

Experiencing Exclusion among Dalits: A Sociological Study of Bauris and Hadis

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Abstract

This study is primarily based on intensive fieldwork. The focus of the paper is to seek an understanding about the perceptions of Dalits namely Bauris and Hadis. They are not very active in terms of participation and responding to the problems of health and illness. Collecting information on experiences of illnesses needs very close interaction with the people (Banerjee, 1980). Sociologists often perceive that Illness as something experienced, represented, negotiated by individuals which is reflected in the narratives and in-depth interviews of people. Perception on illness and health invariably depends on the socio-cultural conditions of the people. In this context, it becomes essential to understand the socio-cultural milieu of SCs in the field. The various and myriad form of expression about illness exist not only from one individual to another but also from one group to another. Therefore a close interaction with the group undertaken and elaborated in this study paper to understand the socio-cultural, economic as well as health perceptives.

Keywords: *Dalits, Castes, Exclusion, Occupation, Sociology, Bokaro, Hadis, Bauri*

Introduction:

This study is primarily based on intensive fieldwork. The focus of the paper is to seek an understanding about the perceptions of Dalits namely Bauris and Hadis. They are not very active in terms of participation and responding to the problems of health and illness. To do the field work, participant observation and rigorous interviews have been used. The process of data collection among Scheduled Castes (SCs) is very challenging due to their impassive nature. They are not very active in terms of participation and responding to the problems of health and illness. This poses a problem to the researcher in the field. Collecting information on experiences of illnesses needs very close interaction with the people (Banerjee, 1980). Sociologists often perceive that Illness as something experienced, represented, negotiated by individuals which is reflected in the narratives and in-depth interviews of people.

To understand the notion of perception and concept of illness and health needs serious observations in the field. Perceptions are necessarily personal, subjective and contextual. It is naïve in the sense that its own premises are not ordinarily subjected to critical appraisal (Sabharwal 2004). How one perceives the reality becomes the basis for his/her actions and therefore goes into constructing the reality that may be perceived and vice versa. Hence perception is the construction reality of the society in the context of its subjective definition. For instance, *Dalits* perceive about their surroundings in a way which is based on their

experiences living in the society. The congested houses, filthy drains and smelling lanes/streets shape their thought processes. Caste based discrimination does influence the perception of the community or the environment of extreme poverty, Social stigma, economic exploitation and discrimination against untouchables is a reality shared by most in my field region too. These conditions make greater sense to look into the process of influence on the perception of *Dalits*.

Recording the Perceptions among Hadis and Bauri Castes:

As identified by many anthropological methods and widely used by most social anthropologist in the third world societies (Srinivas et al 1979, 2002), intensive fieldwork provided me the strength to do fieldwork in the difficult conditions. Each anthropological study requires an observance of distance from the object of study, even when one may be the natural member of the society (by birth or socialization) which one selects for intensive study (Srivastava 2004, 2007). This is relevant when we see that fieldworker is 'humble learner' of the cultures of the other people (Evans-Pritchard 1951:79). A. Aiyappan, Kathleen Gough (1954:54) wrote that he consciously took his respondent, the villager, 'as his *guru (teacher)*'. The fieldworker commits errors in learning the dialect, pronounces local words awkwardly, and finds difficulty in understanding the social structure and at times local men and women teaches him/her in terms of getting 'nativization'. While teaching the researchers or anthropologist people also learn about their own cultures through their reflections and in attempting to answer anthropological questions systematically. This is the reason fieldwork becomes didactic process for the researchers and the respondents (op. cit. 2004). I found this as an integral part of my field experience. Fieldwork is central to intensive fieldwork and in anthropological studies; in Read's words (1986:4), fieldwork is the 'crowning jewel' of anthropology. Fieldwork and the nature of fieldwork also differ from one context to another. For instance, fieldwork in a village society where most of the social life is conducted outside the house will be different from where people draw clear boundaries of privacy and public activities. Modern institutions like hospitals, banks, schools and laboratories poses its own problem from finding the 'community' and then choosing any appropriate tool to study them. The researcher takes some time to internalize and familiarize with the local idioms, dialects and words to understand the real meaning of them (Beteille and Madan 1975: 9). Gradually with months passing, researcher's information becomes more authentic and empirical than the initial weeks of stay and observations. I started collecting relevant data after a few days.

SCs (*Dalits*) are most populated community in the *Bokaro* district of Jharkhand. *Bauris* caste accounts for roughly one third of the total SCs population in the *Chas* block, and a Municipality town of *Bokaro* district. *Bauris*, the majority of my study populations, have been less studied dalit community in recent past although they are populated not only in Jharkhand but also in West Bengal and Orissa. The present effort is to study *Bauris* and they are major chunk of my respondents apart from *Hadis (popularly known as Mehtar)* and a few Rajwar, Chamar, Turi. My attempt to study this community has special significance, first, it will be the first study to look into the aspects of illness and health and second that how *Dalits* perceive illness and health in their life world is unexplored.

The study carries emotional and social flavours in order to share the narratives of *Dalit's* experiences and sufferings about illnesses and health seeking attempts. Researcher's attempt to study one's own society has advantages and disadvantages (Unni 1979; Joshi 1979). Thankfully it was my familiar region and known to me. The familiarity with the region was only my acknowledgment to decipher their day to day perception about health issues.

The fieldwork did have certain innate problems, like why do I visit to a dalit populated area? My belongingness from Muslim community was another repeated question encountered throughout my interaction and stay in the field? *Dalits* of my study population engaged in occupations such as cleaning and sweeping, *Kabadi (waste materials)* works, children in rag picking, rickshaw pulling, manual labours (such as *Gitti todna* i.e. small pebble used in construction of buildings, construction labourers, road construction and repairing, in mining and quarry sector) which is not their traditional occupation. Traditionally they were agricultural caste group except *Hadis*. Famine reinforced them to join the ongoing mining industry started by British in order to expand the British Empire. After the nationalization of mines during Indira Gandhi's period in 1980s, most of the *Bauris* were thrown out from the mining labour works. The *Bauris* could never migrated far away from their natives due to available labour works in the mining sector but now after the change in the mining industrial rules, they thought to migrate. Amuly Kumar *Bauri* recalls that his parents faced severe economic crisis after nationalization of mines and many *Bauris* being the small marginal agriculturalist sold the lands. His father was retrenched from the mine (Mahuda mines) in same period. They had no saving in hand. A small parental land was sold in rupees 15, 000 only. They kept gold coin to a jeweller for health expenses due the shortage of money at home. The sudden decline in the income sources the labourer had least options available to work. Further thousands of SCs were pushed at the extreme situation of deprivations. This incident pushed at the margins.

Bauris in *Bokaro* have not witnessed the benefits of developments with industrial and urban expansion. This makes them to react harshly with a person who visits them and inquire about their life world. I was reminded with the fact that a researcher does an intensive fieldwork in a community and finish the work and there are few who would stay in touch with the people been studied after returning to their respective place (ibid). For me, it is not possible to forget the people or respondents whom I interviewed and studied. Primarily due to my belongingness to the place, my parents, family members and relatives stay in the same town. I keep going whenever there are important rituals, marriages and festivals. All these will not allow me to keep away from them.

Location of the Study area:

In November 2000, Jharkhand became a separate state, comprising of eighteen districts of Bihar. There are 24 districts, 35 sub divisions and 212 blocks in Jharkhand. In 1992, *Bokaro* district was carved out from Dhanbad while comprising two sub-divisions, *Chas* and *Bermo*. *Bokaro* district consists of two sub-divisions, 8 Development Blocks and 136 Panchayats with 639 villages in number. Development Blocks are the second of level administrative unit of districts but they fall under the purview of Sub Divisional offices. The blocks are; Nawadih, *Bermo*, *Gumia*, *Peteruar*, *Kasmar*, *Jaridih*, *Chas* and *Chandankiyari*. *Chas* sub-

division has two blocks, *Chas* itself and Chandankiyari and rest six falls under Bermo Sub Division.

Chas town is spread out in 20.98 square km. The civic status of the town is Municipality. Even before the separation of *Bokaro* district from Dhanbad, *Chas* had the same civic status and it was known as Mine Area Development Authority (MADA). The election for Municipality did not take place for more than twenty five years. Recently in the month of June, 2010 the long awaited elections for municipality were conducted.

Chas has several localities/*Mohallas*, a few of them are Scheduled Castes (Dalit) *Mohallas* which are called as *Cooli*. *Cooli* represents typically Scheduled Castes settlements in *Chas*. I selected four localities of *Chas* which is having highest number of SCs households for my study in *Chas*.

According to Census of India, 1991, the population of Scheduled Castes (SCs) in undivided Bihar was 12,571,700, of which the *Bauri* caste was 127,410. There are twenty three Scheduled Castes listed in the Special Tables of Scheduled Castes in 1991. According to 2001 Census, the population of Jharkhand is 26,909,248 persons. The sex ratio of the state has 938 females per thousand males. The population density is 338 per square km with a decadal growth of 23.19 per cent during 1991-2001 of the state (2001 Census).

The rural population of Bokaro district is 9,71,320 and urban is 8,04,741. The child population in the age group 0-6 years is 2, 80,195 which is divided into rural (1,73,551) and urban (1,06,644). Out of the total urban population of the *Chas* block, the males are 52,063 and females 44,860 persons.

In the Municipality area of *Chas* town, the Scheduled Castes numbers are 8, 700 persons. Out of this, males are 4, 493 and females are 4, 207. However the total general population of *Chas* Municipality is 97, 221 persons, females comprising 45, 039 and males are 52, 182 persons as per the Census of India 2001. In this context, the selected study population of Dalits do not comprises all Scheduled Castes population of *Chas* but part of them. I could not get the exact number of households of other dalits *Cooli* but it will be explored and examined now onward. The recent Municipality elections may have prepared the rolls of people living in the *Chas* and this should be available in couple of months.

Selecting the Caste Groups:

Scheduled Castes (SCs) for which I will alternatively use the term '*Dalits*'. The term *Dalit* is used whenever all the selected caste groups of the study population such as *Bauri*, *Rajwar* and *Hadis* is discussed together. In other cases, the name of caste is used as each caste is known by their names. The caste groups of my study population have been the natives of *Chas* for generations. The four *Coolis* (*Coolis* are popularly known as the settlements of Scheduled Castes groups in *Chas*) such as *Bauri Cooli*, *Hadi Cooli*, *Shakaro Cool* and *Lamba Cooli* are my research field. I selected above mentioned entire *Coolis* of *Chas* town due to certain rationale. There has been least study on the selected Castes *Bauri*, *Hadis* and *Rajwar* Castes except a few on *Bauri*'s by Sengupta 1980; Freeman, 1977. Second, the expansion of industrial sector, establishment of Bokaro steel plant (Asia's largest steel unit and largest unit

of Steel Authority India Limited, GOI), urban centred businesses and other developmental activities have not touched my study population. The life situation of these groups have not changed with the changes in the process of urbanization, housing set up, employment conditions, educational upliftment etc. rather got degraded. The developments of health care services have definitely benefited the people in Chas but how about my study population? In other words, how the changes in Chas has affected these population; the reasons and factors needs to be understood. Hadi Caste group are engaged in the scavenging works in Chas. I wanted to study their health perception in the background of occupational association as well. Rajwar Caste happens to be my study population because they reside is the Cooli's of Bauri caste and while doing fieldwork at Bauri and Shakaro Cooli, they are also considered for the study. Ethnographic study required to study all the caste members in my selected pockets. Hence, they also happen to be part of my selected field.

During the past one hundred years, mostly as a result of immigration, the population of the region has increased more than four fold. Sengupta in his paper writes that between the 1951 and 1961 Censuses the number of Punjabis in the region increased from 30, 00% to 57,000, that of the Marwaris from 8,000 to 22,000, that of the Gujaratis from 8,000 to 36,000, that of the Andhras from 18,000 to 36,000 and of Tamilians from 6,000 to 15,000. Since Hindi, Urdu, Bengali and Oriya are included in the mother-tongues of the original inhabitants of this area, it is not possible to assess the number of migrants from these regions from the available data. The number of people whose mother-tongue is Bengali increased from 7.2 lakhs to 9.7 lakhs between 1951 and 1961 while there was a fall in the number of Oriya speakers, from 3.1 lakh in 1951 to 3.0 lakh in 1961. The 1961 Census data also show that there were 1, 13,000 Bhojpuri speakers, 16,000 Maithili speakers 9,000 Chhattisgarhi speakers and 2,000 Bilaspuri speakers in the region. Many other immigrants from these regions should have mentioned Hindi as their mother-tongue (1980).

Bauris and other SCs and STs were the largest labouring community in the mines of the state. 'In a single week following the nationalisation of coal mines in 1971, 'nearly 50,000 JharkHadi miners lost their jobs and were replaced by people mainly from the Bhojpur region. Several thousand (people say 30 thousand) telegrams were sent from the Dhanbad district alone to people at Arrah-Balia-Chhapra informing them that jobs were available. During Emergency thousands were retrenched and they were all Adivasis or Harijans' (ibid, 1980). Bokaro and Dhanbad have highest concentration of mines and industrial units leading to attract largest migrants from the various parts of the countryside. Precisely for this reason, the colonies are named after the migrants' nature and region; likewise Chas has Bhojpur colony, Gujarat colony, Chapra Colony etc., showing the dominant feature of migrants in Chas. But dalits of Chas have not migrated elsewhere.

Choosing the field:

Bauri Cooli: The *Bauri Cooli* is named after *Bauri*'s. They are the majority household living there. There are 200 households living in the *Bauri Cooli*. In the west and south of the *Bauri Cooli*, Muslim *Mohalla* is located. In the eastern direction, there was a natural stream. It was

popularly known as *Joria* where many of the *Bauris* and *Hadi* families go for bathing and washing clothes. *Joria* is no more a stream at present rather it is drain water of the whole town *Chas* and carries bad smells, filthy garbage and unhealthy wastes. However families of *Bauris* and *Hadis* use *Joria* to wash the clothes and bath because there is hardly any option left. It is amazing to see how they bear to take a dip in that smell and dirty water. Small kids enjoy playing in that water and parents hardly object. The water body is less than two three feet deep and the flow is very slow. Women use this space to wash their clothes and spend little leisure time gossiping each other. Men and women bath at different spots. There are several small ponds in *Chas* town as well *Bokaro* district but during summer generally the water dries up.

I was accompanied with one of the respondent up till *Joria*. My respondent took a bath there and requested me to fresh up as well. To gain his favour I could manage to touch the water with my hands and tried not to give impression that this is very filthy and dirty. I wonder how frequently *Bauris* and *Hadis* go to *Joria*, wash their clothes and take a dip as it is a normal routine to their life. I shared my visit to *Joria* with a friend who stays in *Chas*. He hails from *Bhumihar* (a landowning caste) castes and he has a good business enterprise at *Chas*, started laughing at me. I remember he said “*Itna Padhne-likhne ke baad ab yahi karna tha, kyon bhai, ye accha nahi hai, par aur main kya kahoon, after studying at good universities, is this you wanted to do! It is not good but what else can I say, why brother*”. However he never tried to discourage me rather attempt was to understand the research, I was pursuing.

Hadi Cooli: This is settlement of *Hadis* (popular as *Bhangis/Mehtar*) who have been there for generations. *Hadi Cooli* is another example of nature’s disgrace as a few respondents believe. But the youths feel that they should not anymore carry on their traditional occupation of scavenging. This *Cooli* has fifty (50) household as reported by the elders of the community. The population of the *Cooli* is around 300 people. *Hadi Cooli* is very near to *Chas* main market and everyone passing through this road will notice the filthy drains and very small houses. The doors are very small in height or less than six feet height. One has to bend his/her heads while entering into the houses. Except two houses, others are *Kutchha* houses. The electricity and water is not available to all. A few families have taken proper connection but many households connect the electric wire with the main electric wire and use electricity without paying charges or in other words steal electricity.

Shakaro Cooli: *Shakaro Cooli* has around sixty households. It is located in the northern side of *Bauri Cooli*. Filthy, dirty and open drain makes this *Cooli* very unhygienic. This is located in the both sides of road approaching to Different *Coolis/Mohallas*. I recall eight years back, there were many aluminium repairing and news utensils’ shops. They were very small rooms with smaller entrance height between five or five and half feet. The women will drop in to these shops and get their aluminium utensils repaired (like Glasses, Pots for cooking rice and *Dal (pulses)*, spoons, buckets etc). The rise of new market in the town, as in main road of *Chas*, *Jodhadih* more have definitely reduced the demands of these shops and their services.

This is also *Bauris* populated settlement barring a few from *Rajwar* castes, two three *Dhobi*’s household. *Rajwar* is a Scheduled Caste group listed in the special table of SCs of *Jharkhand*

in the Census of India 1991, 2001. They were agricultural labourers. Rajwar is better off caste groups in Jharkhand among SCs and in Bokaro as well because they still have some land holdings though smaller in size in villages. At a distance of four and five kilometres from Chas town, there are a few villages comprising of Rajwar castes. Rajwar Caste members are largely residing in rural set up and are marginal farmers. But in urban settlements, they are engaged as construction labourer. *Cheera Chas* is a village which is populated by Rajwar caste and located at a distance of five kilometres from Chas town. The contract based labourers in Chas comprises from this caste group. This is very densely populated settlement. Most of the houses are on the road sides, have constructed some space to sit in odd and free hours. It is called '*PEEDHA*', an adjoining space in front of the houses. I found many of the families do not have enough space at house for their members. Except summer (obviously they can't sit outside due to scorching sun) they will be sitting outside their small houses on these Peeddhas.

Lamba Cooli: *Lamba Cooli* is another settlement of *Bauris* in *Chas*. Most of them are *Bauris* and a few Bengali migrants. The name *Lamba* does not refer any castes association. It is named because this road stretches and touches between Chas bypass road and Chas main road. Since length wise, it was long stretch and named as *Lamba Cooli*. But the population living in this *Cooli* are *Bauri* Caste.

Occupational engagements:

The occupational engagements of my study population are found very different. For example, *Bauris'* main economic activities are digging the base for pillars in building or any construction. Now in recent two or three years, ten-fifteen *Bauri* man makes a group of labourers and they tie up with a *Thekedar* (contractor/builder), road contractor. The contractors will call the labourers whenever required. Several of the labourers will be enquiring about any opportunity of works for them in the surrounding vicinity of Chas in a five to six kilometres distance. They come back to their home in the late evening. Many of the labourers are from *Bauri* and *Rajwar* (including a few *Hadis*) stand at *Mahabir Chowk*. A person in the town knows that labourers will be available at *Mahabir Chowk* in the first half of the day till 11 o'clock. I spoke to some of them at the Chowk. For a few days, I observed them and their activities while sitting at a hotel with a cup of tea. Because I tried to speak up a few of them but they did not show any interest. It was difficult for me to approach them when they are waiting for their employer who will hire for a day at least and in turn earn some amount for their livelihood. A labourer agreed to discuss with me some other day. I reached on time but did not say anything to him. I waited for an hour at the same hotel with a cup of tea. Afterward I approached him. Shankar did not get work for the day and he was very upset. It is not necessary that these labourers get the work every day but all of them wait for the work. I offered him for tea but he refused. Shankar told that he worked with a contractor at Chas. But the contractor was not giving wages for everyday rather he ask them to wait for weeks or at least a week. It was very difficult to survive a week without any money in hand. Hence he thought to wait at *Mahabir Chowk* and to see how his luck favours.

It is a popular place and an area of sex workers. People try to avoid this route as it becomes a matter of embarrassment for the person and his family. Women engaged in this part are largely from *Bauri* caste. This occupation had been there for decades now as I have mentioned earlier that *Chas* has a highway which connects several cities/towns of Jharkhand. Huge mining sector and largest Steel plant of Asia attracts thousands of trucks to carry the products, raw and waste material to other cities and places on India. Truck drivers have been an important factor to continue and a major source of earning for the sex workers. It is told by one women of this settlement that there are a few pockets of sex workers in other cities such as Purulia, Dhanbad, and Ranchi where *Bauri* women are the majority. Freeman's study on Muli describes the life history of an Indian untouchable in Orissa and also shows that *Bauri* women were engaged as sex workers due to their deprivation and poverty in Orissa. *Bauris* have been economically marginalized caste group and this condition is found across the states such as Jharkhand, West Bengal and Orissa where the majority of *Bauris* are populated.

It is not desirable to enter into this road which connects to both *Chas* bypass road in southern side and *Chas* main road in the northern side. Hari Mandir, which is a temple worshiped by all the caste groups. The compound of Hari Mandir has a *Mandi* (local vegetable market), which is in the eastern direction. There are several shops in the road adjoining both the sides mentioned above. One shopkeeper told me that sex workers are now for second generations. The *Chas* bypass road is a highway connected to several cities of Jharkhand and the truck drivers were the main the visitors. But it is not necessary as many others from other background do visits. A vendor, who sells *Pakodi* and snack in the evening, says that 'the profession of sex workers has gone down'. Till Five years ago he was earning good amount everyday selling snacks, and many of them were customers for women (sex workers). He also sold fried fishes are of the best combination with alcohol. Now he has stopped selling fish and keeps only *Pakodi* (a snacks mixed with green leafs and onion with green chilly). It is most savoury item for evening snacks. The road of *Lamba Cooli* touching towards bypass road of *Chas*, in this vicinity there are three liquor shops. It is there for years due to a few reasons. First, this is the centre of the Bypass road, *Lamba Cooli* is nearer from this point and last most of the garages were in this vicinity. Now many of the garages and new garages have come up at *Jodhadih More*, three kilometres away from bypass road in the eastern part of *Chas*.

The field work in this place and that too with *Bauris* is very difficult and challenging. It needs more than a year and to collect the desirable ethnographic facts and observation. Every time I visited the field, and inside the localities, I faced one or the other problem and odd resistance. It makes me to think and plan again and again for each round of field visits.

I must mention an important encounter at *Bauri Cooli*. One day, I visited the Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) centre situated at *Bauri Cooli*. I was trying to talk to the children. How much time they spend? Do children like to stay at ICDS centre? What are reasons for their liking, food, better space to play with peers etc? A woman takes care of this centre. A person aged between twenty five years or little more arrives on spot. He starts abusing the woman with local vulgar words. I could not bear ongoing abuse of the caretaker of ICDS and intervened into the scene. Suddenly the person comes near me and says few

abusing words. By the time I was trying to explain and enquire that why he is so harsh. Suddenly he jumps and catches my shirt's collar. I was scared by his hostility. But thankfully two three young boys were sitting nearby ran for my rescue. The boys helped me and told that I should leave now because the person was drunk. He will create more drama. I followed their advice without any delaying and decided to come after few days. I noted down this experience as my most difficult moment of fieldwork. When I shared this with my parents, they were surprised and wondering that why I am so curious to visit these *Coolis*. After listening they advised me to take help of someone who knows the families in *Bauri Cooli*, so there are no repetitions of such incidents.

After this incident whenever I planned I took help of someone from the *Bauri* Caste or any local Muslim community from Muslim *Mohalla*. I need to have a rapport with them so I didn't want such hostile situations as they will hamper my research. An outsider creating trouble would be the worst impression.

Rag picking are carried away generally by the young children (both male and female). This work does not require any particular training. Rag picking invites health problems to children. Skin diseases, at times tetanus infection, allergic related problems, TB, bronchitis and malarial fevers too. They are beaten by *Kabadi walas* if they ask higher money while selling to them. The dirty, smelling and fearful faces show their vulnerability. Girl children are physically and sexually abused and nothing is reported. All this was told by a *Bauri* rickshaw puller who was sharing this fact at the *Chas* bus stand. But the family members are not in a position to stop such works.

The plight of SC's children is very pathetic and future of these children is seriously affected in terms of health status, educational derivation. At the tender age, the children are asked to earn for the family. A few families managed to send their children to middle school and one of them was Ratu *Bauris'* son. There is a high school which is located at the distance of three kilometres from *Bauri Cooli* at *Jodhadih* More popularly known as Ram Rudra High School.

Migration: The percentage of migration is almost less than one per cent in *Bauri Cooli* or among *Bauris* of my field. Sengupta (1980) also finds in a study of *Bauris* in his data about the composition of population in the area reveals that (a) immigrants account for around 10 to 15 per cent of total population (about 15 to 20 lakhs). Three young boys migrated to *Cuttack* (a city of Orissa state). Since details of these youths were not available, other neighbours and their age groups friends narrated that,

“ye dhair bad baat hau ke hamni ke jati se koi baher gail hau aar okhni thike paisa kamat hatoon”, yahan dhere gidar jaye ke socho hateen' jab paiswa hatha mein aao hai to sabke goda mein khujlee howe lago hai' in other words, there is big surprise and first time from Bauri Cooli, people went out in search of Jobs and thankfully they are earning well', there are other guys in the Mohallas who are planning to migrate for jobs. One person uses a local idiom that when money comes after migrating everyone's leg starts itching”.

Daily activities and routine: The Scheduled Castes society and especially *Bauris* of my field area are habitual for regular drinking. I found in the discussion that the alcohols taken

are locally made of Maadi mixing some other things. They prepare liquid of boiled rice, put a few leaves and keep in open sun light. It is kept for two three days for fermentation. They also mix *Mahua juice* (a kind of fruit found in Jharkhand forests). The supplier also mixes original alcohol to show the test is really alcohol alike. It smells unbearable. Due to alcoholism there are several disease found common as reported during interaction with two member of the community. Blood pressure, related problem, kidney failure, lungs infections, itching and rashes in their body parts, tuberculosis, and malarial fever are the few diseases found commonly. Sengupta write that the government had been quite enthusiastic about spreading the network of liquor shops throughout Jharkhand. It was the British rulers who had thoughtfully spread liquor shops in this region, to keep the rebellious adivasis in check. Now, the 'nationalist' government earns Rs 8 crores each year, by keeping the *JharkHadis* addicted to liquor. Addiction to liquor and drugs keeps away both the *JharkHadi* peasants and industrial workers from constructive ideas (1980). This background helps us to understand the historical linkages that why *Bauris* and other Scheduled Castes groups are very prone to alcohol. In fact, Trade union workers and the activists of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha have tried their best to put an end to such addiction. Kalali Toro, Jharkhand Chhoro (smash liquor shops, quit Jharkhand) is one of the popular slogans of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha. The organisation has already achieved tremendous success in effecting complete boycott of liquor in rural areas, so much so that in 1976, long before Morarji Desai became the Prime Minister, the Bihar government was compelled to prohibit selling of country liquor in tribal areas of Dhanbad.

Playing cards and alcoholism is common sight which is linked with unemployment, highest level of illiteracy and ignorance. One respondent said, 'there is hardly anyone who crosses sixty years of age, in other words the longevity or average life expectancy of the *Bauris* are very low. I found the alcoholism is very dominant and they are locally made. At times, it disturbs the lever system of the body leading to serious illness of the people. Meeting *Bauris* after sunset is of great worrisome. Most of them will be highly drunk and not in position to speak consciously. Once a young man caught up my bag and intended to hit me. He thought I am asking unnecessary to him and annoying his mood. Two three youths caught him and gave safeguard to me. Hari told me that I should avoid meeting people at late evening and night time. There will be fighting going on in most of the families' due to the alcoholism. Men abuse their wives and children are bitten up if they ask to stop drinking. Abuse of women and children is very prevailing phenomenon among *Bauris* household.

I also realized that these are my learning experience in the field or of the field. The children are of good help. I spoke to children who would follow me and took my interaction with families or people as very surprising. A few teen aged boys stayed back with me after watching me carefully for couple of days and agreed to discuss with me. They wanted to visit my university which they understood to be a college. Delhi is just fascinating name to all the children, a place they dreamt to visit and enjoy.

Hadis comprises of around fifty families. They have been at this place for a few generations and claim that they are the natives. The daily routine of a Hadi man is to wake up early in the morning and go to each distributed houses in the nearby colonies (Sahu market, Gujarat

colony, Bhojpur colony, Prabhat colony, several others and Muslim *Mohallas* like Muslim *Mohalla*, Ansari *Mohalla*, Sultan Nagar, Azad Nagar, Ghaus Nagar etc. They are generally in demand. There are no drains connecting to all these *Mohallas*. In this case *Hadis* are called upon once or twice a day. The amount to be paid for their work is fixed up with every visit and a few families give them in a week or month.

There are five temples in these localities and except one temple; all four are located at *Bauri* settlements.

Festivals and traditions: The major festivals celebrated among all Dalits caste groups are Mansa Devi *Puja*, Kaali *Puja*, Ram Navmi and Durga *Puja* as well. Mansa Devi puja has special importance among *Dalits* and especially *Bauris* of the Jharkhand; hence it's celebrated in *Chas* as well. On the day of Mansa puja, they perform most of the rituals at the *Peepal's Tree*.

Basic Amenities: Besides the economic distress, there is a struggle for basic amenities such as water. All these *Mohallas* have three ponds in their localities which get dried up during peak days of summer. Except summer, ponds cater the needs of bathing and washing clothes for *Dalits* families. Recently by end of the last year (2009), the government bored a hand pump (deep boring) near *Chas* bus stand which has deep boring and it supplies in tap form.

School and educational interest: There is a Bangla medium middle school located near *Joria* and it gives an edge to both *Bauri Cooli* and *Hadi Cooli*. The language of *Bauris* is neither Bangla nor Kortha (spoken by non-tribal and *Non-Dalits* but local natives of Jharkhand) as they mix so many words which belong to Bengali and Kortha languages. This school has large number of students from *Bauris* and a few from *Hadis* and other caste groups but the attendance is very low. However in terms of educational attainments changes are occurring to a few families in *Bauri* caste.

Health Care Services: There are two homeopathic doctors and one Ayurvedic clinic cum shop. The availability of hospitals is found at a distance. The public health care services are at three tie level in *Chas*. There is one PHC located at Check post area, three kilometre away from *Bauri Cooli*, another *Sadar* (district) hospital at ITI more, *Chas* near *Chas* sub-divisional office. It is popular as *Chas* Hospital. *Bokaro* General Hospital (BGH) is one the best hospital in *Bokaro* but it largely provides services to the Steel Plant employees. It is open only for central government employees such as Bharat Coaking Coal Limited (BCCL), Hindustan Steel limited (HSL) etc. For past years, BGH has started OPD and In Patient cases as private patient. This is very costly which *Dalits* of my study population cannot afford pay. BGH is far away from *Chas*, almost twelve kilometres away which is not feasible to travel for all illness for dalits. The weak functioning of public hospitals provided a big space to develop the infrastructure for private health care providers and hospitals. They are catering the needs of general populations. K M memorial hospital is the most costly private hospital located near *Chas* Bus stand. *Dalits* can't afford this too. Recently another low cost private hospital has come up at check post named Muskaan Hospital. Shubham is another newly constructed hospital. There are almost not less than fifty private doctors practicing in *Chas*. Many of them also work with BGH and practice in the off hours at their private clinic or in

hospitals as a consultant. A few of them are retired from government hospitals and BGH. Counting the numbers of RMPs is very difficult in Chas. Chas area has been also popular for Bengali doctors. They are similar to RMPs but they write Bengali doctor in their name plates. In case of emergency cases, a few families go to Dhanbad Central Hospital which is a government run district hospital. Dhanbad is fifty kilometres away from Chas. It has better health care services, facilities, expert and qualified doctors as well.

Conclusion

The paper brings scope to discuss the subject of fieldwork and how a Dalit community engages with others and within the community. These two groups have been merely touched in all research except one by Sengupta on Bauris in Orissa during eighties. Therefore the ethnography on such excluded groups provides scope to bring the nuances and bits of everyday field experiences in the domain of exclusionary studies. A humble attempt needs further exploration to review in comparison to other such social groups in other parts of the country and bring epistemological understanding of the communities less studied. The perennial form of experienced discrimination existed in the life of Dalits in Bokaro. The land of tribes and Dalits have not found greater attention in the research and policy making. Hadis and Bauris are the two caste existed and practices their traditional occupations for centuries in this region but they have least visibility. The studies conducted in seventies are a few attempts in the direction of exploring the deprivation level of the most marginalized communities in the contemporary India. There is serious need to re-look and revisit to study the life of these two groups keeping everyday sociology in practice.

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