



BLOG CHILDREN

In Pictures: The Brick Kiln Kids of Bengal and How They Are Being Brought Back to Schools

A collection of images by photojournalist Tanmoy Bhaduri gives you a glimpse into the lives of the adults and children who migrate to work in Bengal's brick fields.

by **India Development Review (IDR)**
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A collection of images by photojournalist Tanmoy Bhaduri gives us a glimpse into the lives of the adults and children who migrate to work in Bengal's brick fields.

1. Brick kilns in North 24 Parganas district in West Bengal.



Photo Courtesy: Tanmoy Bhaduri

2. At least 10 million labourers in India are employed in the unorganised brick kiln industry.



Photo Credit: Tanmoy Bhaduri

3. These brick kilns serve as a source of livelihood for thousands of unskilled labourers from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand. The seasonal nature of the work attracts migrant labourers, many of them are landless farmers.



Photo Credit: Tanmoy Bhaduri

4. The entire family, comprising of husband, wife and children move to the brick kilns and work as one unit for the full season of the operating kiln.



Photo Courtesy: Tanmoy Bhaduri

5. Pawan Kumar (name changed) moulds up to 200–300 bricks a day. When I asked how old he was, he shrugged and turned to his parents. “About 13 or 14,” replied his mother.



Photo Credit: Tanmoy Bhaduri

6. “The payment is made to the head of each family based on the number of bricks produced. It is not uncommon to find children involved in the process to maximise income.

They get paid for each 1000 bricks they mould but it isn't much for a family, so it's important that the kids help out. An adult can make 500 bricks a day, a kid can make 200 to 300,” says a supervisor of a brick kiln in Barasat, North 24 Parganas



Photo Credit: Tanmoy Bhaduri

7. Reshma says, “I have been coming to work in the brick kiln for the past 13 years with my husband. There are no jobs in southern Bihar. My four children are also with me, I have no options to keep them at home.”



Photo Credit: Tanmoy Bhaduri

8. A girl working in the brick factory carries her young brother on her back. As most families work together in these factories, babies have to be brought along too.



Photo Courtesy: Tanmoy Bhaduri

9. Children often have to sleep in the sun.



Photo Courtesy: Tanmoy Bhaduri

10. A female child labourer recalls, “I used to go to school when I was in Ranchi, Jharkhand. I came here three months back with my parents. I also work with them.”



Photo Credit: Tanmoy Bhaduri

11. “Every year I come to Bengal from November to June. Here the rate is higher than Uttar Pradesh. Sometimes we have to work overtime.

There are local level brokers (sardars) in villages, they get good commissions but we have no options,” says Narmu Yadav, from Gazipur, Uttar Pradesh, who controls the fire inside the brick kiln.



Photo Courtesy: Tanmoy Bhaduri

12. A barefoot girl carries burnt bricks to the factory area.

Atindra Nath Das, regional director (East), CRY—Child Rights and You says, “Engaging children under 14 years of age in brick kilns is a clear violation of child rights, not only because it goes against the existing legal framework of the Child Labour Prohibition & Regulation Act; but also because it directly contradicts the spirit of Right to Education Act too, as the children migrating with their families remain out of school for several months and run the risk of dropping out. Fortunately the Union government has recently decided to conduct regular visits to such places where children are engaged at work. We do hope such endeavours will take working children back to school.”



Photo Courtesy: Tanmoy Bhaduri

Adapted from an article originally published on the [India Development Review website](#). Like what you read? [Learn more](#) about what's happening in development in India. Have an idea? [Tell us](#) what you want to read.

About the photographer: Tanmoy Bhaduri is an Independent photojournalist based in Kolkata, India.

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