

Understanding Migration Patterns and the Socio-economic Profile of Workers in the Brick Kilns of Rajasthan – Part I

Research Study as part of the Project:

**Empowering CSOs for Decent Work
and Green Bricks in India's Brick Kilns**

Research by:

Prayas Centre for Labour Research and Action (PCLRA)



**Centre for Education and Communication
New Delhi**

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Glossary

BPL	Below Poverty Line
GEN.	General Category
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
OBC	Other Backward Caste
PCLRA	Prayas Center for Labour Research and Action
PDS	Public Distribution System
SC	Scheduled Caste
ST	Scheduled Tribe
UP	Uttar Pradesh

Foreword

This research report is an integral part of the project 'Empowering CSOs for Decent Work and Green Bricks in India's Brick Kilns', being implemented by Centre for Education and Communication (CEC), Prayas and Terre Des Hommes, Germany (TDH) and is funded by the European Union (EU). The study is immensely significant to the context of the project because it will not only provide the stakeholders with comprehensive information on the socio-economic factors leading to distress migration and the debt bondage situation prevalent in the brick-kiln sector but will also provide the basis for setting up the Model Employment Exchange, as envisaged in the project.

This particular research is the outcome of the efforts of Prayas project team. The uniqueness of the research is in the fact that it gathers progressive data consecutively for the entire project period of four years with the same respondent community, the brick-kiln workers, tracking their migration pattern from source states/districts to destination states/districts. I am happy to share that we have already completed two research reports for Year 1 and Year 2. This report particularly refers to Year 1.

There are two key objectives of the study: a) Mapping and documenting the seasonal migration pattern of brick-kiln workers, including the recruitment patterns, the advance payment system, the agents involved, families, status of entitlement; and b) Understanding the socio-economic status of the workers and the factors that perpetuate migration. In doing so, the study covered 22 kilns from Ajmer and Bhilwara, employing 1,042 families from Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Bihar. The same brick kilns are being covered to understand the migration pattern each year. Moreover, parallels drawn from the previous year help to identify changing trends.

The readers will agree with me that the report has done justice to these objectives by systematically analysing and documenting the migration pattern, the recruitment system, the caste structure of the workers for each category of work in the brick kilns, the geographical dominance of workers for a specific category of work, the gender component and the gender divide among workers vis-a-vis work categories; and, finally, the economic aspects that perpetuate migration.

I am confident that, the study findings will not only be useful for the project but also for other stakeholders working on migration and in the brick-kiln sector and can be used as a crucial advocacy tool.

I thank the Prayas Team for their committed efforts and wish them luck for subsequent research reports.

Arati Pandya
Executive Director
Centre for Education and Communication

19 March 2018

Preface

The mobility of labour in India, both rural-to-urban and intra-rural, started to gather momentum in the second half of the twentieth century. The annual trek from village to distant worksites and back has resulted in migrants being permanently afloat.

Keynote Address by Jan Breman in ‘The Shape and Pace of Mobility’, a consultation on seasonal migration in Ahmedabad

This study presents the findings of the ‘migration mapping’ of a sample number of brick kilns in Ajmer and Bhilwara districts in the 2016–17 season. A typical feature of deployment of workers at brick kilns is that, in a majority of the areas, nearly all the workers are seasonal migrants. The work patterns are such that workers have to reside at the kilns. Workers migrate with their families, including women and children, for six to eight months and live at the work sites. Every brick kiln resembles a mini village, with a number of resident families. The number of workers deployed at brick kilns all over India runs into millions. In such a scenario, surprisingly there is almost no information in the public domain about the migration profile of these workers: where they come from, how many family members are present at the kilns, the number of children, and their socio-economic conditions. Therefore, migration mapping of the brick kilns in clusters, was one of the four research studies taken up under the project “Empowering CSOs for Decent Work and Green Bricks in India’s Brick Kilns”. The mapping covered the source profile of workers, the locations from where they migrated, their demographic profile, their socio-economic background, and the work conditions at brick kilns. The information generated will help ensure that interventions cover the source-destination continuum when required.

Sudhir Katiyar
Project Director
Prayas Centre for Labour Research and Action

10 March 2018

Executive Summary

This report is the outcome of a research study carried out by PCLRA in 200 brick kilns in the districts of Ajmer and Bhilwara in Rajasthan. These kilns are seasonal and attract a large number of migrant workers—both inter-state and intra-state—every year for work. The study, planned for a period of four years, is an attempt to understand their migration patterns and gain an understanding of their socio-economic status. This is Year 1. The research is part of a larger intervention, supported by the European Union, to empower Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to promote decent work conditions and green bricks in India's brick kilns.

The study has two major objectives—migration source mapping and socio-economic profiling of the workers. Twenty-six kilns, comprising 1,262 families, were covered in the survey.

All brick-kiln workers are migrant workers. The majority, that is, 67 per cent of the workers were inter-state migrants from UP, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Odisha and Jharkhand. The largest number of workers come from UP. Among the intra-state migrants, intra-district migrants from within Ajmer and Bhilwara are the highest, at 22 per cent. Every state has a specialised category of workers coming from it—almost all the *paatla* workers come from UP, Chhattisgarh and Bihar. The majority of the *nikasi*, *khadkan* and *bharai* workers come from within Rajasthan. All *jalai* workers come from UP. In Rajasthan, Ajmer–Nagaur–Bhilwara form a major source cluster whereas, in UP, Chitrakoot–Banda–Koshambi–Unnao are the source clusters. In Chhattisgarh, Mahasamund–Baloda Bazar and, in Bihar, Jamui–Navada form the major source clusters.

Families work at the kilns for an average of six-and-a-half years wherein a worker changes a contractor every two years and changes brick kilns four times. Prior to the initiation of work at the kiln, a majority of the workers take an advance payment at source from the kiln owners via the contractors. The average advance of Rs 30,000 is given against a guarantee of work for the full season. The wage rates for consecutive seasons are similar, with a negligible hike under most categories of work. The *paatla*, *bharai* and *nikasi* workers are paid on a piece-rate basis whereas the others were paid on a monthly basis. The daily wage calculation per worker under each work category reveals that not only are the wages almost 30 per cent lower than the minimum wage (Rs 200) but there is also a discrepancy between the amount the workers should have received and the actual amount they receive. In almost all cases, the workers are paid less than what is owed to them, with payment losses of up to 26 per cent. Sixteen per cent families reported, what they called, '*tut*' (negative balance) at the end of the work season. The average amount of *tut* is about Rs 23,000. Thirty-two per cent families report having *tut* at least once in their work life. On an average, a family reports *tut* twice every 6.5 years. *Tut* is the most important factor leading to bondage at the kilns. The average income of a family from a brick kiln has been calculated at Rs 84,506 annually. With the average family size at 4.06, roughly Rs 57 per day per head is the average amount available per member of the family. This is 44 per cent of Rs 130, the international poverty line, indicating extreme poverty among kiln-workers.

Working conditions are very poor, with almost all workers living in make-shift (*kuchha*) houses at the kilns, with no toilets or bathing facilities. Work hours range from 6 to 16 hours, with almost 66 per cent of workers working between 11 and 15 hours a day. More than half the workers sleep for six hours or less due to the continuous work cycle. Payment of wages is irregular and often workers are paid daily expenses (*kharchi*) in a cashless form—wherein they are eligible to get food for the work done. The families are thus forced to work long hours to meet food expenses. Children (0–14 years) migrate with their families to the kilns. The kilns do not have any available schooling, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) or hostel facilities to take care of their special needs. Whereas most children migrate to the kilns with their families, a small 15 per cent remain in the source areas. Of the children left in the source area, a majority have both parents migrating. Ten per cent of the families with children admitted to engaging their children in brick-kiln work.

Ninety-three per cent of the workers come from backward classes. In Rajasthan, a majority of workers are from the Bavri caste whereas in UP, they are from the Raidas community. UP also reported a large caste diversity among workers.

Forty per cent of the population are children below the age of 14, 17 per cent of who are below the age of five. Forty-five per cent of the population in the kilns are women. The literacy rate among workers is 36 per cent. They have limited access to government entitlements. Only about half the population have access to BPL cards, Aadhar cards, Bhamashah cards, bank accounts, ration cards and MGNREGA job cards. A small population of about 18 per cent reported using their job cards. Fifty-five per cent of the workers reported land ownership, with an average land holding of 5 *bighas*. However, 30 per cent of the land available is being irrigated. About half the population report animal holdings and about 45 per cent do not have either animals or land. All workers report ownership of a house at the source area, with the majority living in *kuchha* houses. Most do not have access to toilets. Workers from Rajasthan own a majority of the concrete (*pucca*) houses.

A considerably high rate of indebtedness is found among the families, with almost one-third of the workers in debt. The average debt per family is Rs 60,000, with an average interest rate of more than two per cent. The main reasons for this indebtedness are marriages, medical expenses, house repair and construction expenses.

These are the initial findings from the survey, planned for a period of four years, this being Year 1.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This study is one of the outputs of the project ‘Empowering CSOs for Decent Work and Green bricks in India’s brick kilns’. The project focuses on building sustainable change through decent work and green technology in India’s brick kilns and is being implemented in three project areas—Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Tripura. Prayas Center for Labour Research and Action (PCLRA) is implementing the project in Rajasthan, where it focuses on decent work conditions in brick kilns. The process of setting up the Model Employment Exchange for workers and employers in Rajasthan too has been part of PCLRA’s intervention under the project.

The current research study has been undertaken to build an understanding of the migration patterns of workers coming to Ajmer and Bhilwara districts of Rajasthan and also of their socio-economic profile. Efforts have also gone into identifying various interlinking factors that significantly impact the brick-kiln industry and the workers.

The study will map the migration patterns of workers for a period of four years. The current report presents findings for year 1.

Understanding Migration and Brick Kilns

The brick-kiln industry is seasonal and employs migrant workers on a large scale. The study aims at producing empirically grounded data to understand the migration patterns and socio-economic conditions of workers at brick kilns, with the aim of establishing a decent work environment. The study will map this data for a span of four years; presented here are the findings of Year 1.

Migration is considered an inevitable part of the developmental process. In India, ‘employment’ is the second most-stated reason for internal migration, after marriage.¹ The large

number of people migrating for employment is mostly absorbed by the informal economy of the country, comprising wage labour. Wage labour is the chief mode of income for the poor in India. This labour is largely unorganised, with limited or no access to social security of any kind. Disparities in economic growth and the poor implementation of labour laws have led to the creation of huge networks run by middlemen, to supply cheap, migrant and, often, bonded labour. The special predicament of these migrant labourers is that their movements are not tracked. This population is never acknowledged in any government-conducted surveys and remains largely hidden. The 2001 Census lists 307 million internal migrants and defines a migrant as anyone who lives in a place that is different from his/her place of birth or place of last residence. This definition casts too wide a net because it includes many people, who move over very short distances, within the same district. In addition, it likely misses a significant number of seasonal migrants.² These are neither counted in their source state, nor in the destination state and, hence, lack access to any public service, such as, education, health, infant care or PDS.

Migration to the Brick Kilns of Rajasthan

In Rajasthan, as elsewhere in the country, migrant labour forms the backbone of the brick-kiln industry. The kilns are located in the city outskirts and require a large resident labour force. This is sourced from different areas within the state and from various other states such as UP, Chhattisgarh and Bihar. The process of brick-making is characterised by a division of labour, based on a sequence of specialised activities, starting from the moulding of raw bricks to firing them and, finally, loading them into trucks for supply. Each activity has a specific requirement and specialised labour. Workers are categorised, based on tasks, under the following heads:

1 Listed on the Census of India website, as on December 16, 2016

2 Abbas and Varma, ‘Internal Labor Migration in India Raises Integration Challenges for Migrants’ <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/internal-labor-migration-india-raises-integration-challenges-migrants>

a) Paatla/Thapa/Raw brick-making workers

Paatla workers specialise in creating the brick mixture made of earth and water, which is then set into moulds and dried in the sun. When drying, the bricks have to be turned periodically so that all sides get direct sunlight. This forms the first step of the brick-making process and is done in a large, open area. Entire families of workers are involved in producing raw bricks and they constitute the largest proportion of labour at the kilns. The average annual brick production per kiln may range from two million to five million bricks per season.

b) Bharai workers

Bharai workers manually shift the sun-dried raw bricks to the kiln for firing. The kilns are centrally located and are often at a considerable distance, ranging from 100–400 m from where the bricks have been dried. A manually operated cart that can accommodate 50–60 bricks at a time is used to transport the bricks. The *bharai* worker stacks the raw bricks in the cart, takes them to the kiln, unloads them and returns for a refill. In a day, it is estimated, a worker transports roughly around 2,000–2,500 bricks. The weight per loaded cart is roughly around 80–85 kg. In a few places around Ajmer, a camel cart is used to carry the bricks. Here, two to three people are involved in the activity. The distance to the kiln ranges from 1 to 1.5 km.

c) Khadkan/Beldar workers

Khadkan workers arrange the unloaded bricks in a specific, stacked array style in the kiln. This is a specialised task and is crucial for the proper firing of bricks. On an average, a *khadkan* worker stacks about 15,000–20,000 bricks per day.

d) Raapas workers

The *raapas* workers cover the stacked bricks with ash; they clean up the kiln once the firing is done. This includes the removal of burnt ash and leftovers from the kiln.

e) Khakla workers

Khakla workers deliver the raw material (in Rajasthan, typically wasted husk from agricultural plants such as mustard/black gram) used for firing the kiln. This material is stocked at the base of the chimney at multiple positions around it. The workers often carry the material on their heads, climb to the base of the chimney using the steps available and put the material in the kiln, while following the instructions of the *jalai* workers.

f) Jalai workers

Jalai workers conduct the process of firing in the kilns. This is an extremely specialised task that needs continuous monitoring. The temperatures in the kilns are sometimes very high and even a small accident can result in death.

g) Nikasi workers

Nikasi workers load and transport the fired bricks once cooled, in wooden carts from the kilns to the stocking area/trucks, for supply. The weights and distances of carrying the baked bricks are similar to the *bharai* workers.

Workers are paid for most of these tasks through a piece-rate system. They are paid a cash advance to ensure they are bound to the workplace. They are periodically given living expenses for the duration of their stay in the kilns, and their wages are settled at the end of the work period. Wages are low, work hours long and living conditions poor.

The industry is labour-intensive because most of the processes need to be operated manually. Brick kilns work round the clock once the chimney is put to fire and the baking process initiated. The working season is around six to eight months every year, and typically begins around September, running into June, before the onset of the monsoon. This makes the work seasonal in nature.

Contractors/Middlemen form the link between the workers and the owners at the kiln. Most of the time, the contractors work as labour themselves and belong to the workers' community. They are the key resources in the dynamics of the industry.

The owners of the brick kilns are invariably from a higher economic strata. The social background of the owners is varied in terms of caste. Owners belong to multiple caste groups from OBCs, SCs and also the dominant castes. In addition to their caste statuses, owners are empowered either politically or economically and have a significant social capital with a hold on the power dynamics.

Bondage in the Brick Kilns

Bonded labour, or debt bondage, is the most common type of modern slavery in India, affecting millions of people. Much goes unreported and some officials deny that there

is any bonded labour.³ The brick-kiln industry in India is marked by unlawful labour and business practices, with the prevalence of bondage. Workers engaged in this sector can be considered to be one of the most exploited sections of the country's workforce. The social and economic location of the group exacerbates the impact of the exploitation faced by them on a day-to-day basis. The abundance of labour, the hikes in the real-estate industry and the dependence on contractors for labour supply have resulted in the substantial growth of contractors that supply labour. This leads to a race to the bottom, in terms of wages, among the contractors. Undercutting each other, they agree to minimum provisions at the workplace, diminishing the provisions and entitlements of the workers each consecutive year. As a consequence, the workers face ever-increasing isolation from their states and a deterioration of living and working conditions at the kilns.

The current state apparatus to support migrant labour is exclusionary, and legislations like the 'Inter-state Migrant Workman Act' have not been able to fulfil workers' expectations. There is an acute shortage of workforce across the country along with a faulty understanding of the categorisation of workers. Moreover, migrant workers do not form any political constituency, resulting in the indifferent

attitude of the political leaders at both the source and the destination areas. The weak state machinery also fails to track the actual presence of the kilns and, thus, the reach of the state and its provisions, remains far away from the workers at the kilns.

The primary reason for bondage is the economic dynamics, starting with the process of taking advance payment to the negative balance at the end of the working season that traps the workers in a vicious cycle. The fact that they become dependent on the advance payment in the next working season forces them to do the same work again and leaves them with limited scope for skill development and, most importantly, self-development. With the existing economic structure, they hardly get any space to negotiate.

Structure of the Report

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the research and an understanding of the worker migration and brick kilns. Chapter 2 explains the research design. Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the findings of the study in detail. Chapter 5, the concluding chapter, describes the journey so far, the shortcomings of the study and plans to improvise and move forward.

³ 'Bonded labour to brick kilns', *International Slavery Museum*, accessed December 12, 2016, <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/exhibitions/broken-lives/brick-kiln-bonded-labour.aspx>.

CHAPTER 2

The Research Design

Objective: To map the migration profile of brick-kiln workers and their work conditions over the project duration of four years.

The main criterion was to study the origin of workers—where the workers are sourced from and the changes in the source areas during the study period. The study will simultaneously map the social, demographic and economic profiles of workers, the mode of recruitment, the working and living conditions, including wage rates, average income and access to basic entitlements.

Universe and Sampling: The study targets 200 brick kilns in the operational areas of PCLRA in the regions of Ajmer and Bhilwara—this is its universe. The spread of these kilns is as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: **Geographical Spread of Brick Kilns in Operational Areas**

No.	District	Tehsil/Cluster	No. of Brick Kilns	Remarks
1.	Bhilwara	Maandal, Aasind, Shahpura, Jahajpur, Baneda, Gangapur and Raipur	150	Concentration in Maandal and Asind <i>tehsils</i>
2.	Ajmer	Ajmer, Nasirabad, Kishangarh and Masuda	50	
	TOTAL		200	

Sampling

Data collection was done at two levels.

- Profiling of the source area
- Detailed socio-economic profiling, including working and living conditions

For source migration mapping, a 13 per cent sample (26 kilns) of the total universe of 200 brick kilns was taken. Cent per cent mapping of all the workers in these brick kilns was done, covering 1,262 families living in the kilns. The mapping was done with respect to their place of origin and the contractors, who brought the workers.

Of the 26 kilns covered, 8 were from the Ajmer cluster and 18 from the Bhilwara cluster. The selection of 26 kilns was done in such a way that regions from various geographical locations within the cluster were covered.

For the socio-economic profiling of workers, again a 13 per cent sample of all families at the selected 26 brick kilns was taken, covering 160 families. These families were mapped with an average of eight families per kiln. Diversity in the category of workers was proportionately included (in a kiln, about 70 per cent workers are *paatla* workers, 25 per cent *bharai/nikasi/khadkan* and five per cent *jalai/khakla/raapas* workers). Hence, for the sample, the average composition of workers profiled per kiln includes four–five *paatla* worker families, two *bharai/nikasi/khadkan* and one *jalai/khakla/raapas* worker.

Research Tools

a. Structured interviews and questionnaires

Two schedules were developed and used for collecting data, that were filled by the field staff for every worker, through discussion and interviews.

The first was for source profiling—to document the source of the workers and the contractors they came through.

The second schedule collected data along the following aspects:

- Demographic profile: Number of family members, age, sex, education
- Socio-economic profile: Caste, asset base including land holding, annual income, indebtedness

- Mode of recruitment: Advance taken, mode of recruitment
- Work conditions: Wage rates, output, final settlement, status of *tut*
- Living conditions: housing, drinking water
- Access to basic entitlements such as MGNREGA, PDS, financial inclusion

b. Literature review

Secondary data was collected from the concerned government departments and the government data available in the public domain. Published papers in some reputed magazines were also taken into consideration.

c. Observations

The involvement of the PCLRA team allows plenty of opportunities to observe the lives of the subjects and the working conditions at the kiln closely. The engagement of the team with the workers through the year provides exposure and understanding in both the source and the destination areas.

d. Case Studies

Case studies representing individuals, families and disputes and grievances filed were also identified, to correlate with the study outcomes.

Frequency of Data Collection and Reporting

The survey will be undertaken every year at the same brick kilns that are covered in Year 1. The two schedules used will also remain the same. Every year, a report will be generated, documenting the changes taking place. A comprehensive report will be prepared in the last year of the project. This year, the data collection began at the end of February and continued until the end of the season, in June.

Scope and Limitations

The study limits itself to some of the major socio-economic and work condition-related indicators. It does not delve into the political aspects of the same. Geographically, the brick kilns are located in a very scattered manner over a large area and this poses a challenge. A major gap exists because of the reluctant nature of the owners and state officials, making information less accessible. The collection of data on economic status is based on the recollection of the same by the worker and it is often difficult for the workers to distinguish under each head.

CHAPTER 3

Migration Source Mapping

From the identified 200 kilns of the Ajmer and Bhilwara cluster, 26 kilns were mapped to identify the source areas from where workers originated. All the workers and their families, working in the kilns, were covered, resulting in a total of 1,262 families being mapped. The average number of members per family engaged in work at the kilns is 2.4. The outcome resulted in identifying diverse source clusters for both inter-state and intra-state migrants. The findings are as follows.

Composition of Labour by the State of Origin

A majority of the workers were inter-state migrants (67 per cent), sourced from UP, Bihar and Chhattisgarh. A few came from Jharkhand and Odisha. Thirty-three per cent workers are intra-state migrants, of which the majority (22 per cent) are intra-district migrants. A majority of the intra-district migrants lived at the kilns whereas there were a few, who commuted to and fro on a daily basis. The labour-contractor and labour-owner relationship depends and varies, based on the source area of the worker.

Table 2: Source State Mapping of Brick-kiln Labourers

Source States	Proportion of Workers
UP	37
Rajasthan	33
Chhattisgarh	19
Bihar	10
Others (Odisha, Jharkhand)	1

All numbers are in percentages.

Interestingly, the state-wise proportion of workers under each of the work categories at the kiln, namely, *paatla*, *khadkan*, *bharai*, *nikasi*, *jalai* and others, including *raapas* and *khakla*.

Table 3: Worker Proportions in Different Work Categories at the Kilns

Work Category	Percentage of Workers
<i>Paatla</i>	49
<i>Khadkan</i>	3
<i>Bharai</i>	15
<i>Nikasi</i>	15
<i>Jalai</i>	9
Others	8

Table 4: State-wise Proportion of Workers under Each Work Category

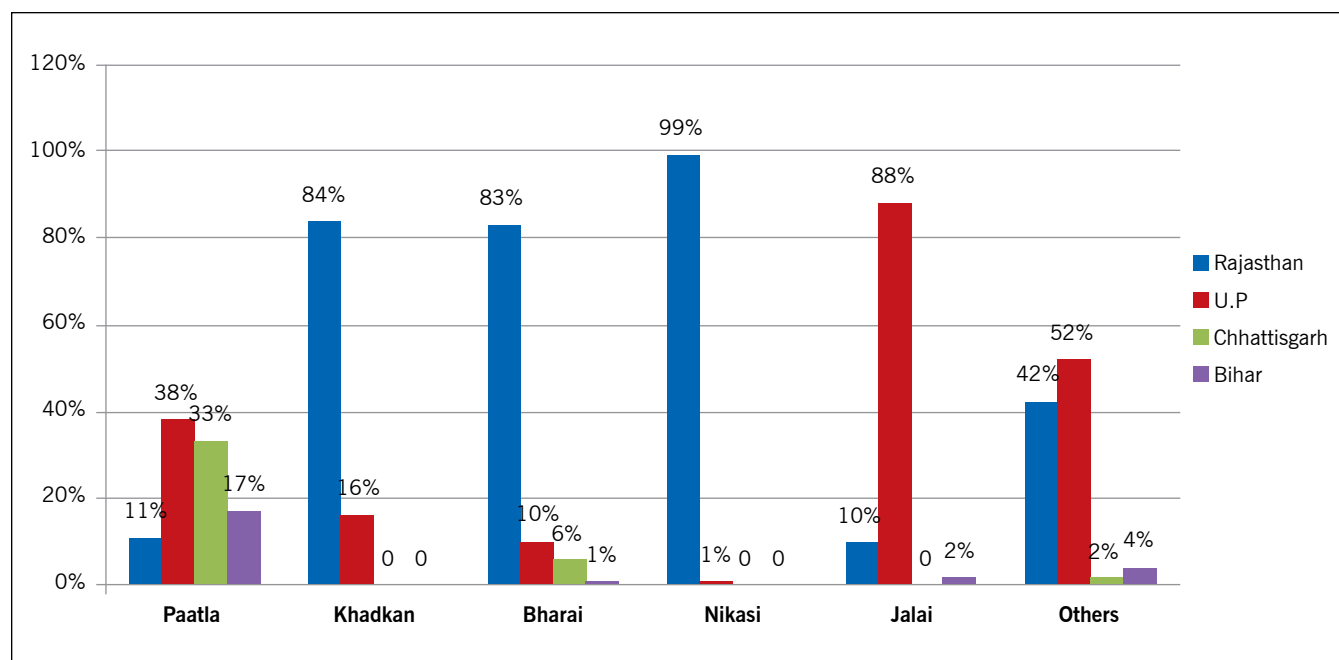
	Rajasthan	UP	Chhattisgarh	Bihar	Others
<i>Paatla</i>	11	38	33	17	1
<i>Khadkan</i>	84	16	0	0	0
<i>Bharai</i>	83	10	6	1	0
<i>Nikasi</i>	99	1	0	0	0
<i>Jalai</i>	10	88	0	2	0
Others	42	52	2	4	0

All numbers are in percentages.

From the data, it can be inferred that the maximum number of inter-state migrant workers come for *paatla* and *jalai* work. For *jalai* work, which is a specialised job, the workers largely come from UP. Interestingly, almost all the *nikasi* workers and a majority of the *khadkan* and *bharai* workers are intra-state migrants.

Figure 1 provides a clear understanding of the data listed in Table 4. It gives an overall picture of the labour composition and the proportion from each state.

Figure 1: Proportion of Workers and Work Categories from the Source States



State-wise Analysis

The four major states—Rajasthan, UP, Chhattisgarh and Bihar—from which workers migrate for work have been analysed. The major clusters within these states from which maximum workers migrate have also been identified. These comprise those districts from where more than five per cent of the total labour population migrates. Also, within these districts, *tehsils* that are the source for more than 60 per cent of the labour from the respective districts have been identified.

Rajasthan

Thirty-three per cent of the workforce at the kilns is intra-district migrant population, that is, migrating within Rajasthan. The major source clusters of the labour, in descending order, are the districts of Ajmer, Nagaur, Bhilwara, Pali and Rajsamand. All the districts (Nagaur, Pali, and Rajsamand) are in the western neighbourhood of the destination location—Ajmer and Bhilwara, which have historically housed SC communities (including Baori, Meghwal and Nayak), who have always worked in brick kilns. The majority of workers come from Ajmer to kilns in both these destinations—Ajmer and Bhilwara.

Table 5: Intra-state Migration Pattern for Rajasthan

Source Districts	Total Proportion of Workers from Rajasthan, N=1262	Worker Proportions Rajasthan, N=404
Ajmer	16	48
Nagaur	9	28
Bhilwara	6	18
Pali	2	5
Rajsamand	<1	1
Total	33	-

All numbers are in percentages.

The major *tehsils* under each district from where the labour was sourced were also identified. It is also worth comparing this data to the districts where the kilns exist, to understand the extent of intra-district migration. Kishangarh, Masuda, Maandal and Aasind all of which were major source *tehsils* were also the destination areas, indicating that a majority of workers were intra-district migrants.

Table 6: Source Cluster/*Tehsil* Mapping for Rajasthan

District	Major source <i>tehsils</i>	Minor source <i>tehsils</i>	Locations of Kilns—Shift to End
Ajmer	Kishangarh, Masuda	Shrinagar, Kisangarh, Bhinai, Kekri, Pushkar, Bewar	Masuda, Shrinagar, Kishangarh, Nasirabad
Nagaur	Parbatsar	Makrana, Degana, Merta, Riyabari	-
Bhilwara	Maandal, Aasind	Shahpura, Badnor, Banera, Jahajpura	Aasind, Mandal, Jahajpur, Gangapur, Shahpura, Banera, Raipur
Pali	Raipur	-	-
Others (Rajsamand, Bharatpur, Kota)	Bhim (Rajsamand), Bharatpur (Bharatpur)	Devgarh (Rajsamand), Kota	-

Mapped here are the major and minor source clusters of Rajasthan. The major source clusters—Ajmer, Nagaur and Bhilwara—contribute to 94 per cent of the intra-state migrant population. (Figure 2)

Proportion of Intra-state Migrant Workers from Rajasthan

The total proportion of workers from Rajasthan to the brick-kiln industry is 33 per cent. As seen in Table 4, almost all *nikasi* workers are intra-state migrants coming from Rajasthan. The largest number of *khadkan* and *bharai* workers come from Rajasthan. Also, a large number of workers in the *raapas* and *khakla* category (clubbed under the 'Others' category) come from Rajasthan. The *paatla* and *jalai* workers are largely from outside the state.

Uttar Pradesh

Among the inter-state migrant workers source locations, UP was found to be supplying the highest number of workers, contributing 37 per cent of the workforce, more than the total number of intra-state workers. A majority of the workers (86 per cent) were recorded from the cluster areas of Chitrakoot–Banda–Koshambi–Unnao. Of this, almost 60 per cent workers

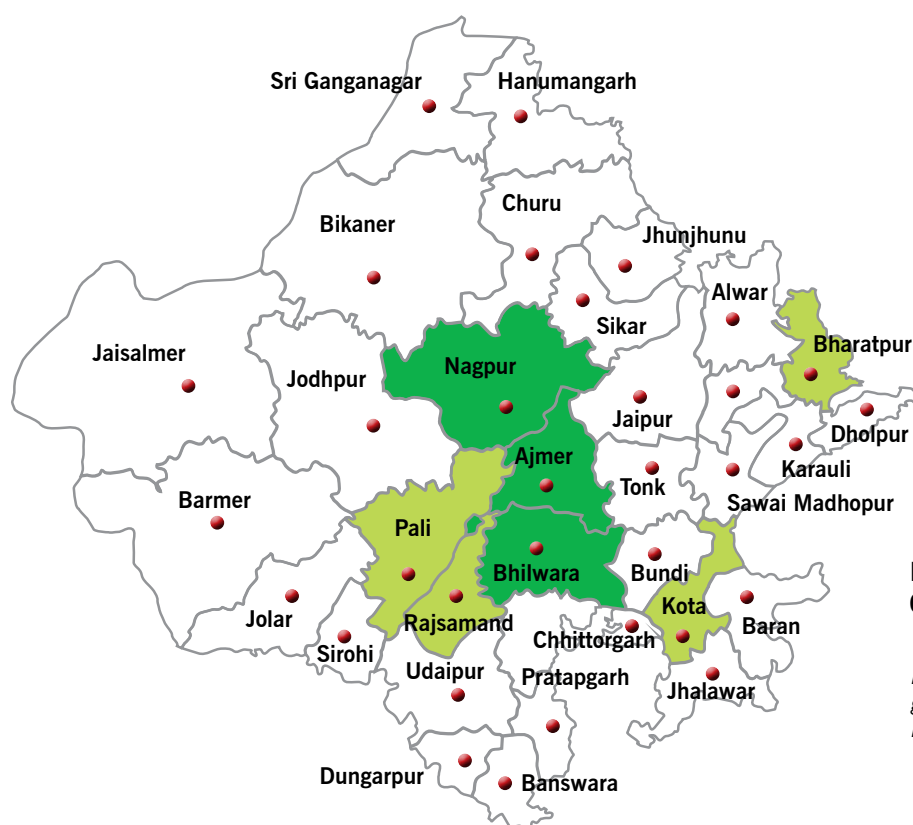


Figure 2: Major and Minor Source Clusters of the Districts of Rajasthan

Major source locations are marked in dark green; minor source locations are marked in light green.

come from Chitrakoot alone. There is also some influx from the districts of Agra, Pratapgarh and Allahabad. There is very great diversity observed in the working profile of the workers migrating.

Table 7: Source Cluster/*Tehsil* Mapping for UP

	District	Major source <i>tehsils</i>	Minor source <i>tehsils</i>
Major cluster (86 per cent workers from UP)	Chitrakoot (60 per cent)	Karvi, Rajapur	Mau, Manikpur, Pahadi
	Banda	Baberu	-
	Koshambi	Chamal	Siratu
	Unnao	Purva	Bhilaigarh, Hiloli
Other minor clusters	Pratapgarh	Kundar	-
	Agra	Dayabag	-
	Allahabad	Kodiyar	Chayal
	Others (Bareilly, Raibareilly, Barabanki, Kanpur, Rampur)		Ramsinghnagar, Bahedi, Goriya, Sahi, Maharajgunj, Lalgunj, Pithora, Munav

Mapped here are the source clusters of UP. The major cluster has been highlighted, which contributes 88 per cent of the total workforce coming from UP. (Figure 3)

Proportion of Workers Migrating from UP

The category-wise proportion of workers from UP to the brick-kiln industry can be referred to in Table 4. There is maximum diversity in terms of work categories in workers from UP. The maximum numbers of *paatla* workers (38 per cent) and *jalai* workers (88 per cent) are inter-state migrants coming from UP. *Nikasi* workers, however, migrate in negligible numbers from this state.

Chhattisgarh

Of the source locations of inter-state migrant workers, Chhattisgarh comes after UP in the proportion of workers migrating for work. Chhattisgarh contributes 19 per cent of the workforce at the kilns. A majority of the workers are *paatla* workers and a small number are engaged in *bharai* too.

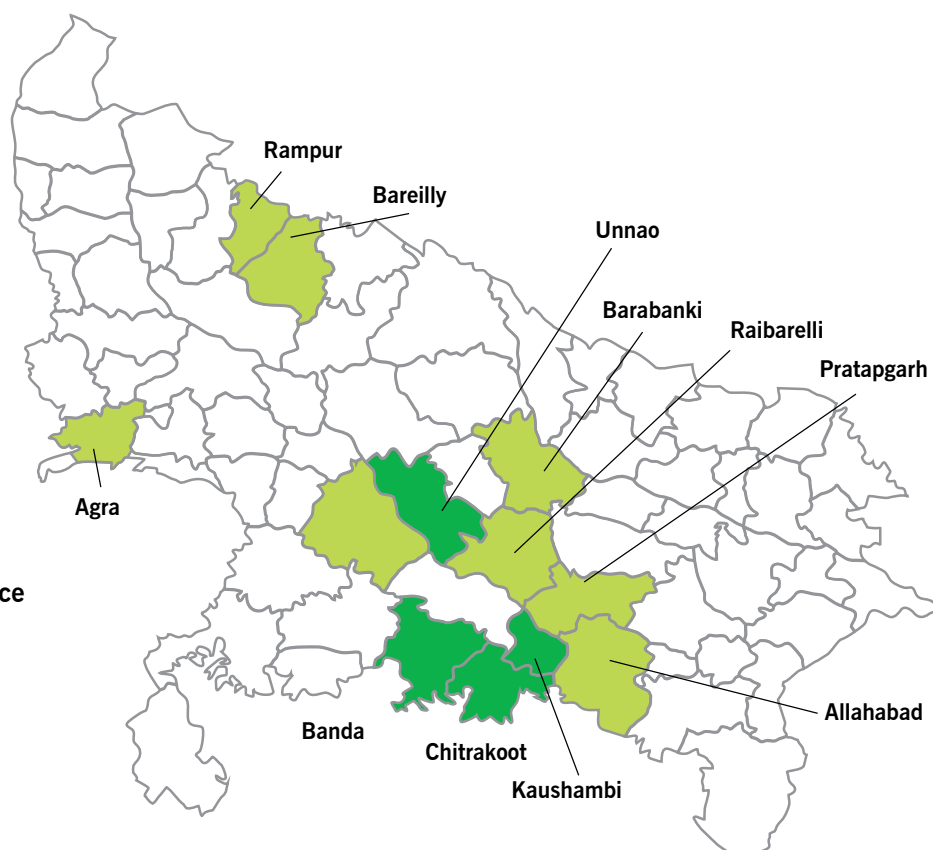


Figure 3: Major and Minor Source Clusters of the Districts of UP

Major source locations are marked in dark green; minor source locations are marked in light green.

Table 8: Source Cluster Mapping for Chhattisgarh

	District	Major Source Tehsils	Minor Source Tehsils
Major cluster (90 per cent workers from Chhattisgarh)	Mahasamund (85 per cent)	Pithora, Mahasamund	Karjod, Pariva, Basna, Tinukona, Jharman, Saraipali
	Baloda Bazar (5 per cent)	Bhilaigarh	Sarsua
Minor clusters	Raipur	Raipur	Tumgaon, Bilaspur
	Janjgir-Champa		Jejepur, Janjgir-Champa, Dabra, Basnedi

Mapped here are the source clusters of Chhattisgarh. The major cluster, which contributes almost 90 per cent of the total workforce coming from the state, has been highlighted. (Figure 4)

Proportion of Workers Migrating from Chhattisgarh

The category-wise worker proportion from Chhattisgarh to the brick-kiln industry has been outlined in Table 4. Almost all the workers coming from the state are engaged in *paatla* work and contribute 33 per cent of the *paatla* workers' workforce. Around 6 per cent are *bharai* workers.

Bihar

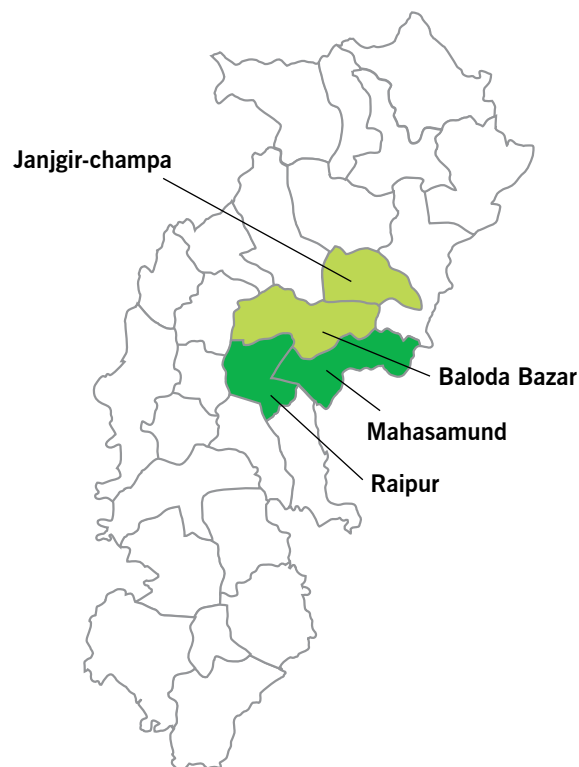
Ten per cent of the inter-state migrant labour comes from Bihar. A majority of the workers come from the district of Jamui and Navada in Bihar and are engaged in *paatla* work, totalling up to almost 70 per cent.

Mapped here are the source clusters of Bihar. The major cluster from where 88 per cent of the total migration occurs has been highlighted. (Figure 5)

Proportion of Workers Migrating from Bihar

The category-wise proportion of workers coming from Bihar to the brick-kiln industry has been outlined in Table 4. It must be noted that the almost all the workers coming from Bihar engage in *paatla* work contributing 17 per cent of the total *paatla* workforce at the kilns.

Figure 4: Major and Minor Source Clusters of the Districts of Chhattisgarh



Major source locations are marked in dark green; minor source locations are marked in light green.

Table 9: Source Cluster Mapping for Bihar

	District	Major Source Tehsils	Minor Source Tehsils
Major clusters (70 per cent workers from Bihar)	Jamui (35 per cent)	Chandradip, Sikandra	Islamnagar, Aliganj, Kotsikandra
	Navada (35 per cent)	Kalichak	Pakribama, Kasidhar, Pasrivarma,
Minor cluster	Banka	Banka	Bounsi
	Sheikhpura	Sheikhpura	
	Munger	Munger	

Figure 5: Major and Minor Source Clusters of the Districts of Bihar



Overall, the source migration pattern for workers coming to the brick kilns in Ajmer and Bhilwara are a mix of inter-state and intra-state migrant workers. The majority of inter-state migrants are from UP, Chhattisgarh and Bihar, in that

order. Odisha and Jharkhand have a very small proportion of workers coming to the brick kilns of Ajmer and Bhilwara to work. Among the intra-state migrant workers, the majority are from the same district in which the kiln is located.

CHAPTER 4

Socio-economic Profile of Brick-kiln Workers

To assess the socio-economic status of brick-kiln migrant workers, 160 families (12.5 per cent sample from a universe of 1,262 families was covered in the 26 kilns under study), comprising 651 members have been covered. The findings are as follows.

Break-up of Workers by Category of Work

The *paatla* workers comprise the largest proportion, followed by *khadkan*, *jalai*, *bharai* and *nikasi*. The 'Others' category include the *raapas* and the *khakla* workers, who contribute significantly.

Table 10: Category-wise Break-up of Workers

Worker Category	Percentage of Workers
<i>Paatla</i>	55
<i>Khadkan</i>	14
<i>Bharai</i>	5
<i>Nikasi</i>	4
<i>Jalai</i>	11
Others	11

Number of families, $n = 129$

Income, Wages and Recruitment Dynamics

Recruitment

The movement of workers and contractors among various kilns during their work life was mapped.

Workers have been working in the kilns, ranging from 2 years to as long as 25 years. The average experience of work per family at brick kilns is 6.5 years; of these, 20 per cent have been working for more than 10 years.

Workers changed the contractors, who hired them for work,

many times over the years. The average rate of change has been 3.16, ranging from 1 to 12 contractors. Hence, for an average work life of 6.5 years per family at the kiln, 3.16 contractors have been changed, that is, roughly a family changes a contractor every two seasons of work.

Similarly, a family even changes kilns. Families have changed kilns an average of four times in their work life, ranging from a minimum of 1 up to 20 times. This change, when compared to the average work life of 6.5 years, is very high indicating high attrition rate at the kilns. Most of the times, this is due to poor payment and working conditions in the sector.

Income

The wage rates, the advance taken, and the payments received by the workers for two consecutive work seasons (2014–15 and 2015–16) were mapped for all 160 families. Most of the payments are made on a piece-rate basis. However, two categories, that is, the *jalai* workers and the *khadkan* workers were paid, based on the number of hours they worked (monthly). The following data also covers all sources of income of a family, with an attempt to understand the overall economic condition of migrant worker families.

To have a detailed picture of the income of workers, the following factors will be reviewed.

- Advance
- Wages
- Earnings and negative balance
- Overall income scenario

Advance

Most workers take an advance before starting work. They are then bound by this debt and have to provide guarantee of work against the advance. In 2014–15, 84 per cent families took an advance before beginning work; a similar percentage took an advance in 2015–16. Interestingly, about 50 per cent of the families that did not take advance in 2015–16 had taken an advance in 2014–15 and, similarly, about 50 per cent of the families that did not take advance initially in 2014–15 took

an advance in 2015–16. A very small number of 6 per cent of the families did not take an advance in either of the seasons. Almost all the workers had to give a guarantee to work for the full season, irrespective of whether they take or do not take an advance.

Table 11: 'Advance' Details in Work Seasons

Work Season	Percentage of Families Taking Advance	Average Advance Taken in Rupees	Range of Advance in Rupees
2015–16	85	28,189	2,000–1,00,000
2014–15	84	32,041	4,000–1,10,000

Whereas the range of advance and the number of families taking advance in both the seasons was similar, the average amount of loan taken in the second season dropped by 13 per cent against the first season. This could be due to the fact that a few families, who took a loan in the first season did not take it in the second season.

The advance is taken for two reasons—paying off loans and family expenses.

Almost all workers got the advance before the onset of the work season (August/September); however, in a negligible number of cases, an advance was given mid-season, in the month of December.

Almost all the workers take the entire amount of the advance in one instalment itself; however, in a few cases, that is, in 2 per cent of the cases, the advance was given in two to ten instalments.

Wages

Workers are not paid regular wages as provided for under the Payment of Wages Act. They are given an advance in the beginning of the season, and are then paid food expenses every week. In fact, most of the times, they are not given cash for these food expenses but just valid slips against which they can draw rations from the provision shops. The provision shops where the slips are accepted are private or, in many cases, owned by the brick-kiln owners. The money for food is proportionate to the bricks made. More than often, this forces the workers to put in long hours of work and even deploy their children in the work in order to make the

required number of bricks that can provide for a basic meal to the entire family.

Accounts are settled at the end of the season; it is a complex calculation because it involves the advance amount, the variable weekly food expense, a daily piece-rate income calculation and other expenses if any. This makes it challenging for the workers, a majority of who are illiterate, to understand the calculations and, thereby, making them vulnerable.

Wage Rates

There exists some difference in the wages of the various types of workers. The wage rates depend on a number of factors such as the negotiating power of the group and its contractor, the commission charged by the contractor, the advance taken by the worker, and the need of the employer.

Table 12 draws a comparison between the two payment reasons and also gives an idea of the average rates of payment. However, while it enlists the average amount received by a family it does not capture the income per worker because the whole family is considered as one unit when payment is made, in spite of the fact that most members of the family put in equal labour. It must be viewed hence as the income of the entire family.

Interestingly, there has been no significant increase in the wage rates in the two consecutive seasons. In a few cases, the workers even settled for 5 to 20 per cent less wages compared to what they received in the previous season. This gives an idea of the poor negotiating power of the workers, especially because, often, the wage rates are decided when the labour has already arrived at the kilns, making them more vulnerable. The situation also gives insights into the possible reasons for the continuous changes a kiln makes in the labour groups and the contractors it deploys because continuous exchange ensures lower negotiating power of the contractor and the labour with the owner and also of the labour with the contractor.

The table below complements the previous table number 12 giving a deeper sense of the income and wage exploitation of the workers.

Daily Wage Per Worker

Calculating the daily wage earnings of every worker is important to get a real understanding of their earnings

Table 12: Wage Rate Comparison of Two Work Seasons

Worker Category	2014–15		2015–16		Unit	2014–15 vs. 2015–16
	Average Wage Rate	Range	Average Wage Rate	Range		Average Rate of Change from Season 1
<i>Paatla</i>	455	330–500	461	450–500	Per 1,000 bricks	1.3 per cent
<i>Khadkan</i>	9,910	8,000–12,000	10,180	8,000–13,000	Per month	2.7 per cent
<i>Bharai</i>	119	100–150	132	100–165	Per 1,000 bricks	10.9 per cent
<i>Nikasi</i>	100	100 fixed	102	100–105	Per 1,000 bricks	2 per cent
<i>Jalai</i>	10,350	7,000–15,000	10,580	8,000–15,000	Per month	2.2 per cent
Others	9,000	6,000–12,000	9,786	6,000–15,000	Per month	8.7 per cent

because multiple members are employed per family whereas the family is treated as one whole unit during wage settlement.

The total wages of a worker is calculated by two methods.

Method 1: Using the figures of the total amount of work output and the fixed wage rate. Multiplying the two figures and appropriating with the piece-rate are the wages.

Method 2: Using the figures of the three amounts the workers actually receive. The advance, the *kharchi* (daily expense) at the kiln and the final settlement amount at the end of the season (this may be positive or negative). The sum of all the three will give the total wages the workers.

If the results of both the calculations are the same, the workers are receiving what they rightfully need to get; a difference will indicate a disparity between the amount a worker must get and the amount that is actually being paid.

The above calculations when divided by the product of total work days and total number of working members in a family will produce the daily wage received per worker.

The calculations for the above can be done independently for each work category and for the first season 2014–15 because the second season was still on-going when this data was collected.

Paatla workers: For *paatla* workers, who are paid on a piece-

Table 13: Daily Wage Calculation for *Paatla* Workers for 2014–15

	Method 1 Using Wage Rate and Total Work Done	2014–15	Method 2 Using Advance, <i>Kharchi</i> and Final Settlement	2014–15
1	Average earnings by <i>paatla</i> worker families for the whole season	Rs 93,887	Advance + <i>Kharchi</i> + Final settlement	Rs 83,620
2	Average number of work days in the season. ¹	207	Average number of work days in the season	207
3	Average number of working members per family	2.4	Average number of working members per family	2.4
4	Average daily wage rate = $1/(2*3)$	Rs 189	Average daily wage rate = $1/(2*3)$	Rs 168

Number of families, $n = 47$

rate basis, the bricks they make are counted periodically. Therefore, the average wage rate has been calculated on the basis of the total output in the season and the total working members. Whereas the entire family engages in brick-making,

¹ This is the total time spend on the brick kilns, including days taken off. Assuming 6 days off in a month, the total days of work will be 80 per cent of this amount. We can, however, consider this as the total working days with the days off because workers are entitled to these off days like in any other sector of work.

including the small children, for the sake of calculation, the population of above-14 years of age is considered.

The difference in the average daily wage rate between the two methods $189 - 168 = \text{Rs } 21$

This indicates that, on an average, every *paatla* worker gets paid Rs 21 less (11 per cent) on their daily wage than what they should be earning as per work done.

Table 14: **Daily Wage Calculation for All Worker Categories in 2014–15**

Category	Method 1 (Wages in Rupees as Per Calculation)	Method 2 (Wages in Rupees Actually Received)	Differences in the Average Daily Wages in Rupees
<i>Khadkan</i>	183	155	28
<i>Bharai</i>	278	278	0
<i>Nikasi</i>	261	258	3
<i>Jalai</i>	153	117	36
Others	154	149	5

In most cases, (apart from *bharai*) the workers have received lower payments (Method 2) than the actual payment they should have (Method 1). The payment loss by the workers varied from 1 to 24 per cent.

The average minimum wage for semi-skilled labour in Rajasthan in 2014–15 was Rs 200.² Evidently, most categories of workers—*paatla*, *khadkan*, *jalai* and others such as *raapas* and *khakla* get an average 30 per cent lower than the minimum wage. Workers spend an average of 14 hours per day to earn these wages. If overtime is taken into consideration, workers receive only about one-third of the minimum wages.

Earnings and Negative Balance (‘Tut’)

Whereas the wage rates have been analysed above, this is not the final amount that the family receives at the end of the season. The total work done by the family (wage rate *

number of working days) is further subjected to deductions of the advance taken, the daily expenses of food (*kharchi*) and sometimes other expenses such as medical expenses, local travel expenses, etc.

Many a times, after these deductions, families end up with a negative balance called ‘*tut*’. *Tut* acts as a binding force to the kiln and often workers are forced to return to the same kiln to repay this *tut*. This ‘*tut*’ can be viewed as the real indicator of bondage.

Details of Earnings and *Tut* Per Family in 2014–15

Eighty-three per cent families earn a take-away income from the kilns; 16 per cent reported a *tut* and 1 per cent showed zero balance after deductions. The average take-away income received by the 83 per cent was Rs 26,060 for the entire season.

As mentioned, 16 per cent of the families reported *tut*. The average amount of *tut* per family was Rs 22,910, which is interestingly almost on lines of the average earnings per season.

Overall, 32 per cent of the families have reported *tut* at least once in their work life. On an average, a family reported *tut* ‘twice’ in their work life, averaging 6.5 years. The negative balance ends very slowly and occurs continuously, trapping the labour in bondage for years. Workers with *tut* are bound by condition to return to the same kilns/through the same contractor for work.

Overall Income

The annual income per family is around Rs 93,700 from various sources, including work in the brick kilns, under MGNREGA and other sources such as agriculture and other daily wage work. This is the entire family’s income, with an average 2.4 members per family involved in full-time labour while being considered as a single unit during wage payment.

In October 2015, the World Bank updated the international poverty line at US\$ 1.90 a day.³ That is about Rs 130 in the

² <http://www.paycheck.in/main/salary/minimumwages/rajasthan/minimum-wages-in-rajasthan-w-e-f-january-1-2014-to-june-30-2014>, as accessed on December 14, 2016

³ www.worldbank.org; retrieved December 16, 2016.

Indian currency. The average income of a family working in a brick kiln has been calculated at Rs 84,506 annually. With the average family size at 4.06, roughly Rs 57 per day per head is the average amount available to each member of the family. This is 44 per cent of the amount that defines the international poverty line, indicating extreme poverty amongst kiln workers.

Working Conditions

The conditions of work in the kilns have been analysed and found to be very poor.

Living conditions

Almost all the families live in make-shift arrangements/*kuchha* houses at the kilns. A small area in the corner of the kilns is usually allocated for rooms/houses to be built. These are usually small, dingy and cramped. Water and electricity are available at all kilns. None of the families reported having any toilet or bathing facilities at the kiln and all workers, including women and children, defecate and bathe in the open. Although not recorded, cases of sexual harassment are not uncommon. Material for cooking such as fire material is provided by the owner of kiln. The overall living environment is smoke-laden due to the firing of the kilns. The houses are very small, with low ceilings. The extreme temperatures of Rajasthan in summer and winter make the kiln environment more challenging.

Work hours

Most workers, particularly the *paatla* workers, work very long hours. The work hours range from 6 to 16 hours per day, with an average of 12 hours. Work continues through the night. The owners set up elaborate lighting arrangements at work stations, to ensure smooth functioning in the night. Work is done in intervals, keeping the worker occupied through the day and the night. For example, after moulding the bricks in wet mud, the *paatla* workers have to keep rotating them, to expose every surface to the sun. This goes on through the day, even if they have finished moulding the bricks.

Table 15: Work Hours at the Kilns

Hours of work	6 to 10 Hours	11-15 Hours	>15 Hours
Percentage of Workers	32	66	2

Number of families, $n = 158$

Similarly, the hours workers sleep has also been recorded. Many workers do not even get the minimum required amount of sleep of six hours. Some sleep for as low as four hours and that too not at an uninterrupted stretch but sporadically in shifts. The work conditions entrap them in a way that they have to work like machines to ensure they have enough to eat.

Table 16: Sleep Hours of Kiln Workers

Hours of Sleep	<=6 Hours	7-8 Hours	>8 Hours
Percentage of Workers	52	48	0

Number of families, $n = 158$

Holidays are not allowed and, in many cases, employers indulge in verbal and physical abuse with their workers if someone asks for one.

Payment of wages

As mentioned, workers are not paid regular wages as provided for under the Payment of Wages Act. They are given an advance in the beginning of the season, which is variable, and then are paid food expenses on a weekly or fortnightly basis. They have to manage all their other expenses in this amount. In fact, in most cases, they are not even given money for the food expenses but are given cash slips against which ration can be drawn from a particular ration shop. This ration shop usually belongs to the brick-kiln owners. The settlement of accounts is done at the end of season ensuring that no worker can leave the kilns in between. The payment of food expenses is proportionate to the bricks made. This forces the workers to put in extra-long work hours and deploy every family member including the children in the job. Lower production result in lower payment for food.

Denial of Child Rights

Migration to the brick kilns leads to denial of rights of children. There are no schooling or ICDS facilities at the brick kilns. Whereas most families bring their children to the kilns, a minor 15 per cent child population have been left behind in the source region. Seven per cent of the children, who stayed back, had a parent (mother in all cases) staying back with them. The remaining 93 per cent of the children were left behind without either parent.

Of the total 56 per cent families, who reported to have children below 14 years, 10 per cent admitted to engaging their children in brick-kiln work. Whereas, clearly, the number of

children working on the kilns is higher than this, the workers are hesitant to admit it.

Other deductions

Once the workers take an advance, they are forced to work till the end of the season. If they have to leave early, however genuine and valid the necessity may be, their wages are calculated at half the market rate. The negligible/no hike in wage rates in the consecutive season are also indicative of the exploitation workers undergo in the industry. In almost 20 per cent cases, workers settle for the same or less wages, compared to the previous year.

Caste-wise Break-up

More than half the population of the workers belongs to SC and almost 93 per cent of the workers come from backward classes such as SC/ST/OBC. Whereas no specific work profile can be related to a particular caste, a majority of the ST population come from Chhattisgarh and Bihar, and the OBC and SC populations from UP and Rajasthan.

Table 17: Caste Composition of Workers

Caste Category	Percentage of Workers
SC	53
ST	11
OBC	29
Minority	1
GEN	4
Unspecified	2

Number of families, $n = 160$

Workers from various castes migrate to the kilns. In Rajasthan, almost 50 per cent of the workers belonged to the Bavri caste (SC). The other castes included Nayak, Rawat, Meghvanshi, Kumhar, Mehrat and Dogra.

Seventy per cent of the workers from UP belong to the Raidas and the Varma communities. UP also has the maximum caste diversity, with workers coming from the Gurjar, Harijan, Rajput, Paswan, Yadav, Thakur, Chamar, Khatik and Kho-Seventyri communities. Minorities such as Muslims and Manjhias were also found.

The workers of Chhattisgarh, Orissa and Bihar were evenly spread across various castes. Many workers used surnames

such as Saroj, Gautam, Ambedkar, Chaudhari, etc., instead of their caste. This is a change in trend from the past few years.

Age Profile

The average family size is 4.06. Forty per cent of the population comprised children below 14 years, of which 42 per cent were children below six. Each family has an average of 1.6 children. Fifty-six per cent of the families housed all the children below 14 years, wherein the number of children in each family varied from 1 child to 5 children.

At the kilns where the entire family is engaged in work, the average family size at the kilns starting with children above 14 years of age is 2.4. This indicates that, in every family, at least 2.4 members were engaged in work at the kilns.

Table 18: Age Profile of Families at Brick Kilns

Age Group	Total Number	Percentage of Members
0-5	108	17
6-14	152	23
14-50	376	58
50 above	15	2

Number of persons, $n = 651$

Gender Break-up

Whereas 14 per cent of the families are single male migrants, overall 55 per cent of the population are men and 45 per cent women.

Literacy Rate

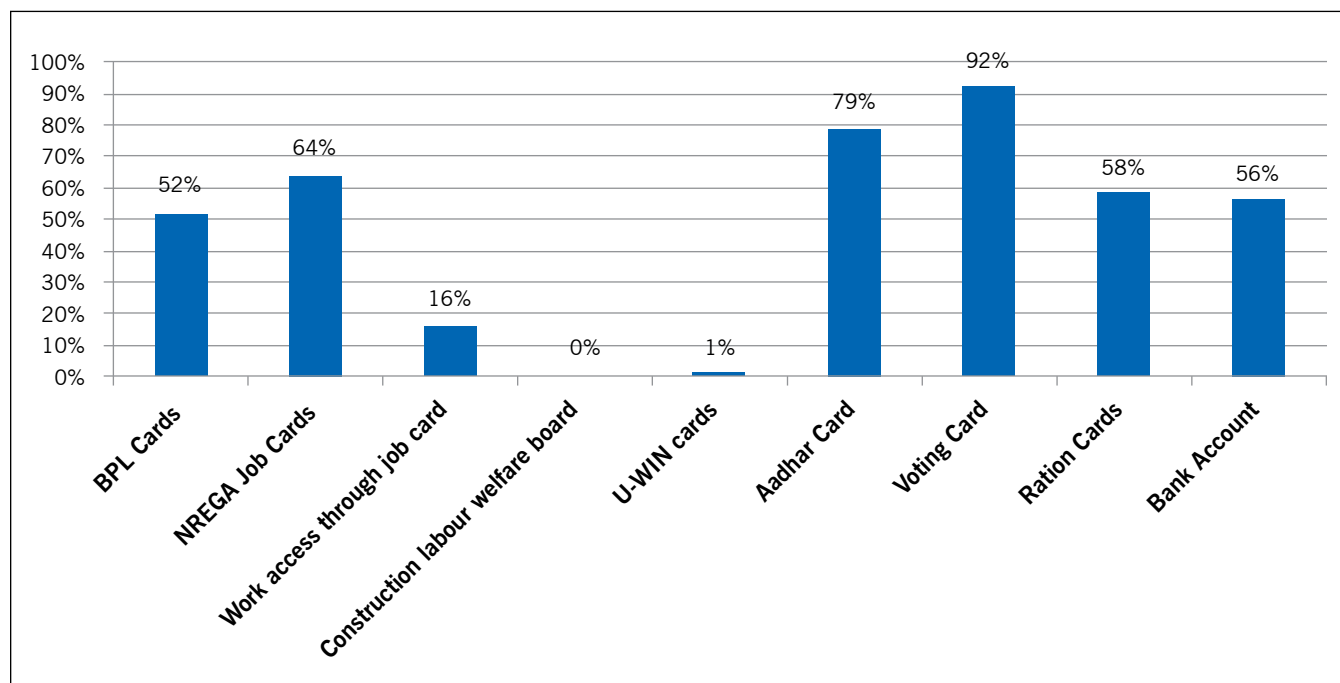
The literacy rate across families is 36 per cent; with the literacy rate of women being 24 per cent and men 46 per cent. Literacy was defined as independent reading and writing skills.

Access to Entitlements

The Indian government has had in place many welfare policies/entitlements for the poor. Access to these has generally been low.

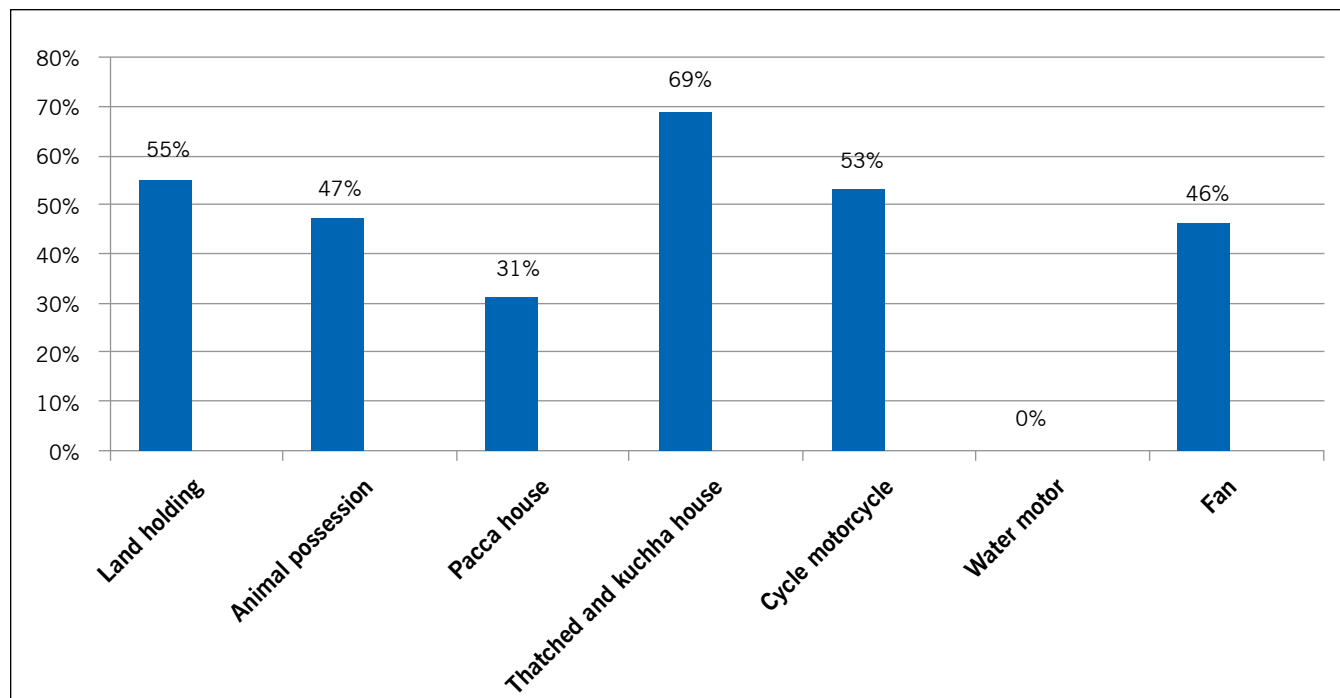
Fifty-two per cent families have BPL cards and 64 per cent have job cards. Of the 64 per cent with job cards (MGNREGA), 18 per cent accessed work for an average of 90 days in a year.

Figure 6: Access to Government Entitlements and Schemes



Number of families, n=160

Figure 7: Asset Base of Workers



Number of families, n=160

Government security schemes were seldom availed of by the families. None of the 160 families is connected to the Construction Labour's Welfare Board,⁴ 53 per cent to the Bhamashah scheme,⁵ one per cent had a U-WIN cards⁶ and in 79 per cent families had Aadhar Cards. Fifty-six per cent families had a bank account and 58 per cent accessed the PDS system for rations. Ninety-two per cent families have voter ID cards, of which 88 per cent have cast their vote in the previous elections.

These figures suggest that a deeper enquiry is necessary to understand why migrant workers' populations have not been registered under the various welfare schemes of the government and what are the various mechanisms the migrants use to manage their food, health and daily living expenses. At the kilns, the owners take care of minor health issues of the workers through a tie-up with a small private dispensary; however, when the problem is more complicated, the worker is asked to return to the source state. The quality of such health care is further questionable.

Assets Base

Land-holdings

Almost 55 per cent of the families reported land ownership, with an average holding of 5 *bighas*,⁷ ranging from a minimum holding of 1 to 20 *bighas*. The workers that reported land-holding came from 3 states—Rajasthan (50 per cent), U.P (38 per cent) and Chhattisgarh (12 per cent). The average land-holding in Rajasthan was about 5 *bighas*, in UP, about 4.5 *bighas* and in Chhattisgarh about 4 *bighas*. Thirty per cent of the land from the total available land was irrigated. Of the irrigated land, 52 per cent belongs to the workers from UP, 45 per cent to those workers from Rajasthan and 3 per cent to workers from Chhattisgarh. Other inter-state migrant workers (Bihar, Odisha) were landless and, thus, more vulnerable and dependent on income from brick kilns.

Animal-holding

Forty-seven per cent of the families own animals. Again, as

in the case of land-holdings the workers, who have animals, belong to Rajasthan, UP and Chhattisgarh. Of the workers who owned animals 60 per cent are from Rajasthan, 32 per cent from UP, and eight per cent from Chhattisgarh.

Of all the animals, goats are the most popular animals, followed by cows. The remaining animals are found in fewer quantities.

Most families that engage in some kind of agriculture do not have any animal such as a bull, to support their agricultural work. In most cases, the animals are owned by workers possessing land because it is possible to feed them. Thus, almost 45 per cent of the families on the kilns do not possess any land or animal.

Housing

All the families reported they have a house to live in, in the source location. These houses varied from thatched and '*kuchha*' houses to semi *pucca* and '*pucca*' houses. Of all the families, 31 per cent had *pucca* houses and the remaining lived in thatched or *kuchha* houses. Eight per cent of the families reported having a toilet.

Interestingly, 60 per cent of the *pucca* households belong to migrants from Rajasthan and another 20 per cent to migrants from UP. Also, *pucca* houses are almost entirely owned by the SC and OBC caste segments.

Home appliances

Most families possess few to nil home appliances. Forty-six per cent of the families have at least one fan in their house. One family reported owning a water pump; this provides us insights into the challenges the families engaged in agriculture and animal-keeping may have. Forty-three per cent reported to have a cycle and 21 per cent a motorcycle. Also, more than half the families possessing a motorcycle were also the owners of a cycle. This results in 53 per cent families not possessing any form of transportation. Television was the other appliance that was owned by 30 per cent of the families.

4 Construction Labour's Welfare Board in every state provides various financial schemes to support construction labour. These schemes are essentially for financial benefit around education, house construction, hospitalization etc.

5 The Bhamashah Scheme is applicable only for the Rajasthan families, n = 62

6 The Unorganized Sector Workers Identification Number (U-WIN) is for workers to receive benefits under various schemes

7 The unit *bigha* varies within states, sometimes; it is the most common way of accessing land area in India. In Central India, *bighas* were standardized at 3025 yd²(2529.3 m²) or 5/8 acre (0.2529 hectare)

Indebtedness

As expected, there is high indebtedness among the workers. Thirty-eight per cent of the workers, that is, more than one-third of the population, are in debt. Most of the debts are taken from local moneylenders, or *sahukars*. The average debt per family is around Rs 60,000, ranging from Rs 10,000 to Rs 2,50,000. The interest rate paid on the loans is done on a monthly basis, It varies from almost half a per cent to ten per cent, with an average interest of about two-and-a-half per cent per worker.

Various reasons have been cited by the workers for taking loans. Forty per cent took loans for marriages and 26 per cent for medical expenses. The remaining loans were taken for various reasons such as house construction, household expenses, death ceremonies, payment of loans and other reasons, including agriculture and land- and festival-related expenses.

Table 19: **Workers' Reasons for Taking Loans**

Reasons	Percentage of workers
Performing marriages	40
Medical expenses	26
House repair/Construction	11
Household expenses	5
Performing death ceremonies	5
Repayment of loans	4
Others	9

Number of families, n = 57

CHAPTER 5

Way Forward, Challenges and Shortcomings

The current report is for Year 1 of the project. The study will be conducted every year for the next three years to compare and understand changes in migration patterns and the socio-economic conditions of the workers in brick kilns.

The current study used two formats to collect the data. The formats were developed by PCLRA. Whereas most of the data recording was done by the field team directly and monitored continuously, diversity and accuracy of data are potentially high. During the analysis, a few shortcomings were noticed, which will be altered in the coming years.

The greatest challenge is the reluctance of the owners and, sometimes, the workers themselves to answer questions and discuss wage details. This will be reduced as the intervention begins and more and more workers join the collective.

The data collection in Year 1 has been from the end of February to June, which was the time of just ending of the work season, which led to workers leaving the kilns. During Year 2, this will be done in May to ensure all the workers can be reached.

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