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

Research Study as part of the Project:

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

Research by:

Prayas Centre for Labour Research and Action (PCLRA)

Centre for Education and Communication

New Delhi

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BUILDING A WIDER HORIZON CEC WITH LABOUR

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Glossary

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

Foreword

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

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

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

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

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

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

Arati Pandya
Executive Director
Centre for Education and Communication

20 March 2018

Preface

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

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

This study presents the results of migration mapping of brick kilns in Ajmer and Bhilwara districts of Central Rajasthan during the 2017–18 season, the second project year. Migration mapping was done for the second consecutive year, to understand the changes that take place from year to year. The migration profile is not static. Broad migration streams evolve under the influence of a number of factors, which include major communication linkages, contact between labour recruiters and employers, preference of employers for workers from a certain region, and availability of cheap labour. Once the migration streams develop, these acquire a certain stability. Yet, migration streams remain dynamic. There are gradual changes determined by a number of factors such as contractor-employer relationship, worker militancy, wages prevalent in different areas, past experience of employers, availability of work, and seasonality. Therefore mapping of workers every year in the select clusters, to monitor changes, has been planned. The sample selected remains the same each year, making it possible to make comparisons across years. Hopefully, the data will be useful in designing and fine-tuning project interventions.

Sudhir Katiyar 15 March 2018
Project Director
Prayas Centre for Labour Research and Action

Executive Summary

This is the report for Year 2 (2017–18), in the four-year-long study planned to understand migration patterns and the socio-economic status of workers in brick kilns. The report is an outcome of a research study carried out by PCLRA in the districts of Ajmer and Bhilwara in Rajasthan. Brick kilns are seasonal and attract a large number of migrant workers—both inter-state and intra-state every year for work. The research is a part of the larger intervention, supported by the European Union, to empower CSOs, to promote decent work conditions and green bricks in India's brick kilns.

The study was carried out with two objectives—migration source mapping and understanding the socio-economic status of workers. Twenty-two kilns from Ajmer and Bhilwara, employing 1042 families, were covered during the study.

The findings largely complement the findings from Year 1. Thirty-three per cent of the workers were intra-state migrants from Rajasthan whereas the remaining were inter-state, with a majority coming from UP, Chhattisgarh and Bihar. The *paatla* workers are largely migrant workers from states other than Rajasthan and the categories of *bharai*, *nikasi*, *khakla*, and *khadkan* came from within Rajasthan. More than half the population of workers belong to SCs, followed by OBCs and STs. A majority of the SCs (the *chamar* community) come from UP, and a majority of the OBCs (Rawat community) are from Rajasthan.

A state-wise analysis restates what was discovered in Year 1: Rajasthan has two major clusters—Rawats from Masuda and Bawaris from Kishangarh Parbatsar and adjoining areas of Nagaur *tehsil*. Whereas Rawats work only in *bharai* and *nikasi*, the Bawaris work across almost the whole range of jobs except *jalai*. However, they have also got concentrated in *bharai* and *nikasi* over a period of time. In UP as well, two major clusters can be identified—Chitrakoot Banda in Bundelkhand that is primarily a source of *paatla* workers and Kausambi, which is part of the Central UP belt that supplies *jalai* workers to all of India.

The average size of a worker's family is 4.53 and the average size of a working family is 2.37. Thirty-eight per cent of the members on the kiln are children below the age of 14, of which 22 per cent are below the age of 6. Forty-five per cent of the workers at the kilns are women. The average literacy rate of workers is low at 35 per cent, with the women's literacy rate dropping below average at 24 per cent.

The ownership of entitlements is largely poor, with a negligible number of workers holding Construction Workers Board Membership cards or any form of insurance. A maximum number of people have Voter IDs and Aadhaar cards, at a little more than 80 per cent. Fifty per cent workers reported land-holding and 27 per cent reported ownership of some form of irrigated land. The average land-holding is 3 *bighas* and average irrigated land-holding is 1 *bigha*. Forty-one per cent workers reported having debts at an average amount of Rs 1 lakh greater than their average earnings from the kilns. Rajasthan showed better ownership of assets compared to other states, although poor

when individually assessed. The state also reported the highest debt. This can be associated to the fact that the workers from Rajasthan are in non-*paatla* categories of work, which are comparatively economically better off than *paatla*. However, there is more scope to explore this.

The income of workers was compared to their income in the previous season; the major source of earning is through wage labour in brick kilns, amounting to about 7 months occupation in a year and contributing 95 per cent of the overall income. The other sources of income are agriculture, animal farming and MGNREGA work. Calculations reveal that the income per worker at the kiln is Rs 65 per day against the international poverty line of Rs 122 per day, indicating extreme poverty.

Labour is hired largely through contractors; a worker, on an average, changes a kiln in 1.8 years and a contractor every 2.2 years. This indicates that the workers generally have low negotiating powers and often shift locations. More probing into the situation can lead to a concrete understanding of the push factors. Taking an advance prior to working is another crucial part of the entire system. Almost 80 per cent of the families take an advance, averaging to more than Rs 13,000 per worker, that is, about Rs 31,000 per family. Ninety-eight per cent have to guarantee that they will work for the whole season against this amount. Household expenses are the main reason for taking the advance. Wage calculations show that *paatla* workers, the main category of workers being studied, and the most dominant work category, have had only a 3 per cent wage hike in two consecutive seasons. The wage rate seems to have stagnated and this could be attributed to various reasons within the macro-picture of the brick-kiln market. Daily wages have been calculated using two methods, based on wage rate and work done, and based on what the labour receives in terms of advance, *kharchi* and final settlement. A difference of 22 per cent has been found in these rates, indicating disparity in account keeping, work done and actual payment. Eleven per cent families also reported *tut* (negative balance) at the end of the season and a majority of these belong to Rajasthan. The average take-back income is reported to be around Rs 25,000 per family.

An analysis of the work conditions reveals that most workers work for 11 to 15 hours at the kilns. A majority of them lived in *kuchha* houses at the site, with access to water, electricity and fire wood but poor sanitation conditions.

The study to be carried out in Year 3 includes new areas of concern identified in Year 2. Parallels drawn from previous years will help identify trend changes. As of now, there are no notable changes in the findings between Years 1 and 2, with the exception of the additions of a few new minor source districts in Year 2 in UP, Chhattisgarh and Bihar.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

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

The current research study has been undertaken to understand the migration patterns of workers coming to Ajmer and Bhilwara districts of Rajasthan, to work in the kilns, as well as to understand their socio-economic profile. Efforts have also gone into identifying various interlinked factors that significantly impact the brick-kiln industry and the workers.

The study will map the migration patterns of workers for a period of four years. The current report presents the detailed findings of Year 2 (2017) and also compares these to the findings from Year 1 (2016).

Understanding Migration and Brick Kilns

The brick-kiln industry is seasonal and employs migrant workers on a large scale. The study aims to produce empirically grounded data for understanding the migration patterns and socio-economic conditions of workers in the brick kilns, with the aim of establishing a decent work environment at the kilns. The study will map this data for a span of four years; presented here are the findings for Year 2.

Migration is considered an inevitable part/trait of the developmental process. In India, 'employment' is the second most-stated reason for internal migration, the first being marriage[1]. Large numbers of people migrating for employment are mostly absorbed by the informal economy of the country comprising wage labour. Wage labour is the chief mode of income for the poor in India. A widely accepted fact is that this labour is largely unorganized, with limited or no access to social security of any kind. Disparities of economic growth and poor implementation of labour laws have led to the creation of huge networks run by middlemen, to supply cheap migrant, often bonded, labour. The special 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 hidden. The 2001 Census lists 307 million internal migrants, but defines as a migrant anyone who lives in a place that is different than their place of birth or place of last residence. This definition casts too wide a net because it includes many people who move over very short distances, within the same district. On the other hand, it likely misses a significant number of seasonal migrants.[2] They are neither counted in their source state nor in the destination state, and hence lack access to any public service such as education, health, infant care or PDS.

Migration to the Brick Kilns of Rajasthan

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

1 Census of India website as on December 16, 2016.

2 Abbas and Varma, Internal Labor Migration in India Raises Integration Challenges for Migrants'

Each activity has a specific requirement and specialized labour. Based on the tasks, workers are categorized under the following heads.

a) *Paatla/Thapai*/Raw brick-making workers

This category of workers specializes in creating the brick mixture, made of earth and water, which is then set in moulds and dried in the sun. During the drying process, the bricks are turned periodically so that all sides get direct sunlight. This forms the first step of the brick-making process and is done in a large, open area. Entire families are involved in producing raw bricks and this group constitutes the largest number of labour in the kilns. The average annual brick production per kiln may range from two million to five million bricks a season.

b) *Bharai* workers

The *bharai* workers manually shift the sun-dried raw bricks to the kiln for firing. The kilns are centrally located and often are at a considerable distance, ranging from100 to 400 m. A manually operated cart, which can accommodate 50–60 bricks at a time, is used to transport the bricks. The *bharai* worker needs to stack the raw bricks in a cart, take them to the kiln, unload them and return to transport the next batch of bricks. In a day, a worker transports roughly around 2000–2500 bricks. The weight per loaded cart is around 80–85 kg. In a few places around Ajmer, a camel cart is used to carry these bricks. Two to three people are involved in this activity. The distance to the kiln ranges from 1–1.5 km.

c) *Khadkan/Beldar* workers

The *khadkan*, or *beldar*, workers in the kiln stack the bricks in a specific style for firing. This is a specialized task and crucial to the proper firing of bricks. On an average, a *khadkan* worker stacks about 15,000–20,000 bricks per day in a kiln.

d) *Raapas* workers

The *raapas* workers cover the stacked bricks with ash. They also clean the kiln once the firing is done; this includes the removal of the burnt ash and leftovers.

e) *Khakla* workers

The *khakla* workers deliver the raw material (typically, in Rajasthan, wasted husk from mustard/black gram plants) for firing the kiln. This material is stocked at the base of the chimney at multiple positions. The workers often carry the material on their head and have to climb to the base of the chimney, to put the material in the kiln, on the instructions of the *jalai* workers.

f) *Jalai* workers

The *jalai* workers conduct the firing process in the kilns. This is an extremely specialized task, which needs continuous monitoring. The temperatures here are very high and even a small accident can result in death.

g) *Nikasi* workers

After the fired bricks are cooled in wooden carts, *nikasi* workers load and transport these to the stocking area/trucks for supply. They carry the baked bricks over the same distance as the *bharai* workers.

The wages of the workers are determined on a piece-rate system, that is, for the number of bricks each. The workers are paid some cash in advance to ensure they are bound to the workplace for the duration of the work season. They are periodically paid living wages during the season and their wages are settled at the end of the work period. Wages are low, work hours long and living conditions poor.

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

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

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

Bondage in Brick Kilns

Bonded labour, or debt bondage, is the most common type of modern slavery in India, affecting millions of people. Much goes unreported and some officials deny that there is any bonded labour.[3] The brick-kiln industry in India is marked by illegal labour and business practices, with the prevalence of bondage. Workers engaged in this sector are easily one of the most exploited sections of the country's workforce. The social and economic location of the group escalates the impact of exploitation faced by them on a day-to-day basis. The abundance of labour, the hike in the real-estate industry and the dependence on contractors for the supply of labour results in the substantial sprouting of contractors. This unfolds a race to the bottom among the contractors, in terms of wages. Undercutting each other, they agree to minimum provisions at the workplace, shrinking the provisions and entitlements of the workers every consecutive year. As a consequence, workers face ever increasing isolation, and a deterioration in the living and working conditions at 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 fulfil expectations. An acute shortage of workforce across states in the country persists along with a misplaced understanding in the categorization of workers, based on the type of work. Moreover, migrant workers do not form any political constituency, resulting in the indifferent attitude of political leaders at both the source and destination areas. Weak state machinery also fails to track the actual presence of the kilns and, thus, the reach of the state and its provisions remain far away from the workers at the kilns.

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

Structure of the Report

The first chapter is an introduction to the research and an overview 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 describes the journey so far, the shortcomings of the study and the plans to improvise and move forward.

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

CHAPTER 2

The Research Design

Objective: The objective of the current study is to map the migration profile of brick-kiln workers and their work conditions over the project duration of four years.

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

To enrich the findings from the Year 1, an ethnographic study in the source areas of Chhattisgarh was carried out in Year 2. The findings of this study will be shared in a report separately.

Sample Area: The study targeted 200 brick kilns in the operational areas of PCLRA in Ajmer and Bhilwara—this was the universe. The spread of these kilns is as shown in the following table.

Table 1: **Brick Kilns in the Operational Area**

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

Sampling

The sample selected for the study covers 13 per cent (26 kilns) of the 200 kilns in Bhilwara and Ajmer. This selection was done in a way that regions from various geographical locations within the cluster are covered.

Data collection was done to achieve:

- Migration source-mapping of workers
- Socio-Economic profiling of workers

Migration source-mapping

Year 1 (2016) : 26 kilns (8 Ajmer + 18 Bhilwara) were studied, covering 1,262 worker families.

Year 2 (2017) : 22 kilns (6 Ajmer + 16 Bhilwara) were studied, covering 1,042 worker families.

Four kilns had to be dropped in Year 2 because these did not start operations in the season.

Socio-Economic profiling of workers

Year 1 (2016) : 160 families covered (13 per cent of all families from the selected 26 kilns)

Year 2 (2017) : 213 families covered (20 per cent of all families from the selected 22 kilns)

These families were mapped, with an average of 10 families per kiln. Diversity in the category of workers was proportionately included to cover four-five *paatla* worker families, two-three *bharai/nikasi/khadkan* and two-three *jalai/khakla/raapas* workers.

Table 2: **Geographical Spread of Brick Kilns Covered in the Study Sample**

No.	Name of the kiln	*Tehsil*/Cluster	District
1	JMD Bricks	Kishangarh	Ajmer
2	VBC Bricks	Kishangarh	Ajmer
3	Sona Bricks	Nasirabad	Ajmer
4	JMD Bricks	Srinagar	Ajmer
5	SSB Bricks	Srinagar	Ajmer
6	GBC Bricks	Srinagar	Ajmer

No.	Name of the kiln	*Tehsil*/Cluster	District
7	Madhav Bricks	Asind	Bhilwara
8	Vinayak Bricks	Asind	Bhilwara
9	Saras Bricks	Asind	Bhilwara
10	Shakti Bricks	Asind	Bhilwara
11	Shri Ram Bricks	Asind	Bhilwara
12	Shayam Int	Gangapur	Bhilwara
13	RR Bricks	Jahajpur	Bhilwara
14	Keshav Bricks	Mandal	Bhilwara
15	Laxmi Bricks	Mandal	Bhilwara
16	Bhawani Bricks	Mandal	Bhilwara
17	Prabhu Int	Mandal	Bhilwara
18	Shree Nakoda Bricks	Mandal	Bhilwara
19	Aazad Bricks	Mandal	Bhilwara
20	Gayatri Bricks	Mandal	Bhilwara
21	New Laxmi Bricks	Mandal	Bhilwara
22	Swastik Bricks	Shahpura	Bhilwara

Figure 1: **Geographical Location of Selected Brick Kilns in Ajmer**

The kilns were chosen on the basis of their geographical spread, to cover kilns from diverse regions in the district. Clearly, the maximum kilns studied are from Mandal *tehsil* in Bhilwara, followed by Aasind. In Ajmer, the maximum kilns are from Shrinagar *tehsil*, followed by Kishangarh.

Research Tools

a. Structured interviews and questionnaires

Two schedules were developed and used for collecting data; these were filled by the field staff for every worker, after discussions and through interviews.

- The first schedule was for source-profiling, to document the source of the workers and the contractors they come through.
- The second schedule collected data along following aspects:
  - Demographic profile: Number of family members, age, sex, education
  - Socio-Economic profile: Caste, asset base, including land-holding, annual income, indebtedness
  - Mode of recruitment: Advance taken, mode of recruitment
  - Work conditions: Wage rates, output. Final settlement, status of *tut*
  - Living conditions: Housing, drinking water
  - Access to basic entitlements such as MGNREGA, PDS, financial inclusion

b. Literature review

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

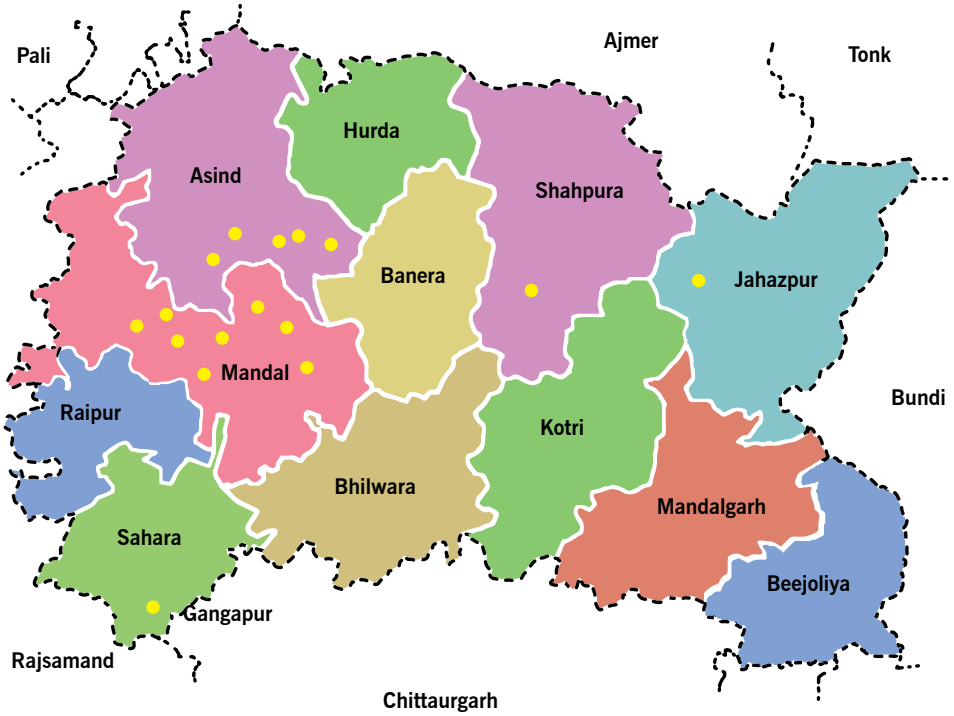
c. Observations

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

d. Case Studies

The case studies of individuals, families or disputes and grievances filed were identified to correlate with the study outcomes.

Figure 2: **Geographical Location of selected Brick Kilns in Bhilwara**



Frequency of Data Collection and Reporting

The survey will be undertaken every year at the same brick kilns that are covered in the Year 1. The two schedules used will also remain the same. Every year a report will be generated, documenting changes taking place. A comprehensive report will be prepared in the last year of the project, with comparative data from all four years.

Data Collection Schedule

Year 1: February to June 2016
Year 2: January to May 2017

Scope and Limitations

The study limits itself to some of the major socio-economic and work condition-related indicators. It does not delve into the political aspects of the same. Geographically, the brick kilns are located in a very scattered manner over a large area and that is a challenge. Another challenge is the reluctant nature of the owners and state officials to divulge information, making it less accessible. The data on economic status is based on the recollection of the same by the worker and, hence, skewed. The data collection in Year 2 was initiated in January, which saw better coverage of all the workers.

CHAPTER 3

Migration Source-mapping

This chapter shares the findings from the survey, covering 22 brick kilns and 1,042 worker families. The main objective of this survey was to map the sources of migrant labour coming to these kilns in Ajmer and Bhilwara.

A majority of the labour was from UP, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Rajasthan itself. The workers were mapped, based on the district and *tehsil*/cluster they came from in the source state and also their dominant caste categories. The findings are as follows.

A. Composition of labour by state of origin

A majority of the workers were found to be inter-state and intra-state migrants from UP, followed by Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Bihar. A few workers had also come from Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Odisha. Most of the intra-district migrants lived at the kilns whereas there were a few intra-district migrants, who commuted to and fro on a daily basis to the kiln. The labour-contractor and labour-owner relationship varied with the source areas of the worker.

Table 3: **State-wise Composition of Workers**

State	Percentage Proportion
UP	39
Rajasthan	33
Chhattisgarh	18
Bihar	8
Jharkhand	<1
MP	<1
Odisha	<1

All numbers are in percentages; N = 1042

This composition is similar to that in Year 1. However, workers from MP were not seen in the Year 1 sample; this year, there are workers from MP, even though they are a very minor percentage.

Table 4: **State-wise Work Category Composition of Workers**

	Overall	Bihar	Chhattisgarh	Rajasthan	UP
1. *Paatla*	58	97	99	16	66
2. *Khadkan*	13	1	0	8	0
3. *Bharai*	7	0	1	37	3
4. *Nikasi*	6	0	0	14	2
5. *Jalai*	5	0	0	2	17
6. *Raapas*	4	0	0	5	7
7. *Khakhla*	3	0	0	6	4
8. Other	4	2	0	12	1

All numbers are in percentages; N = 1,042

In Year 1, there were 48 per cent *paatla*, and 15 per cent *bharai* and *nikasi* workers each; in Year 2, the proportions varied at 58, 13 and 5 per cent, respectively. Also, in Year 1, *raapas* and *khakla* workers were counted under the 'Others' category, and separated, to increase the scope of the study in Year 2. The percentages of *jalai* and *khadkan* workers covered remained similar.

From the data, it can be inferred that the largest number of *paatla* workers come from UP. The state also provides the highest number of *jalai* workers to the kilns. Almost all workers coming from Bihar and Chhattisgarh are *paatla* workers. Most of the intra-state workers from Rajasthan are *bharai* workers, followed by *paatla* and *nikasi* workers. Almost all *bharai* and *khadkan* workers come from Rajasthan.

Table 5: **State-wise Caste Composition of Workers**

	Overall	Bihar	Chhattisgarh	Rajasthan	UP
General	2		2		2
Minority	1				4
OBC	30	76	21	49	8
SC	53	7	36	37	86
ST	14	17	41	14	

All numbers are in percentages; N = 1,042

Table 5 indicates that the dominant caste category on the kilns is SC, followed by the OBC and ST categories. A state-wise analysis above reveals that, from UP, the majority caste is SC whereas from Rajasthan and Bihar it is OBC. Rajasthan also has a substantial number of SC and ST workers. From Chhattisgarh, the dominant caste is ST.

State-wise Analysis

The four major states from which people migrate are Rajasthan, UP, Chhattisgarh and Bihar. The data have been analysed for each state, to identify the districts and *tehsils*/clusters that are the major source areas.

The major districts and clusters/*tehsils* from where 5, or more than 5, per cent of the total work force migrates have been classified. Less than 5 per cent are termed as minor.

Rajasthan

Thirty-three per cent of the workers at the kilns are intra-state migrants from other districts of Rajasthan.

Table 6: **Source Districts of Rajasthan**

Districts	Percentage Proportion
Ajmer	53
Nagaur	21
Bhilwara	14
Pali	7
Sikar	2
Rajsamand	1
Jaipur	1
Tonk	<1

All numbers are in percentages; N = 349

The major source districts from where the labour migrates are Ajmer, Nagaur, Bhilwara, Pali and Sikar**.** All the districts are in the western and eastern neighbourhoods of the destination location. Ajmer and Bhilwara have historically housed SC communities (including Baori, Meghwal and Nayak), who have traditionally worked in brick kilns. Clearly, a majority of workers from Rajasthan are intra-district migrants coming from Ajmer, Nagaur, and Bhilwara to the kilns.

The major *tehsils* from where labour was sourced were also identified. A comparison of this data with that of the districts where the kilns exist, to understand the extent of intra district migration, is worthwhile. Masuda, Parbatsar and Maandal are major source *tehsils*.

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

Major Source Districts	Major Source *Tehsils*	Percentage of workers within *tehsil*
Ajmer	Masuda	60
	Kishangarh	23
	Srinagar	7
Nagaur	Parbatsar	73
	Degana	7
	Nawa	7
Bhilwara	Mandal	44
	Asind	29
	Jahajpur	8
	Banera	6
Pali	Raipur	96
Sikar	Shrimadhopur	63
	Khandela	13
	Neem ka Thana	13
	Sikar	13

All numbers are in percentages; N = 349

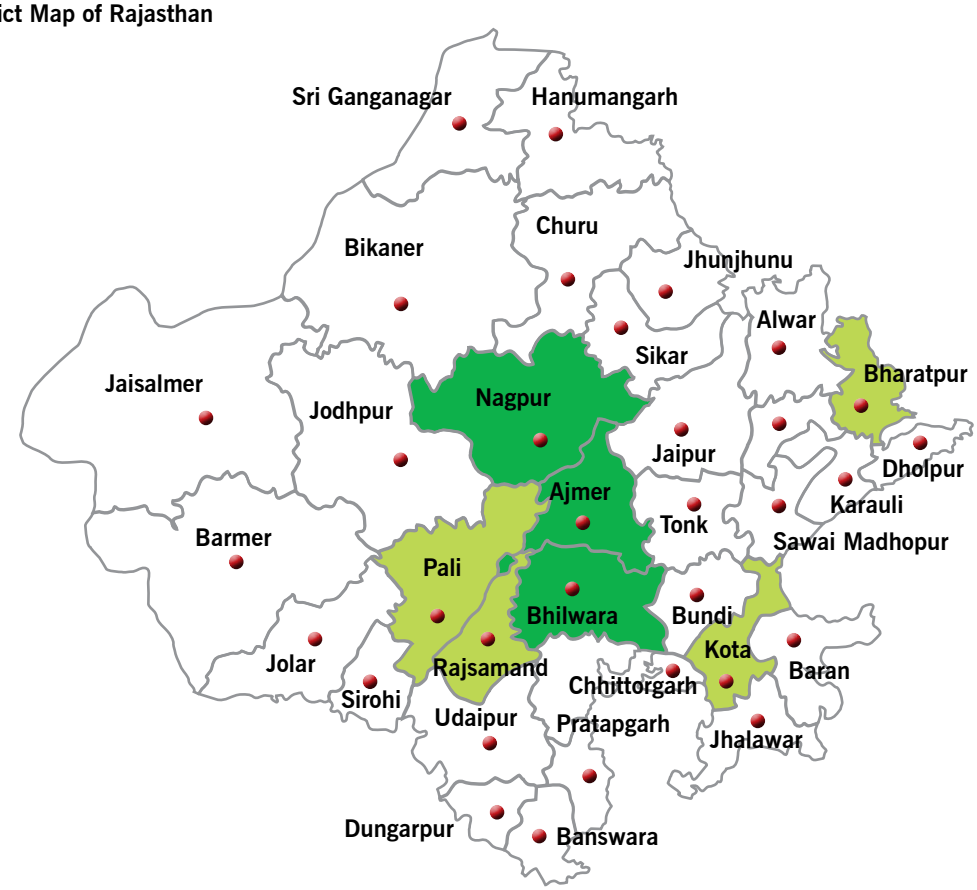
Table 8: **Caste Break-up of Workers in Rajasthan**

Category	Percentage of Workers
General	-
Minority	-
OBC	49
SC	37
ST	14

All numbers are in percentages; N = 349

Table 8 shows that the major caste categories migrating to work in brick kilns are OBCs and SCs, comprising more than 85 per cent of the population. Within the OBC community, the dominant castes are Rawats (76 per cent), Kumhar (5 per cent) and Nath (4 per cent). In the SC community, the dominant castes are Bawri (70 per cent) and Meghwals (20 per cent). Within the ST community, the dominant caste is Nayaka (52 per cent) and Bhil (45 per cent).

Figure 3: **District Map of Rajasthan**



The map above shows the major source districts marked in dark green and minor source districts marked in light green. A comparison with Year 1 shows that in Year 2, Pali has become a major district from being a minor district. Also, in Year 1, workers came from the minor district clusters of Bharatpur, Kota, Sikar and Rajsamand. However, in the current year, Kota and Bharatpur have been replaced by workers from Jaipur and Tonk—two new districts. Interestingly, Bharatpur and Kota were the only source districts last year that are not geographically contiguous to destination districts of Ajmer and Bhilwara.

There are two major ethno-geographic clusters—Rawats from Masuda and Bawari from Kishangarh Parbatsar and adjoining areas of Nagaur *tehsil*. Whereas the Rawats work only in *bharai* and *nikasi*, the Bawaris work across almost the whole range of jobs except *jalai*. However, they have also got concentrated in *bharai* and *nikasi* work over a period of time.

Uttar Pradesh

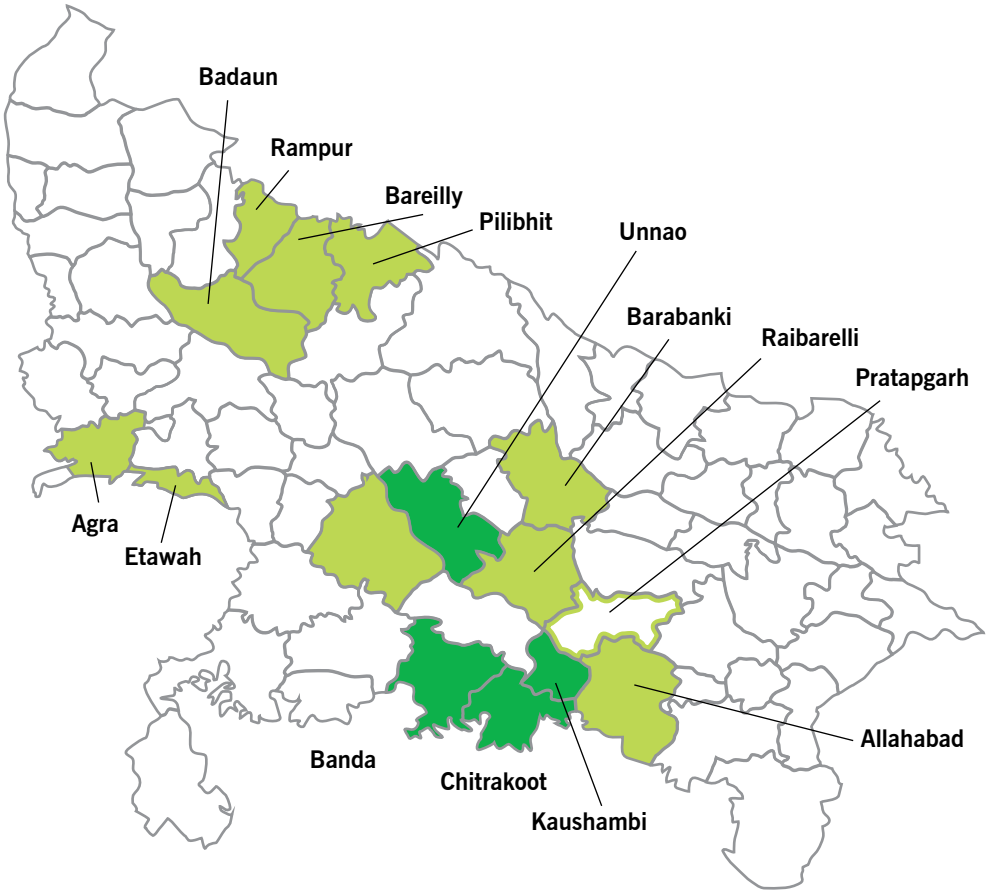
The largest number of inter-state migrants, that is, about 39 per cent, come to the kilns in Ajmer and Bhilwara from UP.

Table 9: **Mapping Source Districts of Workers from UP**

District	Percentage
Chitrakoot	60
Banda	17
Kaushambi	11
Agra	4
Unnao	3
Bareli	1
Barabanki	1
Badaun	<1
Allahabad	<1
Etawah	<1
Pilibhit	<1
Raebareli	<1
Rampur	<1

All numbers are in percentages. N = 407

Figure 4: **Major and Minor Source Districts of UP**



The map above shows the major source districts marked in dark green and minor source districts marked in light green. A comparison with Year 1 reveals that, in Year 2, Unnao has become a minor source district from being a major one. Also, three additional minor source districts have emerged—Pilibhit, Etawah and Badaun. This has led to the expansion of source areas in northern UP. Interestingly, all these new districts are attached to districts from where workers migrated in Year 1. Year 2 saw no workers from Pratapgarh, which was a minor source district last year.

Most of the workers have migrated from Chitrakoot district (60 per cent). The entire cluster area of UP—Chitrakoot, Banda and Koushambi—comprise almost 88 per cent of the worker population. There is also some influx from the districts of Agra, Unnao, Barabanki and Bareilly.

Two major clusters can be identified – Chitrakoot and Banda in Bundelkhand that is primarily a source of *paatla* workers, and Kausambi that is a part of the Central UP belt and a source of *jalai* workers to all of India.

Table 10 shows that the major *tehsil* in Chitrakoot is Karvi; in Banda, it is Atra and, in Kaushambi, it is Chayal.

Table 10: **Source cluster/tehsil for UP**

Major Source Districts	Major Source *Tehsil*	Percentage proportion within *tehsils*
Chitrakoot	Karvi	50
	Manikpur	21
	Mau	15
	Pahadi	14
Banda	Atra	99
Kaushambi	Chayal	91
	Manjanpur	5
	Purwa Mukti	5

All numbers are in percentages; N = 407

Table 11: **Caste Break-up of Workers in UP**

Category	Percentage of Workers
General	2
Minority	4
OBC	8
SC	86
ST	<1

All numbers are in percentages; N = 407

Table 11 clearly indicates that most of the workers migrating from UP are SC. The dominant groups in the General category are Kashyap (66 per cent), Rajputs (25 per cent) and Thakur (9 per cent), and among the minorities are the Muslims (93 per cent). In the OBC community, the dominant castes are Yadav (54 per cent), Kumhar (12 per cent) and Bharati (12 per cent); in the SC community, the dominant castes are Chamar (81 per cent), Pasi (5 per cent), and Saroj (4 per cent).

Chhattisgarh

Of the inter-state migrant workers' source locations, Chhattisgarh comes after UP in the proportion of workers migrating for work. Chhattisgarh contributes 18 per cent of the workforce at the kilns.

Table 12: **Source District Mapping of Workers in Chhattisgarh**

Districts	Percentage Proportion
Mahasamund	49
Baloda Bazar	41
Bilaspur	4
Janjgir Champa	4
Raigarh	1

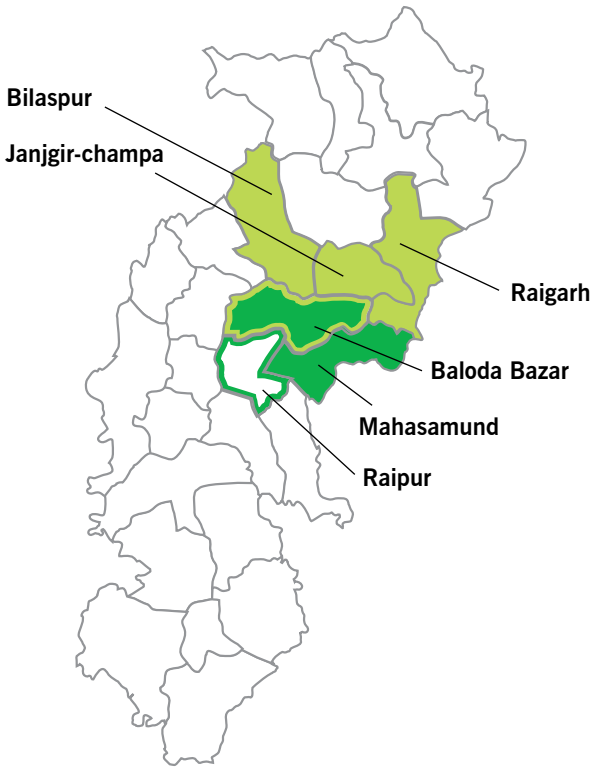
All numbers are in percentages; N = 184

The main source districts in Chhattisgarh are **Mahasamund** and **Baloda Bazar**, collectively contributing 90 per cent of the labour force from the state.

Table 13: **Source Cluster/Tehsil Mapping of Chhattisgarh**

Major Districts	Major *Tehsil*	Percentage Proportion within the *Tehsil*
Mahasamund	Pithora	35
	Mahasamund	22
	Saraipali	21

Figure 5: **Major and Minor Source Districts of Chhattisgarh**



The map shows the major source districts marked in dark green and minor districts marked in light green. A comparison of Year 1 with Year 2 reveals that this year no workers have come from Raipur, which was a major source district last year. In Year 2, Baloda Bazar has become a major source district from a minor one. Mahasamund continues to be the major source district from the state. Two additional districts of Raigarh and Bilaspur have been included in the list this year as minor districts. Interestingly, both are connected to Jangir Champa, which was a minor source district in Year 1.

Major Districts	Major *Tehsil*	Percentage Proportion within the *Tehsil*
	Basna	15
	Bagbahara	7
Baloda Bazar	Bilaigarh	77
	Baloda bazar	12
	Kasdol	8

All numbers are in percentages; N = 184

Table 13 clearly shows that the major *tehsil* in Mahasamund is Pithora and in Baloda Bazar is Bilaigarh.

Figure 6: **Major and Minor Source Districts in Bihar**

The map above shows that the source districts in Bihar have altered considerably compare to Year The major source district in Year 2, from where more than 90 per cent of the workers come are Banka and Sheikhpura, both of which were minor districts in Year 1. Nevada, which was a major district in Year 1 has converted to a minor district this year, and Janui, a major district last year is not a source in Year 2. Munger, a minor district last year, again is not a source area in the current year, thus altering the worker source landscape in Bihar entirely.
Whereas the changes in th emigration pattern of Bihar appear considerable compared to Year 1, it must be noted that the sample size of workers from Bihar is very small (11 families) and needs further probing.

Table 14: **Caste Break-up of Workers in Chhattisgarh**

Category	Percentage of Workers
General	2
Minority	-
OBC	21
SC	36
ST	41

All numbers are in percentages; N = 184

The dominant caste category migrating from the state is ST, followed closely by SC and then OBC. The dominant castes under each category are as follows. ST: Gond (38 per cent), Bariha (18 per cent), Sawra (14 per cent), Oraon (12 per cent), Dhanwar (5 per cent); OBC: Yadav (28 per cent), Khadiya (26 per cent), Chouhan (10 per cent), Rawat (7 per cent); SC: Satnami (28 per cent), Kherwar (22 per cent), Kevat (9 per cent), Ghasiya (6 per cent); General: Thakur (60 per cent), Brahmin (20 per cent) and Pandey (20 per cent).

Bihar

Nine per cent inter-state migrant labour comes from Bihar. A majority of workers, who come from Bihar are engaged in *paatla* work and are from the districts of Banka, Sheikhpura and Nawada.

Table 15: **Mapping Source Districts of Workers from Bihar**

Districts	Percentage Proportion
Banka	82
Sheikhpura	13
Nawada	4

All numbers are in percentages; N = 91

The major source districts of Bihar are Banka and Sheikhpura.

Table 16: **Source Cluster Mapping for Bihar**

Major Districts	Major *Tehsil*	Percentage proportion within *Tehsil*
Banka	Barahat	33
	Banka	27
	Bonsi	13
	Rajon	12
	Brahat	11
	Bhrahat	3
	Bhindarichan	1
Sheikhpura	Kassar	92
	Sheikhpura	8

All numbers are in percentages; N = 91

The major *tehsil* in Banka is Barahat and, in Sheikhpura, it is Kassar.

Table 17: **Caste Break-up of Workers in Bihar**

	Percentage of Workers
General	-
Minority	-
OBC	76
SC	7
ST	17

All numbers are in percentages; N = 91

The major caste category migrating from Bihar is OBC, followed by ST and SC. The dominant castes amongst the migrating are OBC: Leya (98 per cent), SC: Chamar (83 per cent), Bhoi (16 per cent) and ST: Manjhi (100 per cent).

Thus, overall the source migration pattern for workers coming to the brick kilns in Ajmer and Bhilwara are a mix of inter-state and intra-state migrant workers. The inter-state migrants are in the majority, with UP, Chhattisgarh and Bihar as source states in that order. A very minor proportion of workers come in from other states such as Odisha, MP and Jharkhand.

CHAPTER 4

Socio-Economic Profile of the Brick-kiln Workers

To assess the socio-economic status of migrant workers, 213 families, that is, a 20 per cent sample from the universe of 1,042 worker families, of 22 kilns were surveyed. The findings are as follows.

A. Demographic Profile

Family size

The total numbers of families surveyed were 213. These families comprised 962 members, of which 829, that is, 86 per cent, work at the kilns. The remaining stayed back in the source area. The following family size ratios have been derived. Of these, 61 per cent of the members were above 14 and were engaged in brick-kiln work.

Table 18: **Average Family Size**

Average family size of workers (N = 962)	4.52
Average working family size at kiln (N = 829)	2.37

The above family size has been beneficial in the calculation of the income per head in a family and the daily wage rate of each worker.

Age profile

Table 19: **Age Profile of Families at the Brick Kilns**

Age in Completed Years	Proportional Percentage
1. 0–6	22
2. 7–14	16
3. 15–18	9
4. 19–50	49
5. 51–59	<1
6. > = 60	<1

All numbers are in percentages; N = 892

Table 19 helps infer that a majority of the population is between the age group of 19 and 50 years. Thirty-eight per cent of the population are children below the age of 14, and 47 per cent of the population are minors below the age of 18.

Sex (Male/Female) Composition

The male-female proportion of workers stood at 55 and 45 per cent, respectively. The ratio of men is on the higher side, with two per cent of the population comprising single male migrants.

Table 20: **Sex Composition of Workers at the Kilns**

Overall Break-up		
	Numbers	Per cent
1. Men	520	55
2. Women	442	45

N = 829

The state-wise break-up of men and women reveals the population of women migrating is about two per cent more than men, only from Bihar.

Literacy Rate

The overall literacy rate across the families was found to be 35 per cent and the women's literacy rate was lower than the average at 24 per cent. The literacy rate of men was 44 per cent. Literacy was defined as independent reading and writing skills for members above seven years of age.

Table 21: **Literacy Rate**

	Literacy Rate in Percentage
1. Men	44
2. Women	24
3. Overall literacy rate	35

N = 721

Socio-Economic Profile

Work-wise Composition of Labour

Based on the understanding of the overall composition of workers in a kiln, 213 families were chosen proportionately. The *paatla* workers comprised the largest proportion, followed by *khadkan*, *jalai*, *bharai* and *nikasi*. Table 4 gives the proportion of workers surveyed under each category of work. (*Refer to Table 4.*)

Caste-wise Break-up

More than half the population of the workers belong to the SC category, followed by OBC. A majority of the SCs come from UP, followed by Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. Most of the OBCs come from Rajasthan, followed by Bihar. (*Refer Table 5*)

Access to Entitlements

The Indian government has had in place many welfare policies/entitlements for the poor. However, access to these entitlements by the worker families has usually been low.

Table 22 shows that the Aadhar and the Voter ID cards are available with more than 80 per cent workers in all states except Bihar. The BPL card is available with 82 per cent workers in Bihar, higher than in the other states. A little more than half the workers have bank accounts and ration cards. A minimal percentage possess labour construction cards or some form of insurance.

Of the people who hold voter ID cards, 84 per cent had cast their vote in the previous elections; and of those who have MNREGA cards, an average of 19 days' work was done. UP recorded the highest number of MNREGA work days.

These figures suggest the need for a deeper enquiry as to why migrant worker populations have not been registered under the various welfare schemes of the government and what are the various mechanisms they use to manage their food, health and daily living expenses.

Assets Base

A. Land-holdings

Table 23: **Land Ownership**

Ownership of Land	Overall	State-wise Break-up			
		Bihar	Chhattisgarh	Rajasthan	UP
	Percentage of Families				
Workers with land ownership (N = 213)	50	9	54	66	38
Irrigated (N = 106)	27	100	7	28	33
Average land area (in *bigha*)	3	1	2	6	3
Average irrigated land-holding (in *bigha*)	1	1	<1	2	1

Table 22: **Access to Government Entitlements and Schemes**

Entitlements	Overall Percentage of Access	Bihar	Chhattisgarh	Rajasthan	UP
BPL card	53	82	65	42	56
MNREGA card	59	45	46	63	61
Construction Workers Board card	5	0	4	3	8
Bhamashah (only for Rajasthan)	67			67	
Insurance	7	9	0	10	6
Aadhar card	81	64	85	80	83
Bank account	62	27	50	63	70
Ration card	55	73	73	53	50
Voter ID	86	73	88	85	89

All numbers are in percentage; N = 213

Fifty per cent families reported land ownership with an average holding of three *bighas*[1], *ranging from a minimum holding of 1 to 20 bighas*. A majority of the workers, who reported land-holding, came from three states—Rajasthan (66 per cent), Chhattisgarh (54 per cent) and U.P (38 per cent). Only 9 per cent workers from Bihar reported land-holding. The average land-holding in Rajasthan was about 6 *bighas*, in UP about 3 *bighas* and in Chhattisgarh about 2 *bighas*.

Of the total land ownership, 27 per cent of the workers had land that could be irrigated. The average irrigated land-holding was 1 *bigha*, with Rajasthan having the largest irrigated land-holding. Workers from Bihar were found to be landless and, thus, more vulnerable and dependent on the income from the brick kilns.

B. Animal Holding

Table 24: **Animal Holding**

Animal	% of Families	Bihar	Chhattisgarh	Rajasthan	UP
Bull	4		8	3	5
Cow	17		15	23	14
Buffalo	7	9		10	5
Goat	22	9	4	42	8
Sheep	<1			1	
Camel	2			5	
Others	2			3	
Total	**53**	18	27	88	31

All numbers are in percentage; N = 213

Fifty-three per cent of the families reported some form of animal holding. The state-wise analysis reveals that, as in the case of land-holdings, the workers with animal holdings belonged to Rajasthan, UP, Chhattisgarh and Bihar. Goats are the major animal holding, followed by cows, buffaloes and bulls. All these are milk-producing animals.

In most cases, the animals are owned by workers possessing land because it made it easier to feed and keep them. About 40 per cent of the families on the kilns did not possess any land or animal holding.

1 The *bigha*, as a unit, varies within states; sometimes built is the most common way of accessing land area in India. In Central India, *bighas* were standardized at 3025 sq yd (2529.3 sq m) or 5/8 acres (0.2529 ha)

C. House ownership

All families reported to having a house to live in, at the source location. Most of these—57 per cent—were *kuccha* and 32 per cent reported having a *pucca* house. About 11 per cent also stated owning a semi-*pucca* house.

Table 25: **House Ownership**

	% of families	Bihar	Chhattisgarh	Rajasthan	UP
1. *Kuccha*	57	6	64	42	72
2. *Pucca*	32	<1	20	49	19
3. Semi-*pucca*	11	<1	16	9	9
4. Houses with a toilet	21				

All numbers are in percentage; N = 191

Most of the *pucca* houses were owned by the workers of Rajasthan and a majority of the *kuchha* houses by the workers of UP.

In Rajasthan, a majority of the *pucca* and the *kuchha* houses were owned by the OBC community, followed by the SC community. In UP too, the SC community had the maximum number of *pucca*, *kuchha* and semi-*pucca* houses. The ST community largely owned semi-*pucca* houses. The most vulnerable, in terms of ownership of a house, were workers from Bihar and Chhattisgarh. Also, the ST community across all states had the least ownership of houses in source.

The average household size was found to be 342 sq ft. Twenty-one per cent of the house owners reported having a toilet. However, the extent of use of the toilet is uncertain.

D. Home appliances

A majority of the families did not possess any home appliances, electricity or water connections.

Table 26: **Ownership of Home Appliances**

	% of Families				
Appliances	**Overall**	**Bihar**	**Chhattisgarh**	**Rajasthan**	**UP**
Motor cycle	30		8	59	10
Cycle	38	45	50	28	42
Fan	38	18	38	60	17
Diesel pump	5		8	9	1

	% of Families				
Appliances	**Overall**	**Bihar**	**Chhattisgarh**	**Rajasthan**	**UP**
Water motor	4		4	9	
Cupboard	4			7	2
TV	30	9	35	44	16
Electricity Connection	38	45	62	57	11
Water Connection	7	18		14	1
Others	4			10	

All numbers are in percentage; N = 213

According to Table 26, 38 per cent families reported owning cycle, fan and electricity connection. About 30 per cent of the families reported being in possession of a television and a motor bike. A minor percentage reported ownership of diesel pumps, water connection, water motor, cupboard and other appliances, giving insights into the challenges families engaged in agriculture and animal keeping face.

Workers from Rajasthan possess a majority of appliances such as motor cycles, fans, TVs and electrical connections. Various reasons such as that workers from Rajasthan are largely engaged in *bharai*, *nikasi* and *khadkan* work, which is more remunerating compared to *paatla* work. The wage rates too for Rajasthan workers are better; the workers potentially have greater probability of coming to the kiln without advance and not through a contractor. Also, the workers may draw advantages of the home state, where their expenses may be limited compared to workers from other states, who spend on long distance travel.

The possession of home appliances in all the source states is poor, Bihar and Chhattisgarh are the most vulnerable.

Overall Income

An attempt has been made to record the annual income per family, including all available sources. The average annual income per family was around Rs 81,171 from various sources, including work in the brick kilns, under MGNREGA and other sources such as agriculture and daily wage work. This is the income of the entire family, with an average 2.37 members per family involved in full time labour and being considered as a single unit during wage payment.

Table 27: **Sources of Income from Wage Labour**

	Work Days		
	% of Families Engaged	**Average Days**	**Work Days Per Family in a Year**
Brick kilns	100	207	207
MNREGA	7	31	2
Others	13	67	9

N = 191

Average days of engagement per family in wage labour = 218 days (60 per cent of the days in a year)

Ninety-five per cent families reported migrating for brick-kiln work and two per cent for other forms of labour work.

Table 28: **Income from Wage labour**

Sources of Wage Labour	**% of Families Engaged**	**Average Income (Rs)**	**Earnings Per Family from Wage Labour**
Brick kilns	100	87,187	87,187 (97 per cent)
MNREGA	8	11,115	889 (1 per cent)
Others	14	10,808	1,513 (2 per cent)
Total income			**89,589**

N = 190

Table 27 reveals that the maximum days are spent by a family working in the brick kilns. The average income from brick kilns is reported as the highest compared to other sources at Rs 87,187. Also, eight per cent workers reported working in MGNREGA.

Figure 7: **Break-up of Earnings from Various Wage Labour Activities**

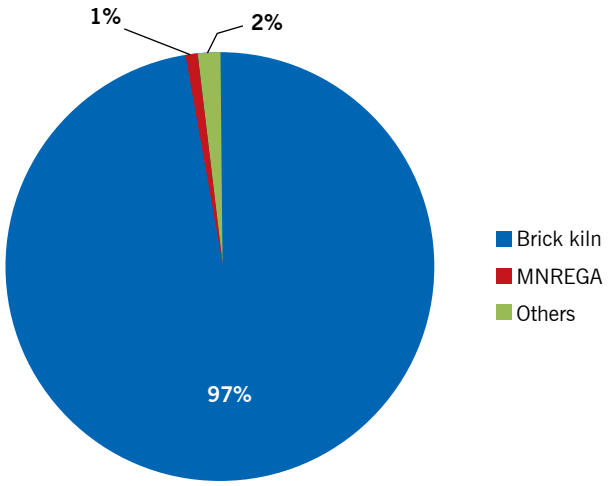


Figure 7 shows that the brick kilns are the major source of income compared to work under MNREGA and other forms of wage labour.

Table 29: **Average Annual Income Per Worker**

Sources of Income	% of Families Engaged	Average Income Annually (Rs)	Annual Income from All Sources Per Family (Rs)
1. Agriculture	28	14,019	3,925 (4 per cent)
2. Animal Farming	1	10,000	100 (<1 per cent)
3. Labour work (including brick-kiln work)	100	1,01,073	1,01,073 (95 per cent)
4. Others	2	45,238	905 (1 per cent)
Total average income for households reporting income from source			**1,06,003**

N = 191

The total income from all sources is calculated at Rs 1,06,003.

Figure 8: **Break-up of Various Sources of Income**

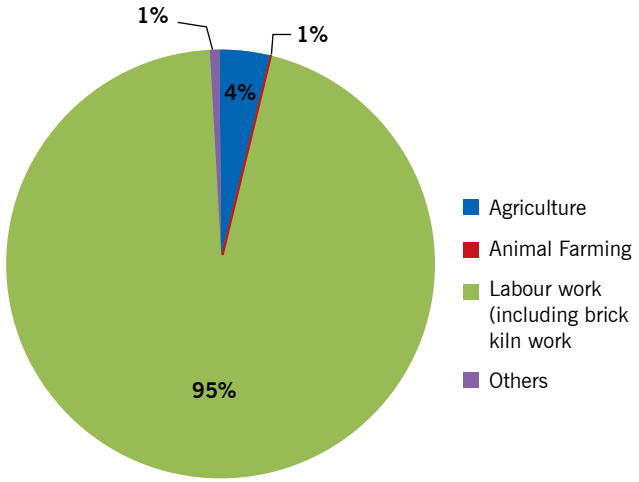


Figure 8 reveals that labour work is the largest source of income for workers followed by other sources beyond agriculture and farming. This is also visible from the poor land ownership and animal holding. The other sources include running shops, sale of local products, etc.

In October 2015, the World Bank updated the international poverty line to USD 1.9 a day per capita.[2] That is about Rs 122 in Indian currency in 2017. The average income of a family per annum from all sources has been calculated at Rs 1,06,003. With the average family size of workers being 4.52, the per-head income of workers at the kiln is Rs 64 per day. This is about 52 per cent less than the amount defined as the international poverty line, indicating extreme poverty among kiln workers.

Indebtedness

As expected there was high indebtedness among the workers. Forty-one per cent of the workers reported to being in debt. The average amount of debt was Rs 1,02,435, within a range of Rs 6000 to 6,00,000. This is more than the average annual income of the workers and thus poses a threatening scenario.

The state-wise analysis revealed that workers from Rajasthan are the highest in debt. More than 60 per cent of the workers in debt are from Rajasthan, followed by those from UP at

2 "World Bank Forecasts Global Poverty to Fall Below 10 percent for First Time; Major Hurdles Remain in Goal to End Poverty by 2030", *www.worldbank.org*. Retrieved 16 December 2016.

25 per cent and Chhattisgarh at 15 per cent. The average debt amounts for workers in Rajasthan is about one-and-a-half lakhs and that of workers from UP and Chhattisgarh is within Rs 40,000. This shows the workers of Rajasthan as most vulnerable.

The average rate of interest at which the loan was taken was found to be three per cent, and varying from one to five per cent. Interestingly, the average rate of interest is lowest in Rajasthan at 2.7 per cent compared to more than 4 per cent in UP and Chhattisgarh.

Debt is a critical part of a worker's life and, hence, one must explore the reasons for such debt. It is clear from Table 30 that performing marriages is the single-most dominant reason for workers being in debt. Other reasons are medical expenses during sickness and construction of house.

Table 30: **Reasons for Debt**

Reasons	% of Families
1. Marriage	39
2. Sickness	15
3. House	15
4. Death expenses	9
5. Farming	3
6. Loan repayment	8
7. Others	11

All numbers are in percentages; N = 88

Again, in this context, the state-wise analysis shows that in Rajasthan and UP, it is marriages that are the main reason for indebtedness; the other reasons are a minority. However, in Chhattisgarh loans for marriages, construction of homes and agriculture are on par with each other when it comes to taking a loan.

Table 31: **Repayment of Loan**

Repayment of Loan	
Methods	**% of Families**
1. Taking another loan	1
2. Working as labour	90
3. Others	9

All numbers are in percentages; N = 67

Table32: **Sources of Loan**

Sources for Loan	
Sources	% of Families
1. Family/Relative	10
2. Bank	11
3. *Sahukar*	78
4. Others	1

All numbers are in percentages; N = 89

Ninety per cent of the workers reported repayment of debt through income earned by working as labour. A major source of loan was from the *Sahukar*—a local moneylender. A few workers took loans from banks and their families. Whereas workers from Rajasthan and UP did take loans from the *Sahukar*, they also took loans from banks, family/relatives, and SHG groups. However, in Chhattisgarh, the *Sahukar* seemed to be the only option.

B. Recruitment

Dynamics of Recruitment

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

Table 33: **Work Years at the Kiln**

Work Years	% of Families	Average Work Years
Average work years spent at the kiln by every worker		**7.02**
1. Less than 3	19	1.93
2. 3–9	56	5.28
3. 10–19	18	12.21
4. 20 and more	7	21.79

N = 207

Of the 207 families, who shared about the number of work years, each family spent an average of seven years working at the kilns, ranging from a minimum experience of less than one year to as long as 30 years. Seven per cent families reported working at kilns for more than 20 years whereas the majority 56 per cent have been working for an average 5.28 years at the kilns.

Table 34: **State-wise Work Years at the Brick Kilns**

	Bihar	Chhattisgarh	Rajasthan	UP	Overall
Average work years	9.00	8.32	7.84	5.58	7.02

N = 207

The state-wise analysis revealed that the most-experienced labour comes from Bihar (average 9 work years at the kiln) and the least from UP (5.58 years lower than the overall average).

Table 35: **Rate of Change of Kilns by Workers**

	Bihar	Chhattisgarh	Rajasthan	UP	Overall
Average rate of change of kilns	3.09	4.75	3.94	3.61	3.85

N = 202

A worker may change brick kilns multiple times during his work life at the kiln. In fact, 202 workers (95 per cent) reported changing kilns in their work life. The average number of times a worker changed kilns is found to be 3.85 times, with a minimum of one change to as many as 20 changes. This implies that in the average work years of seven years, a worker changes the kiln 3.85 times, that is, less than two years/season per kiln.

Table 36: **Rate of Change of Contractors**

	Bihar	Chhattisgarh	Rajasthan	UP	Overall
Average rate of change of contractors	3.18	3.60	3.26	2.94	3.17

N = 200

Families, in their years of work, change contractors often. An average rate of change has been 3.17, ranging from one change to as many as 16 changes of contractors. Hence, for an average work life of 7.02 years at the kilns, a worker changes 3.17 contractors, roughly implying that one contractor is engaged for every two seasons of work.

Multiple reasons can be associated to the seemingly high rate of change of contractors and kilns some of which could be low wages and bondage.

Advance

As an accepted practice across kilns, workers take an advance from brick-kiln owners before the beginning of the season; this is eventually adjusted against the work done by them. The following are some insights into the systems and payment of advance. Every pair of workers is eligible for an advance and the more hands in the family, the more advance it can take.

Table 37: **'Advance' Details in Work Seasons**

Season	Percentage of Families Taking Advance	Average Advance Per family (Rs)	Average advance per worker in Rupees (Advance Per Family/ Working Family Size)
2015–16	81	31,097	13,121
2016–17	79	32,192	13,583

N = 160; average working family size: 2.37

Table 37 shows that whereas the percentage of workers taking advance in the second season has dropped by two per cent, the average amount of advance increased by Rs 1,092 in the season. The average advance per worker was calculated at Rs 13,583 in Year 2 and Rs 13,121 in Year 1.

Seven per cent workers reported not taking any advance in either season. The category of workers, who do not take an advance or report to work directly without any contractor receive higher wage rates compared to those taking advance and coming through contractors.

Instalments for advance: Not all advance amount is received in one payment at the beginning of the season. In Year 2, the average instalments for advance was 1.35, with 18 per cent families reporting taking advance in more than one instalment. About 78 per cent families received the full advance amount in the on-going season during data collection (2016–17); the remaining had pending advance payments.

Interestingly, the advance is paid in instalments and in between or even at end of a season. Therefore, the important question is how does the amount qualify as an advance. An analysis of the previous year depicts similar findings. More enquiry needs to be done to understand the reasons for the advance being held back. How is the payment made for such amounts? Offering and receiving the advance is critical to the running of the entire migration system and deeper enquiry needs to be conducted to understand the changes in it over the years.

Guarantee of work against advance

Almost all workers reported they needed to give a guarantee of work for the whole season against the advance received, irrespective of the amount of advance.

Table 38: **Guarantee of Work against Advance**

	% of Families
1. Whole season	98
2. Till repayment	1
3. No guarantee	1
4. Others	1

All numbers are in percentage; N = 193

Reasons for an advance: Since 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 39: **Reasons for Taking Advance**

Reasons	% of Families
1. Household expenses	51
2. House repair/construction	4
3. Medical expenses	4
4. Repayment of loan	26
5. Marriage expenses	2
6. Others	13

All numbers are in percentages; N = 142

Of the 142 workers, who reported the reasons for taking an advance, the majority took it for day-to-day household expenses, followed by repayment of loans. The main reason quoted under the 'others' category was the advance taken to ensure guarantee of work at the kiln.

C. Wages

Workers are not paid regular wages as provided for under the Payment of Wages Act. They are given an advance in the beginning of the season, and then paid food expenses/*kharchi* each week. Instead of cash, a coupon system for *kharchi*/food exists. The provision shops, where the coupons are accepted, often have a connection with the brick kilns, ensuring some commission against purchases. The payment for food expenses is proportionate to the work done. More than often, this forces the workers to put in long hours of work and even deploy their children to work, in order to make the required number of bricks that can provide for the entire family.

The settlement of accounts is largely done at the end of the season; it is a complex calculation because it involves the advance amount, the variable weekly food expense, the daily work done, accounting and other deductions if any. This makes it challenging for the workers to understand the calculations; a majority of them are illiterate, thereby making them vulnerable.

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

Table 40 draws a comparison between the two payment reasons and also gives an idea of the average rates of payment. However, whereas it enlists the average amount received by a family, it does not capture the income per worker because the 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, hence, as the income of the entire family.

Owners usually follow market rates. The settlement of wages is reviewed once around the festival of Holi (March) because it is the critical point of midterm stock taking, just before the end of season. It is critical because the owner and the workers both take stock of how much work has been done and what has been the wage settlement of the worker against the advance and the *kharchi* received. The worker decides if he wants to continue work; this is important as many workers wish to avoid the very hot summers months in Rajasthan. In a few cases, the owner increases the wage rate if work is pending or needs to be finished quickly.

A considerable increase in wages is visible in case of the *raapas* and *nikasi* workers. An average three per cent increase can be recorded in the *paatla* workers' wages. Only in the case of *khadkan*, no change/negligible drop was found between the two seasons. One hundred and seven workers reported wages in both the seasons. Of these, 43 per cent workers were found to work on equal/less wages in the second season compared to the first season.

Table 40: **Wage Rate Comparison between the Two Work Seasons**

		2015–16		2016–17		
Worker Category	**Unit**	**Average Rate**	**Range**	**Average Rate**	**Range**	**Per cent Change**
1. *Paatla*	Per 1000 bricks	456	400–565	471	400–617	3
2. *Khadkan*	Per month	11000	9000–13500	10893	9000–13500	<1 (negative)
3. *Bharai*	Per 1000 bricks	121	90–154	129	100–450?	6
4. *Nikasi*	Per 1,000 bricks	88	35?–115	102	95–110	16
5. *Jalai*	Per month	8,773	5000–12000	9471	5000–12000	8
6. *Khakhla*	Per month	7,333	6000–9000	7667	6000–10000	5
7. Other	Per month	13,333	13000–14000	15000	13500–18000	13

Table 41: **Wage Rate Comparison for Ajmer and Bhilwara**

Category	**Units**	**Ajmer**		**Bhilwara**	
		2015–16	2016–17	2015–16	2016–17
		Average Rate		Average Rate	
1. *Paatla*	Per 1000 bricks	447	465	463	474
2. *Khadkan*	Per month	13500	13250	10000	10500
3. *Bharai*	Per 1000 bricks	142	147	99	119
4. *Nikasi*	Per 1000 bricks	75	102	108	101?
5. *Jalai*	Per month	8,800	10,500	8,750	9,042
6. *Khakhla*	Per month	9,000	10,000	6,500	7,375

Table 41 records the difference in the wage rates in Ajmer and Bhilwara.

Table 41 shows that *paatla* workers have better wage rates in Bhilwara compared to Ajmer whereas all the other work categories get paid higher wages in Ajmer. In most categories, the difference in wages between the two districts is minor. However in *khadkan, bharai,* and *khakla;* there is considerable difference.

An overall analysis comparing the wages in 2017 with that in the previous year reveals that wages seem to have stagnated. There is only a minor increase. The period was preceded by wage struggles that led to significant hikes in wages in Bhilwara in 2012, and in Ajmer in 2013 and 2014. This was followed by the reaction of the employers, who got together to ensure that wage hikes are checked. The measures taken included change of source catchment and increasing pressure on labour contractors. The workers, who led the wage struggle, were deprived of work.

Table 42 complements Table 41, giving a deeper sense of the income and wage rate scenario of the workers.

Daily wage per worker

Calculating the daily wage earnings of every worker is important to get a real understanding of their income because despite multiple members of a family being employed in the

kilns, a family is treated as one unit during wage settlement.

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

Table 42: **Formulae Used for Calculating Daily Wage Rates**

Method 1: Total wages to be received = Wage rate x Amount of work done
Method 2: Total wages received = Advance + *Kharchi* + Final settlement
Method 1-Method 2: Reveals disparity in the payment of wages
Daily wage calculation per worker: Total wages/(Working family size x Average work days)

Case Study

Paatla Workers

For *paatla* workers, who are paid on a piece-rate basis, the bricks made are counted periodically. 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.

Table 43: **Daily Wage Calculation for *Paatla* Workers for 2015–16**

2015–16					
Average Income (Method 1)	**Average Income (Method 2)**	**Average Work Days for *Paatla***	**Average Working Family Size (> = 14 years)**	**Average Daily Wage (Method 1)**	**Average Daily Wage (Method 2)**
Rs 95,542	**Rs 78,745**	**207 days**	**2.37**	**Rs 195**	**Rs 161**

N = 48

The difference in the average income reveals an average loss of Rs 16,797 per worker family and a lower wage rate by Rs 34 per worker per day.

The average minimum wage for semi-skilled labour in Rajasthan in 2015–16 was Rs 207.[3] Evidently, *paatla* workers get an average of 22 per cent lower than the minimum wage. The workers put in an average of 11 hours per day of work to get these wages. And if overtime is calculated, the workers are then receiving almost one-third of the minimum wages.

This disparity in pay can be attributed to various factors—the lack of information that the 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, the wage rates as fixed with the workers for the latest season (2016–17) are compared across work categories. However, Table 43 clarifies that this wage rate is not received by the workers and is distributed among family members working collectively while also getting lost in calculations that are beyond the comprehension of the workers.

Table 44: **State-wise Wage Rates of Paatla Workers**

2016–17				
	Bihar	**Chhattisgarh**	**Rajasthan**	**UP**
Paatla (per 1000 bricks)	457	460	482	477

All numbers are in rupees; N = 4

From Table 44, it can be inferred that among the wages fixed for *paatla* workers, the lowest rate is received by the workers from Bihar and highest by the workers of Rajasthan, with Bihar receiving about 4 per cent low wages than Rajasthan. Similarly, other categories such as *bharai* in the Table reveal that the lowest paid are workers from UP whereas they do get better payment in the *khakhla* category compared to Rajasthan.

3 http://labour.rajasthan.gov.in/Notification under document MinimumWagesNotification17-122015.pdf, accessed on September 14, 2017.

Table 45: **Details of Final Settlement**

	2015–16			
	% of Families	Average Amount	Minimum Amount	Maximum Amount
1. Positive take-back income	87	25,548	1,750	84,000
2. Negative take-back income/*tut*	11	20,389	9,500	40,000
3. Zero balance	2	0	0	0

N = 84

Duration of payment of wages

The cycle of payment of wages was explored; of the 189 reporting workers, 98 per cent received payment as final settlement at the end of the season whereas less than two per cent families reported monthly settlement of wages.

Inference: The output of wage rates of the two seasons could be indicative of the poor negotiating power of the workers especially because more often than not the wage rates are decided when the labour has already arrived at the kilns, making them more vulnerable. The situation also gives insights into the possible reasons for the rapid change in kilns and contractors by workers.

The state-wise analysis also reveals that wage rates are strongly dependent on factors beyond competence of work such as the relation between the contractor and the owner, the negotiating power of the contractor, the availability of information with workers. Workers from different states seem to be working in silence at different wage rates on the same kiln.

Earnings and negative balance (*Tut*)

Whereas the above analysis is of the wage rates, this is not the final amount that the family receives at the end of the season. The total work done by the family (wage rate * number of working days) is further subjected to deductions of the advance taken, the food expenses (*kharchi*) and, sometimes, other expenses such as medical expenses and travel expenses.

Many a times, after these deductions, families end up with a negative balance, locally called '*tut*'. This *tut* acts as a force binding them to the kiln, and often workers have to return to the same kiln to repay the *tut*. Negative earning, or *tut,* can be viewed as the real indicator of bondage.

The Details of Earnings and *Tut*

As outlined in Table 45, about 87 per cent families earned a positive takeaway income from the kilns, whereas 11 per cent reported *tut*. Two per cent families also showed zero earnings at the end of the season after all the settlements.

The average positive take-back income per family was calculated at Rs 25,548 whereas the average *tut* amount was close to Rs 20,389 per family.

Table 45 reveals that the maximum cases of *tut* and zero balance take-backs are from Rajasthan. Seventeen per cent workers reported *tut* from Rajasthan above the overall average, which is 11 per cent. No cases of *tut* were reported from Bihar. Rajasthan was the only state where five per cent of the workers reported zero balance wage settlement. UP has the highest average positive take-back and also the least amount of *tut*. The average amount of *tut* and positive income were similar in Rajasthan. Clearly, intra-state migrants are the most vulnerable when it comes to *tut* and zero balance. They are also the ones taking the highest amounts as advance. Another reason could be the lack of strong contractual agreements between the contractor and the owner. Also, the chances of direct contract between the worker and the owner are high

Table 46: **State-wise Analysis of Take-back Income**

		2015–16				
		Bihar	Chhattisgarh	Rajasthan	UP	Total
1. Positive take-back income	% of Families	100	95	77	92	87
	Average Amount	19,917	21,330	25,833	29,271	25,548
2. Negative take-back income/ *tut*	% of families		5	17	7	11
	Average amount		15,000	23,500	13,750	20,389
3. Zero balance	% of families			5		2

N = 84

and may lead to exploitative/unclear terms and conditions.

Interestingly, 25 per cent families reported having *tut* at least once in their work life. The average times *tut* was reported was three times per family, ranging from once in a lifetime to even 20 times. If this is compared to the average work years spent by a family on the kiln, which is seven, it indicates that, on an average, a family reports *tut* at least once in less than 3 years.

Negative balance, as the evidence reveals, seems to end very slowly and has a trait of continuous occurrence, placing the labour in bondage. Workers with *tut* are bound by condition to return to the same kilns/through the same contractor for work.

D. Working Conditions at Kilns

1. Facilities at the kilns

A majority of the families reported living in *kuchha* houses at the kilns. A small area in the corner of the kilns is usually allocated for rooms/houses to be built. These are small, dingy and cramped. Thirty-seven per cent workers reported living in *pucca* houses, which was not the case in Year 1. This can be attributed to the efforts of the labour union and PCLRA in the area.

Table 47: **Living Conditions and Facilities Provided at Kilns**

Indicators	Category	% of Families	
House at the kiln	1. *Pucca*	37	
	2. *Kuccha* made of bricks	58	
Water	1. Tap	3	
	2. Tube Well	63	
	3. Well	22	
	4. Tanker	20	
	5. Nothing	0	
	6. Others	3	
Toilet and bathing		7	
	Use of toilet	5	
Electricity	Electricity at workplace	88	Average 11 hours each
	Electricity at home	71	
Material for cooking		83	

All numbers are in percentage; N = 213

Water was available at all kilns. A majority of the kilns sourced water from tube wells.

Only seven per cent of the families reported having access to toilets or bathing facilities. Of these, only five per cent used these facilities.

Electricity was available for an average of 11 hours each day, both at the workplace and at home.

Eighty-three per cent families reported that material for cooking such as firewood was made available at the kiln by the owner.

The overall living environment was smoky due to the firing kilns. With very small-sized houses without toilets/bathing areas, and low ceilings, the living conditions were very challenging. The extreme temperatures of Rajasthan in summer and winter make the kiln environment more difficult to live in.

2. Work hours at the kiln

Most workers work for very long hours, particularly the *paatla* workers. Work continues through the night. The owners set up elaborate lighting arrangements at work stations, to ensure smooth functioning in the night. The work is done in intervals, keeping the worker occupied throughout the day and night. For example, the *paatla* workers after moulding the bricks in wet mud have to keep rotating the bricks, to expose every surface to the sun. This goes on throughout the day even when they have finished moulding the bricks.

Table 48: **Work Hours at the Kilns**

Work Hours	% of Workers	Average Hours	Minimum	Maximum
1–5 hours	3	5	5	5
6–10 hours	41	8	6	10
11–15 hours	52	12	12	15
>15 hours	4	17	16	20
Total		11	2	20

N = 213

Table 48 indicates that the average work hours are 11 hours, and range from 5 to 20 hours. Most workers reported working between 11 to 15 hours.

3. Sleep Hours of Workers

Some workers do not get the minimum amount of sleep of six hours a day.

Table 49: **Sleep Hours of Kiln Workers**

	% of Workers	Average Hours	Minimum	Maximum
0–6 hours	17	4	2	6
7–8 hours	73	8	7	8
>8 hours	10	11	9	20

N = 213

Table 49 shows that the majority of workers sleep for an average of 8 hours per day; however, a considerable population of 17 per cent sleeps for as low as four hours a day.

4. Payment of wages

As mentioned under the section on wages, workers are not paid regular wages as provided for under the Payment of Wages Act. They are given an advance in the beginning of the season, which is variable, and then are paid food expenses on a weekly/fortnightly/monthly basis.

Of the 189 families reporting, only three per cent reported receiving some wages on a monthly basis beyond *kharchi* for food. The remaining 97 per cent stated that the settlement of their wages took place only at the end of season.

E. Status of Children

Migration to brick kilns leads to a denial of rights of children. There are no/negligible schooling or ICDS facilities at brick kilns. Whereas most families have their children on the kilns, a few leave them behind at the source location.

Table 50: **Children at Home and at the Kiln**

	Percentage of Children		
	Overall (0–14 years)	0–6 years	7–14 years
At home	**20**	14	27
At the kiln	**78**	84	71
Unidentified	**2**	0	2

All numbers are in percentage; N = 407

The families of all workers on the kiln comprise a total of 42 per cent (407) children between the ages of 0–14 years. Of these children, 78 per cent are at the kilns and 20 per cent were left behind at source.

Of all the children staying back at source, 27 per cent are without any parent and 73 per cent with a single parent staying back with them.

Of the families at the kiln, 36 per cent parents agreed to engaging their children in work. Whereas many more families engage their children at work, it is observed that there is a hesitation among workers in accepting this.

Education for Children

Only 20 per cent children attended some form of school/ *anganwadi* facility at the source and that number dropped further down to 4 per cent at the kilns. The reason for such poor enrolment can be attributed to lack of facilities at the destination for migrant workers, periodic movement from one location to another and lack of will to educate children.

Table 51: **Children Attending School/*Anganwadi***

	Total Children Attending	Attending School	Attending Anganwadi
At home	20	13	28
At the kiln	4	4	4
Not attending	76	83	69

All numbers are in percentage; N = 407

Table 51 indicates that the children attending school and *anganwadi* are those that do not migrate and stay back at the source location. Children who migrate largely miss out on these education opportunities.

Whereas the lack of facilities and constant movement are known facts, further investigation was done to understand the views of workers on educating their children. It was found that 98 per cent of the workers agreed that education was very important for their children and 75 per cent agreed to send their children to schools and hostels if available at the kilns.

CHAPTER 5

Way Forward and Challenges

The current report is for the second year of the project. The study will be conducted for two more consecutive years and, finally, comparisons will be drawn to understand changes in the migration pattern and the socio-economic conditions of the workers in the kilns.

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 accuracy of data were potentially high. During the analysis, a few shortcomings were noticed, which have been noted and will be altered in the format in the coming years.

A software was developed in Year 2 for accurate and detailed data analysis. It took about two months for the software to get going because a detailed analysis was needed. The software will now generate reports and comparative data for all the four years of the study.

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

Data collection for the year was done from the end of January to May, to avoid the ending of the work season.

With the software for data analysis developed, the study has got more comprehensive in Year 2 compared to Year 1. To fill the gaps identified in Year 1, an ethnographic study was carried out in Year 2 and new inquiries delved into.

In the current year, to understand the push factors, recruitment processes and migration patterns, ethnographic studies in the source areas of Chhattisgarh were planned and executed. A report on the findings from the same is under preparation and will complement the current findings. Such studies have also been planned for the other source areas of UP and Bihar.

To understand the detailed processes and dynamics of recruitment, commissions and migration in greater depths, the mapping of contractors has been identified as crucial to the research. Hence, in Year 3, data will be collected for the same.

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