



## PRESS RELEASE

New Delhi, 18 September 2019

### **New Report Highlights Dismal Living Conditions of Delhi's Gadia Lohar Community: Urges Government to Take Immediate Action to Prevent Further Marginalization**

At a press conference held in New Delhi today, **Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN)** released a new report titled *Mapping the Marginalized: Delhi's Gadia Lohar Community*.

The report was released by Shri Balkrishna Renake (Former Chairperson, National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes) and members of Delhi's Gadia Lohar community. Kiran, Bharti, and Pavan—from different Gadia Lohar settlements—highlighted challenges faced by them in accessing their Fundamental Rights, including education, and essential services. Other speakers at the launch event included Mr Ramesh Sharma (National Convenor, Ekta Parishad), Ms Pallavi Renake (Member, Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission), Mr Vishesh Ravi (Member of the Legislative Assembly from Karol Bagh, Delhi), and Ms Shivani Chaudhry (Executive Director, Housing and Land Rights Network).

The report presents the findings of a primary study, conducted by HLRN in collaboration with the Gadia Lohar Sangharsh Samiti, on the living conditions of the Gadia Lohar community—an extremely marginalized and historically nomadic community—living in over 58 'informal settlements' (*bastis*) in Delhi. Among other goals, the study aims to fill existing gaps, including the acute lack of data and information about the Gadia Lohars, and the absence of an adequate law and policy framework to address their continuing neglect and marginalization.

#### **Major Findings from HLRN's Report:**

- 1. Absence of adequate housing and repeated incidents of forced eviction:** All the Gadia Lohar settlements surveyed consist of highly inadequate temporary structures, mostly situated near roadsides, and unable to withstand extreme weather. Their poor living conditions are further exacerbated by frequent forced evictions by state agencies, with 53 of the 58 surveyed settlements having undergone demolitions, without the provision of any notice or rehabilitation. This has resulted in a persistent violation of people's human right to adequate housing.

In August 2017, a settlement of 62 Gadia Lohar families was demolished in Mansarovar Park, Delhi. In 2018, demolitions were reported in Gadia Lohar settlements in Chirag Delhi, Jahapanah Park, Kirti Nagar, Narayana, Raja Puri, Rohini, and Wazirpur.

- 2. Abysmal living conditions:** Most of the Gadia Lohar settlements lack access to basic services and facilities, resulting in the violation of multiple human rights, including *inter alia* their rights to health, water, sanitation, work/livelihood, privacy, and security of the person and home. The Fundamental Right to education of children is also violated, as 78 per cent of the settlements do not have an Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) centre or *aanganwadi* while residents of almost 44 per cent of the settlements do not have access to schools.

Almost 41 per cent of the settlements lack access to clean drinking water, 22 per cent do not have access to electricity, 75 per cent lack access to healthcare services, 61 per cent of the settlements do not have ration shops, and nearly half of the settlements surveyed do not have access to garbage disposal facilities.

3. **Threat to safety, security, and dignity of women:** Nearly 64 per cent of the surveyed settlements lack access to toilets, bathrooms, and other sanitation facilities which greatly affects the safety, security, and dignity of community members, especially women and girls, who are often forced to bathe fully clothed and defecate in the open. This also increases their vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence and abuse.
4. **Absence of caste certificates and identity proof:** Although the Gadia Lohars have a strong sense of cultural identity, imbibed in history, and are listed as a ‘nomadic tribe’ in the Draft List of Denotified Tribes, Nomadic Tribes and Semi-Nomadic Tribes of India, nearly 99 per cent of the Gadia Lohars surveyed in Delhi do not have caste certificates, which not only deprives them of legal recognition of their identity but also makes them ineligible to avail benefits of various government schemes.
5. **Invisibility in state policy:** Despite being settled in Delhi for decades, most of the Gadia Lohar settlements in Delhi are not recognized by the Delhi government or its Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB), rendering them ‘ineligible’ for resettlement or permanent housing under the Delhi Slum and JJ Rehabilitation and Relocation Policy, 2015. Moreover, the community has suffered state apathy and neglect for decades, resulting in their current marginalized status.

### Recommendations:

The HLRN report provides recommendations for the government to remedy the historic injustice suffered by the Gadia Lohar community in Delhi. These include a call for the following:

- **A moratorium on forced evictions** without due process and implementation of progressive court judgments upholding the human right to adequate housing.
- **Comprehensive survey** of all settlements of the Gadia Lohar community by DUSIB to determine their eligibility for rehabilitation and inclusion in the Chief Minister Awas Yojana (CMAY) in Delhi.
- **In situ (on site) rehabilitation**, wherever land is available, to ensure that members of the community have access to the city and livelihood opportunities, and to minimize the disruption of their lives and loss of livelihoods, income, and education.
- **Provision of adequate housing** accompanied with **space for livelihood activities**, including for shops, keeping in mind the traditional occupation of the Gadia Lohars.
- **Provision of essential services** like clean water, adequate supply of potable water, electricity, and sanitation facilities, irrespective of the nature and status of tenure, and efforts to facilitate their access to education and healthcare.
- **Construction of adequate and sufficient public toilets** in all Gadia Lohar settlements.
- Declaration of ‘**Most Backward Class**’ in lieu of their historic marginalization, and provision of **caste certificates** to all community members.
- Establishment of a **Gadia Lohar Welfare Board** that also ensures that government funds are utilized adequately for the community and that schemes benefit them as well.

Housing and Land Rights Network hopes that this report will help draw attention to the grossly inadequate living conditions of the Gadia Lohar community in Delhi and result in progressive policy measures aimed at protecting their human rights and preventing their further marginalization and exclusion. With the Delhi elections approaching, we are hopeful of a positive response from the state.

---

#### Mapping the Marginalized: Delhi’s Gadia Lohar Community

[https://www.hlrn.org.in/documents/Delhi\\_Gadia\\_Lohar.pdf](https://www.hlrn.org.in/documents/Delhi_Gadia_Lohar.pdf)

#### दिल्ली के गाड़िया लोहार समुदाय की जीवन-दशा (Hindi):

[https://www.hlrn.org.in/documents/Delhi\\_Gadia\\_Lohar\\_Hindi.pdf](https://www.hlrn.org.in/documents/Delhi_Gadia_Lohar_Hindi.pdf)

---

#### Housing and Land Rights Network

G-18/1 Nizamuddin West, New Delhi – 110013, India  
+91-11-4054-1680 | [contact@hlrn.org.in](mailto:contact@hlrn.org.in) | [www.hlrn.org.in](http://www.hlrn.org.in)