

Understanding Migration Patterns and Socio-Economic Profile of Workers in Brick Kilns of Rajasthan – Part IV

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)



 **terre des hommes**
Help for Children in Need



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Understanding Migration Patterns and
Socio-Economic Profile of Workers in
Brick Kilns of Rajasthan – Part IV

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Foreword

This report is being published as part of the research project on *Empowering CSOs for Decent Work and Green Bricks in India's Brick Kilns*, funded by the European Union (EU). It was implemented by Centre for Education and Communication (CEC), Prayas and Terre Des Hommes, Germany (TDH).

There are two key objectives of the study: a) Mapping and documenting the seasonal migration pattern of brick-kiln workers. This includes 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. Twenty-one brick kilns were studied, of which 903 families from Ajmer and Bhilwara were covered, to understand the migration patterns of these workers. Of these, the socio-economic profiling for 170 families was carried out.

This report is the outcome of the efforts of the team from Prayas Centre for Labour Research and Action. It was a four-year study, designated to map the migration patterns and socio-economic profiles of migrant workers in the brick kilns of Rajasthan. The study was initiated in 2016 and concluded in 2019. The study has mapped this data over a four-year time period, and the reports for Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 have been completed and shared during the course of the project. The current data and findings pertain to the fourth and final year of the study, and it draws comparisons with the findings of all the previous years, identifying the changing trends in socio-economic profiling and migration patterns of workers.

Along with the migration pattern and socio-economic factors that perpetuate migration, the research successfully delves into the dynamics of recruitment, the caste profile of the workers for different categories of work in the brick kilns, the geographical profile of the workers for each specific category of work, the gendered division of labour and its relationship with other work categories; and the working conditions in brick kilns. This study will be especially useful for various stakeholders working on questions of migration, regimented labour regimes and decent work in the brick kiln sector.

I thank the Prayas Centre for Labour Research and Action team for their sustained efforts and congratulate the entire project team of *Empowering CSOs for Decent Work and Green Bricks in India's Brick Kilns* for the successful preparation and publication of the report.

Lokesh
Executive Director
Centre for Education and Communication

15 April 2020



Preface

The recent Covid-19 lockdown and the exodus of migrant workers have brought the phenomenon of seasonal migration to the centre stage of national economic policy making. The brick-kiln industry is almost exclusively dependent on seasonal migrant workers. The workers are recruited through an extensive network of labour contractors against an advance for the whole work season. Every brick kiln becomes a temporary village, with resident families the numbers of which vary depending on the size of the kiln. The interesting aspect of this large-scale migration is that it remains undocumented by any state agency. This invisibility has a great impact not only on the labour rights of the workers but also on the access to basic services such as schooling for children, early childhood care and maternity health. The mapping of workers and understanding their movement from source to destination become almost the first step for any initiative that seeks to improve the conditions of work in brick kilns.

This migration study has been undertaken as part of a larger initiative that seeks to improve conditions of work in the brick-kiln industry while reducing its hazardous impact on the environment. Undertaken in the brick kilns of Ajmer and Bhilwara in central Rajasthan, the study maps the source location of workers, the mode of their recruitment, and their work conditions. This is the fourth and last year of the study. Therefore, the report also captures the trends during these four years. The study has also been complemented with an ethnographic study of Chhattisgarh, a major source area of workers for brick kilns in Ajmer. The study will be useful for field practitioners seeking to improve conditions of work, academics who seek to understand the phenomenon of seasonal migration and its driving factors, and state departments in both the source and the destination areas that are tasked with the provision of basic services to migrant workers. This is especially relevant in a post-Covid-19 world, wherein the state is much more aware of the need to track migration routes and migrant workers.

Sudhir Katiyar
Prayas Centre for Labour Research and Action

08 April 2020



Executive Summary

The current report brings the findings and the inferences of a four-year study initiated in 2016 and concluded in 2019. The main focus of the study was to map the migration patterns and socio-economic status of workers going to the brick kilns of Rajasthan. The study is the outcome of the research and intervention carried out by Prayas Center for Labor Research and Action (PCLRA) in the districts of Ajmer and Bhilwara in Rajasthan. Brick-making is a seasonal industry, which attracts a large number of inter-state and intra-state migrant workers every year in search of work. The research is part of the larger intervention supported by European Union under their project titled, 'Empowering CSOs for Decent Work and Green Bricks in India's Brick Kilns'.

The study was carried out with two main objectives: Mapping the source areas of workers migrating to the brick kilns in Rajasthan and understanding their socio-economic status. Twenty-one kilns from which 903 families from Ajmer and Bhilwara were covered, to understand the migration patterns of these workers. Of these, the socio-economic profiling for 170 families was carried out.

Migration source mapping: Throughout the study, a majority of the workers came from the state of Uttar Pradesh (UP), followed by Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Bihar. This trend was the same during all the four years. The major migration clusters within the states too remained the same, with no significant changes during the study period. In UP, the major clusters were Chitrakoot, Kaushambi and Banda, which is the primary source of *paatla* workers whereas, in Rajasthan, it was Ajmer, Bhilwara and Nagaur. The only significant shift in trend was noted in Ajmer district, where the number of workers migrating from the major *tehsil* of Kishangarh dropped drastically in the fourth year.

A majority of the workers, that is, more than 50 percent of the sample, were from the *paatla* work category, followed by *bharai*, *raapas*, *khakhla* and *jalai*. A majority of the *paatla* and *jalai* workers came from UP whereas the *nikasi* and *bharai* workers were from Rajasthan. This trend remained similar in all the four years. Chitrakoot and Banda had clusters of *paatla* workers, and Kaushambi—a part of the Central UP belt—is where the *jalai* workers originate and migrate to all parts of India.

The workers in the kilns are mainly Schedule Castes (SC), comprising over 50 percent of the population, followed by the Other Backward Castes (OBC) above 25 percent. This trend has been the same for all the four years. The overall trends have not shown any major shifts in the study period.

Socio-economic profiling of workers: The average size of a working family in the kiln (members above 14 years of age) was 2.10 in the fourth year whereas the average size of a migrating family was 3.15. The family sizes have largely shown a decreasing trend over the years.

A majority of the workers (over 50 percent) are between 19 and 59 years of age. A huge population of children (14 years and below), averaging over 30 percent are present in the kilns. Women constitute over 40 percent of the workforce. These trends have remained constant over the years.

The overall access that workers had to various social schemes and entitlements such as Aadhaar card, insurance, BPL card, ration, etc., was largely poor. There was a state-wise difference in the access, with the workers of Rajasthan having better access to most entitlements and those from Bihar being the most disadvantaged. Most workers from Rajasthan had Aadhaar, Bhamashah and Voter identity cards. These trends have been similar through the years of the study.

Regarding the ownership of land, house and animal wealth, 51 percent workers reported land holding whereas only 16 percent said they owned irrigated land. All the declared they owned a house in their state; however, 68 percent owned *kuchha* houses and 26 percent had access to toilets. The workers from Bihar were the most vulnerable because none reported ownership of any land or animals. These trends remained the same through the study years.

The overall trend shows that the financial condition of workers from Rajasthan is comparatively better than the other states. This could be because the workers of Rajasthan are mainly engaged in *bharai*, *nikasi* and *khadkan* work, which is better paid as compared to the *paatla* work.

The overall income of workers was studied, based on their income in the previous season from all sources. The different sources of income, besides brick-kiln work, were identified as agriculture work, MNREGA, animal farming, etc. A major source of earning, it was seen, was through wage labour including brick-kiln work. The average annual income per household from all sources amounted to Rs1,03,621. This when calculated against each family member came down to Rs52 per capita (way below the poverty line), indicating conditions of extreme poverty in migrant workers.

Debt was found to be a common factor in a worker's life, with almost 30 percent workers reporting being in debt. Whereas there has been a marginally declining trend in workers under debt, the average amount of debt was reported at Rs 1,03,100, on par with their average annual income, setting a threatening scenario. The major reason for debt was marriage, followed by medical expenses and house construction. Most of the loans are taken from *sahukars* (the local money lenders). These trends have remained the same for all years.

Workers take advance payment before initiating work and this practice is accepted, encouraged and is part of the entire working model of the kilns. In the fourth year, 71 percent families reported taking an advance at the beginning of work, averaging to Rs 28,482 per family. There has been a downward trend in the percentage of workers taking advance over the years, which is positive. A formal guarantee of working until the entire advance is returned is a precondition to work for 90 percent families migrating to work. Household expenses are the main reason for taking the advance.

The wage rates for different categories of work differ. Wage calculations show that *paatla* workers, the major category of workers under study and the most dominant work category, have had only a 3 percent wage hike in the last two consecutive seasons; this season, however, there has been no increment as per the report. The wage rate seems to have stagnated; this could be attributed to various reasons in the macro picture of the brick-kiln market. Daily wages have been calculated using two methods; one, based on the figures of the wage rate and work done and, two, based on the actual payments of advance, *kharchi* and the final settlement received by the workers. This method helps bring out the difference. Like in the previous years, this year too there was a difference between the two calculations, indicating lower wages paid to workers by almost 5 percent against actual work done. Although this difference has reduced over the years, it is still a problem.

Another factor that needs focus is the negative earnings, or *tut*. In the current year, almost 8 percent workers showed negative earnings at the end of season. This number has come down by 50 percent since the first year of the study in 2016; yet, it still needs further policy intervention because it makes the workers vulnerable.

The mode of recruitment is largely contractor-based; it was found that a worker, on an average, changed a kiln in less than two years and a contractor in less than three years. This may be due to the improved negotiating power of workers, which may be a result of the efforts and the strengthening of the labour collective as part of the project.

The study also brings into focus the living conditions at the kilns; one may conclude that the living conditions are very poor at the kilns, with basic facilities such as education for children, access to a *pucca* house to stay, toilets and sanitation being out of reach for most.

In conclusion, the study reiterates the many challenges that workers face such as poor working conditions, poor wage payment systems and negative balance after work. It also maps the sources of migration, which are some of the most backward districts of the country. Collectively it is a situation that demands quick notice and revolutionary policy work.

Structure of the Report

The first chapter is an introduction to the research and an understanding of migration and brick kilns. The second chapter explains the research design. The third and fourth chapters discuss the findings of the study in detail. The fifth chapter concludes the journey so far.



CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This study is a continuous output of a four-year study designated to map the migration patterns and socio-economic profiles of migrant workers working in the brick kilns of Rajasthan. The current year (2019) reported is the fourth and final year of the study. The project, 'Empowering CSOs for Decent Work and Green Bricks in India's Brick kilns' under which this study is being done, focuses on building sustainable change through decent work and green technology in India's brick kilns. The project is being implemented in three project areas- Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Tripura. Prayas Center for Labor Research and Action (PCLRA) is implementing the project in Rajasthan, where it focuses on decent work conditions in brick kilns in the districts of Ajmer and Bhilwara. The process of setting up a Model Employment Exchange for workers and employers in Rajasthan has been part of PCLRA's intervention under the project. The working and living conditions of the workers, who have migrated from different states of the country, were studied, and interventions made for ensuring better work conditions and putting an end to the exploitation of the labourers.

The study areas—Ajmer and Bhilwara districts of Rajasthan—were mapped for four consecutive years, to trace the migration patterns of workers coming to the brick kilns in these areas and also to understand their socio-economic profile. Efforts have gone into identifying the various interlinking factors that significantly impact the brick-kiln industry and the workers. The current report presents the detailed findings for 2019 and also compares these to the findings for the previous years—2016, 2017 and 2018.

Understanding Migration and Brick Kilns

The brick-kiln industry is seasonal in nature and employs migrant workers on a large scale. The workers migrating from their source areas to work in the kiln (destination area) have designated roles and work for a particular period of time. The study aims to produce empirically grounded data for understanding the migration patterns of workers, based on their source areas and work categories while also profiling the socio-economic conditions of these migrating workers. These enquiries are expected to guide interventions, to establish decent work environment in the brick kilns. As mentioned earlier, the study has mapped this data over a four-year time period (2016 to 2019). The present data and findings pertain to final fourth year of the study while drawing comparisons with all the years.

Migration is considered an inevitable offshoot of the developmental process. In India, 'employment' is the second most-stated reason for internal migration after marriage¹. Large numbers of people migrating for wage labour employment are absorbed by the informal economy of the country. Wage labour is the chief source of income for the poor in India. It is also a widely accepted fact that this labour is largely unorganized with limited or no access to social security of any kind. Disparities in economic growth and poor implementation of labour laws have led to the creation of huge networks run by middlemen, who supply cheap, often bonded, labour. The predicament of these migrant labourers is that their movements are not tracked. This population is never acknowledged in any of the government-conducted surveys and remains largely unrecognized. The 2001 Census lists 307 million internal migrants; it defines a migrant as one who lives

¹ As on December 16, 2016, the Census of India listed on its website

in a place that is different than their place of birth or place of last residence. This definition is too amorphous because it includes many people, who move across very short distances, within the same district. On the other hand, it likely misses a significant number of seasonal migrants². They are counted neither in their source state nor in the destination state, and thus lack access to any public services such as education, health, infant care and PDS.

Migration takes place due to the social, economic and political disparity persisting in the country. Inter- and intra-state migration has increased to a great extent in India. The push-and-pull factor leads to the process of migration, especially by the wage labourers. The lack of employment opportunities in the rural areas, increasing indebtedness to landowners, fragmented land-holdings, lack of permanency in the agricultural sector and insufficient wages have made the inhabitants of rural India alter their sources of livelihoods from agriculture to alternative sources of income, giving rise to the process of migration.

Migration for Brick-kiln Work in Rajasthan

In Rajasthan, as elsewhere in the country, migrant labour forms the backbone of the brick-kiln industry. The kilns are located in city outskirts and require a large number of resident labour force. This labour is sourced from different areas within the state and also from states such as UP, Chhattisgarh and Bihar. The process of brick-making is characterized by a division of labour, based on specialized activities starting from moulding of raw bricks to firing these and then, finally, loading them into trucks for supply. Each activity has a specific requirement and specialized labour output.

Based on their tasks, workers are categorized under the following heads:

a) Paatla/thapai/raw brick-making/moulding workers

This category of workers specializes in creating the brick mixture made with soil and water. This is then set into moulds and dried under 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 in the vicinity. Entire families of workers are involved in producing these raw bricks and they constitute the largest number of labour in the kilns. The average annual brick production per kiln may range from two to five million bricks in a season. The entire family unit migrates from one state to another and works for the production of bricks. From two family members to many, the production per day of the bricks depends on the number of individuals moulding bricks. This is the primary process, which determines the rest of the production in the kilns.

b) *Bharai* workers

This category of workers manually shifts the sun-dried, raw bricks to the kiln for firing. The firing kilns are centrally located and are often at a considerable distance, ranging from a few 100 m to even 1–1.5 km from where the bricks have been dried. A manually operated cart, which can usually accommodate 50–60 bricks at a time, is used by the workers to transport bricks. The *bharai* worker is expected to stack the raw bricks in the cart, take them to the kiln, unload them at the kiln and return for a refill. In a day, a worker roughly transports around 2000–2500 bricks. The weight per loaded cart is around 80–85kg. In a few places, around the district of Ajmer, a camel cart is used to carry the bricks. Here, two or three people are involved in the activity, which may incorporate the family unit.

c) *Khadkan/Beldar* workers

This category of workers arranges the unloaded bricks in a specific style in the kiln. This is a specialized task and crucial for the purpose of proper firing of bricks. On an average, it is estimated that a *khadkan* worker stacks about 15,000–20,000 bricks per day in a kiln. The *khadkan/beldar* workers need to be trained to stack the raw bricks in the kiln in a special manner.

d) *Raapas* workers

The *raapas* workers cover the stacked bricks with ash and clean the kiln of burnt ash and leftovers once the firing is done.

e) *Khakhla* workers

The *khakhla* workers deliver the raw material for firing the kiln. This is, typically, husk waste from mustard/black gramplants, used for firing in Rajasthan. This firing material is stacked at the base of the chimney at multiple positions. The

2 Abbas and Varma, "Internal Labour Migration in India Raises Integration Challenges for Migrants" accessed on September 2018 ,www.migrationpolicy.org

workers often carry the material on their heads and have to climb to the base of the chimney through the available steps to put the material in the kiln, on instructions by the *jalai* workers. This is a specialized task in the kilns, and requires observing adequate safety measures.

f) *Jalai* workers

Jalai workers conduct the process of firing in the kilns. This is an extremely specialized task and it needs continuous monitoring. The temperatures are very high, and even a small accident can result in death. This category of workers has to be trained to maintain safety and this is one of the most important work processes in kilns.

g) *Nikasi* workers

After the bricks have cooled, *nikasi* workers load and transport the fired bricks from the kilns in wooden carts to the stocking area/trucks. From these stocking areas, the bricks are supplied to the markets. The weight of the baked bricks and the distance these are carried is similar to that of the *bharai* workers.

These are the categories of workers in the brick kilns. Each category has specialized skills and migrates from different parts of the country to work in kilns. In some categories such as the *paatla* work, the entire family migrates, and members of the families work together in the kilns. In some categories such as the *jalai* workers, a single migration takes place, whereby the men of a family migrate. This is why the maximum number of workers in a kiln are the *paatla* workers. Also, some of the work has gender-specific roles, for example, *jalai* workers are men, who specialize in this aspect of brick-making.

Wages are paid for many of these activities, based on a piece-rate system. Workers are paid an advance in cash to ensure that they are bound to the workplace for the duration of the work season. This advance is provided to the workers prior to the working season at the source and the destination. Workers are provided with money on a weekly basis as part of their living expenses for sustenance. Their final wages are settled at the end of the work period, thus keeping them bonded through the season in the kilns. During the working season, if the money taken for basic necessities is in excess of the work accomplished, a negative balance gets generated. Wages are low in the brick kilns, with prolonged working hours and poor living conditions, making for an exploitative environment.

The brick-kiln industry is labour intensive because most of the processes need to be operated manually. Brick kilns typically work round the clock once the chimney is fired and the baking process initiated. The working season is around six to nine months every year and begins roughly in September and runs up to June before the monsoons. With the onset of the monsoons, the season in the brick kilns comes to a halt. This makes the work seasonal in nature, with the workers migrating for a period of six to nine months to the destination and going back home at the end of the season. Moulding, firing, transporting and supplying requires manual labour in the kilns—labour that migrates from different parts of the country.

Contractors, the middlemen, form the link between the labourers and the owners of the kiln. Some of the contractors work as labourers themselves and belong to the workers' community. Some contractors maintain a huge network of labourers, who are sent to different parts of the country. These contractors are the key resources in the dynamics of the industry, having direct access to the labourers at the source and maintaining contact with the owners of the brick kilns. These contractors earn their commission from the employers, for providing the labour.

The owners of the brick kilns are invariably from a higher economic stratum. The social background of the owners is varied, in terms of caste. Owners belong to multiple castes—from OBC, SC to also the dominant castes. Beyond their caste status, owners are empowered either politically or economically, and have a significant social capital with a hold on power dynamics. Even if the owners belong to the same caste category as the employees, the hierarchy is maintained owing to the difference in economic and political power, leading to exploitation. The owners are responsible for providing the labourers with decent living and working conditions, which they do not fulfill. The exploitative nature of the owners makes the labourers go through the system of bondage in the brick kilns.

Bondage in Brick Kilns

Bonded labour, or debt bondage, is the most common type of modern slavery in India, affecting millions of people. A lot of it goes unreported and many officials deny anyone is

bonded labour³. The brick-kiln industry in India is full of illegal labour and business practices, and bondage prevails. Workers engaged in this sector can be considered one of the most exploited sections of the country's workforce. An abundance of labour, a hike in the real estate industry and the dependence on contractors for labour supply has resulted in substantial sprouting of contractors. This results in a race among contractors, in terms of the minimum wages at which they can supply labour. Undercutting each other, they agree to minimum provisions at the workplace, shrinking the entitlements of the workers year after year. As a consequence, the workers face ever-increasing isolation from the state, and a deterioration of living and working conditions in the kilns.

The present state apparatus to support migrant labour is exclusionary, and legislations such as the 'Inter-State Migrant Workman Act' have not been able to fulfill the requirements of the migrant labour. An acute shortage of a work force, across many of the states in the country, along with a misplaced understanding in the categorization of workers, based on the type of work, is taking place. Moreover, migrant workers do not form any political constituency, resulting in the indifferent

attitude of political leaders at both the source and destination areas. A weak state machinery failed to track the actual presence of the kilns and thus the reach of the state and its provisions remain far away from the workers in the kilns. The basic provisions of public services such as the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) for children barely reach the kilns because these are nowhere in the vicinity of the villages, thus depriving the children of their basic entitlements.

The primary reasons for bondage are the economic dynamics, starting with the process of taking an advance payment and leading to a negative balance at the end of the working season, which traps the workers in a vicious cycle of bondage. The fact that they become dependent on the advance payment during the next working season forces them into the same work again, and leaves them with a limited scope of skill development and, most important, self-development. In this existing economic structure, they hardly get any space to negotiate. The vicious chain of debt that they fall into, and the constant exploitation by moneylenders and landowners in their source villages and the brick-kiln owners in their destination, keeps them bonded.

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-labor.aspx>.

CHAPTER 2

Research Design

Objective

The objective of the current study is to map the migration patterns, the profiles 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 are the workers sourced from and the changes in the source areas during the period of the study. The study will simultaneously map the social, demographic and economic profiles of the workers, the mode of recruitment, the working conditions, including wage rates, the average income, and the access to basic entitlements and public services. The literacy rate, social security in the source areas along with the living conditions of the labourers will also be highlighted through this study.

Sampling universe: 200 brick kilns in the operational areas of PCLRA in Ajmer and Bhilwara formed the Universe. The spread of these kilns is as shown in Table 01.

Table 01: The Brick-kilns Universe in Operational Areas

No.	District	Tehsil/Cluster	No. of brick kilns	Remarks
1	Bhilwara	Maandal, Asindh, Shahpura, Jahajpur, Banera, Gangapur, Raipur	150	Concentration in Maandal and Asindh tehsils
2	Ajmer	Srinagar, Nasirabad, Kishangarh, Masuda	50	Concentration in Srinagar and Kishangarh tehsils
TOTAL			200	

Sampling

Data collection was done at two levels to achieve:

- Migration source mapping of brick-kiln workers from different parts of the country
- Detailed socio-economic profiling of brick-kiln workers

Twenty-six kilns, that is, a thirteen percent sample from 200 kilns in Bhilwara and Ajmer were selected for the study over the four-year period. The selection of kilns was done in a manner that regions from various geographical locations within the cluster are covered and also the socio-economic conditions of the migrant labourers from different states of the country get determined.

For the socio-economic profiling of workers, a sample variable between 13 and 20 percent of all families at the selected brick kilns was covered. The number of brick kilns and the families mapped in the first stage and the number of families surveyed for detailed socio-economic profiling of workers is given below.

Migration source mapping

Year 1: 26 kilns (8 Ajmer + 18 Bhilwara) were studied, covering 1,262 worker families.

Year 2: 22 kilns (6 Ajmer + 16 Bhilwara) were studied, covering 1,042 worker families.

Year 3: 24 kilns (7 Ajmer + 17 Bhilwara) were studied, covering 1,172 worker families

Year 4: 21 kilns (6 Ajmer + 15 Bhilwara) were studied, covering 903 worker families

Socio-economic profiling of workers

Year 1: 160 families covered (13 percent sample of all families from the selected 26 kilns)

Year 2: 213 families covered (20 percent sample of all families from the selected 22 kilns)

Year 3: 212 families covered (18 percent sample of all families from the selected 24 kilns)

Year 4: 170 families covered (19 percent sample of all families from the selected 21 kilns)

Table 02: Geographical Spread of Brick Kilns Covered in the Study Sample

District	Tehsil	Brick kilns covered	No. of workers covered per kiln
Ajmer	Srinagar	3	272
	Kishangarh	2	73
	Nasirabad	1	43
Bhilwara	Mandal	8	269
	Aasind	4	147
	Gangapur	1	48
	Jahajpur	1	45
	Raipur	1	6
Total		21	903

Table 03: Details of Brick Kilns Covered in the Study

No.	Name of kiln	Tehsil/Cluster	District
1	JMD Bricks	Srinagar	Ajmer
2	SSB Bricks	Srinagar	Ajmer
3	Prajapati Bricks	Srinagar	Ajmer
4	JMD Bricks	Kishangarh	Ajmer
5	Vaishnav Devi Bricks	Kishangarh	Ajmer
6	Sona Bricks	Nasirabad	Ajmer
7	Vinayak Bricks	Asindh	Bhilwara
8	Saras Bricks	Asindh	Bhilwara
9	Shakti Bricks	Asindh	Bhilwara
10	Shri Ram Bricks	Asindh	Bhilwara
11	Shyam Bricks	Gangapur	Bhilwara
12	Madhav Bricks	Mandal	Bhilwara

13	Keshav Bricks	Mandal	Bhilwara
14	Laxmi Bricks	Mandal	Bhilwara
15	Bhawani Bricks	Mandal	Bhilwara
16	PrabhuInt	Mandal	Bhilwara
17	Shree Nakoda Bricks	Mandal	Bhilwara
18	Azaad Bricks	Mandal	Bhilwara
19	Gayatri Bricks	Mandal	Bhilwara
20	RR Bricks	Jahajpur	Bhilwara
21	Kumawat Bricks	Raipur	Bhilwara

The kilns were chosen on the basis of their geographical spread, to cover diverse regions in the districts of Ajmer and Bhilwara. The maximum kilns studied are from Mandal *tehsil* in Bhilwara, followed by Asindh *tehsil*. In Ajmer, the maximum kilns are from Srinagar *tehsil*. The primary reason for the selection of these locations is because they are densely populated with brick kilns, and labourers from different states migrate to these geographical locations.

Research Tools

a. Structured interviews and questionnaires

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

- The **first schedule** was source profiling, that is, to document the source villages of the workers and the contractors who hired them. This also covered the previous working experiences of the workers, the total number of migrated family members and also the category of work that they conduct in the kilns.
- The **second schedule** collected data about 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, electricity, availability of fuel wood
- *Access to basic entitlements:* MGNREGA, PDS and ration card, financial inclusion, ICDS

The second schedule provides a detailed description of brick-kiln workers; the detailed survey was conducted with those brick-kiln workers associated with this work for more than two years. This helps determine the socio-economic condition of workers in brick-kilns over a certain number of years.

b. Literature review

Secondary data was collected from concerned government departments and 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 allowed for plenty of opportunities to closely observe the lives of the workers and the conditions of work in a kiln. The engagement of the team with the workers throughout the year provided exposure and understanding in both the source and the destination areas. Along with the schedules, meetings, regular visits to the kilns, and the movement of the workers provided in-depth understanding of the conditions of brick-kiln workers. Interactions with them helped in observing the lives of the workers and the way they were combating exploitation daily and trying, at the same time, to hold on to their livelihoods.

d. Case studies

Case studies involving individuals, families, disputes and grievances filed were identified to correlate with the study outcomes. With the rising exploitation of workers, registered cases by them gave an understanding of the issues, in relation to payment of wages, legal aid, atrocities on the workers and bonded labour.

Frequency of Data Collection and Reporting

The survey was undertaken every year in the same brick kilns. In the second year, third, and fourth years, some kilns were added or removed, depending upon the functioning of

the kilns. Every year, a report was generated, documenting the changes taking place. A comprehensive report has been prepared in the fourth year of the project, with comparative data from all four years.

Data Collection Schedule

Time-frame for data collection each year in the selected brick kilns for migration mapping:

Year 1: February to June 2016

Year 2: January to May 2017

Year 3: January to April 2018

Year 4: January to June 2019

Scope and Limitations

The limitations of the migration mapping survey are:

- The study limits itself to some of the major socio-economic and work conditions-related indicators. It does not go into the political aspects of the same.
- Geographically, the brick kilns are scattered over a large area; this poses the challenge of access to the kilns.
- A major gap comes as a result of the reluctant nature of the owners and state officials to share information, which makes information less accessible.
- In many kilns, the kiln owners do not allow or were hesitant of enumerators meeting workers at the kiln; however, this limitation was overcome by PCLRA's regular intervention and engagement in the kilns.
- There are situations where the workers are not able to provide appropriate responses, leading to issues in data analysis. The generic responses of the workers lead to the lack of detailed information.

Scope of the Migration Mapping Survey

- The data collection in Year 4 was initiated in January, which helped in the better coverage of workers because they were all present in the kilns at that point of time. Two additional kilns were added this year.
- The data analyzed helps us understand and map the migration pattern of the labourers from different parts of the country.
- The data analyzed helps in understanding the socio-economic conditions of the labourers.



CHAPTER 3

Migration Source Mapping of Brick Kiln Workers

This chapter shares the findings from the survey covering 21 brick kilns and 903 worker families. The main objective of this survey was to map the sources of the migrant labour coming to these kilns in the destination areas of Ajmer and Bhilwara. The study also reveals the prior working patterns and living conditions of brick kiln workers.

A majority of the workers came from the source states of UP, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Bihar. The district and *tehsil*/cluster of the source state from which they came, the dominant caste categories migrating to the kilns and the category of work they did in the brick kilns were mapped.

The following are the findings of the migration mapping.

A. Composition of workers by the state of origin

During the study, a majority of the workers were found to be from UP, followed by Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Bihar. The highest number of workers migrating for work to the brick kilns of Ajmer and Bhilwara are from UP, followed by workers from Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. This trend was the same for all the four years. A small percentage of workers (less than 2 percent) also migrate from Jharkhand, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh (MP) and are clubbed under the 'Others' category.

Table 04: Overall State-wise Composition of Workers

State	2019	2018	2017	2016
UP	41	36	39	36
Rajasthan	27	32	33	32
Chhattisgarh	20	20	17	19
Bihar	9	7	8	10
Others	3	2	3	3

All numbers are in percentages. N= 903, 1172, 1042, 1262

B. Composition of workers by work category

The study revealed that the sample covered had the highest number of *paatla* workers, followed by *bharai* and *jalai* workers. In the current year, the following has been the composition of workers based on the work categories. Also, some categories of work such as *raapas* and *khakhla* have been included in the study in small numbers. Later on, for the sake of analysis, they were clubbed in the category of 'Others'. Including the various categories has been done to increase the scope of the study.

Table 05: Overall Work Category Composition of Workers

Work Category	2019	2018	2017	2016
1. <i>Paatla</i>	54	52	58	57
2. <i>Khadkan</i>	3	4	2	2
3. <i>Bharai</i>	14	12	13	16
4. <i>Nikasi</i>	4	4	5	4
5. <i>Jalai</i>	8	8	7	9
Others (includes <i>khakhla</i> , <i>raapas</i>)	16	20	15	12

All numbers are in percentages. N= 903, 1172, 1042, 1262

Workers coming from UP are a mix of *paatla* and *jalai* workers whereas those from Rajasthan are largely engaged in *bharai* and *khadkan* work. Almost all the workers from Bihar and Chhattisgarh are *paatla* workers, who have been following the family tradition of migration for work in brick kilns.

Table 06: State-wise Work Category Composition of Workers (2019)

Work Category	Total	Bihar	Chhattisgarh	Rajasthan	UP
1. Paatla	54	92	98	20	58
2. Khadkan	3		<1	7	1
3. Bharai	14		<1	31	1
4. Nikasi	4	<1	<1	18	4
5. Jalai	8			2	22
Others	16	8	2	22	14

All numbers are in percentages. N=903

C. Caste composition

Table 07 below indicates that more than half the kiln workers belong to the SC category; this was always high during the research period (2016–19), with the proportion an average of 40 per cent. This was followed by OBC, comprising 27 per cent, followed by the Schedule Tribes (STs). The data of ST and other minorities have remained consistent over the previous years as well.

Table 07: Overall Caste Composition of Workers

Category	2019	2018	2017	2016
Minority	4	2	2	1
OBC	27	28	30	29
SC	52	53	53	53
ST	17	16	14	11
General	<1	<1	1	4
Unspecified		<1		2

All numbers are in percentages. N= 903, 1172, 1042, 1262

State-wise analysis

Brick-kiln workers have been migrating, primarily, from clusters within four source states—**Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar** each state. Over the last four years, an almost negligible change has been observed in the major clusters.

Rajasthan

In Rajasthan, the major source clusters are within the districts of Ajmer and Bhilwara, which is intra-state migration. Workers also migrate from the neighboring districts mainly for *bharai* and *nikasi* work.

Table 08: Overall Source Districts in Rajasthan

Districts	2019	2018	2017	2016
Ajmer	55	46	53	48
Bhilwara	9	17	14	18
Nagaur	23	27	22	28
Pali	5	6	8	5
Sikar	4	3	2	--
Others	<1	<1	-	1

All numbers are in percentages. N=244, 385,365,404s

A majority of the workers migrating from different districts of Rajasthan came from the source areas of **Ajmer, Bhilwara, Nagaur, Pali, Sikar, Chittaurgarh, Dholpur, Jhunjhunu, Rajsamand and Tonk**. Most of these districts are located in the western and eastern neighborhood of the destination districts of Ajmer and Bhilwara. This is the overall trend during the duration of the study. The percentage of workers was always high from Ajmer and Nagaur, followed by Bhilwara and so on.

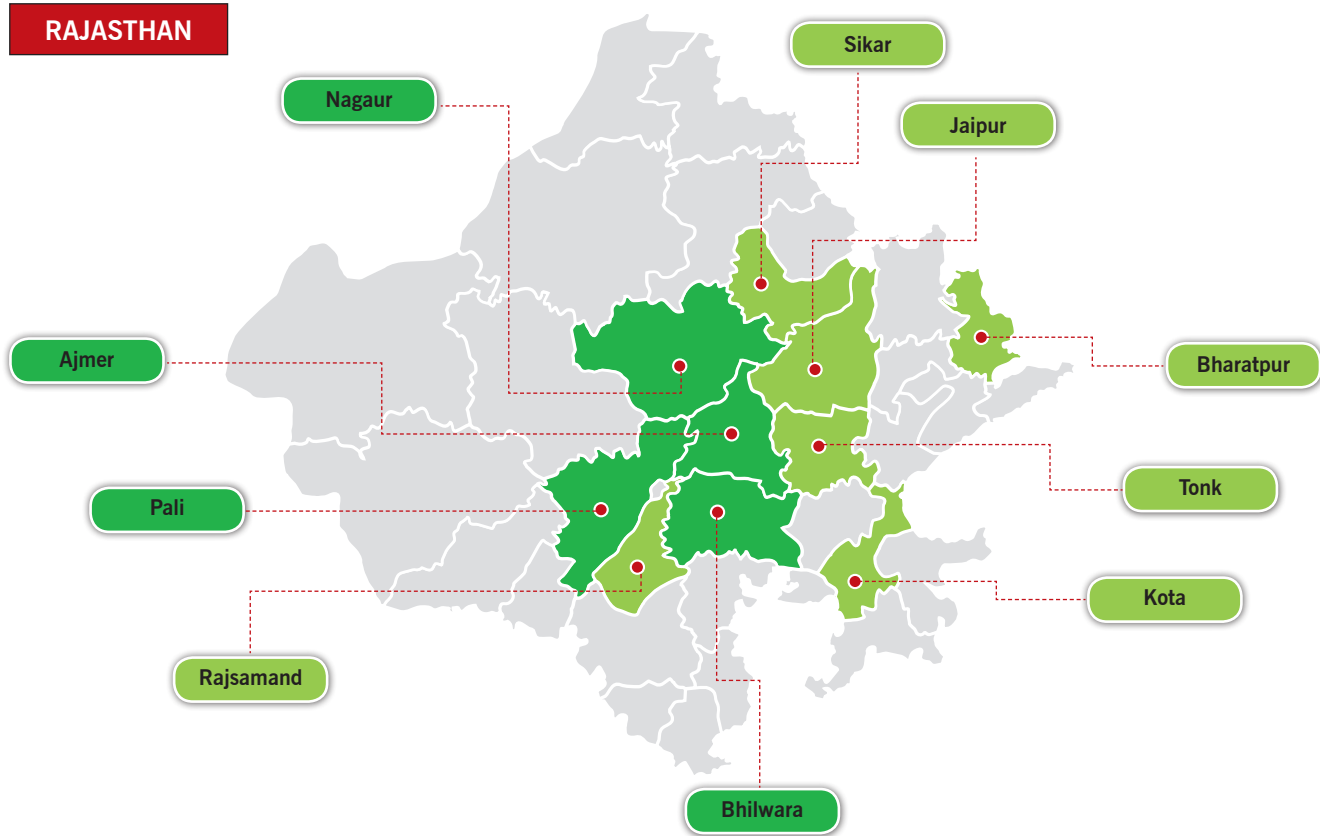
Table 09: Major Source Clusters/Tehsils of Rajasthan (2019)

Districts	Major Tehsil	Proportion of Workers (Percentage)
Ajmer (Total number of workers: 136)	Masuda	69
Nagaur (Total number of workers: 56)	Parbatsar	71
Bhilwara (Total number of workers: 24)	Mandal	32
	Asindh	18
	Jahajpur	28

N=377

Table 09 identifies the major source clusters: Masuda in Ajmer, Mandal in Bhilwara and Parbatsar in Nagaur. These are the major clusters from where the labourers migrate to the brick

Figure 01: Major and Minor Districts of Rajasthan



kilns of Rajasthan. The only major change in the current year is that Kishangarh, which was a major source *tehsil* for Ajmer for three years, had become a minor source *tehsil*, with only 8 percent workers, indicating that workers may have migrated to kilns in other locations. This can be probed further.

Table 10: Overall Caste Break-up of Workers in Rajasthan

Caste Category	2019	2018	2017
Minority	-	2	1
OBC	55	40	49
SC	41	49	36
ST	4	9	14
General	-	-	-

All numbers are in percentages. N=244, 385,365; data for 2016 not available

Migrant workers from Rajasthan mainly belong to SCs and OBCs. The dominant caste groups found are Rawat and Bawari.

Compared to 2017 and 2019, the caste composition has remained almost the same, with the exception that the percentage of STs was higher in 2017, and it saw a continuous drop in numbers by 2019.

OBC workers were the highest through the years of study; the number of workers from the Rawat community showed an increasing trend; however, on an average, it was between 65 and 75 per cent over the four years. The data shows an important analysis for the Rawat community, with ample scope for work in this community.

Uttar Pradesh

UP constitutes the largest number of workers migrating to the brick kilns. The majority of workers were engaged in *paatla* and *jalai* work. The *jalai* workers usually come singly, leaving their families behind in the source areas. In contrast, the *paatla* workers migrate as a family unit, and most of the members are involved in the work.

Table 11: Overall Source Districts in UP

Districts	2019	2018	2017	2016
Chitrakoot	61	53	60	59
Banda	15	11	17	13
Kaushambi	15	11	11	6
Unnao	7	10	3	6
Others	2	15	9	16

All numbers are in percentages. N=377,421,402,427

The trend is the same overall through the years being studied, with the major cluster being Chitrakoot, Banda and Kaushambi. The *tehsils* that were the source areas are shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Major Source Clusters/Tehsils of UP (2019)

Major Districts	Major Tehsil	Proportion of Workers (Percentage)
Chitrakoot (Total no. of workers: 228)	Karvi	68
		59
	Rajapur	18
Banda (Total no. of workers: 51)	Baberu	84
Kaushambi (Total no. of workers: 50)	Chail	86

N=373

The above Tables show that a majority of the workers migrate from Chitrakoot district, followed by from Banda and Kausambi districts. Compared to the numbers from the earlier years, there has been no significant change. **Chitrakoot, Banda and Kausambi** are neighbouring districts and also a major source cluster in the state, followed by **Unnao** and other areas of **Agra, Fatehpur, Badayun, Allahabad, Mathura, Karbi** and **Rae Bareilly**.

Table 13: Overall Caste Composition of Workers from UP

Caste Category	2019	2018	2017
Minority	4	4	4
OBC	6	13	8
SC	89	83	85
ST	2	-	1
General	-	-	3

All numbers are in percentages. N=377,421,402; data for 2016 not available

Table 13 indicates that a majority of the workers migrating from UP are largely SC, followed by OBC and the minority communities. The dominant caste groups have been Raidas, averaging around 65 percent, followed by Passi, Paswan, Yadav and Chamar. The trend has been similar overall in the years.

Chhattisgarh

Chhattisgarh is also a state from where workers migrate in large numbers to Ajmer and Bhilwara for work in the brick kilns. The workers of Chhattisgarh are mainly involved in *paatla* work.

Table 14: Overall Source Districts of Chhattisgarh

Districts	2019	2018	2017	2016
Mahasamund	42	43	50	61
Baloda bazaar	31	38	41	25
Jahngir Champa	20	14	4	5
Raigarh	5	4	1	4

All numbers are in percentages. N=188,245, 268

The major source clusters of Chhattisgarh are **Mahasamund**, followed by **Baloda Bazaar** and **Jahangir Champa**. The other important districts that send migrant labour are **Raipur** and **Raigarh, Bilaspur**. Over the four years studied, the workers coming from Jahangir Champa and Baloda Bazaar have been increasing and there is a drop in workers from Mahasamund. There is scope to probe this change further.

Figure 02: Major and Minor Districts of UP

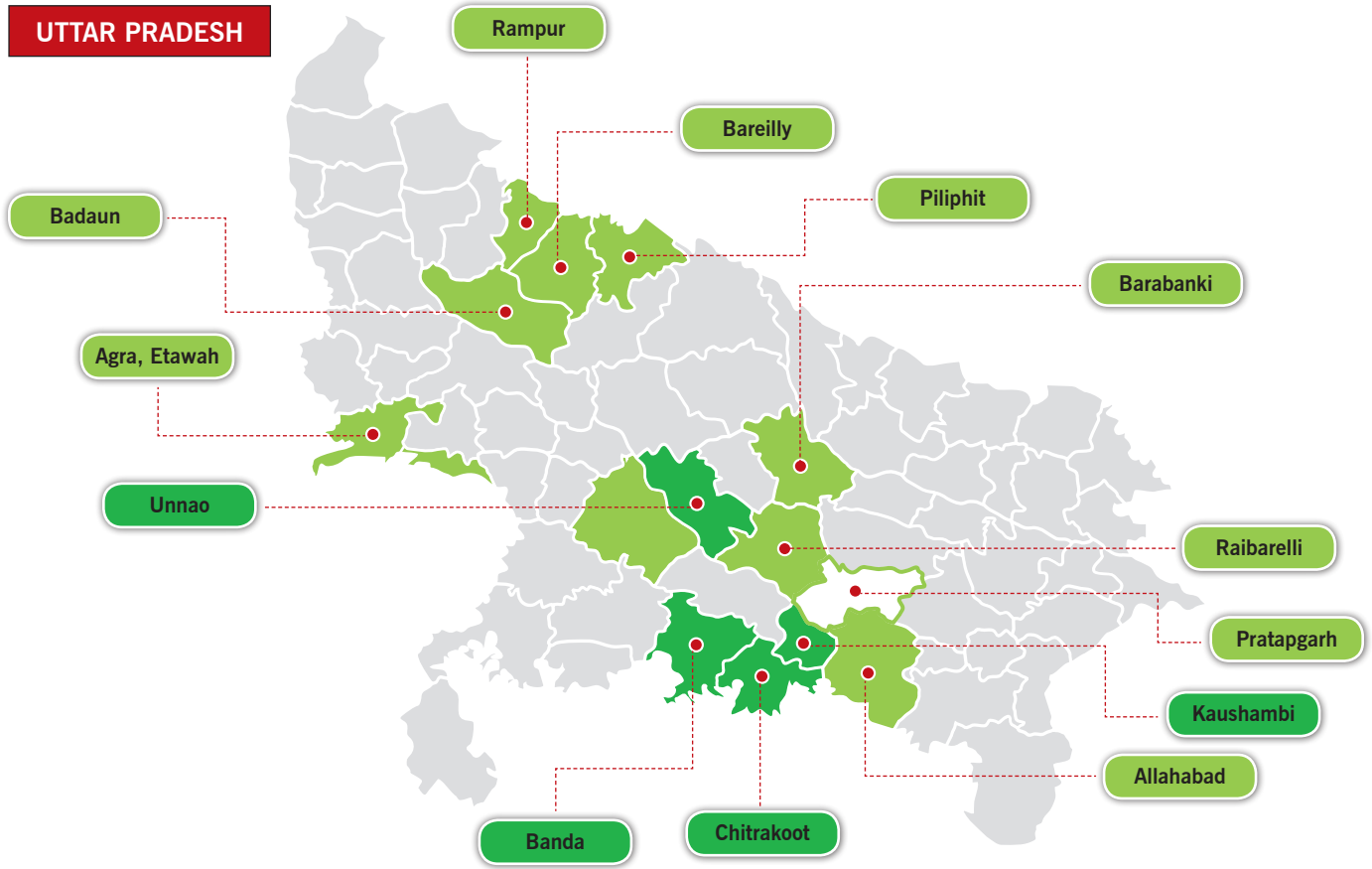


Table 15: Major Source Cluster/*Tehsil* Mapping for Chhattisgarh

Major Districts	Major <i>Tehsils</i>	Proportion of workers (percentage)
Mahasamund (Total number of workers: 76)	Basna	38
	Pithora	28
	Saraipali	22
	Mahasamund	8
Baloda Bazar (Total number of workers: 62)	Bhilaigarh	69
	Baloda Bazaar	24
	Kasdol	7

Janjgir Champa (Total number of workers: 37)	Shakti	35
	Champa	32
	Malkharoda	14
	Jhajepur	8
	Janjgir	5

N=188

As was the trend largely for all four years, Mahasamund, Baloda Bazar and Jahangir Champa have been the major source districts for workers migrating from Chhattisgarh. Basna and Pithora of Mahasamund continue to be the major *tehsils*.

Figure 03: Major and Minor Districts of Chhattisgarh

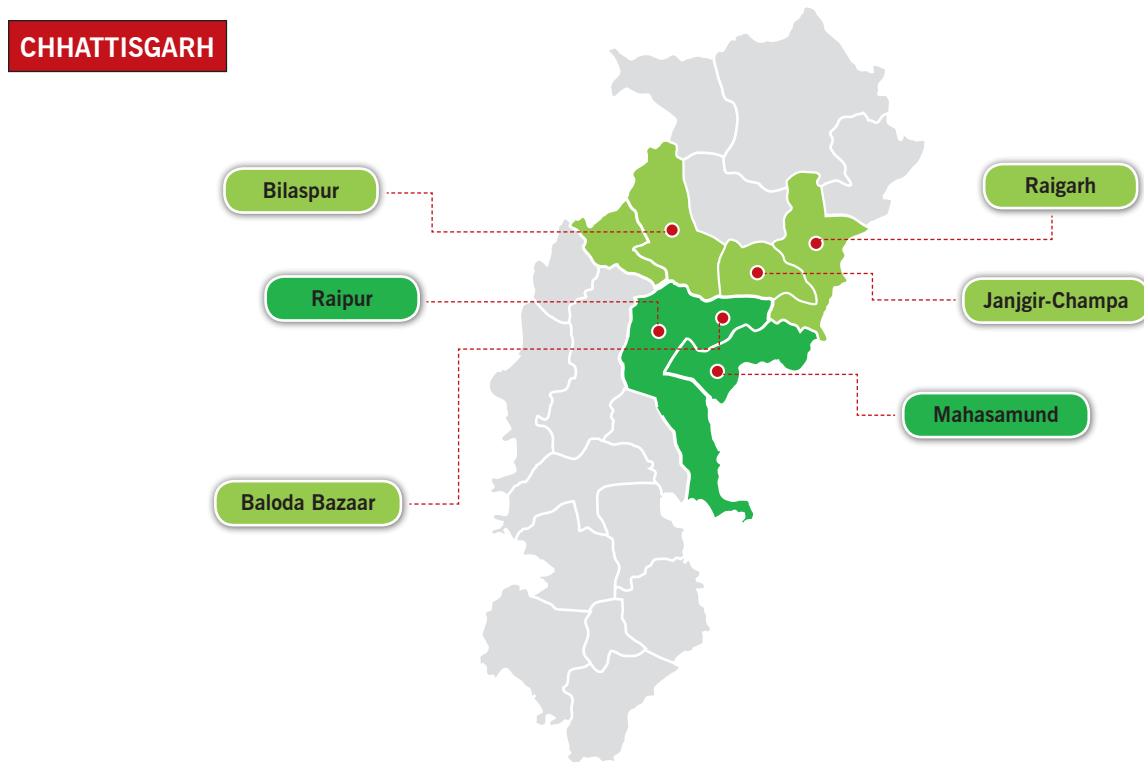


Table 16: Overall Caste Break-up of Workers in Chhattisgarh

Category	2019	2018	2017
Minority	-	-	-
OBC	15	13	20
SC	53	24	36
ST	30	62	40
General	-	-	-

All number is in percentages, N=188,245, 268, data for 2016 not available

The majority of workers migrating from Chhattisgarh belong to the ST. This is unique to Chhattisgarh because largely the OBCs and the SCs migrate from other source states. This trend is consistent with the findings of the previous years. **Kherwar, Gond and Bariha** are the dominant castes among the STs. **Satnami, Chauhan and Sarathi** amongst SCs and **Yadav and Rawat** among OBCs.

Bihar

Bihar contributed eight percent to the workforce to the kilns of Ajmer and Bhilwara in 2019, consistent with the previous years. The workers from Bihar are primarily engaged in *paatla* work.

Table 17: Major Source Districts Mapping of Workers in Bihar

Districts	2019	2018	2017	2016
Banka	31	56	82	33
Jammui	20	21	4	44
Sheikhpura	16	9	14	--
Nawada	9	5	--	--
Munger	18	5	--	11

All numbers are in percentages. N=87, 91,91, 83

Banka, Jammui and Shiekhpora form the major source cluster for workers migrating from these districts. Whereas Munger has largely been a minor cluster in the previous years, it has had a considerable raise this year.

Figure 04: Major and Minor Districts of Bihar

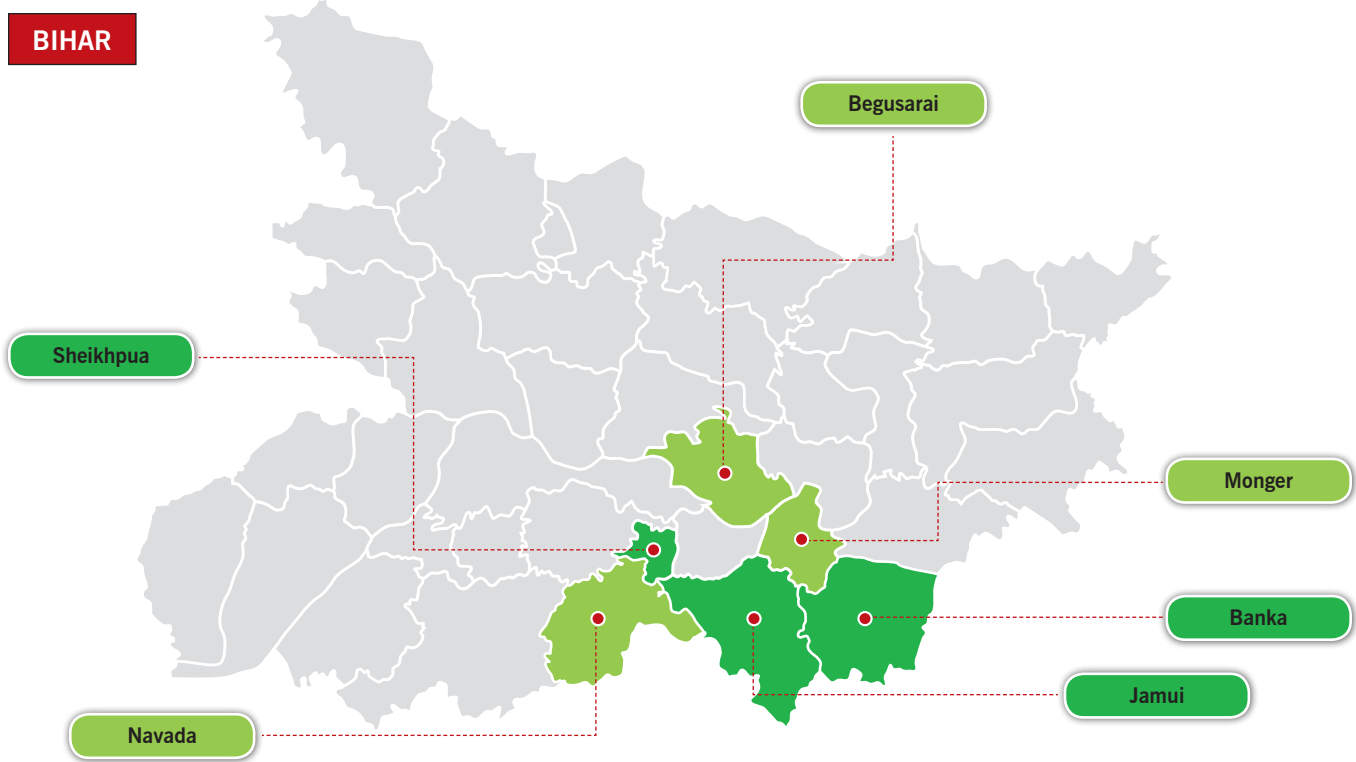


Table 18: Major Source Cluster Mapping for Bihar

Major Districts	Major Tehsils	Proportion of workers (percentage)
Banka (Total number of workers: 26)	Bousi	77
	Banka	12
	Rajaun	11
Jamui (Total number of workers: 17)	Islamnagar Aliganj	76
	Jamui	24
Munger (Total number of workers: 17)	Munger	82
	Tarapur	18
Sheikhpura (Total number of workers: 14)	Kasar	71
	Sheikhpura	29

N=87

Bousi is the major source *tehsil* of Banka district and Islam Nagar Aliganj from Jammui. There has been an expansion in the major source cluster over the years with the inclusion of Munger and Sheikhpura in major districts.

Table19: Overall Caste Break-up of Workers in Bihar

Category	2019	2018	2017
Minority	20	7	
OBC	45	54	78
SC	--	37	7
ST	33	2	16
General	--	--	--

All numbers are in percentages. N= 87, 91, 83; data for 2016 not available

The majority of workers from Bihar are OBCs. However, there is a declining trend in the migration of OBCs over the years. The migration of the ST community has been considerable in the current year compared to the previous years.

Overall Trends

The overall state-wise trends have not shown any major shifts over the four-year study period. There are a few minor changes as noted—there has been an expansion of the major cluster in Bihar in the current year; as of now this seems like a minor shift and needs further probing. There is also a decline of worker population noted from a major cluster of Chhattisgarh. A similar trend is visible in Rajasthan, in the major *tehsil* of Kishangarh. Within Rajasthan, there is a decline noted in the ST and the minorities population migrating to the Ajmer and Bhilwara kilns. UP and Rajasthan have shown almost similar trends throughout the study period, presenting a case for work with the major caste group—Rawat, Raidas and Bawari.

CHAPTER 4

Socio-economic Profile of Brick Kiln Workers

This chapter explores the socio-economic status of workers migrating to the brick kilns of Ajmer and Bhilwara districts of Rajasthan. The workers migrate from various states, primarily Rajasthan, UP, Chhattisgarh and Bihar. Most of the workers migrate as an entire family unit. The total number of migrant worker families recorded in the study in 2019 is 168 (18.6 percent of the 903 families selected from 21 brick kilns in Bhilwara and Ajmer). The 903 families were studied, to map the migration patterns as recorded in Chapter 3. The profiling of the selected families was done through a detailed in-depth interview based on a pre-designed questionnaire. The findings follow.

A. Demographic Profile

Family Size: This was calculated from the entire universe of 903 families in 21 kilns. Ninety-eight percent of the families lived within the compound of the kilns. Family members above the age of 14 years were all engaged in work at the kilns.

Table 20: Overall Family Size

Indicators	2019	2018	2017	2016
Average family size of workers	5.38	5.53	4.89	-
Average family size present in the kiln	3.15	3.49	3.89	3.79
Average family size (14 years and above) engaged in work at the kiln	2.10	2.25	2.37	2.34

N= 903, 1172, 1042, 1262

Table 20 indicates that the average working size of the family at a kiln and the average family size migrating to a kiln have both decreased over the years, indicating a shift in the number

of workers migrating to the kilns of Ajmer and Bhilwara. Multiple reasons can be associated with this shift and this presents a case for further probing.

Age Profile: From the 903 families, 168 were profiled in detail. From these, 536 family members were found in the kilns. The age profile of the family members was as follows.

Table 21: Age Profile of Families in Brick Kilns (2019)

Age in Completed Years	Proportional Percentage
0–6	22
7–14	12
15–18	7
19–50	57
51–59	1
>=60	1

N= 536

A majority of the population working in the brick kilns is between the age group of 19 and 50 years, followed by children between the ages of 0 and 6 years. Worth noting is the fact that 34 percent of the population are children (below the age of 14) and 41 percent are minors below the age of 18. The datapoints to the fact that a large percentage of children accompany their parents to the kilns and many are engaged in work, accounting for child labour, which is a huge concern at kilns. The years under study reveal that the percentage of children in the kilns is always more than 30 per cent, which is a large number and calls for further probing.

Gender-wise composition of the workers: A total of 57 percent of the population was male and 43 percent female. Men also migrated as single individuals (largely, the *jalai*

workers) skewing the ratio. The trends have been similar all through the study period.

Table 22: Gender-wise Composition of Workers in Kilns

Overall Break-up		
	Numbers	Percent
1. Male	420	57%
2. Female	320	43%

N = 740

Despite the fact that a large number of women migrate for work, the living conditions are usually do not cater to women's needs or requirements.

Literacy rate: The overall literacy rate of the families was found to be 42 percent, 10 per cent lower than 2018. The literacy rate among the male workers was found to be 58 per cent and among the female workers was 31 per cent.

The literacy rate is defined as the ability to read and write by individuals above 7 years of age. Table 23 empirically shows that the highest number of literate workers migrated in 2018 and the lowest in 2017. The variation in both the years is very high, the reason has not been identified in this research and needs further probing.

Table 23: Overall Literacy Rate

	2019	2018	2017	2016
1. Male	58	61	44	48
2. Female	31	41	24	23
3. Overall literacy rate	42	52	35	37

All numbers are in percentages. N = 720, 890, 898,740

B. Socio-economic profile

Work-wise categorization: In brick kilns, workers are engaged for different tasks and wages vary with the tasks. There is a clear demarcation between each work category as introduced in Chapter 1. The *paatla* workers comprise the highest proportion in the brick kilns, operating as family units, followed by the *bharai*, *nikasi* and *khadkan*. The proportion of workers at the kilns has been provided earlier in Table 06 and is repeated here.

Table 06: State-wise Work Category Composition of Workers (2019)

Work Category	Total	Bihar	Chhattisgarh	Rajasthan	UP
1. <i>Paatla</i>	54	92	98	20	58
2. <i>Khadkan</i>	3	0	<1	7	1
3. <i>Bharai</i>	14	0	<1	31	1
4. <i>Nikasi</i>	4	<1	<1	18	4
5. <i>Jalai</i>	8	0	0	2	22
6. <i>Raapas</i>	11	8	1	12	9
7. <i>Khakhla</i>	3	0	0	8	4
8. Other	2	0	1	2	<1

All numbers are in percentages. N = 903

Access to entitlements: The Government of India provides for various social security, public policy and entitlement schemes for the marginalized sections of society. Families, who migrate to the kilns, although eligible for these entitlements, are usually found to have limited access, deteriorating their living conditions.

Table 24: Access to Government Entitlements and Schemes (2019)

Entitlements	Overall Access	Bihar	Chhattisgarh	Rajasthan	UP
BPL card	45	38	48	40	51
MNREGA card	54	38	36	81	58
Work under MGNREGA	18	0	16	16	22
Construction Worker's card	<1	0	0	0	1
Bhamashah (only in Rajasthan)	72	-	-	72	-
Insurance	3	0	0	11	0

AADHAR card	75	50	56	100	88
Bank account	56	13	16	69	60
Taking ration	48	44	52	56	50
Voter ID	74	56	48	100	81
Voted in the previous election	72	38	44	100	76

All numbers are in percentages. N=170,16,25,57,72

Table 24 clearly shows that the workers from Bihar and Chhattisgarh have the lowest access to most entitlements through all the four years. Clearly also, the Aadhar card and the voter ID are the most widely accessed cards. However, other entitlements such as access to the BPL card, the MNRGA card, the construction workers' board card and ration card are not accessible to many. The BPL card ownership of workers from Bihar saw a significant decline of 30 percent in 2019 compared to 2018. The workers from UP have worked the maximum number of days under MGNREGA, followed by those from Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. The Bhamashah card is for Rajasthan state only, where 72 percent of the workers possess this entitlement. Access to Aadhar card and Voter identity card was found to be consistently high in the state of Rajasthan with 100 percent in 2019 demonstrating effective implementation of the schemes.

The status of these entitlements indicate that whereas the Government of India has provided migrant labourers with social security and public services, access to these entitlements is limited in this segment of migrant workers, putting workers in a very vulnerable position, whereby they are forced to access basics necessities for a living through alternative methods of generating them.

Assets Base

a. Land-holding

Overall, 51 percent of workers reported owning land. Rajasthan has the highest percentage of workers with land ownerships, followed by UP.

Table 25: Land ownership (2019)

	Overall	Bihar	Chhattisgarh	Rajasthan	UP
Percentage of families with land ownership (n = 170)	51	0	64	77	43
Average land area (in bigha)	1.14	-	1.38	1.3	1.87
Percentage of families with irrigated land (n=170)	19	-	32	18	20

The workers from Bihar reported being landless. Importantly, the few from all four states, who reported land ownership, had irrigated land. The average size of the land was the largest in UP, followed by Chhattisgarh and then Rajasthan. This is similar to previous years.

b. Animal holding

Twenty-five percent of the families reported animal holdings. According to the state-wise analysis, the animal holdings of the families are the highest in Rajasthan, followed by Uttar Pradesh.

Table 26: Animal Holding (2019)

	Overall	Bihar	Chhattisgarh	Rajasthan	UP
Families with animal holding	25	0	8	62	30
Bull	8	-	44	1	12
Cow	32	-	33	25	46
Buffalo	14	-	-	10	26
Goat	39	-	22	53	14
Sheep	3	-	-	4	-
Camel	4	-	-	6	-
Others	2	-	-	1	3

All numbers are in percentage. N=116,9,9, 72, 35

Workers from Bihar reported no animal holding, which is in sync with their land holding. The highest holdings are of goat, cow and buffalo; these are related to husbandry, milk production and agricultural purposes. The percentage of animal holding has been similar to previous years, with a mild incremental trend.

c. House ownership

All families reported to having a house to live in, at the source location. Whereas a majority of these houses were *kuccha*, 32 percent workers reported living in *pucca* houses. The average built-up size was reported at 167 sqft and 26 percent households reported having access to toilets at source.

Table 27: House Ownership with Caste Break-up (2019)

	Overall	OBC	SC	ST
1. <i>Kuccha</i>	68	67	70	69
2. <i>Pucca</i>	32	33	30	31

All numbers are in percentages. N=150

The caste break-up revealed that SCs, STs and OBCs had similar access to *kuccha* and *pucca* housing. In 2019, there is an improvement in the status of ownership of *pucca* houses by the ST community compared to the previous years when the average holding was 10 percent.

Home appliances

A majority of the families did not possess basic home appliances, including electricity and water connections.

Table 28: State-wise Ownership of Home Appliances (2019)

Appliances	Overall	Chhattisgarh	Bihar	Rajasthan	Uttar Pradesh
Motor Cycle	21	14	-	24	9
Cycle	38	28	2	19	50
Fan	28	31	3	25	28
Diesel Pump	1	-	-	5	-
Water Motor	1	-	-	2	2
TV	20	27	5	27	12

All numbers are in percentages. N=160

Table 28 indicates that, largely, families have minimal home appliances. Although Rajasthan has the largest share in home appliances, it is evident that the general condition of the workers is poor. This has largely been the situation in the previous years; however, ownership of motor cycles has been incremental. The trend shows that the financial condition of the labourers from Rajasthan is comparatively better than the other states. This could be because the workers of Rajasthan are mainly engaged in *bharai*, *nikasi* and *khadkan* work, which is better paid than the *paatla* work.

Overall income scenario

An attempt was made to explore the annual income per family from all available sources. It was found that 94 percent families reported migrating for brick kiln work from their home location. The families have also been involved in MGNREGA work and other forms of wage labour.

Table 29: Overall Sources of Work for Brick-kiln Workers

Sources	2019	2018	2017	2016
Brick kilns	100	100	100	100
Agriculture	34	26	28	24
Animal farming	6	5	<1	5
Others (MGNREGA, etc.)	6	31	2	9

All numbers are in percentages. N=160, 186, 191 and 124

There has been an increase in the trend of looking at agriculture and animal farming as alternative sources of income.

Table 30: Wage Work and Days of Engagement (2019)

Work Days	% of Families Engaged	Work Days Engaged Per Family in a Year
Brick kilns	100	214
MGNREGA	10	31
Others	23	52

N=170

Table 30 conclusively shows that workers spend the maximum number of days in brick kilns. Ten percent of the workers

reported working in MGNREGA this year, compared to 13 percent from the previous year.

Table 31: Average Annual Income Per Household (2019)

Sources of Income	% of Families Engaged	Average Annual Income (Rs)	Per Family Income (Rs)
1. Agriculture	25	17,772	4,443
2. Animal Farming	5	7,833	392
3. Labour work (including brick-kiln work)	100	97,625	97,625
4. Others	9	12,895	1,161
Total average income			1,03,621

N=168

The total income from all sources is calculated at Rs 1,03,621. The data in Table 31 reflect that the annual income of the workers was the maximum from labour work, which includes brick-kiln work. In terms of other engagements, the percentages of families engaged remained high, indicating that through work in the kiln, the families generate a higher income, followed by agriculture.

Daily Per Capita Income of Brick-kiln Workers

The average family size in 2019 of kiln workers was 5.38. The average income per annum from all sources for these workers has been calculated at Rs 1,03,621. Hence, the total amount of resources available per family member is Rs 19,260 annually.

On a daily basis, this is Rs 52 per capita, which is still lower than the international poverty line of USD 1.9 dollars per capita per day as per the 2015 declaration by the World Bank. Although, a constant increment in the overall income of the family is seen throughout the study period since 2016, the workers are still below poverty line, indicating the extreme poverty of brick-kiln workers.

Indebtedness

Predictably, there is high indebtedness among the workers. Thirty percent of the workers reported being in debt in 2019, which is lower than 2018 by 14 percent.

The average amount of debt was Rs 1,03,100, which is higher than the previous year by almost 10 percent. This amount is almost the same as the average annual income of the workers, and thus poses a threatening scenario.

The average rate of interest at which a loan was taken was found to be 3per cent, similar to previous years.

Debt is a critical part of a worker's life and one must explore the reasons for such debt. Table 32 reveals that marriages is the single, most-dominant reason for workers being in debt. Other predominant reasons are medical expenses and construction of their house.

Table 32: Overall Reasons for Debt

Reasons	2019	2018	2017	2016
1. Marriage	30	38	39	38
2. Sickness	17	23	15	25
3. House construction/ repair	15	8	15	15
4. Death expenses	13	8	9	2
5. Farming	9	7	3	5
6. Loan repayment	2	3	8	3
7. Others	13	13	11	10

All numbers are in percentages. N= 46, 88, 92, 59

Table 32 makes it clear that the most compelling reason for taking loans is marriages, followed by medical treatment. There are other several other reasons for taking loans such as for farming, funerals, house construction or repair, due to which the workers have to borrow money on interest, leading to long-standing and heavy debts.

Rajasthan and UP have the highest percentage of debts for marriages and sickness. Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh workers incurred debts for the purpose of house construction. Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and UP have certain percentages of debts for the purpose of agriculture and farming. Rajasthan's workers debts are high in all the years of the study.

Compared to the debt of all the previous years, the debt decreased in 2019. A state-wise analysis found that in Rajasthan and UP, the main reason for taking loans is marriages.

Table 33: Repayment of Loan

Repayment of loan	
Methods	% of Families
1. Taking another loan	6
2. Working as labour	91
3. Others	2

All numbers are in percentages. $N=47$

Table 34: Sources of Loan

Sources of Loan	
Sources	% of Families
1. Family/Relative	11
2. Bank	23
3. SHG	-
4. <i>Sahukar</i>	62
5. Others	4

All numbers are in percentages. $N = 47$

Table 33 indicates that a majority of the workers repay their loans by working as labour. Throughout the study, it was noted that the maximum loan is taken from the *sahukar* (money lender), followed by banks and so on. A majority of the labour adopts the technique of repaying through labour, which is the crucial part of this cycle and also clears the vicious circle of poverty.

C. Dynamics of recruitment

The movement of workers between kilns and contractors during their work life was mapped to understand the migration and recruitment pattern.

Work Years: This is calculated as the average number of years a worker and his family have been migrating to the kilns for work.

Table 35: Years of Work in Brick Kilns (2019)

Work Years	Percentage of Workers	Average Work Years
Average work years		7.7
1. 3>	9	1.9
2. 3-9	57	5
3. 10-9	30	12.3
4. 20 and more	4	24.6

$N=167$

On an average, a worker spends 7.7 work years at the kilns.

There has been a decrease in the average number of work years of the migrating workers during the study period which indicates that younger workers are migrating more than older experienced ones. Some reasons could be change in work location, availability of local work options and also challenges of living conditions/wages in kilns that may not be attractive to the more-experienced workers anymore. This is a case for further probing in the source area to understand the reason for this shift.

Table 36: State-wise Work Years in Brick Kiln Work

	Bihar	Chhattisgarh	Rajasthan	UP	Overall
Average work years	8.5	7.9	8.8	6.5	7.7
Percentage of workers	10	15	34	42	

$N = 170$

From a state-wise analysis, it is evident that the most-experienced labour in the kilns came from Rajasthan, followed by Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh.

Rate of change of kilns in work life: On an average work life of 7.7 years, a worker changed kilns 4.2 times. That is more than once every two seasons of work.

Table 37: Rate of Change of Kilns (2019)

Years	% of Families	Rate of Change of Kilns
Overall		4.2
1. 3>	41	1.5
2. 39	50	4.9
3. 10 and more	9	12.5

N=41

Interestingly, almost 40 percent of the population changed kilns as low as 1.5 times and half the population about 4.9 times during their average work life of 7.7 years. A higher rate is indicative of frequent changes in kilns.

Table 38: Overall State-wise Rate of Change of Kilns by Workers

	2019	2018	2017	2016
Bihar	4.6	3.4	3	5.6
Chhattisgarh	4.2	7	4.8	3.4
Rajasthan	4.9	4.9	3.9	3.9
UP	3.5	5.5	3.7	3
Overall	4.2	5.3	3.9	3.6

All numbers are in percentages. N=154,210,202,159

A worker may change brick kilns multiple times during his work life. The state-wise overall analysis shows that there is almost a constant trend of changing kilns 3–4 times within the average 6–9-year work life, with an exception of 2018. Workers from Rajasthan consistently demonstrate a trend of being more frequent changers of kilns compared to those from other states. The rate of change of kilns can also be indicative of bonded labour, and can be probed further.

Rate of change of contractors: Workers largely migrate to kilns through contractors. The contractors are either those who have always been contractors or, many-a-time, those worker leaders who take up the role of contractors also. These may be small contractors. In 2019, it was found that workers changed contractors 2.7 times in an average work life of 7.7 years, with most changing in less than 3 years.

Table 39: Rate of Change of Contractors (2019)

Years	Percentage of workers	Rate of change of contractors
Overall		3.5
1. 3>	53	1.5
2. 3–9	42	4.8
3. 10 and more	6	11

N=163

Table 40: Overall State-wise Rate of Change of Contractors by Workers

	2019	2018	2017	2016
Bihar	3.2	4	3.2	4.6
Chhattisgarh	4.6	3.6	3.6	3
Rajasthan	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.5
UP	3.2	4	3	3.2
Overall	3.5	3.8	3.2	3.4

All numbers are in percentages. N=163,208,200,160

A state-wise analysis reveals that all states consistently change contractors. This can be probed further to understand the reasons for these changes and also its impact on the wage rates of workers.

Advance: Workers take advance from owners before the beginning of the season, which is eventually adjusted against the work done by them. This is a long-time system across kilns. The following are some insights into the systems and payment of advance. Every unit of workers (also called *saancha*—usually a family) is eligible for an advance. Hence, the more the number of hands in the family, the more is the amount of advance it can take. In 2019, the following data was collected from workers for their previous work season and the current work season.

Table 41: 'Advance' Details in Work Seasons (2019)

Work Seasons	Percentage of Families Taking Advance	Average Advance Per Family (Rs)	Average Advance Per Worker (Rs) (Working Family Size=2.10)
2017-18	58	28,545	13,592
2018-19	71	28,482	13,563

N=170

Table 41 points to the fact that there is minimal variation in terms of the amount of advance; however, the percentage of workers taking an advance is lesser than the previous season. A comparison of current season advances for all four years when data was collected is given here.

Table 42: Overall 'Advance' Details for All Seasons

Work Years	Families Taking Advance (%)	Average Advance Per Family (Rs)	Average Advance Per Worker (Rs) (Advance Per Family/ Working Family Size)
2016	87	28,272	12,082
2017	79	32,192	13,583
2018	75	25,056	11,136
2019	71	28,482	13563

N=163,208,200,160; average working family size: 2.34, 2.37, 2.25 and 2.10

The trend clearly demonstrates that the average advance taken per worker is between Rs 11,000 and 14,000 every year and a huge number of workers are involved.

There were families, interestingly, who never took any advance. This varied from 6-11 percent over the previous years. In 2019, nine per cent of the families never took any advance. The category of workers, who do not take an advance or directly without a contractor usually receive higher wage rates compared to those taking advance and coming through contractors.

Installments for advance: Not all the advance is received in one payment at the beginning of the season. Many workers have to provide a guarantee against the advance they are taking. In 2019, about 66 percent families reported that they got the advance in more than one installment, and the remaining

received the full advance. This has been a progressive trend over the years, in which more and more workers are opting to take an advance in installments. Whereas this can have an evident direct benefit of workers getting the flexibility to move to another kiln or leave work early, it can be probed further.

The question also arises that if an advance is paid in installments, how does it qualify as an advance against which the workers issue a guarantee. More enquiries need to be done into understanding the reasons for the advance being held back. Important also to understand is how the payment for such an amount is made. The advance is critical to the running of the entire migration system, and deeper enquiry needs to be made to understand the changes in it over the years.

Guarantee of work against advance: Ninety-seven percent of the workers reported that they needed to give a guarantee of work for the whole season against the advance, irrespective of the amount of advance. This is similar to the previous years.

Reasons for advance: Getting an advance is a crucial part of the entire migration process; it may be helpful to understand the reasons for which the workers take advance.

Table 43: Reasons for Taking Advance

Reasons	Percentage of Families
1. Household expenses	69
2. House repair/Construction	7
3. Repayment of loan	14
4. Marriage expenses	7

All numbers are in percentages. N = 168

A majority of the workers reported taking the advance for day-to-day household expenses, followed by repayment of loans. The main reason quoted under the 'others' category was that the advance was taken to ensure guarantee of work at the kiln, which is more a way to secure work than necessity. These are trends similar throughout the study period.

D. Wages

Workers are not paid regular wages, as provided for under the Payment of Wages Act. They are given the entire advance or a part of it at the beginning of the season, and then paid food/living expenses (*kharchi*) on a weekly basis. Instead of

Table 44: Comparison of Wage Rates for Two Seasons of Work

Worker Category	Unit	2018-19		2017-18		Per Cent Change
		Average Rate (Rs)	Range	Average Rate (Rs)	Range	
1. <i>Paatla</i>	Per 1,000 bricks	498	400-730	488	400-720	3
2. <i>Khadkan</i>	Per 1,000 bricks	207	160-480	192	31-460	8
3. <i>Bharai</i>	Per 1,000 bricks	106	100-122	123	100-450	-14
4. <i>Nikasi</i>	Per 1,000 bricks	110	110-110	105	100-110	5
5. <i>Jalai</i>	Per Month	500	500-500	-	-	--
6. <i>Raapas</i>	Per Month	3057	115-600	3055	3000-6000	1
7. <i>Khakhla</i>	Per Month	108	75	125	110-140	-13

N=96

cash, often, there is a coupon system for payment of *kharchi*. The provision shops where the coupons are accepted are, often, owned by the owners of the kilns, ensuring control over purchase prices and choices.

The payment for food expenses is made to a family unit as one and is proportionate to the work done. More often than not, this condition forces the workers to put in long hours of work and even deploy their children in order to make the required number of bricks so that they can provide for the entire family. The average size of members engaged from every family in brick-making is 2.1 whereas the size of the families that are actually present, including the little children not engaged in work but have living expenses, is 3.15. This is a gap of almost 33 percent.

The accounts are settled usually at the end of the season; it is a complex calculation because it involves the advance taken, the variable weekly food expense, the accounts of the daily work done (different for different categories of work) and other deductions, if any. This makes it challenging for the workers, a majority of who are illiterate, to understand the calculations. They are vulnerable and, most of the time, at the mercy of the accounting *beldar*.

There exists some difference in the wage rates across various types of workers. The wage rates differ, depending upon a number of factors such as the negotiating power of a group and its contractor, the commission charged by the contractor,

the advance taken by the worker, and the need of the employer.

The following analysis draws a comparison between the two payment reasons and also gives an idea of the average rates of payment. However, whereas it lists the average amount received by a family, it does not capture the income per worker because payment is made considering the whole family as one unit in spite of most members of the family putting in equal labour. It must be viewed, therefore, as the income of the entire family.

It has been noticed that owners usually follow market rates. Wage settlement is reviewed once towards end of the season around the festival of Holi (in the month of March). This is critical in order to take stock, just before the end of the season. It is critical because the owner and the workers both take account of how much work is done and what has been the wage settlement of the worker against the advance and *kharchi* taken. This also helps the worker decide if he wants to continue work, in case the entire advance has been paid. Also, with March, severe summer starts setting in Rajasthan, which workers may want to avoid. It is also a time when, in a few cases, the owner increases the wage rate to ensure that more workers stay and pending work finishes quickly.

There was considerable increase in wages for the *khadkan* workers, followed by the *nikasi* and the *paatla* workers. This is consistent with the rise recorded last year. On the other hand, the wages for *bharai* and *khakhla* work have decreased. The

wage rise has affected 45 percent of the workers in the current season, in comparison to the previous season. Table 45 shows the difference in the wage rates in Ajmer and Bhilwara.

Table 45: Wage-rate Comparison among Kilns in Ajmer and Bhilwara over Two Seasons

Category	Units	Ajmer		Bhilwara	
		2017–18	2018–19	2017–18	2018–19
		Average Rate		Average Rate	
1. <i>Paatla</i>	Per 1,000 bricks	511	512	476	491
2. <i>Khadkan</i>	Per 1,000 bricks	157	180	366	366
3. <i>Bharai</i>	Per 1,000 bricks	171	105	105	106

N=96

Table 45 shows that the *paatla* have better wage rates in Ajmer, which is a reversal from the previous years, showing a change in trend. However, the *khadkan* category has shown huge improvement during the year in Bhilwara as compared to Ajmer. This can be attributed to the efforts of the field team.

The overall analysis compared to the previous year reveals that wages of workers seem to have stagnated, with a small hike of 3–7 percent, compared to the previous years. The data collection for the study was preceded by wage struggles in Ajmer and Bhilwara, (during and before the project period). The struggles ensured the employers reacted and wage hikes were checked. The measures taken to check wage revision included changing the source catchments and increasing the pressure on labour contractors. The workers, who led the wage struggles, were deprived of work.

Table 47: Daily Wage Calculation for Paatla Work Category for the Season 2018–19

	Average Income (Method 1)	Average Income (Method 2)	Average Work Days for <i>Paatla</i>	Average Working Family (>= 14 years)	Average Daily Wage (Method 1)	Average Daily Wage (Method 2)
<i>Paatla</i>	Rs 1,09,663	Rs 1,14,772	217	2.10	Rs 227	Rs242

N= 81

Table 46 complements the facts in Table 45, giving details of the income and wage rate information of the workers through daily wage calculations.

Daily wage per worker: It is important to calculate the daily wage earnings of every worker to get a real understanding of their earnings because multiple members are employed per family and the entire family is treated as one whole unit during the wage settlement.

The following calculations will help understand the wages received and the daily wage per worker.

Table 46: Calculation formulae for daily wage rate per worker

Method 1: Total wages to be received = Wage rate x Amount of work done

Method 2: Total wages received = Advance+ *Kharchi* + Final settlement

Ideal Scenario: Method 1 = Method 2

Method 1 - Method 2: Reveals disparity in payment of wages

Daily wage calculation per worker: Total wages/(Working family size x Average work days)

Case of Paatla workers: For *paatla* workers, who are paid on a piece-rate basis, the bricks made 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. The calculations are done for the population of above 14 years of age working in the kiln.

Clearly, the daily wages earned by a working member at the kiln are much lower than the minimum wage. Further, there is a disparity between the wages to be received against work done and those actually received.

Table 48: Daily Wage Calculation for Other Work Categories for the Season 2018–19

Work Category	Average Income (Method 1)	Average Income (Method 2)	Average Work Days for <i>Paatla</i>	Average Working Family Size (>= 14 years)	Average Daily Wage (Method 1)	Average Daily Wage (Method 2)
<i>Khadkan</i> (n=14)	82,752	1,05,025	194	2.10	204	224
<i>Bharai</i> (n=23)	77,793	88,122	196	2.10	189	232
<i>Khakhla</i> (n=11)	54,500	69,562	191	2.10	117	182
<i>Jalai</i> (n=20)	45,000	69,606	194	2.10	111	185

Some categories could not be calculated due to lack of data.

This disparity in pay may be assigned to various factors—the lack of information workers have on the work done, the workers being taken advantage of due to the complex nature of record-keeping and the calculations involved, the low literacy rate of workers and the illegal deductions from workers when paid *kharchi*.

State-wise comparison of wage rates: To understand the wage-rate differences state-wise, wage rates as fixed with the workers for the latest season (2017–18) are compared across work categories. It must, however, be noted that the previous Table clarifies that this wage rate was not received by the workers and was distributed among the family members working collectively.

Table 49: Overall State-wise Wage Rates of *Paatla* Workers

	2018–19	2017–18	2016–17
Bihar	483	463	457
Chhattisgarh	512	472	460
Rajasthan	495	483	479
UP	495	490	478

All numbers are in Rupees. N = 96, 154, 145; data not calculated for 2016–15.

The above Tables indicate that the wage rates have shown an incremental trend across states. The trends also show that when it comes to wages, UP and Rajasthan have better rates, and workers of Bihar have always received the lowest across years. Chhattisgarh workers are unique because the workers have been demanding a hike in *paatla* wages since 2016 in Ajmer. The large hike, specific to Chhattisgarh workers, can be an outcome of these efforts.

The data above reveal that there is ample scope for improvement of wages. This includes standardization of rates and better negotiation power for workers. Kilns operate in silence without any transparency, and workers from different regions get paid differently for the same work. It boils down to their own negotiating skills or that of their contractor's, and their desperation and need for work.

Payment cycle of wages: The cycle of payment of wages was explored; almost all the workers receive their payments only at the end of the season. There was no settlement done either mid-term or monthly.

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 are then paid food expenses on a weekly/fortnightly/monthly basis.

Table 50: Overall Payment Cycle of Workers

Indicator	2019	2018	2017	2016
End of season	100	98	98	98

All numbers are in percentages. N = 160,213,202,170

These outputs of wage rates of the two seasons could be indicative of the poor negotiating power of the workers, especially because more than often the wage rates are decided when the labour has already arrived at the kilns, making them more vulnerable. The situation also gives rise to the possible reasons for the rapid change in kilns and contractors by workers.

This may evidently make the workers vulnerable and also result in unfair deductions at the end. This arrangement

Table 51: Details of Final Settlement

	2018-19			
	% of Families	Average Amount	Minimum Amount	Maximum Amount
Positive take-back income	92	36,772	800	1,01,800
Negative take-back income/ <i>tut</i>	8	12,769	2,000	50,000

N=170

Table 52: Overall Details of Earnings by Workers

Indicator		2016	2017	2018	2019
Positive take-back income	% of families	84	95	93	92
	Average income (Rs)	26,060	25,548	33,514	36,772
Negative take-back income/ <i>tut</i>	% of families	16	5	7	8
	Average income (Rs)	22,910	20,388	16,750	12,769

N=160,213,212 and 168

Table 53: State-wise Analysis of Take-back Income for the Previous Season (2019)

		2017-18				
		Bihar	Chhattisgarh	Rajasthan	UP	Total
Positive take-back income	% of families	83	100	84	100	92
	Average amount	39,575	40,389	40,479	37,772	39,277
Negative take-back income/ <i>tut</i>	% of families	16	-	13	-	8
	Average amount	18,000		5,583		8,687

clearly gives the advantage to the owners, making it an unfair scenario. This leaves ample scope of work with owners and worker collectives.

E. Earnings

To understand the final settlement of the payments to workers, one needs to understand the phenomenon of negative balance, or *tut*. The total work done by the family (Wage rate * Number of working days) is further subjected to deductions of advance taken, food expenses (*kharchi*) and, sometimes, other expenses such as medical expenses, travel expenses, etc.

Many a time, after these deductions, families end up with a negative balance called '*tut*'. This *tut* binds a worker to the kiln

and often workers have to return to the same kiln to repay the '*tut*'. This is locally termed '*tut*' (negative earning) and can be viewed as the real indicator of bondage.

Table 52 outlines that 92 per cent families earned a positive take-away income from the kilns, while 8 per cent reported *tut*. This is similar to the previous year. The average positive take-back income per family was calculated at Rs 36,772.

Throughout our study and continuous touch with the worker have shown a positive impact on their final earning and *tut*.

From the Tables 53, we can infer that 8 percent workers went back with a negative balance/*tut* in the previous year. The average amount of *tut* is Rs 8,687. Table 53 also shows workers

from Bihar are the most vulnerable and have the highest rate of workers returning with negative income. This factor can be an indicator to bondage work in kilns and must be probed further. There has been a downward trend in the number of families returning home with *tut* over the years; however, the situation is still alarming and needs focus. This can also be correlated with the decline in the number of families taking an advance over the years. Both these trends are positive and maybe due to the efforts of the PCLRA field team working for decent work conditions in the kilns.

F. Work Conditions in Kilns

Facilities in a kiln: A majority of the families reported living in *kuccha* houses in the kilns. A small area in the corner of the kilns is usually allocated for rooms/houses to be built; these were observed to be small, dingy and cramped. Only one per cent of the workers reported living in *pucca* houses in the kilns, which is a considerable reduction from previous year when 12 percent workers reported staying in *pucca* houses. The availability of toilets is poor and has reduced, compared to the previous years. This may be due to a change in the sample kilns; kilns that dropped out may have provided better housing to workers.

Table 54: Living Conditions and Facilities Provided in Kilns (2019)

Indicators	Category	% of Families
Houses in the kilns	1. <i>Pucca</i>	1
	2. <i>Kuccha</i> made of bricks	99
Water	1. Tap	13
	2. Tube Well	43
	3. Well	28
	4. Tanker	23
	5. Others	1
Toilet and bathing		6
	Usage of toilet	2
Electricity	Electricity at the workplace	100
	Electricity at home	96
Provision of material for cooking		91

All numbers are in percentages. *N* = 151

Table 54 also indicates that tube wells continue to be a major source of water in the kilns. There has been a considerable rise in usage of tankers for water supply over the years, with an increase of almost 10 percent, compared to the previous year.

Whereas there have been some minor improvements in the living conditions over the years, they may be still be considered poor.

Work hours in the kilns: Most workers, particularly *paatla*, work for very long hours. Work continues through the night. The owners set up elaborate lighting arrangements at work stations to ensure smooth functioning during the night. The work is done in intervals, keeping the worker occupied through the day and 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 55: Work Hours of the Kilns (2019)

Work Hours	% of Workers	Average Hours
6–10 hours	30	7
11–15 hours	67	11
>15 hours	3	18
Total average		11

N = 37

A majority of the workers, across the four years of the study, reported working between 11 and 15 hours. However, the percentage of workers working above 15 hours has seen a decreasing trend and may be due to the efforts of the intervention team and workers' collective.

Sleep hours of workers: A majority of workers are able to sleep for an average of 6 hours per day. This trend has largely remained constant over the years.

Table 56: Sleep Hours of Kiln Workers (2019)

	% of Workers	Average Hours
0–6 hours	83	6
7–8 hours	17	8
>8 hours	0	0

N = 37

G. Status of Children

Migration to brick kilns leads to the denial of rights to children. There is no or negligible schooling or ICDS facilities in the brick kilns. Most families have their children in the kilns; a few leave them behind at the source location.

Table 57: Children at Home and in the Kilns (2019)

	0–6 years	7–14 years	Total
At home	8	21	30
In the kilns	45	26	70

All numbers are in percentages. $N = 232$

Seventy percent of the children in migrating worker families live in the kilns. Within these, the larger population of children is those between the age group 0 and 6 years. It was also recorded that parents agreed to engaging their children in work. Whereas many families did engage their children at work, there is hesitation among the workers to accept this.

Table 58: Children Attending School/Anganwadi

	Percentage of Children		
	Overall (0–14 years)	0–6 years	7–14 years
At home	06	2	4
In the kilns	<1	<1	<1
Not attending the school	94	51	42
Total	100	53	47

All numbers are in percentages. $N = 232$ children

A closer look at Table 58 above indicates that the children are largely deprived of *anganwadi*/schooling facilities at both the source and at the kiln. This could be due to the constant migration that families undertake.

Overall, whereas almost all parents agree that education is valuable and they would like their children to get educated, the situation in the kilns leaves tremendous scope to improve the working and living conditions, and access to basic rights for migrating workers at kilns.

Solution and Conclusions

The current report is the final analysis of a four-year study, to map the migration patterns of workers in the brick kilns of Rajasthan. This report not only brings our indicators from the current work season 2019 but also draws comparisons over four years, to identify the changing trends in the socio-economic profiling and migration patterns of workers at the brick kilns. Whereas there have not been any drastic variations in the migration patterns from the source or in the socio-economic profile of workers, many areas offer opportunities for further probing.

Two formats to collect the data were developed by PCLRA. Whereas most of the data recording was done by the field team directly and monitored continuously, the diversity and the accuracy of data was high. With regular interventions and analysis by PCLRA of the 26 kilns identified in the first year, the following conclusions may be drawn:

- 1) The main states from where workers come to Rajasthan remain the same. The state-wise proportion of workers, the caste break-up, and the work categories have all shown a similar trend across the years. The only major exception in Rajasthan as a source area was Kishangarh, which was a major source area for kilns in Ajmer. The current year saw a dip in intra-district migration pattern of workers, reducing it to a minor source *tehsil*.
- 2) Wage rates have seen an incremental trend in most categories of work, especially in *paatla* work over the years; however, this has been a minor increase and, largely, the wages have reached stagnation. This could be on account of various reasons.
- 3) The living conditions of the workers continue to be poor. Whereas there has been an improvement in certain indicators such as access to water, electricity, firewood, *pucca* housing over the last four years, it is still below what can be termed as 'fair' living conditions. To achieve decent work conditions for migrant workers, strict implementation of labour laws and monitoring by the government is necessary.
- 4) One of the most important stakeholders, who need to be sensitized, are the owners. Throughout the study, it was observed that owners must be made more sensitive to the needs of the workers, women and children.
- 5) The condition of sanitation facilities such as basic access to toilets and bathrooms in the kilns are very poor. Most kilns do not have a toilet. This especially makes women and girls on kilns vulnerable. Government schemes should activity implement laws for companies and businesses, to ensure better living conditions for workers.
- 6) Children of migrant families in kilns are particularly vulnerable; their education is hugely compromised both at home and in the kilns. Very young children are often engaged in work because the entire family is considered as one unit and wages are paid proportionate to the work done. School, *anganwadis*, migratory hostels are available in very few places. Through its intervention and advocacy efforts, PCLRA and the labour collectives have been able to initiate a few steps in this direction. However, the situation needs greater will and support from government departments, to implement schemes beneficial to children of migrant workers.
- 7) The entire brick-kiln labour industry in the region runs on the system of advance payments to worker units and then creates bondage-like situations because of which the workers are unable to leave. There is still a high percentage of workers leaving the kilns with negative balance, or *tut*. Alternatives such as a government employment exchange for migrant workers can be explored for the same.

- 8) The study offers interesting insights as to how brick kilns operate in silence and opacity. Workers doing the same work in the same kiln are paid differently. The larger the negotiating powers of the contractor, the better the pay. The most vulnerable workers come from Bihar. Not only do they receive the minimal wage rates but their socio-economic profile is also the weakest compared to other states. This is a reflection of the exploitative work conditions in the kilns.
- 9) The account-keeping in a kiln is of a complex nature. All the four years saw variations in the payment of workers, based on the work done and the payments they actually received subsequent to the complex calculation of matching advance, living expenses and other deductions.
- 10) Whereas the total earnings of the workers has increased over the years, it must be probed if this has actually transformed into the upliftment of the socio-economic status and living conditions of workers. Earnings per worker reveal they are still hugely below the international poverty line, indicating extreme poverty. Also, not much has translated into access to entitlements, land or house ownership.

Overall, the research opens up multiple difficult questions and situations that demand further probing and remedy, to improve the conditions of brick-kiln workers. The study further reinstates many challenges that have been associated with migrant workers for long—extreme poverty, exploitative work conditions, unequal and poor wages, child labour and bonded labour. Brick-kiln work attracts some of the most vulnerable populations from very backward districts of the country in search of work. Collectively, this situation demands quick notice and revolutionary policy work.