

Situating Hadis' Occupation and Caste: Exclusionary Journey from Manual Workers to Sanitation Workers in India

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Abstract

This essay is an outcome of a long ethnographic account of an occupational group that remains low-paid, polluting in nature, and historically considered menial. In India, various names are used to refer to the people, but they are called Hadi/Hari caste in Bokaro, Jharkhand state. The essay examines the exclusionary process deeply rooted due to the occupational association with sanitation, cleaning of toilets, and all work that is not carried out by other castes and communities. The oral histories of the Hadi community brought in by intensive fieldwork demonstrate how occupational association brings a different level of social status by changing the workplace. In the last two hundred years (somewhat after 1802 A.D.), this community has not found the fruit of change that many other deprived groups could receive in reality; instead, they live in a dilemma to be urban but consistently remain at the margin. Further, there has not been a single study locating Hadis as one of the most marginalized and discriminated caste groups and they are never addressed in the policy framework except a few¹ on the same caste groups of Chas town² in Jharkhand. The services of Hadis played a pivotal role in the life of the new township in the sixties. Nevertheless, where and how they survived over a few decades is examined in India this research. Sociologically, communities and occupational groups like Hadis find an apt example of discrimination and exclusion even in twenty-first century India.

Keywords

Dalits, manual scavengers, exclusion, Jharkhand, ethnography, Hadi caste, sanitation worker, safai karamchari

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Introduction

India is multi-cultural, diverse in works and occupation, historically complex, and a socially stratified society. Some writings manifest and ignite feelings of celebration to the spirit of historical multiculturalism and the vividness of diversity that stands true. The scientific journey of researchers studying people and their occupations could involve:

- Discrimination
- Deep-rooted unequal social structure
- An unglorified caste-based occupational association to the people's lives.

A few communities and castes did not even find correct mentions in the census of India documents, historical textbooks and social scientists' writings. Hadi caste families felt neglected—when individuals carrying out documentation exercises miswrite their names or caste names while doing survey or official work. One of them is the Hadi caste, a sub-caste of Mehtar, referred to as manual scavengers at the pan India level. They go by more than a dozen distinct titles, yet they all refer to the same thing: a standard and single occupation; in other words, one occupation with a wide range of names (Ziyauddin, 2017; Ziyauddin, 2021). The Hadi caste is one of the lowest ranking castes groups among twenty-two SCs listed for the Jharkhand State (District Handbook Bokaro, 2011) and settled in Bokaro, Dhanbad (Jharkhand) and Purulia (West Bengal), comprising around 500 households (Ziyauddin, 2016).

Historically, Hadis are engaged in menial occupations, including serving the royal families in the region. By serving for more than one generation, their job remained less respectful until they helped royal families and were not seen as unclean as it is now. In 2011, the Census of India mentioned three castes (Hadi, Mehtar and Bhangi) in one category of occupation of manual scavenging and sweeping. The Census of India's subsequent reports reveals officials' and census enumerators' apathy and ignorance in conducting census enumeration on Hadis. Hadi's caste is referred to as Hair in census documents with Mehtar and Bhangi (Indian Census, 2001); afterwards, like Hari, Hadis are referred to as Hair (Census of India, 2011). Another type of exclusion is imagining their caste names having been misspelled and incorrectly mentioned.

Hadis, angered by the way their names were spelt and reported said, "Why can't you find mistakes in the names of any other castes except my people" Santu Hadi emphasized. Though they are misspelt in census reports, Hadis assert themselves as Hadi caste and not as Hari. Volume IV, compiled by Russel and Lal states, "The Bengal name Hari is supposed to come from Haddi in Bengal which is supposed to derive from 'Haddi' a bone' and is the bone gatherer and was [to] familiar early settlers of Calcutta" (1916, pp.216–217).

In volume IV and volume I (1916, p. 367), Russel and Lal described "Hadis as the sweepers" and a bone gatherer synonym of Mehtar, the sub-caste of Mehtar in Bengal.

Castes' names and titles have changed in the past, even in his study in Mysore; M. N. Srinivas (1942) found caste names changed in census records. It is thus not surprising that Hadis are spelt as Hair or Hari in different census records. Altogether, the three mentioned castes in the state stand out as 58,242 (Census of India, 2011). In urban Jharkhand, 36,044 and 22,198 were rural figures of the total population. Historically, the demand for both urban households' toilets and public toilets compared to rural areas in the state has been higher than in rural due to significant chunks of the population being urban.

The population of Hadis, Mehtar, and Bhangis (formerly manual scavengers) in the studied district (Bokaro) are 10,581 out of 58,242 persons in the state. They comprise 5,286 rural and 5,295 urban at the district level. Almost an equal number of people reside in rural and urban areas at the district level. It is crucial to consider that Chas is the most populated town in the Bokaro district. Further, Chas town employs many sweepers (manual scavengers) who are Hadi.

Unlike studies (like Shyamlal in Rajasthan and Pathak in Bihar) that show sanitation workers are more urban than rural, Hadis' bring interesting dissimilarities in various ways. The population appears almost equal between urban (5,286) and rural (5,295) in this research field. The scattered population of Hadis tells another fact that the region of Dhanbad, Bokaro, Purulia, etc., has had a more prominent presence of sanitation workers (erstwhile manual scavenger workers) in the last few centuries. Second, Muslim rulers brought the toilet system into West Bengal province that ruled for long. The arrival of the British Empire, initially the East India Company into trade and commerce that gradually converted as an established empire, also influenced local royals and kings in most of their lifestyles and standard of living. Dhanbad became the first area to get underground mining by the British administration, and it is still referred to as the coal capital of India. The coal mining also brought new sub-urban settlements and regions in large numbers across Jharkhand (earlier Chota Nagpur division of Bihar), creating demand for toilets.

It is essential to consider that coal and other mining industries existed in the Bokaro (a part of district Dhanbad before 1991) region even during British rule. Each mining site also had residential settlements for the workers employed in the mines. Hadis are engaged in cleaning jobs in the residential colonies of mine employees and live nearby. Thus they are dispersed in Bokaro and Dhanbad.

Out of 35 wards of Chas town, five wards were added after the Chas Municipality was converted into Chas Municipal Corporation on 9 February 2015 (Census of India, 2011; Chas Municipal Corporation, 2015). The field site of this study, Hadi Cooli, falls under ward 11. This ward has a population of 3,632 and has 646 households referred to as sweepers, but local folks call them Hadis, a synonym for sweepers.

I have tried to describe and analyze the various living aspects of Hadi's settlement, the people themselves, household census, amenities, schools, the problems, work and everyday life, and related aspects of health and illness.

Population and Linguistic Speaking Diversity of Hadis

The linguistic population of Hadis at all India level, largest clusters of them are associated with Bengali-speaking families (5,81,000 Bengali speakers), followed by Oriya 21,200; Hindi 1,26,000; Rangpuri 44,000; Bhojpuri 38,000; Maithili 4,600; Santali 4,400; Kui 2,400; Kharia 1,700; Kurux/Kurukh 1,500 and Magahi 1,400 (Joshua Project, 2014). Similar to Hadis, Bhangis are also widely populated, as Shyamlal (1981) writes. Interestingly Hadi castes are kept in different constitutional categories in different states, unlike Bhangis and Mehtars. Himachal Pradesh categorizes the Hadi caste under the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) category. Though, they are put in the SCs category in all other states of India.

Majority of Hadis' population resides in 10 states of India. In descending order, it would be: West Bengal (5,89,000); Orissa/Odisha (2,24,000); Bihar (1,06,000); Jharkhand (84,000); Uttar Pradesh (8,300); Himachal Pradesh (2,100); Andaman and Nicobar Islands (1,600); Chattisgarh (1,500); Tripura (1,000) and Meghalaya (1,000) and in small numbers both across and outside India.

India's neighbouring country, Bangladesh, has a population of 59,000 Hadis who speak Rangpuri as their primary language. They follow the religious rituals and faith of Hindus (Joshua Project World, 2014).

In general, the details of Hadi's population are limited and not representative due to the lack of a countrywide survey and differences in the mention of castes by state. Further, there is a lack of an extensive sociological study on the Hadi caste compared to other social groups. For instance, research on the Bhangi of Rajasthan studied by Shyamlal (1992), Sachchidananda (2001), and Pathak (1991) wrote extensively based on their fieldwork studies in Bihar. Whereas the writings of Srivastava (1997) on Bhangi/ Mehtar in the book *Manual Scavenging in India: A Disgrace to the Country*³ are some significant reflections that pose questions why manual scavenging remained as a practice even in twenty-first century India. Geeta Ramaswamy (2005), on the manual scavenging castes in Andhra Pradesh, elaborated on the plight of manual scavengers in her book *India Stinking*. However, Hadis as a caste group did not find the attention of any researcher. One does not get a proper reference about the Hadis even in the edited volume of the People of India³ series for Bihar that includes Jharkhand in part I and part II. Scanty references that Hadis existed and have been engaged in menial occupations of manual scavenging are found in the Census of India documents, 1991, 2001 and 2011. A survey by the Committee on 'Improvement of Living and Working Condition of Sweepers and Scavengers' headed by IPD Salpa on the sweeper Pourakarmiks in Karnataka working in various municipalities in the state shows that

³Kumar Suresh Singh. 2008. People of India series for Bihar that includes Jharkhand in part I and part II. Anthropological Survey of India.

besides the Scheduled Castes, there are Muslims, Christians, Lingayats, Kurubas, and Mudaliars engaged in this profession. It proves that members of different castes and communities have also taken up this vocation mainly due to economic compulsions. However, debates on how various occupations based on birth and caste are a reality in non-Hindu communities demand further research. Hence, this paper is limited to low-caste Hindus' caste and occupational history. Another report in *Frontline* shows the existence and continuity of such practice in many states (Venkatesan, 2005).

There is also a mention in this chapter about the entry of tribal youth as a sweeper in Chas town, mainly employed in private hospitals. My research is one such initial intensive and qualitative study on Hadis in India, elaborating and examining the community's life extensively and how they suffer exclusionary practices in multiple ways.

Hadi Cooli as a Site of Discrimination

Bokaro town is classified as Class I, Chas as Class II, and Bokaro Steel City are classified as an Urban Agglomeration in 2011 All India Town Directory of Census Enumerations. Chas is governed by the Nagar Parishad (Municipal Corporation). After the state government passed the Jharkhand Municipal (Nagar Palika) Act, 2011, the term 'Nagar Parishad' became popular (Jharkhand Municipal Act, 2011). The Chas Municipality was created on January 21, 1977. According to the 2011 Census report, Chas town has 35 wards with 141,640 people, with 74,727 men and 66,913 women. The town's population density is 338 people per square kilometre, up 23.19 per cent from 1991 to 2001 and it grew at 6913 in the year 2011.

Hadis Working Population by Sex

Females outnumber males 167 to 139 in a Hadi Cooli population of 306 people. The sex ratio in Chas (Nagar Parishad) is 895, lower than the state average of 948. Though in Hadi Cooli, several factors have contributed to the improved status of female sex proposition. The number of females in the 0–9 year age group is 43, compared to 37 males. Between the ages of 50 and 59, the proportion of females and males changes, with eight females and five males.

Further, in the 60 years and above age group, there are six males and twelve females. The underlying fact in this data is an unequal number of males and females. Still, these observations of the lesser numbers of males in the older age groups reflect a different aspect of Hadi's life. The shorter longevity of males is also attributed to their occupation and heavy addiction to liquor. It is reported that Hadi men died earlier than women due to their higher liquor habits. The health status degrades due to the continued consumption of low quality locally made liquor. Hence, the sex ratio of Hadis may be better not due to Hadis' preference for girl children but due to the high incidence of male mortality in the old age groups as well.

Tracing History and Lineage of Hadis in Chas Region

The Maharaja of Kashipur, Maharaja Bhuvanewari Prasad Singh Deo, in the Purulia district, governed the territory until 1947 and opposed British rule to establish an independent state. Hadis first settled in the Kashipur area of Purulia district, a nearby district of Bokaro with a long history of cooperation, and then dispersed throughout the region. In Bokaro and Chas town, a few senior-most Hadi caste people maintain that the area's Raja imported their forefathers from other states to labour in their houses and forts.

This claim is supported by land records that reveal Hadi settlements in the Chas region dating back nearly 200 years. Hadis in Hadi Cooli have a long history dating back to the Maharaja of Kashipur, who granted them state favour and enabled them to reside in the beautiful region of Chas, now Hadi Cooli. The land was given to them by the Zamindar of the Chas region. This information is supported by land records, which reveal that the local king allocated some land to the first inhabitants in 1802 (Map 2.2).

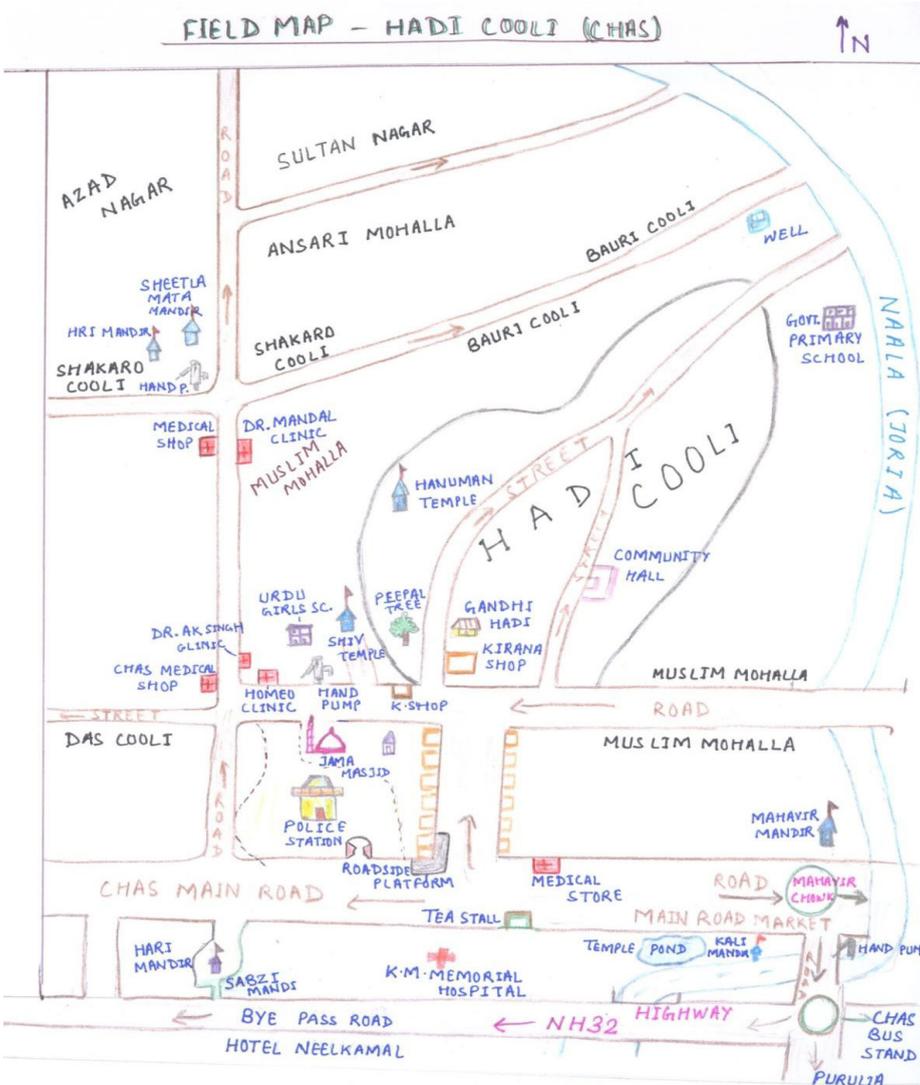
Hadis themselves reported that most of them worked for the ruling families until the end of the kingship of the Maharaja of Kashipur. Later there was a change in the geographical and territorial entity of Manbhum⁴ to Dhanbad, which affected Hadis' life. Due to historical facts and being a joint ruler in the past, Hadis in Bokaro district had common bonds with the families of their caste in Purulia district, West Bengal. Hadis of Chas identify themselves as Maghaya Hadi, different from Hadis living in Purulia, Bengali Hadi.

The history of settlement helps to understand how Hadis continued doing traditional occupation and examine their occupational conditions. Ramesh Hadi (69) and Somesh (62) narrated that the local kings were Brahmins (or Brahmans) and were paid high respect due to the patronage given to Hadis. Both of them said,

“hamni ke Budha Purna ke raja zameen dalae halau aur vehe zameenva par hamnee baes galiye. baaede mein konhon soche na partil ke hamni kae zameen kamae aur aadmi logan boaidh jitae. Ab kahan jeebin, badi samasya hau. Chas mein konhon zameen nae hau ke hamni liye paarbin. Joria thheen kutchau nae bachal hau.” “It is literally said that Raja gave some land to our ancestors who first settled in Chas, and we all continued living on the same piece of land. No one thought that in years to come, our family would expand and that very land would be a problem to us. There is no land in Chas which we can buy. Even land near Joria (an earlier natural stream turned into the drain) is sold, and houses have come up.” The settlement of Hadi

⁴In 1833, district Manbhum was made a separate district out of the Jungle Mahals district and the headquarters at Manbazar. Just five years later, headquarters was transferred to Purulia in 1838, which is closely located to Chas at fifty kilometers. In Independent India, Manbhum district was again partitioned between Bihar and West Bengal under the States Reorganization Act and the Bihar and West Bengal (Transfer of Territories) Act 1956 in 1956 AD (Purulia District Profile, 2014). In the same year, Dhanbad was given a separate status of a district that included present-day Chas town.

Cooli can be read and seen in the following Map 1.1.⁵ It also provides sociological insights as to how habitations in India have been patterned by social distancing and occupational purity and pollution.



Map 1.1: Hadi Cooli

The families find it challenging to understand the de-sanskritization in their community life over the last few decades. The patronage of Raja provided some social respect to Hadis. Hadis differentiated themselves and claimed higher social ranking as they worked for Raja's families, similar to Bhangis in western Rajasthan who claimed higher social ranking who worked in upper castes families than those who worked for Dhobi castes (Shyامل, 1981).

⁵The map was prepared after the fieldwork and Dr. Navin Narayan finalized it.

Khortha is one of the recognized languages in the state of Jharkhand. Perhaps for this reason, except for one Hadi household in Purulia, who later settled after getting a job, all kinship ties are traced within the neighbouring districts of Bokaro in Jharkhand state but not in Purulia; however, it is not far away in terms of considerable distance.

It is also vital that there are no government lands in the vicinity of Hadi Cooli where they could settle down temporarily, as discussed with Hadis. Generally, some land is found that is neither owned by individuals nor by the government, known as “*Gair Majurwa Zameen*” (Lahiri-Dutt, Krishnan, and Ahmed, 2012). The government can use such lands for community purposes, and at times people also use them until the government takes over. The absence of *Gair Majurwa Zameen* near Hadi Cooli also minimized their residential expansion. They got confined in the same land, which was enough when the first settlers constructed their houses and settled down in the present Hadi Cooli.

People narrated that except Hadis, most people had some land, and they used to pay taxes to the ruler at the time. The Misree (Brahmins were referred to as Misree earlier, and the colloquial term for the ruler in the past was Misree (Mishra) would send his revenue staff to collect taxes from each house as per the landholdings and available assets of the agriculturalist or farmers in Chas. The team in charge would also use a drum to inform the households about his visit to the localities. The revenue collectors gave Hadis an exemption in the regular tax collected from all the families. This fact denotes that this area was under the Raja of Kashipur, and he promoted local Zamindars to run the administration and collect revenue (Purulia District Profile, 2014).

Hadi’s oral narration of their past is a testimony to the fact that they lived and worked in the estate of the local king, Maharaj of Kashipur. It is also reported that a few Hadis worked in the houses of landlords and zamindar in the Chas region. Such stories are transferred from one generation to the next. Although most elders, including Ramesh Hadi, the oldest and most vocal man, pointed out that Hadis had better social status in his time than the later period and years after the decline of Maharaja’s rule. The stigma associated with Hadis took rigorous forms, and they became the most discriminated caste among all the lower castes. The old generation provided several narratives of being humiliated and discriminated against as children born into Hadi families. The identity of a child was also associated with the work performed by their parents. Ramesh says, “I was not allowed to have a cup of tea in the tea stall at Chas bus stand. If at all I insisted, tea would be poured in an earthen cup (kulhad). After putting the tea in an earthen cup, a hotel helper would be asked to keep the cup down on the floor, and I would then pick it up to sip it. I felt degraded and would mostly avoid going to the tea stall.”

There are a few commonalities from the past to the present in a Hadis' life. Senior elders reported that the nature of work has relatively changed in the last generation. Shailender Hadi said, "We used to live filthy life at an early age due to dirty work and had less number of dresses. We were also less in number than the available workers. Now our children and new generation live a decent and good life. They can use washed clothes; eat better food than us; what else you can see as a good chance than this."

The work and occupation have not entirely changed, but the stigma and discrimination have significantly reduced. A noticeable change took place like work. Twenty years ago, houses in Chas had a large number of dry latrines and Sandas⁶ that needed regular cleaning. An informal understanding existed between the households and Hadis. Five rupees were paid to clean the lavatory and the connected drain or outflow pipes for each house. Such an arrangement would give Hadis everyday earnings to take home. The change in latrine system, dry to flush based, has changed the mindset of the households. It is noticed that now people do not hire Hadis for everyday cleaning until there is a blockage and major cleanings are required. Families are doing the cleaning jobs themselves. A large proportion (40 persons) of the total (75 male) Hadi men workers have got employment in Chas Nagarpalika (municipality) as sweepers.

The land records available with Ramesh Hadi show the lineage of Hadi families having been settled at Hadi Cooli of Chas town since 1802. Ramesh's sister Dhulia Devi, a widow, lives in Hadi Cooli. Dhulia lives with her younger son, Jhomda Hadi. The other two sons, Somda and Komda, reside separately with their respective wives and children in Hadi Cooli.

The diagram (Chart 1.2) prepared with the help of land records available with Ramesh Hadi in the form of Khatiyaan⁷ shows that it was 1802 AD that the first person (Narayan Hadi) of Hadi lineage settled in Chas. Khatiyaan paragraph refers to the original land records kept with the owners, which shows the family history of Hadi caste in Chas. As per the same land records at the disposal of Ramesh Hadi, out of the nine members shown in the lineage, only three continued to live in Bokaro district in Hadi Cooli. The ancestors settled at Chas are Gadaghar Hadi (also known as Manu Hadi), Manik Hadi (also known as Makun Hadi) and Ganesh Hadi. The other seven members migrated to other localities and regions within the state (as told by Ramesh Hadi). There are 36 of the 51 households who belong to the above mentioned three persons, and the remaining households are either of those who came from other localities and settled at Hadi Cooli or grooms who moved in uxorilocally after marrying a woman who is a daughter in Hadi Cooli in Chas and settled there.

⁶Sandas word rooted in Sanskrit origin and the term is used for toilet.

⁷Khatiyani is called Land records.

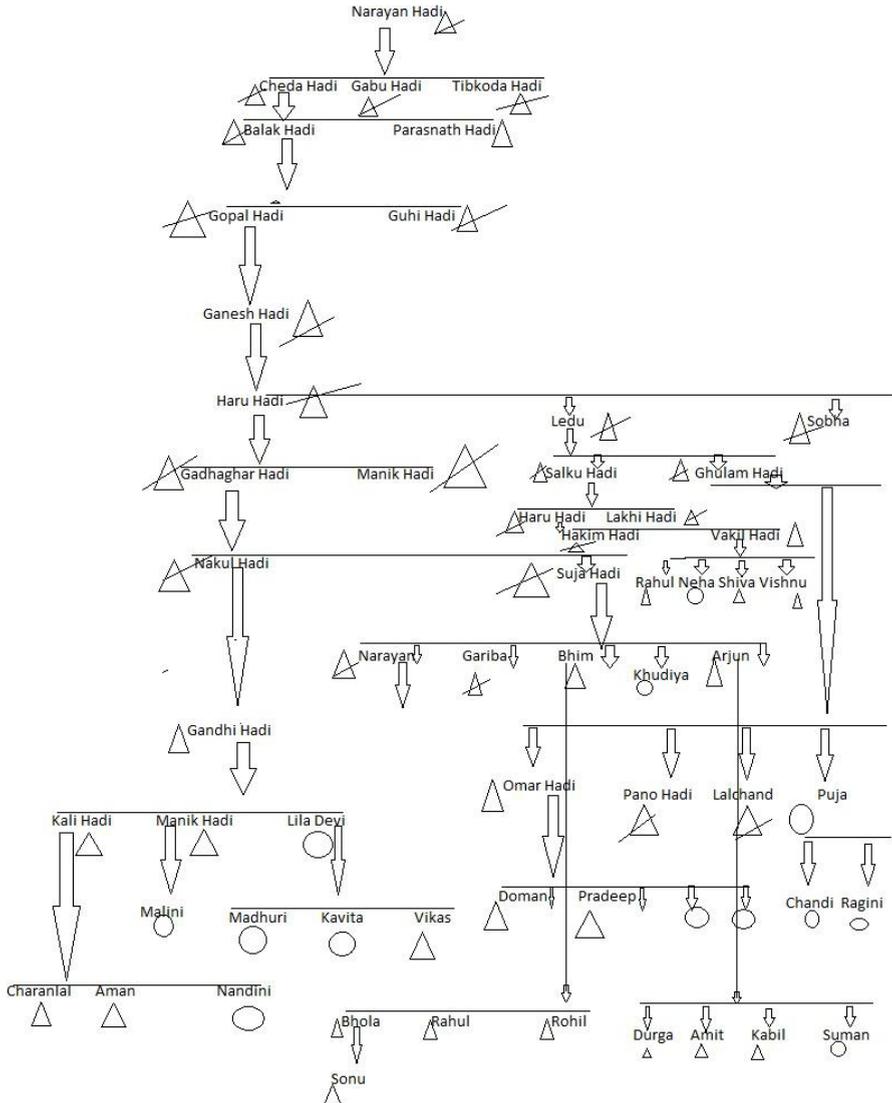


Chart 1.2: Lineage of Hadi Cooli

Hadi Sub-Castes

Hadis can be further divided into four sub-castes. One of the four sub-castes, Maghaya Hadi, is settled in Hadi Cooliin Chas. The three sub-castes, who have not been studied are: Sahir Hadi, Digar Hadi and Bengali Hadi. The other sub-castes have settled in different districts of Jharkhand and neighboring states like West Bengal. The data on three sub-castes are not collected and analyzed, demanding further research be conducted. As Maghaya Hadis have associated with the kings in the past, they assert themselves as higher in social status than the other three Hadi sub-castes.

It is believed that only families belonging to Maghaya Hadi are found in Dhanbad, Hazaribagh, Ranchi, Purulia, Giridih and Ramgarh districts in the state. Ramesh Hadi finds it challenging to provide community details to give the date and year-wise information. The data of elder Hadis have been most relevant to bring out the social history of Hadis in the Chas area. I was informed that the four sub-castes are found among Hadis, but the younger generation is unaware. A few Hadis were observed sitting and learning about their history, but mostly they were not interested. The newer generations are not able to connect with the account of Hadis. The last older generations may take away all the social history with them if they don't share it with the present age. Only a few elders in Hadi Cooli discussed Maghaya Hadis during a couple of meetings, and a group discussion clarified the facts and understanding related to sub-groups. A few interviews were also held with the Hadi elder women and men residing in another village, Mahar Basti.

The elder Hadis, who pondered over and illustrated the occupation and work of Hadis in the past, found that Hadis was left with fewer choices after Raja's rule was taken over by the British. In several interviews with mostly senior members, namely Ramesh, Somesh, Pintu, Goli, Haribabu, Jagdish Hadi, Shailender Hadi, and Panbabu Hadi who supported the data, they said, "Our elder had less choice after the rule of Raja was taken over. Gradually the relatives of Raja left Kashipur. Hadis adopted doing other menial jobs, mainly removing excreta and cleaning jobs. The existence of MADA (Mines Area Development Authority) in Dhanbad provided opportunities to Hadis in Chas. The cleaning job in government offices continued to remove dead animals and carcasses as there was no Chamar caste in Chas urban area." As Goli said, "Except for us, most castes had agricultural lands. In this condition, our job continued in menial and polluted works and transferred from one to another generation traditionally." In response to the researcher's question, "Why did you take up manual scavenging as your occupation?" Pintu responded and said, "*Hamni ke itihaas ke jaen ke kee karbeen hao. Ab hamar baap-dada yehe karo halae are hamro ekre main laga dal hathin. Ye batvaa hamni kee jaanbeen puchae ke konhon reeti naae hau. bus kartae jau yehe hau hamni ke budhha-purna ke niyam.*" "What would you know about our history? My father and grandfather were doing this occupation, and they also put me into the same. We never thought of reasons. There is no way of questioning why we chose and practiced manual scavenging. Just keep doing our job is what we have learned from our elder community members."

Gradually, Hadis found themselves getting engaged and occupied with scavenging jobs and the social status of Hadis reduced as polluted caste groups. Still, this data is only reported by senior members, as mentioned previously. The younger generations believe that it is their traditional occupation inherited from their parents. Now the assertion to report the social history of Hadis are recorded in the data that there is the degradation of Hadis' work status from Ghoda Sahej to Manual Scavenging.

Maghaya means a sub-caste to Bhumihars in this region, as claimed by Ramesh Hadi. Hadis in Hadi Cooli belongs to Ghoda Gotra. As per the memory of the 69-year-old Ramesh Hadi, initially, it was only three households that settled in Hadi Cooli,

Chas and the available lands where they settled belonged to three paternal brothers. However, a significant social fact emerges that there is a gradual and subtle change in using the caste surnames as Hari. A few use Hari, while a large number continue to use Hadi. The Census of India has misspelled their original caste surname 'Hadi' and has mentioned Hadis as 'Hair' in the census report 2001—a term that is unrecognized by Hadis in written or other references.

Occupational Structure

The research focuses upon manual scavengers who are engaged in a certain manual occupation as their traditional jobs. Sachchidananda (2001) rightly observes that manual scavenging has received proper attention, neither about its inception nor its existence, desirability, or epistemology. In the volume prepared by Vasant Moon in 'Writings and Speeches of Bhim Rao Ambedkar' published in 1989, Ambedkar writes once an untouchable always he remains an untouchable, similarly, Hadis have remained sweepers once born as sweeper. This expresses the existing concerns and reality of Dalits and this context still finds relevance in the data on Hadi Cooli. The above illustration of Ambedkar meant that a sweeper remains a sweeper throughout the life due to his ascribed status and birth in caste that does not change once born in a particular caste family.

Most Hadis assert that in the last three centuries, their socio-economic situations have worsened. They live in a prejudiced world and are surrounded by caste-based social interactions. Rajen Harshe (2013) reviewed the forms of prejudice mentioned by Gyanendra Pandey (2013) as more or less 'universal' and refers to 'natural'.

As Hadis too shows certain changes in their occupation, in the past, several castes have attempted to change their castes from one to another. M.N. Srinivas in his published paper on 'An obituary to caste system' illustrates other changes as brought about by technological changes and how those products are transforming the lives of villagers who are governed by caste and traditional occupation. He illustrated the changes brought by new technologies in occupation like barber, shifting into market and cash-based work, washerman opening laundry. However, a few castes could not adopt new technological changes due to certain limitations. For instance, Hadis have not been able to transform their work because sweeping jobs are to be done at the work-place like, office, house and similar with jobs removing garbage from streets and roads. The change can be brought gradually in the nature of work, to use gloves; tools etc. to clean the garbage and drains etc. Sweeper could never follow the better way of some castes. The nature of work of Hadis requires them to visit workplaces unlike a barber and washerman. He describes how those products are transforming the lives of villagers who are governed by caste and traditional life occupations. A few examples are, "Edible oil is now produced in factories and they have rendered the oil presser and his bullock drawn wooden press....the barber and the washerman, two essential castes, have had to change their working styles" (Srinivas, 2003, p. 457). This change is taking place in those castes's for whom occupational technology is finding

technological way out but a lesser quantum of change is noticed in the work of manual scavengers (mentioned earlier), Hadis' sweeping job. The continuation of sweeping occupation has perpetuated discrimination but the forms of such discrimination have started changing. People still call Hadis as Hadis (when they want to call a Mehtar) but not by names; it reflects a kind of prejudice against one occupational caste like Hadi.

The ethnographic data provides the continuation of unequal treatment meted out to Hadis but the forms and crudity has changed over the period of the last one generation. There is quite a visible change as mentioned earlier by Somesh and Ramesh that the tea stall was also place of discrimination and prejudice against Hadis. Such forms of discrimination show a gradual change in the market place and also while visiting temples. Hadis are now allowed to pray. The attempt to change their surnames is not very visible although the names of some children have kumar and hari but not Hadi as their surname. This needs further study to illustrate whether it is a deliberate attempt or a normal act. Unlike the study of Tulsi Patel's paper, 'Stigma Goes Backstage: Reservation in Jobs and Education', which shows that there is a conscious attempt by the first generation parents who worked as sweepers (safaiwala) in offices to hide their caste identity and had gone through humiliations. Tulsi Patel writes,

"It is not surprising that people from the SC category react in ways to avoid their traditional caste or surnames and use the relatively caste neutral surnames, such as Kumar, Pal, Ram, Lai, Chand and Nath. They also prefer to use surnames used by higher castes to hide their caste identity and the anticipated ensuing humiliation in life. Some of these surnames are Singh, Vyas, Guru and Charan. Parents, especially fathers who have been in jobs through the reserved quota have given their first names as surnames to their children to conceal their quota category identity, such as Kapoor, Chand and Swaroop" (Patel, 2008, p. 104).

One does not find deep data on Hadis' attempt to change their surnames. The existence of Hadis as their surnames identifies their occupational category in the eyes of others. The level and forms of unpleasant experiences at the workplace vary from one person to another. The field data makes it true to quote that an 'untouchable' caste would remain lowest in the caste rankings, would remain excluded and this system of stratification functions systematically (Michael, 2007).

Hadis have not been able to benefit from the several welfare schemes perhaps due to their hesitation in approaching the concerned offices. There is also a mindset inherently found among Hadis that they are lower among all the other castes. It is for these reasons as well that, in general, have been called by various names in the past, such as 'untouchables', 'Harijans' (a glorified term, coined by Narsimha Mehta later adopted and popularized by Mahatma), 'Exterior Caste' (a term used by J.H. Hutton), 'Depressed Classes' (a term used by British officials).

Nayak (1995) in his paper writes that a Brahmin would not do any other job like a cobbler or scavenging. Similarly an untouchable would not recite the Vedas. This reality connects to all those occupational groups including Hadis in Chas who

would not perform prayers in temples. He further describes the caste and the practice of inequality in different forms. As regards the notion of pollution we may look at an interesting account given by Aiyappan in his study on the Nayadis in 1937 (see Srinivas, 1952), Caste members of Nayar stay at a distance of 7 feet when a Nambudri Brahmin is present. Iravan people must stay at a distance of 32 feet; a Cheruman caste should stay at 64 feet and a Nayadi between 74 to 124 feet like the other castes (Nayak, 1995). This account would merely be humorous if it were not the case that some of the above-mentioned notions are still prevalent, even though in a diluted form in certain quarters of India.

Such strict social distance is diluted at a minimal level and this crude form does not reflect in Hadi Cooli. The respondents in the field also narrated the practice of discrimination in the past that was visible. Goli Hadi, 52-years-old, works as a sweeper, narrated, "During my childhood, in all eating joints (Dhabas), I was not given space inside the hotel. Tea was not served directly by hand of the worker at the stall either. Most tea stalls keep kulhad (earthen cups). Tea was served in the same cup to everyone but our cup would be kept at some point and I would pick [it] up. Now my son does not believe me when I tell him about my childhood stories."

The household census data shows there are 113 Hadis in the age group 0–14 years. This figure includes both boys and girls, and they are a working population in Hadi Cooli. However, out of 61 Hadi youth in the age group of 15–24 years, 18 males and 10 females are working. Out of 53 Hadis in the age group 25–34 years, 21 are working men and nine are working women. The number of working women decreases in the age group of 35–44 years as there are only three women in comparison to 23 men out of a total of 34 Hadis. Table 2.1 provides the distribution of workers in the age group of 15 years and above among the Hadis. No one under the age of 14 years is reported to be working.

The Hadis are found engaged in their caste occupation which continues even today. Only one person among the 105 Hadi workers is found to be doing non-caste work. Jhomda Hadi, 33 became the only exception in the entire Hadi Cooli, working in a private firm, Tata Indicom, as an office clerk. He spends the entire day in an office unlike his friends who go back home in the afternoon. But he finds comfort due to the nature of his work. It is an office equipped with an air conditioner. During an interview he questions, "Why does the birth in a certain family and caste restrict us from the freedom of choice in all aspects of life and work?" Most are overly dependent on available jobs and consequently spiraled in their traditional occupation. Although it gives both a sense of security and over-dependency, the result is rarely helpful in bringing a change in their life. Jhomda asserts, "I am the only Hadi who has completed graduation (B.A.) and I am not doing my caste based occupation unlike my friends and peers in Hadi Cooli."

This is true of caste based communities that are still found to be engaged in the same or similar occupation for generations and this fact is much more prevalent among the low castes in the region including Hadis. The Hadis are not exploring other avenues of jobs and other jobs as such, rather they find it easier to take up sweeping

jobs. It is the sector where there is little chance of competition from other castes than Hadis themselves. It is in this milieu that Hadis have retained their traditional occupation and have been unable to find a way for social mobility. His life in Hadi Cooli is completely different than at his workplace.

The existence of Hadis reflects the reality and continuity of manual scavenging in different names (sweeper) of my study's caste in the state of Jharkhand. The onus does not lie on the state machinery due to the fact that Hadis are now called sweepers therefore they do not fall into the group of people doing scavenging. But the works of Hadis are similar. There is a possibility of a drastic reduction in the number of scavengers as most who got employed in government and state offices were named as Sweepers or Safai Karamcharis. Hadi castes were already into scavenging occupation but mostly employed in the municipality way back from 1977 onwards and continued to do work in the sanitation department of the Municipal Corporation. The nomenclature changed but the work of Hadis continued to remain the same.

Households Living in/at Margin

As per the household composition census data collected, there were 51 households in Hadi Cooli. The total population of 51 Hadi households is 306, of them 139 are male, and 167 are female. It is important to note that in such a small population there are 19 widows and one divorced woman. One widow, Dhulia, 65-years, lives with her son and daughter-in-law in Hadi Cooli. She is the younger sister of Ramesh Hadi. Another woman, Bijla Devi, a divorcee, lives with her two unmarried daughters. Her husband, Kamal, is married to a woman in Ranchi and settled in his father-in-laws' house. No widower was found at the time of data collection.

Among the six surviving old age males, four worked at Bokaro Steel Plant and other two were in private jobs. Lakhicharan worked in ICICI Bank and Haribabu at a private office. The better working conditions at the offices of Bokaro Steel Plant (BSL), like Bokaro General Hospital (BGH), Administrative Block (ADM) building, etc., kept them a little away from hazardous working conditions and less liquor consumption too. This difference between steel plant employees and others was found during interviews. Steel plant employees reported having the best health care services at BGH that could help to diagnose disease or illnesses. Somesh and Ramesh are examples who benefited from BGH health facilities. Having heart surgery for Ramesh Hadi has been only possible due to the facility of BGH for the staff. The manual workers in Steel Plant offices and Municipal Corporation live at the two extremes of margins due to their varied income category and status associated with the work.

Marriage Practices

The average number of persons per household in Hadi Cooli is six. The walls of a few houses are common to each other. Krishna Hadi and Binod Hadi are brothers and their houses are in one homestead but it has two different households settled there.

Similarly, Ramesh Hadi and his sons live in one building whereas his married daughter Lila Devi and son-in-law Ganesh live on the other side of Hadi Cooli. They were given a small house after their marriage by Ramesh Hadi (Lila's father) and were helped to settle down in Hadi Cooli. There is a very close familial interaction between them. Ramesh's sister, Dhuria Devi is also settled in Hadi Cooli. She lives with her younger son Jhomda Hadi. The other two sons, Komda and Somda, also reside in their separate household with their respective wives and children on the same compound. Pintu and Goli's houses are next to each other and have a common wall between their houses.

The number of married persons is 160 including 19 widows and one divorced woman. There are 9 men and 57 women who were married in the age group of 10–17 years while 48 men and 23 women were married in the age group between 18–24 years. Only three men were married late, i.e. in the age group of 25–31. But none of the women fall in this category. Marriage happens early among Hadis. However, the average age at marriage is increasing from 15 to 20. Pintu was married when he was 12 years of age and his wife was younger than him. His father liked the bride when he saw and met her at one of the weddings. Despite his repeated request to delay, he was told that her burden is not an issue, "Once you start earning things will be alright." But his elder son married at the age of 24 years and other children are still unmarried. One son, Vishnu is 19-years-old and the daughter is 18 years. But he has not made up his mind to marry them off quickly. He opines that 20 years is a normal age when a girl should be married and a boy can marry even later than 20 years. Even boys do not wish to get engaged and settle down early. It increases the burden on their shoulders and in this way their youth is numbered.

A large number of women married before attaining 18 years of age and a few men as well. Fifty-seven women married between 10 and 17 years. This is quite high in a total of 80 married women in contrast to nine men in the age group of 10–17 years.

The household composition of Hadis shows that they have both simple and complex households. Of the 51 households, 23 are complex and 28 simple households. Jhomda, his wife and a child live with his mother and two of his brothers reside separately with their respective wives and children. Jhomda said, "I wanted to live with my mother whereas my elders did not prefer that. They wanted to live separately so that their households get a better life, good food and daily complaints are minimal." However, it has been found that lower castes prefer to live in simple households once they get married (Shah, 1996). Married sons moving to live in a separate household is common. The number of simple and joint households is almost equal. The younger generations want to live in a separate household as each one of them earn and contribute to the household. It is also true that lower castes preferring to move into a separate household after they get married is a common practice. A.M. Shah writes that, "The emphasis on joint household was greater among higher castes and classes, who formed a small section of the society, than among lower castes and classes, who constituted the vast majority of the population" (Shah, 1983, p. 3). This becomes the obvious fact that Hadis' preference to a simple household is not uncommon but similar to many other lower castes in the background literature of A.M. Shah. Individual earning, the choice

to spend on their wives and children, preference of food, and type of recipe becomes important to Hadis to an extent that makes them shift in a simple household after marriage. However, very limited land in Hadi Cooli and lack of saving or money in hand restricts them to move immediately into a newer house. A few of them got support from their in-laws' families to construct a new house after marriage. At times parents and other relatives also helped.

Kinship network is typically based on blood ties, marriage or adoption. Marriages are arranged with matches outside Hadi Cooli following marriage within the Ghoda Gotra. This practice is contrary to gotra exogamy, i.e. not to marry within the same gotra. The avoidance rule of marriage is limited to the paternal lineage. They avoid marrying a person with whom there is a known lineage association. In other words, a Ghoda Gotra groom does not marry a woman from Ghoda Gotra if she is known to be an offspring of a man related to the male line within a traceable depth of Ghoda Gotra. Otherwise, marriage can take place as told by Ramesh Hadi. But all of them do not belong to the same gotra in the surrounding region of Chas. They do not marry the children of their father's siblings. This practice is seen until traceable generations in the male line. However, marriage alliance is arranged within Maghaya Hadi, one of the four sub-castes of Hadis mentioned earlier in this chapter. The localities of married women in Hadi Cooli are scattered at different places in the above-mentioned districts.

Sanitation and Sewage Conditions

Besides economic distress, there is a lot of struggle for basic amenities such as water and sanitation. The area surrounding Hadi Cooli has three ponds that dry up during peak summer. Due to the absence of public or private wells, deep bore, etc., the Hadis are mostly dependent upon these ponds, as ponds cater to the needs of bathing and washing for the Hadi and other castes. The open ponds do attract stray animals, drains of neighboring houses adding to the filth and dirt into it. Except for one hand pump installed by Municipal Corporation and another one at Bauri Cooli, there is no other source of drinking water.

The condition of the sewage system in the town is very poor. It is essentially a public health concern for all but Hadis have the worst situation in their Cooli. Ramesh Hadi said, "How can there be such an insensitive government although the head of the state is represented by a native tribal, Shibu Soren, then Chief Minister of the State, one of the most neglected social groups of Indian society?" *Times of India* in its Ranchi edition on May 23, 2011, reported that Jharkhand perhaps is the only state in India that does not have even a sewage treatment plant at a time when the world is moving ahead with a mission of total sanitation and a hygienic environment under Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) across the globe. The important towns like Ranchi, Bokaro, and Dhanbad having more than two million people, exist without this facility.

Further, the increasing contamination of groundwater is affecting the drinking water through wells, hand pumps, and tube wells that are the main source of water

for the poor population including Hadis. The state stands at the bottom of the list in the implementation of the total sanitation scheme against the national average of 63 percent as only 41 percent of households in Jharkhand have toilets in the state. The absence of sanitation and toilets adversely affects everyone in general but women in particular. One of the documents of the World Health Organization (WHO, 2008: cited from Rebecca, 2008, p. 172) points out that “Sanitation is a cornerstone of public health.” The lack of toilets not only challenges the dignity of Hadi women but also exposes them to bacterial infections. Females and males still practice open defecation. There is no data to discuss the increasing problem in Open Defecation due to crowding as Open Defecation Free (ODF) is not a problem.



Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Photograph 1: Krishna Hari's Two Private Flush Toilet at Hadi Cooli, Chas

Photograph 1 shows the two flush toilets that remain mostly unused in Krishna Hari's house. His house is better constructed but the rooms are very small and congested. However, there is one corner in the courtyard allocated for prayers. There are a large number of households that have some familial association with first settlers. In an interview in the field, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Bokaro especially reiterated that Bokaro stands out for its greenery in the entire state but the adjoining town of Chas is a contrast to it. Bokaro has been one of the well-planned and developed towns much before its separation from Bihar. But the development is purely confined to the industrial civic areas of the steel plant and Chas is left out.

Men and women have to fetch water from a distance. They find it difficult to walk long distances and one does not know exactly where water would be available.

As a few men use cycles to go farther. In the afternoon most Hadi men get free from work; hence they find it easy to do this job. However, a constant effort and appeal are addressed to the Municipal Corporator to provide a deep borewell in the Hadi Cooli locality. They say it is under consideration.

Apathy in Schooling and Educational Interest

A primary school is located at the outskirts of Hadi Cooli, closer to Bauri Cooli and Muslim Mohalla. The school has children from all three localities Hadi, Bauri and Muslim. There are five teachers in the school. It is a small building of four rooms and one large veranda. In front of the school, a deep well was sunk as a source of water for the school. This well was used to fetch drinking water by the Muslim Mohalla and Bauri Cooli. But it has now dried up and is filled with garbage. The school has no source of water these days.

A number of children are enrolled but they barely attend classes. During the mid-day meal, the children return to school and enjoy the food. Teachers find it difficult to manage the regularity of attendance. As a teacher stated, "It is very difficult to teach children from lower castes. Their parents do not bother about the progress of their children. Most parents from Hadi Cooli do not visit school and even when their children do not turn up to the school even for a month sometimes. ``The educational level of Hadis is quite low as shown in Table 2.5. A larger number of them are illiterate among both male and female. Not a single woman is found who reached class 11, except for Jhomda Hadi who completed graduation.

The lapses in regular schooling are another serious problem in Hadi upliftment. After primary schooling, only a few enroll in the high school located at a distance of three kilometers east of Hadi Cooli. But they hardly attend school. The apathy towards education is dominant in the minds of Hadis, including the youth. Youth are aware of the son of a tea stall, who studied in a common school, Ram Rudra High School, and he qualified for an officer's job (Probationary Officer) in the State Bank of India. In an interaction with young children, they had less interest in talking about education.

Conclusion

Exclusion is a perceived and lived reality to the Hadi community and as a polluting caste group. Educational backwardness is rampant among the Hadis. Almost every day a discussion on educational backwardness took place in the field while I was there. The socio-economic condition does not allow them to spend on their children's education. Schooling is free for all SC children in government schools. Uniforms are given. Though several children got uniforms and books, they are still not made available to every Hadi student.

Neighboring localities resided by the Bauri caste show that they have started sending their children to school as they are aware of the jobs in the government sector

through reservation. But Hadis are found to be unsure about such avenues outside their traditional jobs.

A strong perception among Hadis exists that degrees will neither bring prosperity nor feed them. They have to work daily without failing to earn a minimum amount. Food and clothing are essential items in the life of every Hadi. In the whole of Hadi Cooli only one, Jhomda Hadi is a graduate but he is unsuccessful in people's perception. He tried his best to find a good job but a simple graduation degree did not help him. He was not ready to revert back to the same sweeping and scavenging job. It was very difficult for Jhomda to survive in such an environment where education does not have significance in earning for everyday living. There is one Bangla (Bengali) medium middle school located near Joria and it gives an edge to Bauri Cooli due to its location.

There are no success stories in the lives of the Hadi community. Most parents do not aspire to encourage and educate their children as it is believed that after spending years of time and money on education there are still no job opportunities. Their only hope is for the children if they overcome the deprivation and attain higher education. Life in Hadi Cooli is relatively different in several aspects. Hadis have to follow their work that demands different working hours than most other jobs. Community solidarity is observed and the same can be noticed when the elders pass any information to anyone. Any new visitor will be asked and enquired upon his / her purpose to visit Hadi Cooli. The young children primarily spend time among themselves except school-going students who have friends outside the Hadi Cooli.

The lives of Hadis have been changing but there is less social mobility. Bhangis in Rajasthan started following customs and traditions of upper castes and have shown the process of Sanskritization as Shyamlal (1984) writes. There is diversity in the occupation of Bhangis in Rajasthan but Hadis do not show many variations, except two households doing other jobs; one person has a grocery shop in a portion of his own house, and other works as an office staff at Tata Indicom Retail shops in the private sector. In 'The Bhangis', Shyamlal (1984) found they were engaged in nine other occupations. The study is 30-years-old when private-sector employment had lesser avenues in a town like Jodhpur. But the growing industrial and urban sector would have increased the opportunity for Bhangis as it has also helped Hadis in Chas. But Hadis in Chas has retained their own occupation of sweeping than diversifying into other jobs. Thereby nomenclature changed, spatial expansion of the town changed, demographic and population size has increased but what has not changed is the same occupation carried for generations. Traditional occupations of sweeping, cleaning drains and toilets is the main work that the Hadi community does even today that keep the discrimination and multiple forms of exclusion as an essential part of their socio-cultural life even today.

The social history, occupational background and spatial location multiply their agony and pain to live in poverty and on the margins. Present generations have no idea of their lineage that may die or fade away by the time elders pass away. In the eyes of the administration and state, Hadis are occupational caste groups that do find work

in sanitation and cleaning jobs of the municipal corporation. Hadis also cater to the sanitation job in the private sector on a casual payment basis keeping them on their toes every day. It would be interesting to observe in future, if other caste members and a few tribal youth start joining into sanitation and menial jobs on the formal set-up like hospitals and nursing homes. A negligible number is found in the field data. Will the arrival of a new workforce reduce the discrimination meted out and social distance kept with Hadis sustain for longer time in future? New research in the future would have to take this aspect into consideration while studying Hadis as an occupational caste group to understand new phenomena.

Though their exclusionary journey from Workers to Sanitation Workers continues even today despite various efforts and policy initiatives, they are still manual scavengers by occupation, and sweepers/sanitation workers by name.

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