Age	Frequency	%	S. No.	Education	Frequency	%
1	18-30 Years	03	5.00	1	Illiterate	31	51.66
2	30-45 Years	18	30.00	2	Literate	17	28.33
3	45-60 Years	31	51.66	3	8 th Passed	9	15.00
4	60 / More Years	8	13.33	4	12 or more	3	5.00
5	Total	60	100.00	5	Total	60	100.00
Religion of the Respondents				Family Structure of the Respondents			
S. No.	Religion	Frequency	%	S. No.	Family Type	Frequency	%
1	Hindus	60	100.00	1	Extended	01	1.66
2	Muslims	-	-	2	Joint	11	18.33
3	Buddhists	-	-	3	Nuclear	46	76.66
4	Others	-	-	4	Other	02	3.33
5	Total	60	100.00	5	Total	60	100.00
Marital Status of the Respondents				Genders of the Respondents			
S. No.	Marital Status	Frequency	%	S. No.	Marital Status	Frequency	%
1	Married	52	86.66	1	Male	56	93.33
2	Separated	03	5.00	2	Female	04	6.66
3	Widow / Widor	5	8.33	3	Others	00	00
4	Divorced	-	-	4	-	-	-
5	Total	60	100.00	5	Total	60	100.00

The age-wise distribution of respondents shows that the majority of the respondents belonged to the economically active and older age groups. Maximum of the respondents (51.66%) fall within the 45-60 years age group, followed by 30.00% in the 30-45 years age category. Only 5.00% of the

respondents are in the 18-30 years age group, while rest of them (13.33%) are aged 60 years and above. This pattern shows that the livelihood and occupational activities of the community are largely carried out by middle-aged and elderly individuals, with very limited participation of younger adults. The low representation of younger respondents may reflect early withdrawal from traditional occupations or migration in search of alternative livelihoods.

The educational profile of the respondents reveals extreme educational deprivation of the community. The data show that maximum number of the respondents (51.66%) are illiterate and 17 respondents (28.33%) are literate and able to read and write. 9 respondents (15.00%) have completed education up to the 8th standard, and rest of the respondents (5.00%) have completed 12th standard or more. The data clearly show that the majority of the respondents have low educational levels, with most being either illiterate or having only basic literacy. This pattern may influence their socio-economic conditions, employment opportunities, and level of awareness in society.

The data on religion shows a complete homogeneity among the respondents, with all respondents (100.00%) belonging to the Hindu religion. No respondents were reported from other religious groups. This homogeneity reflects that the observed socio-economic conditions are not influenced by inter-religious variation.

The table on family structure indicates a predominance of nuclear families as a significant majority of respondents (76.66%) live-in nuclear family followed by 18.33% of the respondents living in joint families and rest respondent (1.66%) belongs to an extended family. The predominance of nuclear families among the respondents may be attributed to economic pressure, housing constraints, and mobility associated with informal occupations. The shift away from joint family systems reflects changing social and economic realities among marginalized urban communities.

The marital status as the table shows that marriage is the dominant social institution among the respondents. A large size of the respondents (86.66%) is married, while 5 of them (8.33%) are widows or widowers and rest (5.00%), are separated. The high proportion of married life among the respondents reflects early and universal marriage, while the presence of widowed and separated individuals indicates social vulnerability, particularly among older respondents.

The gender-wise distribution of the respondents shows a significant imbalance. An overwhelming majority of respondents (93.33%) are male, while only 4 respondents (6.66%) are female. This skewed representation suggests that males are more visible in occupational activities and public spaces, while women remain underrepresented, possibly due to domestic responsibilities, socio-cultural norms, or restricted mobility. It also indicates that women's experiences of marginalization may be underreported in the study.

Table: II
Family Background of the Respondents

Family Occupation of the Respondents				Income of the Family			
S. No.	Occupation	Frequency	%	S. No.	Income (in ₹ per month)	Frequency	%
1	Traditional Iron Smith	32	53.33	1	Up to 5000	41	68.33
2	Contact / Landless Worker	17	28.33	2	5000-10000	17	28.33
3	Private Job	4	6.66	3	10000-15000	02	3.33
4	Own Business	2	1.66	4	15000-20000	00	00
5	Others	3	5.00	5	20000 & >	00	00
6	Total	60	100.00	6	Total	60	100
S. No	Settlement	Frequency	%	S. No.	Type of House	Frequency	%
1	Roadside	33	55.00	1	Traditional Bullock Cart	12	20.00
2	Slum	3	5.00	2	Temporary Tent / Hut	36	60.00
3	Pavements	12	20.00	3	Kachcha House	6	10.00
4	Squatter	7	11.66	4	Pukka House	2	3.33
5	Permanent	5	8.33	5	Mixed House	4	6.66
6	Total	60	100.00	6	Total	60	100
S. No	Type of Family	Frequency	%	S. No.	Number of Members	Frequency	%
1	Joint	7	11.66	1	Up to 2	2	3.33
2	Nuclear	52	86.66	2	3-4	9	15.00
3	Extended	1	1.66	3	5-6	36	60.00
4	Other	0	0	4	7-8	8	13.33
	-	-	-	5	8 or More	5	8.33
7	Total	60	100	7	Total	60	100

The data on family occupation as the table reveals, there is a heavy dependence on traditional and informal livelihoods. The majority of the respondents (53.33%) belong to families engaged in the traditional occupation of iron smithy and slightly more than one-fourth (28.33%) of them consists of contract or landless workers. A small part of respondents (6.66%) is opted private jobs, the few respondents (3.33%) are engaged in their own trade and business and the rest (5.00%) of the respondents fall in the category of others in which miscellaneous or irregular occupations. The table clearly shows that traditional iron smith occupation is still dominant in the community but a significant number of families are shifting toward wage labour and other forms of employment from traditional iron smith occupation.

The table on the income distribution among the families of respondents clearly indicates an extreme economic deficiency. A huge majority of families (68.33%) responded a monthly income of up to ₹5,000, 28.33% of them are within the category of ₹5,000-₹10,000 range, 3.33% reported an income between ₹10,000-₹15,000, while nobody earns above ₹15,000 per month. This pattern of income clearly proves economic uncertainty, continuing poverty and severely limited access to basic necessities such as housing, education, nutrition and healthcare.

The data on settlement patterns, as the table denotes that a major proportion of respondents (55.00%) live-in roadside settlements, 20.00% of them on pavements and, 11.66% live in squatter settlements. A small section (5.00%) of the respondents lives in slums, and the rest of the respondents (8.33%) live in permanent settlements. This settlement pattern of Gadia Lohars in urban Agra indicates they are living in temporary, roadside, or unauthorized settlements. The finding on the settlement reflecting a high level of housing uncertainty and socio-economic disregarding.

The types of houses in which the respondents' families live as the table shows, the clear majority of respondents (60.00%) live-in temporary tents or huts, a significant proportion (20.00%) of them in traditional bullock carts, one-tenth of them (10.00%) lives in Kachcha houses, 3.33% of the respondents lives in Pukka houses, and rest of the respondents (6.66%) live in mixed (Kachcha / Pukka / huts) houses, which associates both temporary and permanent construction materials. The findings clearly indicates that huge a majority of the respondents live-in highly uncertain, insecure and temporary housing conditions in roadside or pavement settlements, tents, huts, or traditional carts, which reflects peripheral socio-economic status.

Data on the types of family as the table presents, a landmark majority of the respondents (86.66%) have nuclear families, slightly more than one-third (11.66%) of them reported having joint families, and rest of the respondent (1.66%) reported having to an extended family. Although no respondents reported to live-in any other type of family. This approves that nuclear families are overpoweringly predominant among the respondents / among the Gadia Lohars of urban Agra. The analysis of the table shows that a majority of the respondents belong to socio-economically marginalized families, engaged in the traditional occupation of iron smith, indicating dependence on low-income and irregular sources of livelihood.

Table: III
Access to Basic Facilities

Access to the Following Facilities						
S. No.	Facilities	Yes	%	No	%	Total
1	Clean Water	9	15.00	51	85.00	60
2	Electricity	23	38.33	37	61.66	60
3	Sanitation	5	8.33	55	91.66	60
4	Toilets	8	13.33	52	86.66	60
5	Drainage	4	6.66	56	93.33	60
6	Park	1	1.66	59	98.33	60
Possession of the Following Facilities						
1	Aadhaar	43	71.66	17	28.00	60
2	Ration Card	27	45.00	33	55.00	60
3	Caste Certificate	7	11.66	53	88.33	60
4	Voter ID	41	68.33	19	31.66	60
5	PAN Card	6	10.00	54	90.33	60
6	Bank Account	21	35.00	39	65.00	60
7	Passport	0	0	0	0	60
Access to the Following Facilities						
S. No.	Facilities	Yes	%	No	%	Total
1	School	8	13.33	52	86.66	60
2	Hospital	35	58.33	25	41.66	60
3	Public Toilets	22	36.66	38	63.33	60
4	Public Parks	8	13.33	52	86.66	60
5	Government Housing Schemes	3	5.00	57	95.00	60
6	Government Employment Schemes	21	35	39	65	60
Facilities Availability in House						
S. No.	Facilities	Yes	%	No	%	60
1	T V	19	31.66	41	68.33	60

2	Fridge	3	5.00	57	95.00	60
3	Smart Phone	27	45.66	33	55.00	60
4	Washing Machine	2	3.33	58	96.66	60
5	Sofa	1	1.66	59	98.33	60
6	Double Bed	5	8.33	55	91.66	60

The table number III clearly shows the responses given by the respondents on the accessibility of civil amenities to them. Access to clean water supply, a small proportion (15.00%) of the respondents reported positively, while a predominant majority of them (85.00%) lacks this essential amenity. Sanitation facilities are available to merely 8.33% of the respondents, and toilets to slightly more than one-tenth (13.33%) of them indicating tremendous poorly living conditions. The condition of drainage system and parks is more worsen in their localities. The few (6.66%) respondents reported to access to drainage system facilities, and just one (1.66%) respondent accesses to a park facility. Electricity facility is accessible for 38.33% of the respondents and a clear majority (68.33%) of them still lacks to access electric facilities in their home. The electricity facility is relatively higher in comparison to other facilities in the community, but interestingly, all these do not have individual connections in their homes, most of them have collective electricity connection. The findings on these facilities reflect an acute infrastructural exclusion, poor urban service delivery, and spatial marginalization of the community.

The data in the table on document possession shows a mixed pattern of exclusion and inclusion. Slightly less than three-fourth (71.66%) of the respondents possess Aadhaar cards and majority (68.33%) of them Voter IDs, it reflects limited integration of the community into the official identification system. But, possession of other vital documents remains is limited and low. In regard to ration cards, less than half (45.00%) of the respondents possess it and slightly more than one-third (35.00%) of them possess bank account, it is limiting their access to food security and financial inclusion. Although, 11.66% of the respondents have caste certificates and 10.00% have PAN cards but none of the respondent has passports. It is indicating a systemic barrier to documentation. The lack of documentation directly or indirectly contributes to the exclusion from welfare schemes and government economic programmes.

The data on accessing to public services and institutions among the community members remains extremely uneven. Only 13.33% of the respondents reported to have access to schools. It reflects an educational marginalization of Gadia Lohars of urban Agra. Accessing to hospitals, more than half (58.33%) of the respondents reported to have assess, it is relatively a better situation, yet still it is inadequate for a sizeable proportion of respondents. Data on accessibility to public toilets shows that slightly more than one-third (36.66%) of the respondents reported positively and availability of public parks is only for 13.33% of the respondents and for majority of the community members it is inaccessible. It is reflecting neglect in urban public infrastructure. A small portion (5%) of the respondents reported to have access to government housing schemes while most of them (95%) denied it. It is indicating a complete exclusion from housing welfare programs of the government. In the same way, slightly more than one-third (35.00%) of the respondents have access to government employment schemes, reflecting to marginal livelihood support from the government.

The findings on the basis of table on household assets highlights the lower standard of living among the community members of urban Agra. Slightly less than one third (31.66%) of the respondents own a television, 45.66% of them possess a mobile phone and ownership of other household amenities is extremely limited. A few respondents (5.00%) have refrigerator, 3.33% own a washing machine, and merely one respondent (1.66%) reported having own sofa. Access to basic sleeping furniture as double bed and bed is also limited, with only 8.33% respondents. These results clearly indicate economic deprivation, financially exclusion and poor material living conditions.

Table: IV

**Political Representation, Access to Civic Amenities, Documentation and Welfare Access,
Social Interaction and Participation.**

Members of our Community have No/ Little Political Representation			
S. No.	Reaction	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	0	00
2	Disagree	0	00
3	Neutral	0	00
4	Agree	0	00
5	Strongly Agree	60	100
6	Total	60	100
We live-in an Area that Lacks Basic Civic Amenities like Water, Sanitation, and Electricity			
1	Reaction	Frequency	Percentage
2	Strongly Disagree	0	00
3	Disagree	3	5.00
4	Neutral	3	5.00
5	Agree	3	5.00
6	Strongly Agree	51	85.00
7	Total	60	100
Lack of Proper Documents Prevents us from Accessing Welfare Schemes			
S. No.	Reaction	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	1	1.66
2	Disagree	1	1.66
3	Neutral	5	8.33

4	Agree	13	21.66
5	Strongly Agree	40	66.66
6	Total	60	100
We are Regularly Invited to Social or Cultural Activities of Nearby Communities			
S. No.	Reaction	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	0	0
2	Disagree	2	3.33
3	Neutral	2	3.33
4	Agree	3	5.00
5	Strongly Agree	3	5.55
6	Reaction	50	83.33
7	Total	60	100

The table on the political participation of the respondents, the data presents a unanimous response. All respondents (100%) strongly agreed that members of their community have no political representation. None of the respondent responses in the categories of disagreement, neutrality, or simple agreement. The absence of political representation suggests that the community lacks a voice in policy formulation, decision-making processes, and local self-governance. This exclusion severely limits the community's ability to advocate for its rights & duties and address socio-economic and political grievances.

Accessibility of basic civic amenities to the community, the table indicate a serious lacks of these amenities. A vast majority of respondents (85.00%) strongly agreed that their area lacks essential services such as water, sanitation, and electricity and 5.00% of the agreed, strengthened this view. A small proportion of respondents (5.00%) expressed neutrality/ disagreement and 90% of them acknowledged inadequate civic infrastructure, reflecting poor urban planning and administrative neglect. This condition adversely affects health & hygiene, and quality of life, and is a clear indicator of spatial and infrastructural exclusion within the urban environment.

Respondents' view on the documents access to welfare schemes; the responses show that documentation barriers are one of the major barriers in accessing welfare schemes. Two third of the respondents (66.66%) strongly agreed, while 21.66% of them agreed on the absence of proper documentation excludes them from government welfare schemes. 3.32% of the respondents disagreed, and 8.33% of them remained neutral. Thus, a vast majority (88%) of respondents acknowledged documentation as a key barrier, highlighting procedural exclusion. This shows that

despite the existence of welfare schemes, bureaucratic requirements and lack of legal identity documents prevent marginalized communities from benefiting from state support.

On invitation to socio-cultural activities from nearby communities, the table shows very limited social interaction and inclusion. Only 10.55% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are regularly invited to socio-cultural activities. A majority 88.33% of the respondents fell under the category indicating non-participation or exclusion, while small proportions disagreed/ remained neutral. This pattern reflects social isolation and weak inter-community socio-cultural relations, reflecting the respondents are largely excluded from broader social and cultural networks.

Table: 5

Participation in Festivals and Religious Events, Role of NGOs and Social Organizations, Treatment by Government Officials, Sense of Belonging and Citizenship

We freely Participate in Local Festivals and Religious Events			
S. No.	Reaction	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	2	3.33
2	Disagree	11	18.33
3	Neutral	16	26.66
4	Agree	19	71.66
5	Strongly Agree	12	20.00
6	Total	60	100
NGOs and Social Organizations Play an Important Role in Improving Our Inclusion			
1	Reaction	Frequency	Percentage
2	Strongly Disagree	45	75.00
3	Disagree	5	8.33
4	Neutral	8	13.33
5	Agree	1	1.66
6	Strongly Agree	1	1.66
7	Total	60	100
We feel Respected by Government Officials when Seeking Services			
S. No.	Reaction	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	47	78.33
2	Disagree	4	6.66

3	Neutral	5	8.33
4	Agree	3	5.00
5	Strongly Agree	1	1.66
6	Total	60	100
We feel a Sense of Belonging to Urban Agra as Equal Citizen			
S. No.	Reaction	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	48	80.00
2	Disagree	3	5.00
3	Neutral	5	8.33
4	Agree	2	3.33
5	Strongly Agree	2	3.33
6	Total	60	100

On the participation in local festivals and religious events, the table clearly shows the respondents' views. A majority of respondents expressed a positive view on participation. Slightly less than one third (31.66%) of the respondents agreed and one-fifth of them (20.00%) strongly agreed, together forming more than half of the respondents. It shows that a significant part of these respondents actively participates in community activities. However, slightly more than one-fourth (26.66%) of the respondents are neutral, showing their uncertainty on participation, although 21.66% of the respondents are disagreed or strongly disagreed. This diverse response reflects that although cultural involvement exists, but it is not generally experienced by all the members of the community.

Data on the role of Non-Government Organizations and various other social organizations in cultivating inclusion, respondents clearly voiced a negative perception in enhancing social inclusion. Three-fourth of the respondents (75.00%) strongly disagreed, and 8.33% of them disagreed, indicating that most of them do not notice Non-Government Organizations and various other social organizations as effective negotiators of inclusion. A few (3.32%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while 13.33% of them were neutral on this point, showing an unclear response with such Non-Government Organizations and various other social organizations. This indicates that Non-Government Organizations and various other social organizations have limited outreach, unsuccessful intervention, and lack of visibility among the respondents.

Data on feeling respected by government officials while seeking services, shows a high-level of dissatisfaction. Slightly more than three-fourth (78.33%) of the respondents reported to strongly disagreed that they feel respected, while 6.66% of them who disagreed on it. This reflects that more than four-fifths of the respondents have negative experiences while accessing government facilities. Only 6.66% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed, and 8.33% of them responded to be neutral. This data strongly supports that the presence of institutional negligence,

bureaucratic apathy, or unequal treatment by government functionaries, and limited access to civil amenities adversely affects trust in government institutions and reinforces feelings of exclusion and marginalization.

The sense of belongingness as a citizen in urban Agra, a predominance number of respondents (80.00%) strongly disagreed, and 5.00% of them disagreed, indicating that the majority of the respondents do not perceive themselves as equal citizens of urban Agra. Only, 6.66% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while rest of them (8.33%) were neutral. This indicates deep-rooted issues of social exclusion, discrimination, inequality, and marginalization within the urban settings. The absence of a sense of belonging among the community members reflect structural barriers that prevent them from integrating fully into urban social and civic life.

Result Analysis

The results of this study are very interesting that there is dominance of middle-aged respondents, high levels of illiteracy, nuclear family structures, male predominance, and uniform religious composition collectively point to a community facing a structural socio-economic exclusion. All these issues, aligned with poor education and limited financial opportunities, vicious patterns of extreme poverty, occupational immovability, and social exclusion and economic marginalization. The findings of the study point up the need of adult educational programs, gender-sensitive interventions, and youth-oriented employment opportunities to improve the overall socio-economic conditions of the community. Their household income reflecting their poor economic conditions, live-in roadside temporary settlements, followed by pavements and squatter settlements, highlights their unstable and insecure residential conditions. Since, family structure is predominantly nuclear and the size is generally moderate, with most households having 5-6 members, this pattern is reflecting on economic marginalisation and they are living in temporary houses, tents or huts.

Community members facing multidimensional and systemic exclusion such as limited access to basic civic facilities, lack of public services, minimum possession of identity and welfare-related documents, and inadequate household assets collectively indicate toward poverty, institutional exclusion, and socio-economic marginalization. Though community members are living in an urban setting, the they remain excluded from the benefits of urban welfare schemes, development programmes, and basic civic amenities. The findings strongly suggest the need for inclusive urban development planning, improved service delivery, simplified and inclusive documentation processes, and targeted welfare interventions to enhance the quality of life and social inclusion of excluded communities including Gadia Lohars of urban Agra.

Although, the findings of the study present a contradictory picture of social inclusion as on one hand some of the community members show a moderate participation in cultural activities and religious festivals, but on the other hand they simultaneously experience institutional neglect, lack of support from Non-Government Organizations and civil societies. At the same time, they are being disrespect from government officials and functionaries, and have a weak sense of urban citizenship. This pattern indicates that cultural or symbolic inclusion does and participation in religious festivals do not necessarily transform into institutional or civic inclusion. This analysis of results emphasizes an urgent need for inclusive and transparent governance, effective

intervention from Non-Government Organizations and civil societies, and sensitization of public functionaries to foster genuine social inclusion and strengthen the sense of belonging among marginalized urban communities including Gadia Lohar.

The analysis of results on political exclusion, indicates a multidimensional pattern of exclusion as community experienced a complete exclusion as there is a completely deprivation of political representation. Inadequate access to basic civic amenities and denial of infrastructure further intensify institutional barriers, particularly in accessing welfare schemes and, identity and welfare related documentation. This social exclusion among the community also reflected as community members have minimal participation in social and cultural activities with neighbouring communities. All these dimensions of social exclusion and economic marginalisation reinforce one another, again and again creating a cycle of social exclusion and economic marginalization that limits the community's social mobility, civic participation, sense of belonging, political empowerment. All these findings emphasize the need for inclusive social development, economic security, political representation, improved urban infrastructure, simplified welfare access, and initiatives promoting social and cultural integration.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study clearly reflects that the Gadia Lohar community of urban Agra is facing a deep-rooted pattern of socio-economic exclusion and marginalisation that significantly affects their living conditions. The community facing socio-economic vulnerability, reinforcing chronic poverty with low levels of education and limited access to financial resources, occupational immobility, and structural marginalization. An immediate need is required for adult education initiatives, gender-sensitive policies, and youth focused employment programmes that can improve skills and enhance livelihood possibilities. Lower household income levels indicating poor economic conditions, as many households live in roadside, pavements, and temporary shelters that demonstrating insecure residential patterns of the community. Community members reside in tents, huts, or temporary structures with lacking basic civil amenities, showing an unstable and insecure nature of their living conditions. The nuclear family structure with moderate family size creates financial difficulties on insufficient earning members and reflecting an insecure economic stability. As findings indicates that the community members are largely depend on traditional occupations which hinder their occupational mobility, financial advancement and traditional mindset. The community also experiences multidimensional exclusion because of inadequate access to basic civil amenities such as education, safe & clean drinking water, sanitation, electricity, and healthcare. Insufficient possession of formal official identity and citizenship documents such as ration cards, Aadhaar cards, birth certificates and voter identity cards further indicate institutional and administrative exclusion. Many community members remain excluded from government welfare schemes and public services, reflecting a significant gap between policy provisions and implementation. The results emphasized the urgent need of inclusive planning initiatives, better service delivery, easier documentation procedures, and need based intervention to enhance their overall quality of life.

The result shows a contradictory situation in social inclusion from cultural context as community members are involved in cultural and religious practices with neighbouring communities, but

continue to institutional exclusion, limited non-governmental organisations assistance, and nonsupportive attitude of governmental officials continue to weaken their sense of citizenship. The political exclusion as it is evident from the analysis as there are no political representation and participation of community members in democratic & decision-making processes that directly affecting their lives. Lack of basic infrastructure- poor condition of drainage system, limited electricity, weak healthcare, and poor education facilities further deepens their social exclusion and marginalization. Complex and traditional bureaucratic setup, lack of awareness, and complicated administrative procedures prevent the community from accessing government welfare schemes in an effective and practical manner. This complex form of exclusion creates a continuous cycle of marginalization that restricts social mobility, civic participation and economic advancement from one generation to next. Hence, the study strongly underlines the necessity for inclusive political representation, infrastructure strengthening, awareness generation programmes, and community-based strategies that can promote empowerment, social integration, and lasting socio-economic inclusion of the Gadia Lohar community.

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