

## Socio-demographic Characteristics of Semi-nomadic Lohar-Gadiyas of Malthon Town of Sagar District, Madhya Pradesh

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**ABSTRACT** The paper presents some aspects of the demographic characteristics of the Lohar-Gadiyas of Malthon town of Sagar district, Madhya Pradesh. The findings indicate that majority of population is illiterate and poor. The population indices are lagging behind the state population. The fertility and mortality level are high. The infant mortality rate is quite high. Acceptance of family welfare is almost nil. Under these circumstances it is highly desirable to take step for reducing infant mortality by improving mother and child health services and by increasing acceptance of family welfare devices.

### INTRODUCTION

It has been estimated that every individual have some specific opinion about the health, illness and health seeking behaviour which may be expressed in their concerning environment. The genetic endowment and environmental factors like nutrition, hygiene, parasitic load etc. through their mutual interaction play an important role of the disease. In this way, socio-demographic study of any population help in health promotion and disease curative strategies. A number of studies on demographic characteristics have been made by various investigators like Hu (1955), Forter (1954), Mahapatra (1972), Yelsma and Athapilly (1988), Pandey and Goel (1999), Jain (2000), Yadav (2000) and others etc.

The Lohar-Gadiyas are semi-nomadic in nature, i.e., they are in a phase of transition period in between settlement and nomadism. Here, in Malthon town they lives in a camp, by making their houses in a tent like shape, on wooden pillars and by polythene roof. The Lohar-Gadiyas main occupation is blacksmith work, by which they prepare the articles of iron, but by primitive techniques. These Lohar-Gadiyas stays in Malthon town from the first week of July to Second-third week of November, than from there,

they migrate to different directions on their bullock carts and again repeat this cycle next year. The Lohar-Gadiyas are found in most of the parts of India but they are known and pronounced by different names in different parts of India. These are called as "Gadulia-Lohar" in Rajasthan, "Loha-Rajputs in Maharashtra", but in Bundelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh they are called as "Lohar-Gadiya" because they are engaged in blacksmith work by primitive techniques and move from place to place on their small bullock carts. As no proper demographic study and other socio-economic aspects of Lohar Gadiya available, so an attempt has been made in this paper to throw some light on these aspects of the Lohar-Gadiyas.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study is conducted in Malthon town of Malthon block in Khurai Tehsil of Sagar District of Madhya Pradesh, India. The block lies in between 24° 01½ north and 78° 18½ east and covers an area of 756 sq. km. whereas Malthon town covers an area of 4 sq.km. The Malthon town is situated exactly on National Highway Number twenty-six, in between Sagar-Jhansi road about sixty kms away from Sagar headquarter.

The entire population of 677 individuals distributed in 127 household were covered in the study. The study is made by random sampling and semiparticipant method by using structured schedule.

The socio-demographic characteristics were obtained by observation relating to occupation, average monthly income, type of life, number of room in house, place of defecation, average family size, marriage pattern, marital status, dependance ratio, educational attainment, vital rates, fertility rate, growth rate and index of aging etc.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of the study are presented in the following tables:-

Table 1 reveals that about 96.06 per cent household of the Lohar-Gadiyas families lives in a nuclear family and 3.94 per cent lives in a joint family. The most of Lohar-Gadiyas lives in a temporary houses or tent like house made on wooden pillars of polythene roof (95.27 per cent) and few of them lived in a bricked side wall houses with a roof of Kuppār's or cemented lantan (4.73 per cent). The majority of Lohar-Gadiyas (95.27 per cent) have only one room

**Table 1: Socio-Demographic characteristics of Lohar-Gadiyas of Malthon town**

| S.No. | Characteristics                                                     | Lohar-Gadiyas                  |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1.    | Population Covered                                                  | 677                            |
| 2.    | Number of household studies                                         | 127                            |
| 3.    | Type of household                                                   |                                |
|       | (a) Nuclear                                                         | 96.06%                         |
|       | (b) Joint                                                           | 3.94%                          |
| 4.    | Average family size                                                 | 5.465 individuals              |
| 5.    | Age at marriage                                                     |                                |
|       | (a) Male                                                            | 16-25 years (74.02%)           |
|       | (b) Female                                                          | 16-25 years (51.17%)           |
|       | (c) Widow/Divorcee                                                  | 1.31%                          |
| 6.    | Literacy rate                                                       | (6+ years)                     |
|       | (a) Male                                                            | 0.26%                          |
|       | (b) Female                                                          | 0.33%                          |
|       | (c) Total                                                           | 0.29%                          |
| 7.    | Occupation                                                          |                                |
|       | (a) Blacksmith work                                                 | 85.04%                         |
|       | (b) Animal domestication                                            | 3.94%                          |
|       | (c) both Blacksmith work and animal domestication                   | 11.02%                         |
| 8.    | Monthly income                                                      | Average about Rs. 1201 to 2500 |
| 9.    | Type of houses                                                      |                                |
|       | (a) Tent like houses made on wooden pillars by polythene roof       | 95.27%                         |
|       | (b) House of bricked side walls and roof of Kuppār/ cemented lantan | 4.53%                          |
| 10.   | Number of rooms (including Kitchen)                                 |                                |
|       | (a) One room                                                        | 95.27%                         |
|       | (b) Two rooms                                                       | 1.59%                          |
|       | (c) Three rooms                                                     | -                              |
|       | (d) Four rooms                                                      | 3.15%                          |
|       | (e) five rooms                                                      | -                              |
| 12.   | House Electrified                                                   |                                |
|       | (a) Yes                                                             | 22.84%                         |
|       | (b) No                                                              | 77.16%                         |
| 13.   | Place for defecation                                                |                                |
|       | (a) Open field                                                      | 100%                           |
|       | (b) closed latrine                                                  | -                              |

house including kitchen where as cent per cent Lohar-Gadiyas used open field for defecation purpose. Out of them, only (22.84 per cent) Lohar- Gadiyas use electricity. The literacy rate in 6+ year aged population is (00.267 per cent) in males and (00.333 per cent) in females respectively, where as in overall (99.70 per cent) of 6+ year aged population are illiterate.

The age of marriage, on an average for both male and female marriages is same. They marriage in age between 16-26 years. It is observed that most of the males (77.02 per cent) and females (51.17 per cent) got married after the legal age of marriage i.e. for male 21 years and for female 18 years.

The average family size is found to be 5.46 individuals among them. The majority of working population (15-69 years) is engaged in blacksmith work (85.04 per cent), a negligible proportion is in animal domestication (3.94 per cent) and few in both animal domestication and blacksmith work (11.02 percent). It appears that high poverty is prevailing among then. In spite of their hard work of 5 to 6 hours in a day, they are able to earn only Rs 1201 to 2500 in a month.

Table 2 depicts the age-sex composition of Lohar-Gadiyas population. The percentage of child population (0-14 years) is 47.98 per cent and percentage of aged population 70+ years is 0.295 per cent and working population (15-69 years) is 51.84 per cent. The median age of the population is between 20-15 years is 70.86 per cent among the household shows that population is too young indicating high fertility and mortality levels prevails in the population.

The young dependency ratio which is the ratio of child population (0-14 years) to the working population is 92.30 and old dependency ratio which is the rate of aged people 70+ years to the working population is 0.0056. The total dependency ratio is quite higher 92.87, which shows that out of every hundred working population, there are 92.87 dependent population. It also implies the poor economic status of Lohar-Gadiyas. The index of aging which is the ratio of aged population 70+ year to the child population (0-14 year) is 0.00617, which indicate low longevity in the community. The comparison of population indices with the state indices reveal that the Lohar-Gadiyas population is lagging

**Table 2: Population Characteristic among Lohar-Gadiyas of Malthon**

| S. No. | Characteristics                     | Lohar-Gadiyas        | Madhya Pradesh population* |
|--------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1.     | Population size                     |                      |                            |
|        | (a) 0-14 years                      | 47.85%               | 38.1%                      |
|        | (b) 15-69 years                     | 51.84%               | 58.1% (15-59)              |
|        | (c) 70+ year                        | 0.295%               | 3.8% (60+)                 |
| 2.     | Medium age population of households | 20-25 years (70-86%) |                            |
| 3.     | Young dependency ratio              | 92.30                | 65.5                       |
| 4.     | Old dependency ratio                | 0.0056               | 6.5                        |
| 5.     | Total dependency ratio              | 92.87                | 72.1                       |
| 6.     | Index of aging                      | 0.0061               | 10.0                       |

\* Source: National Family Health Survey, Madhya Pradesh, 1992, International Institute for population Science, Mumbai

**Table 3: Shows vital rate of Demographic characteristics among Lohar-Gadiyas**

| S. No. | Vital rates                                          | Lohar-Gadiyas | Madhya Pradesh population* |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| 1.     | Crude birth rate                                     | 128.9         | 34.4                       |
| 2.     | Crude Death rate                                     | 47.19         | 12.7                       |
| 3.     | General Growth Rate                                  | 76.17         | 21.7                       |
| 4.     | Child women ratio                                    | 1622.22       | -                          |
| 5.     | Infant mortality rate                                | 144.3         | 104                        |
| 6.     | Total fertility rate                                 | 466.66        | 4.6                        |
| 7.     | Average number of children born per eligible couples | 4.13          | 3.2                        |

\* Source: National Family Health Survey, Madhya Pradesh, 1992, International Institute for population Science, Mumbai

behind. Similar observation have been made by others on other population of Madhya Pradesh. Pandey and Saxena (1988), Pandey and Tiwary (1994), Pandey (1998), Verma (1999), Pandey and Goel (1999) and others.

On the basis of births and deaths occurred since last year preceding the survey, vital rates for the populations have been computed. As evident from the table 3. The Lohar-Gadiyas have higher Crude Birth rate (128.9) and Crude death rate (47.19) as compared with the vital rate of Madhya Pradesh. Thus, the population growth rate among the Lohar-Gadiyas has been quite higher than the state. The infant mortality rate and average number of children born per eligible

couple among Lohar-Gadiyas are 144.3 and 4.14 individual respectively, which are quite higher than the state. The crude birth rate is 129.89 and General fertility rate is 424.24 and the total fertility rate is 466.66, which is higher than the total fertility rate of Madhya Pradesh. The child-women ratio among Lohar-Gadiyas is 1622.22. The crude death rate among Lohar-Gadiyas are 47.19 and general growth rate is 76.7, which is very higher than Madhya Pradesh.

The demographic analysis of the data among Lohar-Gadiyas of Malthon town of Sagar District, Madhya Pradesh, India has revealed that most of the Lohar-Gadiyas are illiterate and poor. They lead a semi-nomadic life, lives in a tent like houses having only one room including kitchen. They are mainly engaged in blacksmith work and have an average monthly income of Rs 1201-2500. Their fertility rate is very high, though the age at marriage is high. The mortality level is high, particularly the infant mortality. The acceptance of family planning devices is very low. Under these circumstances, it is highly desirable to take step for reducing infant mortality and fertility rate by providing more medical health and family welfare services and by increasing acceptance of spacing methods of family planning.

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