



**MAPPING HOMEWORKERS AND ASSOCIATED
ORGANIZATIONS IN DHAKA CITY, BANGLADESH**

Final Report

Prepared for
HomeNet SouthAsia (HNSA)

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About the Report

This study contributes to the development of understanding of supply chain with which the women homeworkers are involved. We have studied the homeworkers and their organizations in Dhaka city. Specifically, the study explores the following research questions:

- What activities are the women homeworkers performing in Dhaka city?
- What problems do the homeworkers face while performing their activities?
- How do women homeworkers evaluate their work?

The first chapter of the study presents information about the research background, objective, methodology applied, study location and major challenges faced. The subsequent chapters include the major findings where we incorporated data and discussions regarding the socio-economic characteristics of the homeworkers, their trades, working conditions, benefits of paid work, role of middlemen/women and the profile of the organizations who are involved in the trades of the homeworkers. Chapter four is the concluding chapter where we came up with few recommendations which would complement further research on the selected trades and their supply chains.

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CHAPTER - ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

HomeNet South Asia (HNSA) has been working with the organizations of homebased workers from five countries in South Asia - Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. HNSA has been striving to achieve visibility for the urban homeworkers and their issues. At the same time, HNSA also carries the voice of the homeworkers at the national, regional and international levels to influence legislation, policies and programs. The strength of HNSA lies in its grassroots membership of homeworkers in the region, and the efficacy of its work stems from the positive changes it can bring to the lives of these members.

Like many other Asian countries, in Bangladesh, women homeworkers comprise a significant part of the informal sector of the economy. However, the contribution of homeworkers remains invisible and unrecognized largely because of considering their income generating activities as integral part of their unpaid care work. Homeworkers use simple tools for production and most of them do not have any formal training. Therefore, they are frequently labeled as unskilled or semiskilled worker. Although home-based work is a major survival strategy of poor families, for the lack of recognition or under representation, it does not attract the penal provisions of labor law. Moreover, since homeworkers contribute in a part of the production, and the small transactions of homeworkers are dependent mostly on the informal channels, they remain unaware of the organizations, key personnel and resources which are involved in moving a product to the consumers in domestic or international market. These all finally result in their inability to strive for their basic rights.

From this ground, HomeNet South Asia (HNSA) has initiated a rapid assessment on the urban homeworkers and their organizations as part of conducting a supply chain study on the trades of homeworkers in Bangladesh. It is expected that the supply chain study would reveal the existing situation of the homeworkers and their trades in the domestic and international markets.

1.2. OBJECTIVE



The major objective of the rapid assessment is to identify 3-4 trades to carry out a Supply Chain Study which would reveal the existing situation of the organized and unorganized home workers who are engaged in the supply chain.

1.3. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

Homeworkers are home-based piece rate or subcontracted workers, who are provided with raw materials and sometimes with equipment and they are involved in the partial production of any final product.

1.4. STUDY LOCATION

The study has been conducted in Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh. For the rapid assessment, two large concentrations of the homeworkers in Dhaka city corporation area have been selected. One is Mirpur and another one is Mohammadpur.

Mohammadpur area is located in the mid-west part of Dhaka city. This area is characterized by relatively high population density and middle and low income housing. Mohammadpur area was planned around 1950s.

Mirpur is located further north to Mohammadpur. Along with low and middle income housing, there are some small and medium industries in Mirpur. Like Mohammadpur, Mipur area was also developed around 1950s. Population density in Mirpur is relatively higher than Mohammadpur.



Google Earth Map of Dhaka City showing the location of Mohammadpur and Mirpur Area

In 1972, International Committee for Red Cross (ICRC) built a number of camps in Mirpur and Mohammadpur area for the refugee Bihari community who played controversial role during the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971. Since then, generations of Biharis have been residing within the camp boundaries. The study was conducted over the Bihari homeworkers at Mirpur and Mohammadpur. Besides, the Bengali homeworkers from Baunia slum, adjacent to the Kurmitola Bihari camp of Mirpur and in other areas of Mirpur and Old Dhaka were covered.

1.5. METHODOLOGY

The rapid assessment was conducted using distant observation, key informant interview and individual questionnaire survey methods. The duration of the field work for this study was two weeks starting from middle of July, 2012.

Following are the different steps for empirical data collection:



Step 1 Site visit

Step 2 Interviewing key informants

Step 3 Finalizing questionnaire

Step 4 Questionnaire survey (homeworkers, middleman/woman and organizations)

At the outset of the study, available literatures on the home-based workers and supply chain were reviewed. After that, Mirpur, the largest constellation of homeworkers in Dhaka city, was visited by the research team (comprised of the principal researcher and 2 field assistants). The living condition of the homeworkers, types of work they perform and the organizations and people who are involved with their trades were observed and noted down.

At the second phase, a total of 10 key informants (five female homeworkers, two male homeworkers, one middleman, one garment worker's leader and one NGO activist) were interviewed. Combining the insights gathered from observation and unstructured interviews, the survey questionnaires were finalized. Three sets of questions were constructed for surveying the women homeworkers, middlemen/women and organizations. Most of the questions of the short questionnaire were close-ended (see *Appendix II, III & IV*).

At the final stage, 60 individual homeworkers who are involved in different trades were surveyed. With a view to get a more concrete picture of the supply chain, the survey was conducted over 10 middleman/ woman. For assessing the 13 organizations providing supports for the HWs, another set of questions was used. The samples were selected following convenience sampling¹ technique. For cross checking, similar questions were delivered to different group of respondents.

1.6 MAJOR CHALLENGES & STUDY LIMITATIONS

Since there exists almost no information about the informal sector in Bangladesh, one of the major challenges of this study was to identify the homeworkers. However, the traditional *karchupi* industry is a well

¹ Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where subjects are selected based on their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher



known sector and the workers are concentrated within camp boundaries, it was a bit easy to identify *karchupi* homeworkers. But it was very difficult to track the homeworkers involved in other industries. Finally, the study incorporated information of a limited number of scattered unorganized homeworkers (50 in total).

The second obstacle faced by the research team is to access the managerial level of the organizations. Many organizations were not willing to share information on their market transactions and homeworkers since they consider it as their business secret. Some of them were not interested to allow their workers for interviewing. In other cases the organizations were unaware of where their subcontractors/ middlemen place orders. Moreover, the majority of the homeworkers who are affiliated with the surveyed organizations reside outside Dhaka. Since the study covers only the homeworkers in Dhaka city, therefore, we were able to track only 10 homeworkers involved with the export oriented organizations.

Thirdly, most of the organizations working with the informal workers do not have categorical data on the regular, irregular and self employed homeworkers. Therefore, they provided a gross enumeration regarding the number of their affiliated homeworkers which fails to reflect the exact scenario.

CHAPTER- TWO: UNORGANISED HOMEWORKERS & THEIR TRADES

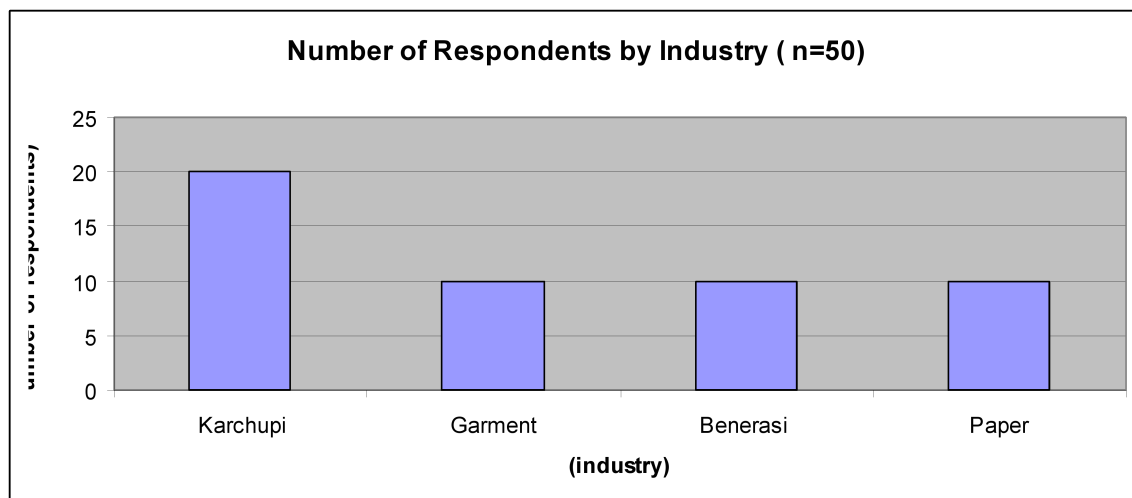
2.1. IDENTIFIED INDUSTRIES

Following are the 4 major industries with which women homeworkers are involved;

- a) Karchupi Industry (location : Mirpur, Mohammadpur)
- b) Garment Industry (location : Mirpur)
- c) Benarasi Industry (location: Mirpur)
- d) Paper -based Packet, Garland and Shopping Bag Industry (location: Mirpur)

2.2. THE HOMEWORKERS

The study identifies 50 individual women HWs who are categorized as unorganized HWs since they do not have connection with any formal organization that provides work orders, training or other supports for the homeworkers. Among them, 20 are *karchupi* workers (10 are from Mirpur cluster and 10 from Mohammadpur cluster), 10 are involved in garment industry, 10 are benrasi sharee workers and the rest 10 workers are involved in the paper based industry (see the figure below).



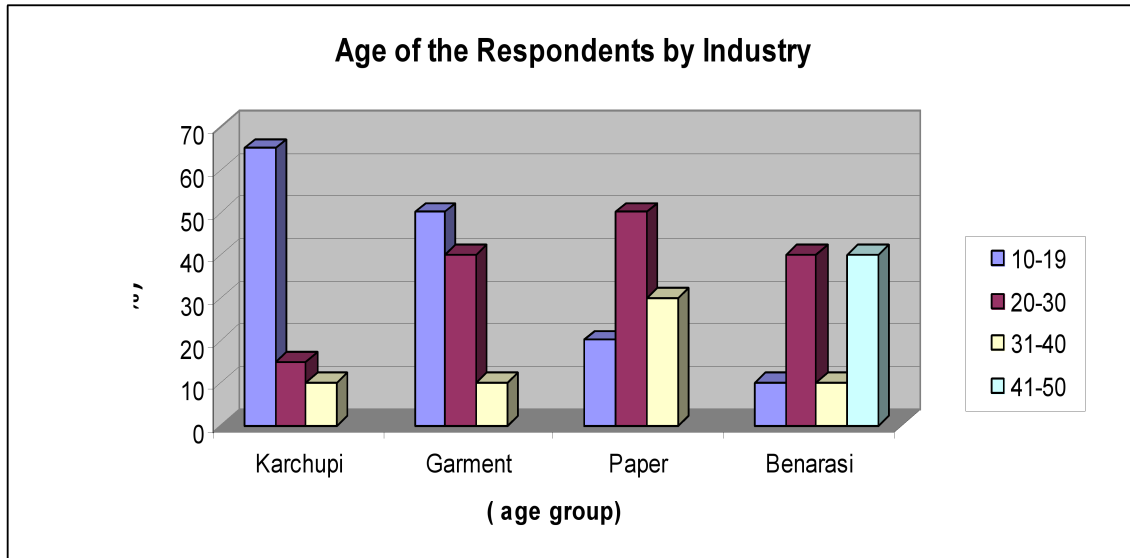
2.2.1 Age & Marital Status

In the *karchupi* (i.e. beads and sequin work on fabric or shoes) sector, a family often works as a manufacturing unit. As a result, among the workers, a significant number of minor children and adolescent girls are found. According to our survey, among the 20 *karchupi* workers the majority (i.e. 13 workers) belongs to the age group 10-19, 3 are from 20-30 age groups and the rest 2 belong to the age group 31-40.

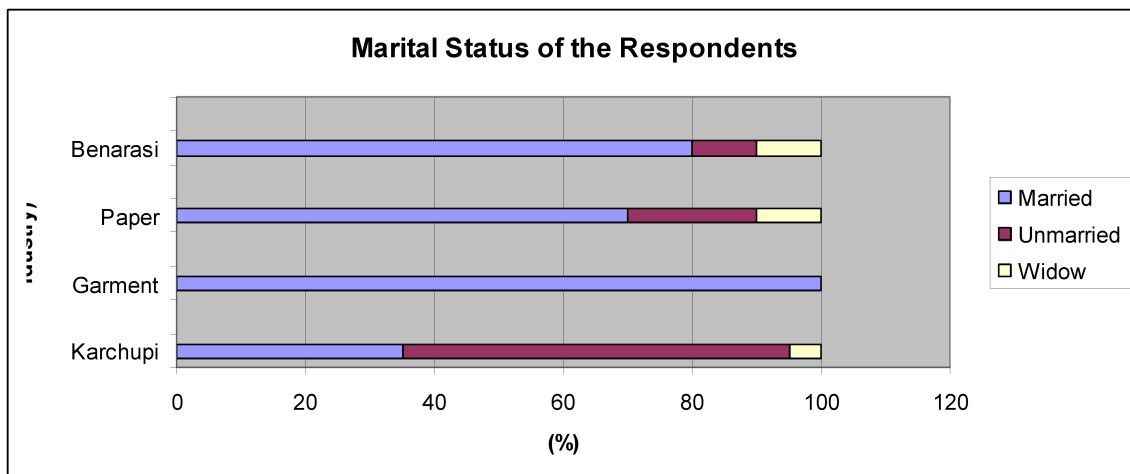


A significant number of adolescent girls are involved in karchupi Industry

Unlike *karchupi*, young and mid- aged women predominate among the garment sector workers. In the paper-based industry again we found the involvement of child labor. On the contrary, a higher percentage of young and aged women are found in the benarasi sector (see the figure below).



Among the surveyed karchupi workers, 7 are married women, 1 is a widow and the rest 12 are unmarried girls. On the other hand, all the surveyed homeworkers involved in garment industry are married. Following the same pattern, married women workers predominate in the paper-based and *benerasi* sharee industries (see the figure below).



2.2.2 Housing Condition

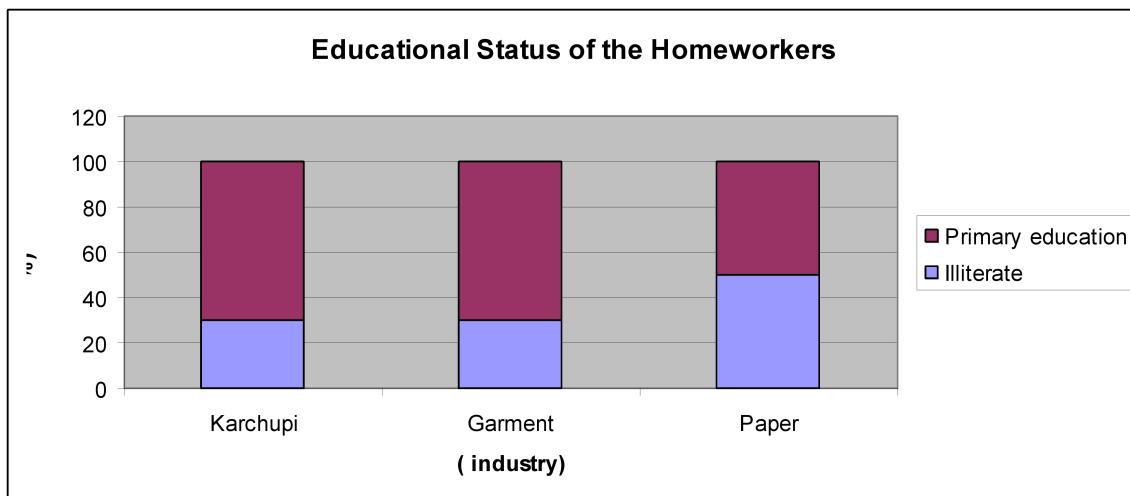
The surveyed homeworkers reside in the congested low income areas characterized by poor housing structure. In the Bihari camps and Bengali inhabited slums at Mirpur and Mohammadpur, the members of a family share a small room for working, living and cooking. Many families use a part of the room as toilet. In other cases, families use public toilets. The residential areas have electricity but no infrastructure for gas supply.



Housing Condition of the Homeworkers

2.2.3 Educational Status

Among the surveyed women, in the garment sector, 3 (30%) are illiterate and the rest 7 (70%) have primary education. Among the karchupi workers, 6 (30%) are illiterate and 14 (70%) have primary level education. Similarly, in the paper-based industry, 5 (50%) are illiterate and the remaining half have primary level education (see the figure below). All the respondents in benarasi sector are illiterate.



The poor homeworker families are interested to engage their children, especially the girls, in income generation. While conducting the survey, we met girls of school going age working in the karchupi industry. The girls stopped going to school after completing six or seventh grade due to eve teasing. Similarly, in the paper industry families prefer to engage child labor in the income generating sector rather sending them to the school.

2.2.4 Working Condition

The Homeworkers in Dhaka city are positioned at the end of the supply chain. They are not in a direct contact with the real employer or owner of the trade. They receive low wage and most of them work on a piece rate basis. On an average, a homeworker works for 8-10 hours per day.

Among the identified industries, *Karchupi* work could be seen as a major survival strategy of the poor Bihari families. *Karchupi* is a middleman (locally known as *mohajan*) dominated sector. The *mohajans* supply work orders to the workers with fabric, string, beads etc. Our survey revealed that all of the respondents (20) in *karchupi* sector managed their work through *mohajans*.

Karchupi workers do not have any formal training; they learn this skill from the senior members of the family. Sometimes, the entire family works as a unit for manufacturing. On an average, a *karchupi* worker receives TK 110-200 for embellishing a *kameej* or *panjabi* while a worker is paid TK 400- 1200 for a *sharee*.



A Family Karchupi Manufacturing Unit

In the garment sector, previously piece-rate homeworkers were hired for making button hole, button stitch, and embroidery work. According to the **president of Textile Garments Workers Union Federation (TGWUF)** in the present context, the number of garment homeworkers has been decreasing because now the factory owners have expanded their factory space and they like to finish production by their regular workers. Moreover, the wage of the factory workers has increased that encourages many homeworkers to join the sector as regular factory worker. Yet, a good number of women are hired on a piece rate basis for doing embroidery or beads work over the garment products.

According to our survey, the piece rate workers are not given a fixed rate. They are paid TK 1-15 for per piece of work. Among the surveyed 10 respondents, the majority (6) receive payment upon finishing per lot of orders, 2 are paid weekly basis and 2 work as subcontracted worker who receive a monthly salary (TK 3000 & 6000). Like the *karchupi* workers, garment homeworkers also do not have any formal training. They do not have access to credit.



Garment Embellishment

At Mirpur, many small benarasi sharee manufacturing units are found where men workers predominate. They are involved in designing and weaving the sharees. A male worker receives TK 400-1800 per week from the owners of the factory. For a very good quality sharee, a worker is paid TK 4000-5000 per week.



Benarasi Sharee Weaving

After weaving, the sharees are sent to the women homeworkers for cutting the extra threads. For this job, women are paid TK 15 -20 for per piece of sharee, but for a very good quality sharee they receive wage up to TK 200-400. Most of the workers receive a weekly payment from the *mohajans*.



Benarasi Sharees are Sent to the Women for Cutting Extra Threads

Many of the slum dwelling Bengali women at Mirpur are involved in manufacturing paper packets, bags and garlands. Unlike the karchupi or garment sector, these workers have a bit regular job flow. In festival times, the workers get more orders for shopping bags. They are contracted by the *mohajans* who supply them the raw materials based on the orders. Since the work is not very critical, families engage their minor children as assistants. Like the other sectors, the workers in paper industry are poorly paid. For making 1000 paper bags a homeworkers receive TK 60- 200, for 1000 packets a worker is paid TK 35-50 and for one dozen garlands a worker gets TK 2.5 only.



Paper Packet Manufacturing



Women also Make Paper Garlands

Usually women homeworkers who are employed in *karchupi* and *benarasi* sectors receive more orders from *mohajans* before Eid festivals. Rest of the year, they remain almost unemployed. In the garment sector, factory supervisors contract the outside homeworkers for piece rate work. In the paper based industry, homeworkers receive more regular orders from the *mohajans*, however, the workers receive very poor wage.

PROBLEMS FACED BY THE UNORGANISED HOMEWORKERS ARE:

- Low levels of education and poor housing
- No formal contract and fixed wage
- A lack of regular job flow
- Repetitive, stereotypical womanly work
- Lack of access to formal training and credit facilities
- Lack of direct access to domestic and international market
- No organizational support

2.3 THE MIDDLEMEN/WOMEN

Usually the homeworkers are placed at the margin of any trade or industry. Middlemen/women play a significant role in their trades. We interviewed 10 middlemen/women in total. Among them, 9 are men and one is a woman with an age range of 22 to 65 years. Men middlemen are involved in shopping bag making, *karchupi* and *benarasi* industries and the woman is involved in the *karchupi* industry.

Middlemen/women who are locally known as *mohajans* take orders from the final supplier of the business and contracted the homeworkers for specific tasks. In general, one *mohajan* handles 3-20 workers. In the *karchupi* industry, we found different levels of *mohajans*. The first level *mohajans* are directly connected with the production houses, local markets, shopping malls from where they collect orders. The second level *mohajans* usually receive orders and raw materials from the first level and supply it to the workers. In other cases, the first level supplies orders to the second level and the second level manages the raw materials and contracts the workers.



Sometimes, the second level *mohajans* are hired by the first level and they receive monthly wage from the first level. Like the homeworkers, sometimes they do not receive their wage in due time. Some of the prominent *mohajans* in the *karchupi* industry have 5-6 regular employees to run their business. At the peak season (e.g. Eid festival) they engage more people.

Among the interviewed 10 *mohajans*, 2 were previously involved in the *karchupi* industry as worker. Later they became *mohajans*. Some *mohajans* have their own small factory where men are hired as regular workers who are paid TK 1500-2000 per week while women homeworkers are hired as irregular piece rate workers.

2.4 HOW WOMEN EVALUATE THEIR HOMEWORK

Despite a lot of problems in the homeworking sector, women homeworkers consider their job valuable because it provides them a major means for family survival. Among the respondents, 44 women (88%) utilize their income for bearing day to day family expenses (i.e. kid's education, medicine, food, house rent). The rest 6 women (12%) have mentioned that their job enables them to spend for themselves (e.g. dress, cosmetics) .

Among the surveyed women, 39 women (78%) are satisfied with their job because it gives them the flexibility to combine income generation with reproductive responsibilities. Moreover, homeworking provides them the opportunity to turn their leisure hours as productive. Additionally, working from home ensures their security.

Since homeworking sector in Dhaka city is middleman/woman dominated, the respondents have remained unaware of the final destination of the products they make, but all of them have the realization that they are poorly paid. From this ground, 42 women (84%) have mentioned that homeworkers should be organized to ensure a fair price. However, 8 of the respondents have responded negatively in the question of homeworkers' organization because they are not interested to go outside their home boundary for being organized.



CHAPTER - THREE: ORGANISATIONS & HOMEWORKERS

3.1. IDENTIFIED INDUSTRY

- a. Fabric toys, *Naksi* Kantha and Christmas gift items (location: Mirpur, Old Dhaka)
- b. Jute bags, Manipuri Sharee and other tribal goods (location: outside Dhaka city)

3.2. THE ORGANIZATIONS

The following section provides the profile of some organizations which are involved in the supply chains of the above mentioned industries. A list of the organizations with their contact details and major area of focus has been attached in *Appendix I*.

3.2.1 Trinamul Nari Uddakta Society

Trinomul Nari Uddakta (Grassroots Women Entrepreneurs) society is an organization working with the grassroots women workers. Their activities are extended over the 48 districts of Bangladesh. Trinomul organizes the homeworkers and provides them training and work. The organization helps the members to get credit and sell their products. On a regular basis, Trinomul organizes local and regional *melas* where the homeworkers have the opportunity to display and sell their products. Trinomul also buys products from the homeworkers.

The members of Trinomul Nari Uddakta society produce jute bags, coconut shell show- piece, bakery items, monipuri sharee, herbal products, *zamdani* sharee, embroidered *salwar-kameez* etc. The organization has 1 sales center in Dhaka and 3 liaison centers in Dhaka, Nepal and Canada. At present, around 700 homeworkers are member of the organization, but the majority of them stay outside Dhaka.



Trinomul Members in a Meeting

3.2.2 Viator Bangladesh Limited

Viator Bangladesh limited is a subsidiary of a Norwegian company, VIATOR AS). It was founded as a private limited company in 2001. Their products range from handloom weaving to embroidery, mirror work, handmade paper products, bamboo products, leather and wooden items, greetings cards, jewelry, dresses, indigenous textile etc.

Viator aims to support low- income indigenous craft producers in Bangladesh through marketing and training. In Bandarban Hill District Viators was able to bring 11 indigenous groups under their training program and motivate them to produce their traditional products. The company jointly organized several training programs in different district of Bangladesh.

Viator has around 1850 home workers. The majorities of them is women and are from Bandarban hill district. At Bananni in Dhaka the company has an exclusive handicrafts shop. Viator set up its Fair Trade Handicrafts Shop at Bandarban in Chittagong Hill Tracts. The company exports handicrafts to Norway, Sweden, Australia, USA, UK and Nepal.



Viator Products

Viator Bangladesh is entitled with UNDP program through their Bandarban project. Besides, the company is affiliated with Folk Nepal (www.folknepal.com) and CSR_Norge (www.csr-no.no), Nordstrandveien, Norway.

3.2.3 TARANGO Handicrafts

Established in 1986, the organization is working with extreme poor people especially women. TARANGO provide women home-based work after successful completion of skill development and entrepreneurship training. They also provide micro-credit for home-based small business.

TARANGO has 50 listed homeworkers in Dhaka city. The majority of their workers (around 1200) reside outside Dhaka. TARANGO workers produce handicraft items like jute bags, basket, pottery, toys, travel bags, laundry baskets, shopping bags, greeting cards, table mates, bamboo baskets and many more. The organization has its sales center at Cox's Bazar. TARANGO does not supply its products to any other centre in the domestic market. The products are exported to Germany, UK, Singapore and Finland.



The Products of TARANGO

3.2.4 Salvation Army

Salvation Army operates Sally Ann sales store in Dhaka since 1997 which sells handicrafts made by poor women. Salvation Army trains women and supplies them raw materials for making different handicrafts. This is a fair trade operation which is based on certain values, guidelines and principles, such as dignity, economic independence, fair wage and a safe, healthy life. One of the major aims of Salvation Army is to prevent trafficking of women through exploring alternative ways of living.

At present, Salvation Army has their training centers at Mirpur and old Dhaka. The organization produces hand bags, toys and various Christmas gift items as such Christmas tree, greetings card etc. At Mirpur 11, there are 20 homeworkers who are listed as regular worker. Besides, there are 5 more homeworkers who work on an irregular basis.



Salvation Army Training Center at Old Dhaka

3.2.5 The Tribal Crafts

The tribal crafts, a producing and marketing organization initiated by a group of indigenous women of Bangladesh was established in 1999. The major objective of this organization is to help marketing the crafts of ethnic women producers for fair wages and increase their income and self- esteem.

The craft producers are from different parts of Bangladesh and they belong to different ethnic groups, e.g. Garo, Hajong, Koch, Santal, Oraon, Marma, Chakma, Bawm, Tripura, Monipuri, Rakhyan and Bengali women from rural areas. Around 400 women home workers work for this organization.

The products of tribal crafts are: woven tribal cloths, tribal pottery, tribal jewelry, bed spread, silk products and scarf, cotton handloom fatua, handloom napkin, embroidery items, *nokshi kantha*, cushion cover, Christmas item gifts, bamboo basket, bamboo jewelry, bamboo flower vases, wooden products, soft toys and candles.

Tribal crafts supplies their products in a shopping outlet at Mohammadpur in Dhaka. They also export different items to Australia, France, Germany, USA and India.



3.2.6 Jagorani Jute Handicrafts

Jagorani has been running since 1960 when a few sisters started to think of ways through which they could provide the impoverished a sustainable source of income. In the past jute was plentiful in the country and they realized that jute can be used for helping people. Now their major products are jute good. They have around 3000 home-based workers as their members. At Tejgaon, Dhaka Jagorani has a showroom and training centre.

Mainly focused on jute products Jagorani also produces other types of products for local market and export. These include jute plant hanger, shoulder bag, place mat, and rug, wooden show piece and household utensil, candles, card, lunch bag , earthen jewelry, pottery etc. They also have a variety of Christmas themed gift piece and decorative items.

Besides their own sales center, Jagorani supplies products for other organizations and sales centers in Dhaka including TARANGA, Kumudini etc. They export to the buyers in Japan, Italy and the USA.

3.2.7 Monipuri Tant Emporium

Established in 1980, Monipuri Tant Emporium produces Monupuri sharee, salwar-kameej, fabric handbag and jute bag. The organization provides work and helps the producers to sell their products. At present the organization has 50 regular workers. Monipuri Tant Emporium supplies product to the shops in Baily road, Dhaka. They export their products to the neighboring country India.

3.2.8 Hand and Cloth / CUP

Hand and cloth has been running for around six years. The organization provides raw materials and work orders to their homeworkers. They also buy products from the homeworkers. Hand and Cloth runs a literacy program for their workers. The workers of the organization produce nakshi kantha. The products are exported to Canada, USA, the Netherlands, Hong Kong and UK.

Hand and Cloth collects women workers from CUP (Children's Uplift Program) that aims to provide support for the children, especially for



the girls and their families. CUP is a program of SIM (Serving In Mission) New Zealand. The organization provides training for women and girls and helps them to manage work. The organization does not directly export products but helps others for exporting.

3.2.9 Hand Touch

Hand Touch provides raw materials to the homeworkers through middlemen for the production of satranchi, embroidered sharees, dopatta, jute bags etc. The organization has its own sales centre at Adabor, Dhaka. Hand Touch supplies products to the famous fashion houses in Dhaka e.g. Aarong, Jatra, Nari Mela and Tangail Sharee Kutir. Their products are also exported to Los Angeles, USA.

3.2.10 PaWA: Coalition of Informal workers

The Partnership of Women in Action (PaWA) coalition was founded by Nagorik Uddyog and One World action with financial support from the Robert Gavron Trust. PaWA was registered as a trust in 2008. The aim of this coalition was to promote a strong, self sufficient and independent coalition, capable of supporting its members to claim their rights, take collective action to influence policy makers and alleviate the poverty and discriminations against poor working women including the homeworkers.

PaWA brought together:

Dalit Women Forum (Dalit Nari Forum),

Independent Children and Women Workers Forum (Mukto Shishu O Nari Sramik Forum),

Women Learn to Live (Bachte Shikho Nari),

PaWA Uddyog (focusing on domestic workers) and

Floating Women Workers Development Centre (Bhasoman Nari Sramik Unnyon Kendra).

Although each member organization has a different focus depending on its membership base, as a whole, its members are all informal workers or un/underemployed women seeking work in the informal sector.



Through joining this collation, each of the member organization has developed their capacity and expertise to support their members, identify common agendas and take collective action. PaWA is a platform to organize and mobilize informal women workers and ensure their job security. Each organization under PaWA has several thousand members and PaWA has a central office for conducting trainings and meetings. Right now PAWA has no specific project. Therefore, the member organizations are running their activities separately.

3.2.11 Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC)

Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) was established in 1957. It is the prime mover organization entrusted with the responsibility of development of small and cottage industries (SCI) in Bangladesh. It is an autonomous corporation under the Ministry of Industries. Although not solely devoted to the homeworkers, BSCIC provides opportunities for the homeworkers to get training and develop entrepreneurship. The organization provides;

- Pre-investment counseling
- Post-investment extension services
- Technical information
- Design and prototype of handicrafts
- Industrial profiles and fact sheets
- Marketing information
- Infrastructural facilities
- Skill development training
- Entrepreneurship development training
- In-plant advisory services
- Credit facilities etc.

BSCIC provides training courses on block-batik, screen print, doll making, pottery, leather and jute goods, packaging, sewing, bamboo and cane products etc. From the beginning, it has provided training for 10-15 thousand women and men. BSCIC organizes national melas where the small entrepreneurs participate and sell their products.

3.2.12 Joyeeta

Joyeeta is an initiative taken by the Ministry for Women and Children Affairs under Government of Bangladesh to help women's cooperatives to receive fair price and market their products in Bangladesh while discouraging the middlemen. Joyeeta was inaugurated in 2011. It is now an outlet of 140 stalls. A variety of products ranging from handicrafts, agro products, home decor and traditional cuisine are available in the outlet. Bangladesh Government has planned to open branches of 'Joyeeta' in all divisional cities as well as district and *upazila* headquarters gradually.

In sum, the organizations who are working with homeworkers could be divided under two major heads:

- a. The organizations which are primarily involved in training, providing orders for homeworkers and selling final products
- b. The organizations which are working for organizing the homeworkers

3.3. THE HOMEWORKERS

With organizational support, the homeworkers in Dhaka city are engaged in manufacturing fabric toys, *nakshi kantha* and Christmas gift items. On the other hand, jute bags, *manipuri* sharee and other tribal goods are manufactured by the homeworkers residing outside Dhaka (e.g. Chittagong Hill tracts, Sylhet, Modhupur *garh* and other districts of Bangladesh).



Greetings Card Made by the Homeworkers



Since most of the organizations were not interested to disclose their workers identity and the majority of them have their workers outside Dhaka, we interviewed only 10 homeworkers in front of the office administration. Out of them, 8 are Salvation Army workers who are involved in the production of fabric toys and Christmas greetings cards. The rest 2 are *nakshi kantha* workers affiliated with Hand and Cloth.

Among the respondents 3 are unmarried and 7 are married women with an age range of 20-40 years. Five of them have primary level education and the rest five are illiterate. The workers of Salvation Army are from Mirpur and Old Dhaka and the workers of Hand and Cloth reside at Mirpur area.

3.4 WORKING CONDITION

The organizations supply orders to the homeworkers for manufacturing their products. Some workers are hired as regular workers who are given training and provided with raw materials to manufacture specific products. The regular workers are expected to work inside the office space. They are paid on an hourly basis. But in some cases, because of the unavailability of large office space, the workers are allowed to work from their home. Besides, the regular workers, the organizations have contact with a good number of irregular homeworkers who are contracted in regular intervals for supplying big orders. The regular and irregular workers who work from home are piece rate workers. Usually the workers are paid once in a month based on how many pieces they have produced. The following table shows the piece rate of some products:

| Sl no | Product | Piece rate (in TK) |
|-------|---|---------------------|
| 01 | Small fabric heart & other small show piece | 15-10 |
| 02 | Embroidery over fabric bag | 20-80 |
| 03 | Nakshi kantha | 3000-5000 |
| 04 | Christmas card | 15-20 |
| 05 | Decorated plastic ball | 45 |
| 06 | Handmade tribal dress (dok.sharee) | 30 |
| 07 | Earthen show piece | 50 |
| 08 | Fabric bag | 20-60 |
| 09 | Jute bag | 25-40 |
| 10 | Cane basket | 100-400 |
| 11 | Jewelry box | 50-400 |
| 12 | Manipuri Sharee | 300-500 |



Besides the regular and irregular homeworkers, there are the self employed homeworkers who produce products by themselves and supply those to the women's cooperatives, fashion houses, and local markets.

According to one of our key informant who worked for an organization for 12 years, the export oriented organizations are interested to engage workers living outside Dhaka city because they could be paid less than the workers in Dhaka city. Besides, the *adivasi* communities residing outside Dhaka have greater skill in manufacturing their traditional goods. These goods have huge demand in the international market. Therefore, many Dhaka based organizations set up their sub centers in the Chittagong hill districts and Sylhet . Moreover, the Christian missionaries in Bangladesh have good connection with the outside buyers. The local missions in Mymensingh and Modhupur in Tangail district have been providing training and raw materials to the local women homeworkers. After quality checking, the products are sent to their head quarters in Dhaka. After double quality checking, they are supplied abroad.

The participants in the survey have mentioned that they are satisfied with their payment. They have also informed that the organizations give them adequate time for finishing per lot of work and they are paid instantly after submission. The workers are well aware of the destination of their products. However, they do not have any formal contact, regular job flow and they do not get any bonus except the fixed piece rates. However, like the homeworkers in the unorganized sector, the respondents are happy with their job mainly because it allows them to contribute to their families.



CHAPTER - FOUR: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HNSA

1. In order to conduct further study on the supply chain, it is important to start with an understanding of the interconnection between all members in a supply chain. Therefore, the homeworkers, middlemen/women, final suppliers and the consumers- each group should be given equal weight.
2. The organizations in the supply chains should be motivated to document and share information. For maintaining clarity in documentation, a documentation sheet showing definition and categories of homeworkers could be shared with them. Organizing workshop with selected organizations would be useful in this regard.
3. For exploring the domestic supply chains, HNSA could focus on three trades in Dhaka city: *karchupi*, paper and benarasi sharee. In this context, a cluster based approach would be helpful for identifying the homeworkers, resources and associated people.
4. To understand the local-global continuum, garment embellishment sector and export oriented trades (e.g. tribal handicrafts, *nakshi kantha*, *monipuri* fabric, exclusive toys and gift items) could be explored. In this regard, attention should be paid to the remotely situated homeworkers, their affiliated organizations and outside buyers.

For identifying the homeworkers outside Dhaka city, a wider survey over the 64 districts in Bangladesh should be conducted. Among the districts, Rangamati, Cox's Bazar, Badarban Hill district and Sylhet should be prioritized. Besides, survey should be conducted over the northern districts and Modhupur *Garh* area in Tangail district.

Networking with organizations and coalition of informal workers (e.g. Trinomul Nari Uddokta, TARANGO, Hand & Cloth, PaWA) would be useful to conduct the survey. For methodological guidelines, WIEGO manual could be shared with the organizations.

5. At present, the demand of the jute products are on the rise in the international market. Since Bangladesh is an agricultural country, it has immense opportunity to supply good quality jute and homeworkers for manufacturing traditional jute products. HNSA can



explore organizations like Jagorani, Trinomul Uddokta and TARANGO while conducting detail supply chain study on jute products.

Appendix I: List of organizations surveyed

| SI No | Name | Contact Detail | Major area of focus |
|-------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| 01 | Trinamul Nari Uddakta Society | House No.12/5 (1st floor), Tajmohal Road, ,Block-C, Mohammadpur, Dhaka -1207 Email: nari.uddyakta@yahoo.com Cell: 01193027115 | Worker mobilization Marketing products Assistance for receiving credit |
| 02 | Viator Bangladesh Limited | Road 7A, House 60, Block H, Banani, Dhaka-1213 Tel: + 880 2 987144, 9872827 Cell: 01717 925272 Email: viator@onenetbd.com | Training, Supplying work order Exporting products |
| 03 | TARANGO Handicrafts | 282/5, 1st Colony, Mazar Road Mirpur - 1, Dhaka Phone: 01712342272, 01943197896 Email: sanjaymondol@gmail.com | Providing work order Training Exporting products |
| 04 | Salvation Army | Head Office: House # 365/2 Road 6 (West) Baridhara, Dhaka Cell: 01713094994 Email: banleadership@ban.salvationarmy.org | Training Providing work order Exporting products |
| 05 | The Tribal Crafts | Room # 1, Ist Floor Rajuk Trade Centre | Training |

| | | | |
|----|---------------------------|---|---|
| | | Nikunjo # 2, Dhaka - 1229 Bangladesh Cell # + 88 01726607144 Email: tcraft@dhaka.net | Providing work order Exporting products |
| 06 | Jagorani Jute Handicrafts | 1 Holy Cross College Road Tejgaon Dhaka - 1215 Phone # + 88 9114590 Email: jagorani@dhaka.net | Organizing workers Providing training and work order Selling products |
| 07 | Monipuri Tant Emporium | 1/1 Shukrabad (1st floor) Mirpur Road Dhaka - 1207 Cell # 01715-544403 | Providing work order Selling products |
| 08 | Hand and Cloth | 6A/B, 2nd Coloni Mirpur Mazar Road Dhaka Phone: 01758440101 Email: robon@handcloth.org | Literacy program for HWs Providing orders and Exporting products |
| 09 | Hand Touch | House# 560, Road # 08, Baitul Aman Housing Society Adabor, Dhaka Tel:8141871 Email: handtouch2002@yahoo.com | Providing work order Supplying products to local fashion houses |
| 10 | CUP | 6A/4, 2nd Colony, Mirpur -1, Dhaka-1216 Cell: 01754824880 http://www.sim.org.nz/projects/118-childrens-uplift-programme.html | Training Helping Workers to be Employed |
| 11 | The Partnership | 2/21, Babar Road, | Mobilizing HWs |

| | | | |
|----|---|--|--|
| | of Women in Action (PaWA) | Block-B, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207 , Bangladesh. Phone: 880-2-9115696, 8125804. Fax: 880-2-9110088 . E-mail: info@nuk-bd.org | Training |
| 12 | Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) | 137-138, Motijheel Commercial Area Dhaka - 1000 Tel: PABX-9556191-2 Fax: 88-02-9550704 info@bscic.gov.bd | Providing training and credit facilities |
| 13 | Joyeeta | Rapa Plaza 3rd and 4th floor Old 27, Dhanmondi, Dhaka. Bangladesh. Contact no: 9124306 Website: http://www.joyeeta.com.bd | Marketing products in Bangladesh |



Appendix II: Questionnaire for Supply Chain Study (Homeworker)

Respondent:

Name:
Age:
Education:
Marital status:
Children (if applicable):
Total household member:
Monthly household income:
Present address:
Cell No:

1. How many different jobs from home have you ever had?
a. What were they?
2. What type of work you are doing now?
3. How did you manage this work?
SelfFactory supervisor.....Middleman ... Relative
4. Who supplies you the raw materials?
Middleman Factory supervisor Self.....
5. Who collects your product?
Middleman..... Factory supervisor
6. Do you know where the final product of your work goes? Yes.....
No.....
7. (if yes) Where? National market.....International market..... (please mention the place)



8. How many days are you given to finish per lot of work?
One week.....Two weeksOne monthAs much as it takes
9. How much do you earn for per piece of your work?
10. Do you keep any record of your income?
Yes NO
11. How do you receive payment for your work?
Daily.....Weekly.....Monthly
12. Does the person/ organisation to whom you submit your work keep any record? Yes..... No.....
13. Do you like your job? Yes.....No..... Why?
14. Have you ever not being paid by your employer?
Yes....No...Sometimes....
15. How often have you faced rejection to your work because of poor quality/ finishing? Never.....
Frequently.....Rarely.....
16. Have you ever received training/ credit from any organization that has helped you to enhance your capacity as a home worker?
17. If yes, please mention the name/ type of the organization.

Name:

Type: NGO ----- Government

Org.....Cooperative.....

18. Are you a member of any organization?
19. Do you think that HBWs should be organized? Why?



**Appendix III: Questionnaire for Supply Chain Study
(Middleman/ woman)**

Respondent:

Name:

Age:

Education:

Marital status:

Present address:

Cell No:

- 1) What type of service are you providing for the home workers (please choose multiple answers if required)?
 - a) Supplying work order
 - b) Supplying raw materials
 - c) Collecting work
 - d) Other..... (please specify)
- 2) How did you manage this work?
- 3) (if the middleman/woman supplies raw materials) how do you manage those raw materials ?
Market.....organization.....
- 4) How many days are given to the homeworkers to finish per lot of work?
- 5) One week.....Two weeksOne monthAs much as it takes to finish
- 6) How much do you pay for per piece of work?
- 7) Do you keep any record of your business?
Yes..... NO
- 8) How do you pay the homeworkers?
Daily.....Weekly.....Monthly
- 9) Have you involved hired workers for running your business?
Yes.....no.....
(If yes) how many workers have you employed?



15) **Appendix IV: Questionnaire for Supply Chain Study
(Organization)**

Organization:

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Respondent:

Name:

Designation:

1. What type of service you are providing for the home workers
(please choose multiple answers if required)?

- a. Training
- b. Credit
- c. Supply order
- d. Raw materials
- e. Buys products from HW
- f. Helping for getting credit
- g. Helping HWs for Marketing their products
- h. Organizing homeworkers
- i. Others.....



2. How many home workers are involved with your organization?
(Please specify by category)

- a) Regular worker.....
- b) Sub-contracted worker.....
- c) Self employed (finished product supplier).....

3. What sort of products are the Home workers producing?
.....

4. What is the nature of work their work (e.g. Sewing, embellishing, weaving, designing, cutting paper/fabric, pasting etc)? (Please specify by product type)
.....
.....

5. How do you supply order to the homeworkers?

- a) Directly through the organization
- b) Middleman
- c) Other.....(please specify)

6. How many days the Home-based workers are given to deliver per lot of order?

7. How are the workers been paid?

- a) weekly
- b) Monthly
- c) daily

10 . How much wage the HBWs are given for per piece of work (please mention by item)?
.....
.....



11.(If the organization provides training for HWs) What type of training are you providing?

.....
.....

12. What are the raw materials needed for the products of your organization?

.....
.....

13. Who supplies the workers raw materials?

.....
.....

15. (if the organization supplies raw materials) how do you manage those raw materials ?

.....
.....

18. Do you have your own sales centre? If yes, where?

19. Do you sell your product in local organizations/ sales center? If yes, where?

.....
.....

20. Do you supply abroad? If yes, where?

.....