



Melange

# How are brick kilns affecting our quality of life?



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By Insha Farid

Brick kilns, which are unheard of in advanced countries nowadays, are one of the leading causes of air pollution in India, harming not only the natural environment but also the poor workers associated with it. The sheer amount of smoke these kilns emit per day is enough to cause serious health problems to a healthy individual. Despite knowing about the negative impacts of these kilns on human health as well as the environment, hardly anything has been done to check their operations. Team KO inquires about the ill effects of these kilns on our society.



*Development as well as preservation of environment is necessary. With regards to brick kilns, pollution control board has issued strict guidelines for the operation as well as the amount of permissible smoke emitted. If the smoke emission is more than 1000 particles in case of any factories or brick kilns, rules call for their immediate sealing.*

— Niraj Kumar , DC Pulwama



*Brick kilns in District Budgam have major negative impacts on the environment especially with regards to the air quality, human health and vegetation. These brick baking industries are responsible for land degradation, air pollution, water quality degradation and also loss of biodiversity. The existing water bodies are contaminated by harmful compounds and continuous silt deposition from the brick kilns.*

— Bilal Bhat , Businessman



*Emission of huge quantity of toxic materials by these brick kilns is causing serious health hazards. The brick kilns emit toxic fumes containing suspended particulate matter rich in carbon particles and have high concentrations of carbon monoxides as well as oxides of sulphur that are harmful to our eyes, lungs and throat.*

— Khursheed Ahmed, Student



*Thick black clouds of smoke can be seen billowing out from the chimneys of brick kilns. Hundreds of brick kiln workers including children and women are exposed to various health hazards as they continuously inhale this polluted air. These brick kilns have made our lives miserable. We can barely breathe in the heavily polluted air.*

— Mohammad Wasif , Student



*Brick kilns emit more smoke than any other factories because a long time is required to solidify the bricks from mud. Low grade coal burnt for this process causes huge amounts of pollution.*

— Mohammad Suvaid , Private Employee



*The working conditions of kiln labourers are worse than the worst. Workers, both men and women, mostly belong to the downtrodden communities and have no knowledge of their rights and privileges. They are forced to work in intense heat without any medical facilities. Despite burn injuries, workers keep working because complaining only results in them being fired. Poverty forces these people to work at petty wages.*

— Akhtar Bhat , Professor



*It is believed that air pollution affects wild native vegetation and forests more than agricultural crops and also results in land degradation as a consequence of utilization of best quality top soil in brick making. Even the nearby streams get polluted.*

— Zara, MBA Student



*Trucks transporting bricks from these kilns throughout the day also affect the health of the people. We have literally been turned deaf due to their constant noise in addition to the deterioration of roads. Our roads resemble deserts of dust and breathing this very dust filled air causes several respiratory problems.*

— Mushtaq Ahmed , Businessman



*Those brick kilns which violate environmental laws should be fined or banned. Brick kilns pose a serious threat to the health of the people living in close vicinity. The smoke that comes out from their high chimneys is full of lethal gases.*

— Muneer Sufi , Contractor



*The concentration of particulate matter present in air in an area is three times higher when the kilns are operating than during the seasons they are non-functional. Similarly, the health of students studying at a school situated near a brick kiln is found to be significantly worse than that of students studying in a school situated in an area without brick kilns.*

— Shabir Ahmed , Government Employee



*Emission of black carbon into the air by these kilns is an obvious indication of air pollution. This has a deteriorating health impact on the workers and people who live around these kilns. They also have a large impact on vegetation and agriculture as well as the fertile land allotted to them.*

— Sahil Ahmed , Lab Assistant



*The brick kilns are occupying a large areas of land suitable for saffron cultivation, thus resulting in declining production of this priceless gift from nature. The deadly smoke and soot emitted by these kilns has drastically affected the trees and vegetable plantations in the area.*

— Ghulam Hassan , Government Employee



*These kilns have been constructed near schools, hospitals, residential areas, agricultural lands, fruit orchards and water resources, in gross violations of the Jammu and Kashmir Brick Kilns (regulations) Act 2010. Hundreds of fruit trees were felled in the karewas of Budgam district to pave way for the brick kilns.*

— Asif Ahmed , Photographer





*Mushrooming of brick kilns has not only resulted in environmental pollution but the heavy trucks employed for transportation by these kilns have also damaged our roads. Government and administration are hand in glove with the brick kiln owners that have made life miserable for us.*

— Bilal Ahmed, Businessman



*The huge amounts of coal and diesel these kilns burn to operate results in production of huge amounts of harmful residues. These horrendous residues combined with poor working condition are not only damaging to the environment but also result in several health problems both for the workers as well as the common man.*

— Mohammad Saleem , Government Employee



*Being a social activist, i cannot speak on the matter. However, I am planning on writing a detailed book on this issue soon.*

— Farooq Renzu, Social Activist



*All brick kilns need to be shifted from populated areas and it must be made mandatory for all brick kiln owners to introduce environment-friendly technology. The government can encourage this by extending carbon credit facility.*

— Mohammad Amin , Shopkeeper

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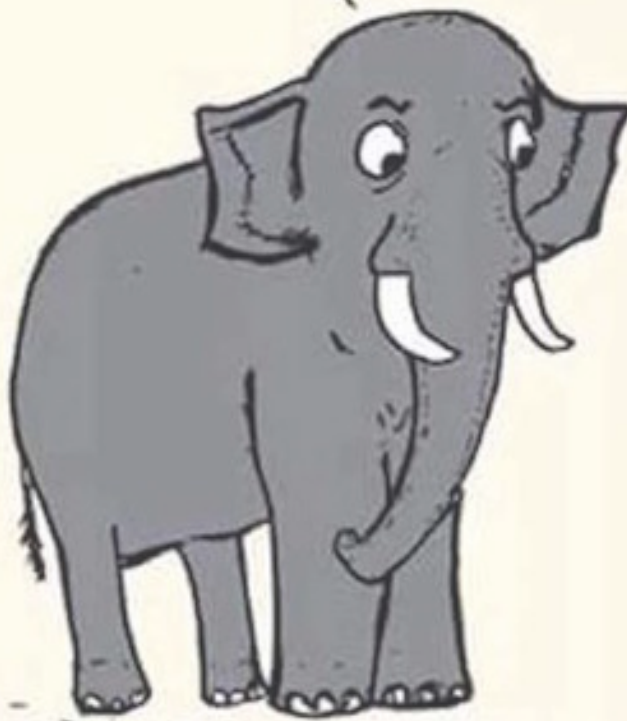
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