

# EDUCATION



## Hazrat's story

Hazrat's father Yusuf, pulled rickshaw at their native village in Dhibhhibi of 24 Parganas (N) for a livelihood. His meagre income pushed them into penury. A labour contractor provoked him to work in a kiln in the vicinity. The family migrated to a kiln where they began to learn brick-moulding. Being unskilled they were paid low wages much to the dissatisfaction of Yusuf. He decided to move back to his native place and again the usual rigmarole followed.

After sometime Yusuf met another contractor and once again migrated to work in another brick kiln at Dhibhhibi. Hazrat was born here while his parents worked in this brick kiln. However, Hazrat never attended any school owing to the poor economic condition of his family. The family kept on changing kilns to get better wages. At last, Hazrat's family came to BBF brick kiln in Boalgata and settled down as they received the best wage rate here.

Hazrat's mother, Mamta, was introduced to the BCC teacher by another co-worker at the same brick kiln. Mamta was impressed by the teacher very much and decided to send Hazrat to study at her BCC. Hazrat was quite intelligent and within a span of few months Hazrat picked up the lessons and was now ready for school. The BCC teacher motivated his parents to enrol him in the nearby school. Last year Hazrat was admitted in Panruipara SSK. Now he is continuing his studies in Class II. He still attends the BCC for any support after school hours. Mamta dreams that one day Hazrat will pass the school exams and get some small office job which will enable her to purchase a plot of land for the family. This project supported by EU block Grants is being implemented by Save the Children, West Bengal office along with two local partner NGOS, in 70 brick kilns in 2 districts of West Bengal has succeeded in enrolment and retention of 2113 children in the brick kilns into formal schools during the academic year 2008-09.

## Ismatara's story

Ismatara is a young girl of 10 residing in Majlishpur village under Sasan Gram Panchayat. Her parents work at the BBF brick kiln. Ismatara also started helping them at the kiln, starting her day early in the morning carrying clay and bricks. Her face smeared with grime and sweat, her slender shoulders sinking under the weight of four heavy bricks balanced on her head as she makes her way to the edge of a brick kiln. She hoists the bricks to a man standing atop an enormous mountain of dun-colored bricks. Then she turns and walks back, barefoot, to collect another load of bricks.

After a while Ismatara started attending the BCC operated by NMCS at their brick kiln. She had a knack for studies though she had problems in remembering lessons. She could not manage to write or draw without looking at the books. She also had the bad habit of chewing khaini or ghutka (tobacco). The teacher at the Centre counseled her about the harmful effects of tobacco chewing. After 3 months she gave up the habit. Ismat became a regular and attentive student at the BCC. She gradually tried to memorise the lessons and soon qualified for the next level of learning. The BCC teacher and other students who were part of the child protection group formed by NMCS motivated her parents to send her to school. Finally she was admitted at Mithpukur Kabiguru Adarsha FPS in Class III. A year later she was promoted to Class IV and is happily continuing her education along with other children. Ismat receives remedial support from her sisters and is doing well in school.