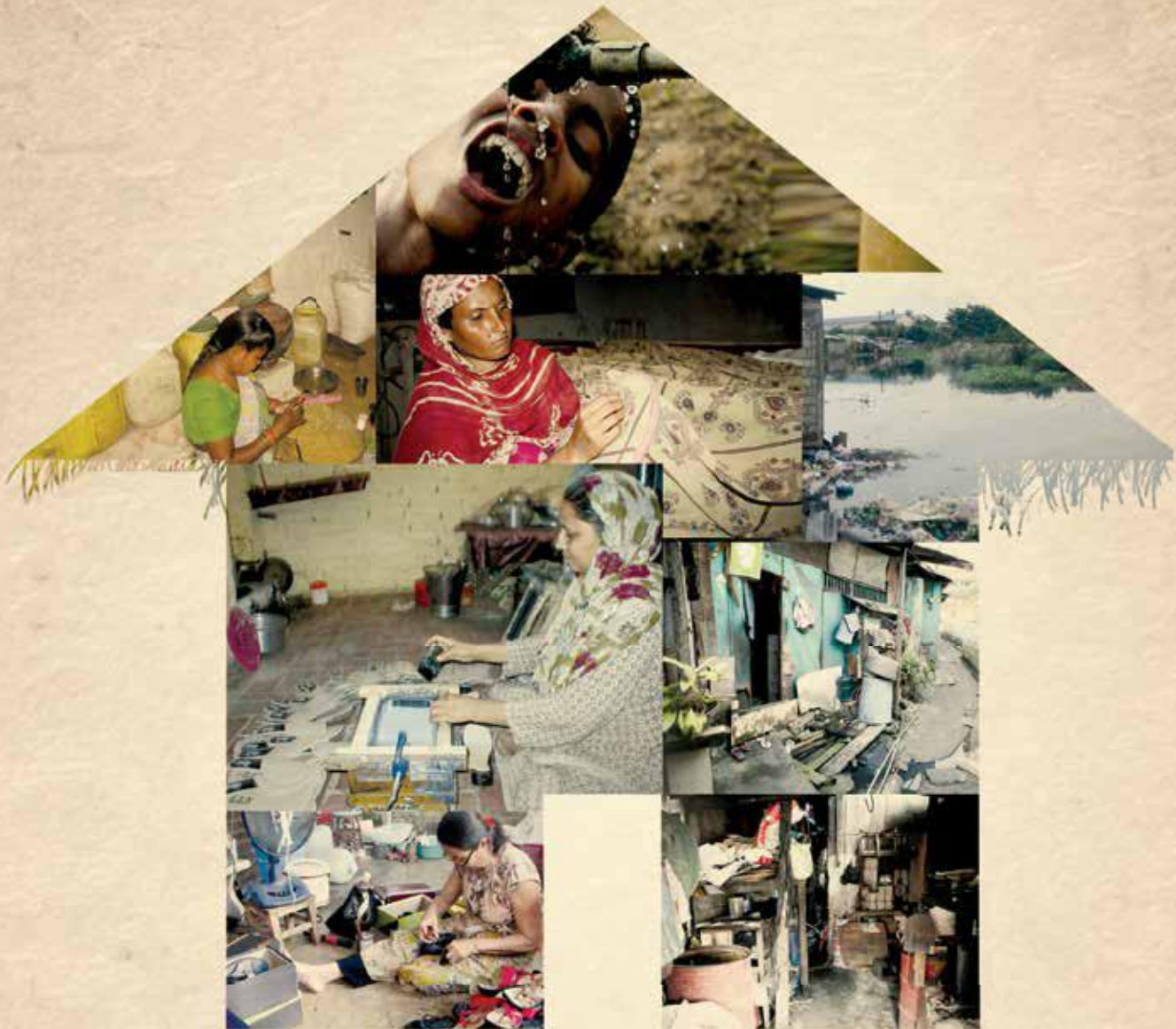

KEY ISSUES OF URBAN POOR HOMEBASED WORKERS



SOUTH & SOUTH EAST ASIAN COUNTRIES



**A SUMMARY OF STUDIES
FROM SELECTED CITIES IN
BANGLADESH, CAMBODIA, NEPAL,
PAKISTAN, THE PHILIPPINES,
AND THAILAND**

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REGIONAL OVERVIEW

Detailed studies of key issues facing urban poor homebased workers were carried out recently in three South Asian countries (Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan) and in three SouthEast Asian countries (Cambodia, The Philippines, and Thailand). Many of these studies can be considered ‘frontier’ studies given that, in the past, the focus has been primarily on rural homebased workers; relatively little is known about working poor urban women and men who work within or near their homes as own account (self-employed) or subcontracted workers.

The cities in which the studies were conducted include Dhaka, Jamalpur and Tangail districts in Bangladesh; Kathmandu Valley and Hetuada in Nepal; parts of Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Islamabad, Lahore and Rawalpindi in Pakistan; Phnom Penh and Siem Reap in Cambodia; Quezon City and Caloocan City (part of Metro Manila) in the Philippines; and Bangkok, Khon Kaen and Chiang Rai in Thailand. The goal of each study was to understand the current situation faced by urban poor homebased workers and begin to identify interventions that will help address some of their main challenges, in line with the priorities expressed by women and men homebased workers interviewed.

Homebased work is important in helping to create vibrant and sustainable urban neighbourhoods, particularly in low-income communities, by providing opportunities that help stabilize and

invigorate the local economy. Interventions to improve the conditions faced by women and men home-based workers will be important in working toward the goal of creating inclusive cities in developing country contexts.

It is not surprising that the challenges facing and top priorities expressed by urban poor homebased workers, in all cases, revolve around livelihood requirements, and recommendations focus on the need to ensure equitable and sustainable livelihoods. Homebased work is very significant as a key source of employment in developing countries for women, who have to combine market work with care work and domestic chores in their homes. It is also an important source of employment for men who may have few other options due to lack of employment opportunities, disability or other reasons. Given the fact that the vast majority of homebased workers in developing countries are women, gender concerns are very much in the forefront of most of the studies discussed here.

To establish a picture of the current conditions faced by women and men homebased workers, the studies begin by describing the occupations, incomes, wages, and other details of the lives and livelihoods of those surveyed. Most urban poor homebased workers are particularly concerned with problems of insufficient or irregular work, very low earnings, and other challenges that prevent them from attaining economic stability. Health and housing are also priorities, given that without adequate health and housing conditions – including storage facilities – homebased workers cannot sustain their livelihoods.

The situation of homebased workers differs from that of many other poor urban informal workers because their homes are also their workplace, meaning they may spend day and night in slum



environments, as opposed to those who work elsewhere and come home primarily at night. For this reason, slum-related health and environmental problems pose particular concerns in the case of homebased workers. A lack of urban services — including an adequate and affordable supply of electricity, water, sanitation, transportation, and other basic services — thus threatens not only their living environment but also their livelihoods. The studies show how these problems play out in the specific cities and urban communities — e.g., how contaminated water or irregular supplies of electricity or inadequate public transportation in low-income settlements can compromise both the health and productivity of homebased workers. All of the studies found that improving and securing the livelihoods of homebased workers, who both work and live in low-income settlements, requires provision of basic urban infrastructure and housing services, health (including occupational health and safety services, and social protection against injuries, disability, and old age to supplement employment-related interventions. The studies also found that training in technical skills, in design and product development, and in advocacy and negotiating skills were essential, but need to be tailored to the specific circumstances and requirements of subcontracted and own account workers in different sectors.

Most fundamentally, the studies found urban poor homebased workers need to have their own organizations, especially because the workers are often scattered, isolated and voiceless. Homebased workers organizations and networks are important for many reasons — not only for greater social recognition as key community-based producers, but also for the economic benefits that organizations can provide (e.g., a greater ability to negotiate, and greater access to market information and capital, along with

providing linkages that help meet other basic requirements). Many urban poor homebased workers, who are otherwise cut off from others in the community, also express a desire for common (shared) workspaces and storage facilities. In some settings, neighbourhood-centred enterprises have helped provide a local economic base.

The conditions, challenges and recommendations made in each city context are presented first on the sub-regional level through synthesis of the South Asian and SouthEast Asian studies, and then on the country-specific level, where more detailed findings and recommendations are outlined, albeit in summary form. Readers are encouraged to go beyond both the regional synthesis and country study summaries, and seek out the original studies (available at www.homenetsouthasia.net and www.homenetsoutheastasia.org). The original studies are very rich and are full of information and insights, and will give a far better understanding of key issues of urban poor homebased workers than can be captured in either the regional synthesis or country study summaries presented here.

The ideas presented here, then, are intended as a glimpse of what the original studies offer concerning this important segment of urban informal workers in developing country contexts. It is hoped that readers will be inspired to go on and read more about this very much understudied and often invisible segment of the urban informal economy, and that specific and viable interventions will be developed over time to effectively address their concerns.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The greatest thanks must go to the homebased workers, homebased workers leaders, urban officials, and key persons interviewed for the studies summarized here, along with the authors, research team members and staff members that made it possible to carry out these studies. As noted in the Nepal country study, all of these individuals 'have devoted their valuable time and energy with great zeal and enthusiasm' to work with the research teams, and for their sincere participation everyone involved in the studies would indeed like to extend heartfelt thanks.

We would like to acknowledge Dr Martha Chen for her guidance and substantive support in pulling this report together. Very special thanks are due to the WIEGO team, especially Shalini Sinha for their valuable inputs in giving it the final shape and to Leslie Vryenhoek for copy editing.

Study Authors

The following includes the titles and key authors of the original studies for each country. (In some cases, the main members of the support staff and others giving assistance are also cited.)

1. Bangladesh: 'Study on Homebased Workers in Three Cities of Dhaka Division, Bangladesh' – Dr. Rafique Uddin Ahmed, research team leader (Development Consultant and Global Compliance Initiative, Dhaka). Other team members include Professor Sheikh Shafiul Islam, lead researcher, and Mr. Md. Maksudul Hannan, data processing expert.

2. Cambodia: 'Artisans' Association of Cambodia IUP Project: Report of Key Issue Study' – Ms. Norm Sina, Inclusive Cities Project for HomeNet Cambodia, with assistance of Mr. Men Sinoeun, Artisans' Association of Cambodia.

3. Nepal: 'Study on Urban Issues of Homebased Workers in Selected Cities of Nepal – Issues-Based Study in Two Cities: Kathmandu Valley and Hetauda' – Mr. Dibyeswar Prasad Shrestha, team leader. Additional team members include Ms. Sabitra Neupane, Ms. Shristi Dhakal, Ms. Rosanne Hoeven, and Ms. Wouke Oprel, along with Mr. Roshan Shrestha and Ms. Pooja Dangi. (Special thanks are also given to Mr. Om Thapalaya of HomeNet Nepal and Hetauda Municipality Chief and Executive Officer Mr. Bharat Bahadur Dhungana, and other officials of the municipality.)

4. Pakistan: 'Urban Planning Policies and Practices – Life of Homebased Workers: Findings of Five Main Cities of Punjab, Pakistan' – Ms. Kishwar Sultana, consultant, with the assistance of HomeNet Pakistan and local organizations in the five cities.

5. The Philippines: 'Surfacing Homebased Worker Issues and Local Level Responses as Entry Points for Organizing: Focus on Urban Communities in Two Cities of Metro Manila, Philippines.' – PATAMABA Research Team: Ms. Primar S. Jardeleza, Ms. Phoebe O. Cabanilla, Ms. Divina Cesar, Ms. Graciela Ibanga, Ms. Lourdes A. Gula, Ms. Ma. Concepcion F. Delos Santos, Ms. Leonida A. Antonio, and Ms. Antonette C. Moral.

Ms. Antonette C. Moral.

6. Thailand: 'Study Report on Situation of Homebased Workers' Groups in Urban Areas and Target Groups under the Inclusive Urban Planning Project' – Compiled by the Foundation for Labour and Employment Promotion (FLEP; Ms. Poonsap Tulaphan, Manager, FLEP).

Based on these country studies, the authors of the sub-regional syntheses and summaries of country studies presented in this paper include the following: Dr. Donna L. Doane for the South Asia summaries (as well as the Executive Summary and Introduction), and Dr. Rosalinda Pineda Ofreneo and Myrna Magbitang for the South East Asia summaries.

The authors sincerely hope that these studies will be useful and will provide a brief introduction to the circumstances and views of poor urban home-based workers in selected cities in South and South East Asia. Additional research on urban policies and practices that impact home-based workers in the region, with suggestions for specific interventions, will follow over the coming years.

INTRODUCTION

The 'key issues' studies of urban poor homebased workers in South and South East Asian countries profiled here were conducted as part of the Inclusive Cities for the Urban Working Poor project, a global project involving organizations of urban informal workers and support NGOs from around the world. These organizations include Asiye eTafuleni (AeT), AVINA Foundation, HomeNet South and South East Asia, Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (KKPKP), the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Waste Pickers, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), Street Net International, and Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO). The overall project has been made possible by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation under its Urban Poverty Initiative.

The studies summarized here were commissioned by HomeNet South Asia as part of its contribution to the Inclusive Cities project. These are 'frontier' studies in the sense that very little was known prior to these studies about urban poor home based workers in most of the studied cities. The ideas presented are initial findings that will be complemented by additional research, including studies in coming years of urban policies and practices and their impact on homebased workers (whether positive, negative or neutral).

Readers are strongly encouraged to go beyond the summaries included here, and to refer back to the original studies in order to understand the issues in more detail and gain access to the insights, experiences, life stories and recommendations provided by the homebased workers interviewed in the course of this research. Indeed, what is included here is only suggestive of the rich detail of the original documents, which are available on the HomeNet South Asia (HNSA) and HomeNet South East Asia (HNSEA) websites: www.homenetsouthasia.net and www.homenetsoutheastasia.org, respectively.

Background

Homebased workers are among the most vulnerable of all urban informal workers. Because they work in their own homes, or in small workshops near their homes – not in public space – homebased workers generally remain invisible to the public and to policy makers. They work in the bottom links of value/supply chains and are, in the worst cases, exploited by contractors and subcontractors. They are particularly invisible and isolated in urban locations, where they are often scattered and have very little contact with one another. Moreover, unlike most rural homebased workers, they do not have agricultural employment or local sources of food that they can rely on. However, though most work on their own in their own homes, some form or belong to community-based enterprises.

Despite these problems, homebased workers produce goods for both domestic and export value or supply chains, notably in



Homebased Worker from Cambodia- Making Jute Bags

labour-intensive manufacturing sectors (such as garments and textiles, artisanal craft, shoes, sporting goods) but also in electronic assembly, pharmaceutical packaging, and sectors. Homebased work provides a key source of employment, primarily for women but also men, and contributes to the household, national, and global economies. By bringing work into their communities, homebased workers are a source of economic resilience in their neighbourhoods. As a result, homebased work can raise significantly the social status of both women and men in their families and communities.

To illustrate the importance of homebased work: in South Asian cities, the majority of all non-agricultural women workers are homebased workers (about 70 per cent in Bangladesh, 53 per cent in India, 65 per cent in Pakistan). In other words, to talk about working poor women in South Asia – as well as in South East Asia, and in much of the world – is to talk primarily about homebased workers. While their products may be sold on the streets by local street vendors or make their way to retail malls in the global North, the homebased producers remain invisible and, therefore, ignored by policy makers. The net result is that urban laws, ordinances, and regulations, as well as the lack of urban services may – often inadvertently – harm homebased workers.

With rapid urbanization, occupations such as factory work, street vending and domestic work are quickly saturated. Moreover, in South and South East Asia, as in many other parts of the world, the social requirements placed on women often result in their having to work from home in order to meet gender-assigned responsibilities (notably, domestic chores and care of children, the elderly, and other members of the family and community). In some communities, women are also expected to remain under the watchful eye of their men relatives and not engage with strangers outside the home. Men in low-income or marginalized positions (e.g., as disabled or elderly workers, or members of social minorities) also find that homebased work may be their best – or only – employment

option. In addition, because homebased workers are often isolated from one another and the marketplace, it is difficult for them to gain access to information about employment opportunities, changing demands, new designs and techniques, or other information that would allow them to break a common pattern of very low and irregular earnings. Because they lack market knowledge and power, contractors or middlemen who provide them work or sell their products can easily exploit them by paying them below-market rates or delayed payments.

Moreover, homebased workers and women homebased workers in particular are usually not given the rights accorded to other recognized 'workers'. Women homebased workers, in particular, are widely assumed to be doing subsistence production or earning 'supplementary incomes' (i.e., supplemental to their husband's or other male earner's income) even if they are the sole breadwinners in the family. Even as co-breadwinners, their earnings are often crucial to the survival of the family, a fact that is rarely recognized.

For these and other reasons, it is important for low-income homebased workers to join organizations and networks that can help increase their visibility and voice, and provide skills, employment opportunities, information and other benefits. This allows their economic status to improve, which in turn allows their social status and decision-making ability to rise as well.



Homebased Worker from Pakistan- Making Mats

The Importance of Organizations and Networks of Homebased Workers

Both, the need to form and challenges to forming — local organizations or associations of homebased workers; are arguably greater in urban than in rural areas, given the greater invisibility, isolation, and lack of community ties in urban areas. The specific goals of forming democratic and membership-based organizations and networks (MBOs and MBNs) of homebased workers are to reduce isolation and increase visibility, to increase market knowledge and power, and to improve business and advocacy-negotiating skills; the overall objectives are to secure their livelihoods, increase their well-being, empower women as workers and leaders, and build sustainable organizations.

Organizations such as the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) — a women's union of informal workers in India, inspired by Gandhian principles — helped pioneer the organizing of poor homebased women workers. Out of these efforts, networks of organizations of homebased workers emerged in two parts of Asia: HomeNet South East Asia and HomeNet South Asia. The HomeNets have been active in promoting the visibility of homebased workers within South and South East Asia and in global forums. In fact, there is interest in many parts of the world for the HomeNets to move beyond Asia to other regions. These efforts to form broader global ties will allow new regional networks and an international network to be formed in the coming years.

The HomeNet family currently includes two sub-regional networks (HNSA and HNSEA), and national networks in nine countries: four in South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan) and five countries in South East Asia (Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, the Philippines, and Thailand, with Malaysia and Viet Nam as recent additions). Studies of key issues of urban poor homebased workers have been conducted to date in six countries — three countries in each sub-region — with additional studies planned.

The Inclusive Cities project, described above and in greater detail at www.inclusivecities.org, has provided an important opportunity to create, strengthen and expand the HomeNets' membership-based organizations and networks. The homebased workers themselves have a great deal to say to urban planners and policy makers, and are beginning to enter into productive dialogues with city officials, urban planners, academics, media, and other concerned agencies and institutions. This will have implications both for the countries in which homebased workers' organizations and networks now have a presence, and for countries that currently lack organizations or networks to voice the concerns of homebased workers. The key studies of key urban issues summarized in this paper are an initial set (a 'first cut') of a series of studies that will be conducted in the coming years.

PART 1

Sub-regional Synthesis
(South Asia and South East Asia)

SOUTH ASIA SYNTHESIS:

South Asian Studies on Urban Poor Homebased Workers

The following is intended as a brief synthesis of some of the main findings of the detailed studies carried out in three South Asian countries that focus on urban poor homebased workers in Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan. The studies were conducted in selected parts of several urban centres in each country, including low-income urban locations in Dhaka, Jamalpur and Tangail districts in Bangladesh; in Kathmandu Valley and Hetuuda in Nepal; and in parts of Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Islamabad, Lahore and Rawalpindi in Pakistan. The intent of the studies has been to find out more about the current situation of urban poor homebased workers in the three countries, together with their main challenges and priorities – especially vis-a-vis the cities in which they live and work – and to begin to come up with recommendations about how to meet their stated goals.

The main findings are grouped below according to the following themes: livelihood-related issues are discussed, including urban services and their relationship to homebased work, followed by a brief discussion on urban planning and regulations – informal livelihoods and informal habitations. Preliminary recommendations for responses on the part of government, civil society, and other key organizations are then made. It should be noted that gender concerns run throughout these three studies, particularly given the serious gender inequalities that characterize most South Asian countries. More so than men homebased workers, women home-based workers tend to be scattered, isolated, and voiceless. They are generally unorganized and lack their own organizations, and therefore find it difficult to negotiate with contractors, middlemen/women, family members, and others in the community. The challenges

they face are particularly acute in South Asian countries where gender norms of female seclusion and modesty restrict women's mobility, with the result that homebased work is especially prevalent among women workers. Effective responses need to be found in order to empower women homebased workers as well as to avoid the social tensions and social problems associated with chronic poverty in poor urban neighbourhoods.

Livelihood-Related Issues of Urban Poor Homebased Workers

In the urban locations in which the studies were conducted, some of the main occupations of homebased workers include the following:

- Bangladesh: garment subcontracting (piece rate) and handicraft/hand-stitching, tailoring/sewing, bamboo products, handloom/weaving, pottery-making, broom making, bidi (local cigarette) rolling, and chumki/karchupi setting (of sequins and jewellery, and embroidery work);
- Nepal: weaving, stitching/sewing, embroidery/patchwork, incense stick-rolling, knitting, beadwork, bamboo work, candle making, metal work, and traditional painting; and
- Pakistan: embroidery, stitching, sewing, needlework (including attaching small stones on cloth), stitching footballs, winnowing grain, beans and pulses from chaff and waste, making vermicelli, and packing different types of goods.

Some occupations are sex-specific – e.g., certain types of stitching is done more by women, and traditional painting and woodcarving are done more by men. Some occupations involve both women and men but with each specializing in different

stages of production (e.g., in the production of and then embellishment of pashmina wool). However, in South Asia the vast majority of homebased workers are women.

Incomes or earnings from home-based workers tend to be very low in all three countries. In the Bangladesh study, about 86 per cent of the respondents reported that their monthly earnings from homebased work was below BDT 5000 (or US \$66); almost two-thirds (65 per cent) reported they earned less than BDT 7500 (about US \$100) per month from home-based work; and 16 per cent of respondents reported a monthly household income from all sources, of BDT 2500 (about US \$33). In the Nepal study approximately 85 per cent reported earning less than NPR 5000 (about US \$65) per month from home-based work and 50 per cent of respondents reported a monthly income from homebased work of less than NPR 2000 (about US \$26). The Pakistan study also found low levels of earnings – e.g., for making coloured vermicelli, the home-based workers get 60-70 rupees a day (approximately US 68-80 cents), and discrimination was seen as particularly strong regarding religious minorities in the urban poor areas surveyed.

In Nepal over 45 per cent of those interviewed reported that women homebased workers earn less than their male counterparts. In Bangladesh, gender-based differences in wages were not a major issue raised by the homebased workers (although other gender-related problems are discussed); instead, the very low level of wages of all homebased workers was seen as the main problem. For example, own account bamboo workers reported that their net earnings were too low to allow two meals a day ('If we do not work hard, we will die'), and piece rate workers in particular – which represented 56 per cent of all homebased workers respondents – reported harassment and exploitation by intermediaries regarding very low rates of payment, delays in payments, etc.

Given the poverty of homebased workers in South Asian countries, it is not surprising that the main concerns and priorities voiced in the studies are livelihood-related. In the

focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted in Nepal, the homebased workers stated that their main concerns and priorities were health, low earnings, and housing – all of which are closely tied to their livelihood requirements. When asked what they discuss most in their meetings, the homebased workers identified the following concerns: how to increase incomes, access to markets, urban issues (including the lack of urban services), and their lack of access to social security. In Bangladesh, the main problems identified during the FGDs included insufficient work, long hours, little pay, and the fact that the worker must pay for expenses, among other livelihood concerns, as well as their lack of ability to save even for emergencies due to their extremely low



Homebased Worker from Nepal- Yarning Cotton

earnings. The Pakistan study focused particularly on the urban slum environment in which homebased workers both work and live, such as poorly designed and maintained roads that create a backflow of dirty and contaminated water into homes, causing damage to homebased goods and supplies, disrupting production, and resulting in serious health problems.

All of the studies found that a lack of urban services to poor urban settlements has negative impacts on both the livelihoods and health of homebased workers and their families. For example, in all three countries the fact that the supply of electricity so necessary for homebased work is either missing, insufficient due to frequent load-shedding, or costly, was cited as a major problem. The studies also discussed how insufficient or contaminated water (with expensive drinking water for purchase being beyond their means in many cases), together with unsanitary conditions and environmental pollution, results in health problems in the slum areas/informal settlements where homebased workers spend both day and night. This, in turn, seriously compromises their ability to work and undermines their productivity. (The contrast here is made with other types of informal and formal work where workers go outside slum areas/informal settlements during daytime hours.) The urban service-related hazards faced include problems of sewage, open drains, and poor waste management and garbage collection, as detailed, for example, in the Pakistan study. Similarly, concerns for occupational safety and health (OSH) issues were also expressed in all three country studies: 92 per cent of the respondents in Bangladesh reported respiratory and other chronic or acute health problems. Further, lack of adequate and affordable transportation was also a common concern: transportation services are expensive, inconvenient, or non-existent in low-income urban communities. In Bangladesh, for example, most of the homebased workers surveyed had to go on foot rather than use public transportation to meet contractors, suppliers, middlemen/women, and others on whom they depend for their work.

Housing and storage facilities also came up as key issues. In Pakistan and Nepal, the high costs of housing in urban centres contributed to difficulties in carrying out homebased work as well as accommodating several members of the family in the same premises. In Bangladesh the situation regarding housing

and storage is even worse, with about 75 per cent living in tin-shed houses and 5 per cent in thatched houses located in a 'messy environment having no arrangement for ventilation'; over 44 per cent report that they have to live in a single room with husband, children and sometimes with parents and relatives, and only 32 per cent report that they have access to a supply of water. Moreover, 35 per cent of all respondents reported having no storage facility, and of these 59 per cent reported damage to their products, while 36 per cent had difficulty preserving their finished goods.

Education is very much on the minds of homebased workers, both for themselves and for their children. In the case of homebased workers, basic literacy, skill development and improved access to technology are seen as crucial to deal with rapidly changing market demands and increasingly intense competition. According to the studies, the homebased workers are also very concerned that their children not be stuck in the cycle of poverty, and are working hard to educate them. However, many report that schools are too far away from slum communities, and alternatives are either not available or are too expensive given the homebased workers' very low earnings. Child labour and lack of adequate schooling may arise as serious problems under these conditions. (Some of the children engaged in homebased work told the research team [in Bangladesh] that their education could be stopped if they did not work since the income of their parents was too inadequate to support their educational expenses; these are children who have managed to both work and go to school, but this is not possible for many others.)

Urban Planning and Regulations:

Informal Livelihoods and Informal Habitations. In all three South Asian countries where the studies were carried out, as elsewhere, the focus of legislation and public policies has been primarily on formal workers, formal enterprises, and formal economic activities – to the relative neglect and disadvantage of informal workers, informal enterprises, and informal economic activities. For instance, labour regulations and protections are premised on the notion of a recognized employer-employee relationship: but homebased workers are either self-employed or sub-contracted workers (without an easily identifiable employer who can be held responsible).

In urban areas, urban planning, regulations, and practices reinforce this formal economy and wage employment bias. Urban planning, as commonly taught and practiced, does not focus on urban livelihoods: while there is some focus on informal settlements, there is limited understanding and little (if any) focus on informal livelihoods. This lack of a livelihood focus in urban planning is compounded by the influence that powerful stakeholders in the formal economy – corporations and real estate developers – have on the allocation of urban public resources, notably urban public land, and on urban design and planning. The net result is that most current urban renewal schemes undermine the livelihoods of the working poor in the urban informal economy: notably of street vendors (who are evicted from prime vending locations) and waste pickers (who are denied access to waste and waste management contracts) but also of homebased workers (who are denied basic urban services while cities decide what to do about informal settlements, and who can be denied the right to work in their homes under single-use zoning regulations). At the same time, most cities in South

Asia are not creating enough formal employment opportunities to meet the demands of a growing urban labour force: indeed, many cities are de-industrializing and pushing all industries to the urban periphery or to rural areas.

The political economy of cities in South Asia, and elsewhere, is of particular concern: as vested interests in the formal economy exert both political and economic power. The structure and effectiveness of local government and governance are of critical importance. In Pakistan, the dissolution of local government bodies is said to have 'taken away the possibility of local populations electing their representatives at the level of Union Councils/Towns in order to participate in planning processes'. On top of problems in urban governance and public sector responses, little effective support is seen coming from individuals, organizations or institutions outside of government agencies. Relatively few civil society individuals or institutions in South Asia, or elsewhere, focus on urban livelihoods or the urban workforce.



Housing Condition – Kathmandu, Nepal

SOUTH EAST ASIA SYNTHESIS:

Livelihood Related Issues of the Urban Poor Homebased Workers

The following is a brief synthesis of the main findings of the studies on urban poor homebased workers (homebased workers), conducted in three countries in Southeast Asia – Cambodia, Philippines and Thailand. The studies were conducted in low-income urban locations in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap (Cambodia); Quezon City and Caloocan City (Philippines); and Bangkok, Chiang Rai, and Khon Kaen (Thailand). The objective of the studies was to explore the current situation of urban poor homebased workers in the three countries, document their main challenges and priorities, especially vis-a-vis the cities in which they live and work, and begin to come up with recommendations about how to meet their stated goals.

The studies looked at both the self employed and the own account homebased workers in all the three countries. Some of the main occupations of homebased workers in each location were as follows:

- Phnom Penh and Siem Reap (Cambodia): making toys, bags, baskets, boxes, containers, jewelry, key rings, musical instru-

ments, items made of recycled plastic bags, and woodcarvings; producing smock (fish, flowers, birds and other items made of palm leaves) and sewing pants, neckties, scarves, mats, and hand gloves;

- Quezon City and Caloocan City (Philippines): self-employed workers in food processing, sewing of dresses and pants, rug making, producing metal products, fashion accessories and the like; and subcontracted workers in capiz shell making, garments, Christmas decor, rugs and potholders, peeling of onion skin, jackfruit seed and fruit pulp extraction and packaging;

- Bangkok, Khon Kaen and Chiang Rai (Thailand): in Bangkok, the production of crafts from carabao horns, crispy rolls, embroidered hijab (head scarf), organza embroidery, garments, and patched leather bags; in Khon Kaen, the production of semi-dried fish, brooms from coconut palm ribs, stuffed bun and steamed dumpling, pork sausages, sweet fried snacks, sweet crispy rice, woven cotton and plastic baskets, fishnets and artificial flowers, and garbage recycling; in Chiang Rai, traditional weaving, sewing Buddhist Monks robes, pearly bead embroidery and crocheting, food processing, and production of mulberry paper and tea pillows.



Homebased Worker from Thailand- Making Broom

Livelihood Related Issues of Urban Poor

Homebased Workers:

Income or earnings from homebased work tends to be low in all the countries in the region, especially Cambodia and Thailand. Almost half – 44 per cent of the home-based workers interviewed – in Cambodia earn a monthly income between US \$10-40, and the next biggest group – 38 per cent – get between US \$50-80. Homebased workers in Thailand, living in the central and inner city areas, have higher incomes, ranging from 150- 300 baht (US \$ 5-10) a day while those living away from the city centers in suburban areas earn a lower daily income of 50-100 baht (approx. US \$1.5-3). In Cambodia, more than three fourths of those interviewed do not earn enough income even if they work full-time and try to make ends meet by working in other jobs. Whenever productive work is available, homebased workers work for long hours – in the Philippines, for instance, those engaged in jackfruit processing (removing seeds, cutting the flesh into strips), report working from 10 a.m. to 7 a.m. the following day. In Cambodia, about one third report that they work for 10-17 hours a day, with some (5 per cent) even saying they work 'non-stop'.

The homebased workers face other insecurities of work, including irregular and seasonal work and competition. Competition can be among themselves and also, increasingly, from imported products from other countries. In Thailand, homebased workers engaged in sewing and embroidery have experienced decreasing job orders due to competition from imported products. The market for tea pillows is currently saturated in Thailand by the same type of product, resulting in decreasing sales and profits. All the countries reported that homebased workers do not have the knowledge and skills to create new designs and develop products for the changing markets and clientele.

In order to create and maintain this livelihood, homebased workers need capital, especially for purchasing raw material in bulk, and in accessing and maintaining tools and machines.

Homebased workers in all three countries reported rising costs of raw material. Own account home-based workers from the Philippines say they are caught between increasing costs of raw materials and equipment rental and the decreasing price of the products they sell in the market. Homebased workers in Cambodia stated they had no resources for the repair of their sewing machines, or for the vehicles that they used for transportation.

Compounding their low earnings is the fact that they live in poor urban settlements, and their homes-cum-workplaces are of small and of poor quality. In Cambodia, 64 per cent of the home-based workers interviewed report having problems with housing –spaces too small for the family; hot or leaking roofs; and weak structures that cannot stand strong winds. Another 26 per cent of the homebased workers in Cambodia report the absence of water drainage, and proper garbage collection, as well as the presence of mice, insects, bad-smelling canals and ponds. Many workers in Thailand reported that working from home meant working in cramped conditions, in insufficient lighting and poor ventilation. Flooding was reported in both Thailand and the Philippines. Homebased workers in all the three countries complained of unsanitary and unsafe living and working conditions, which undermine their productivity and health.

Overhead costs of space and utility add to the non-wage cost of production for the homebased workers. The supply of electricity so necessary for homebased work is either missing, or costly. In Siem Reap, in Cambodia, water and electricity connections are not yet available to homebased workers who use water pumps and battery-operated lamps. Homebased workers in Thailand and Cambodia also complained of the high costs of electricity, which impinges on the earnings of some homebased workers. Lack of storage facility – for their raw materials, equipment, and finished product – is another problem. In the Philippines, home-based workers complained of instances when raw materials and finished products are damaged due to improper storage, or as a result of unforeseen calamities such as floods and typhoons.

Further, lack of adequate and affordable transportation was a common concern: transportation services are expensive,

inconvenient, or non-existent in low-income urban communities. When Bangkok became increasingly urbanized and the price of land began to rise, homebased workers were evacuated to the suburbs, where the government provided them with low-priced land that they could pay for through long-term installments. Because these sites are far from the city center, relocated homebased workers experience inconvenience, high transportation costs, and difficulty in getting access to work. In Cambodia, a large majority (61 per cent) of home-based workers use a bicycle or motorcycle to transport their products, which are usually old and poor condition because the Homebased workers often do not have money to pay for the fuel or bear the maintenance costs.

Because their homes are the sites in which they live and work for their livelihood, fear of eviction adds to homebased workers' insecurity. In Cambodia, homebased workers in Siem Reap are afraid that the government/land owning authority may move them to a new location far away from their source of livelihood. In Phnom Penh where they lived on rented property, they are fearful of being evicted if they are unable to keep up with the payments, given the irregularity of their incomes, and the delayed payment of their wages. In Thailand, home-based workers fear eviction because their houses are on rented private lands and the landowner may want to use the land for some other purpose, such as building an apartment block. Those living in rented houses pay higher charges for electricity and water, imposed at flat rates by the house owners. In the Philippines, a majority of those involved in the study own their homes, but they do not own the land on which these homes were built. Those whose homes are located on private land pay a monthly rent, which was just Php50 (about US \$1.15) some years ago, but now has gone up to as much as Php500 (about US \$11.50). Some have applied to join the government-sponsored Community Mortgage Program (CMP), for which they have to share the high cost of surveying as well as pay a monthly amortization for 25 years.

Similarly, concerns for occupational safety and health (OSH) issues were also expressed in all three country studies. In Thailand, apart from physical pain, stiffness or numbness (particularly in the legs, waist, and back), dizziness, urinary and

posture problems associated with long hours of standing or sitting were reported, Homebased workers also run up against many other OSH problems. Some experience hand injuries due to cutting by plastic straps and piercing by nails and needles. Exposure to dust and other irritants, such as the pungent smell of kerosene, result in allergies and respiratory diseases. Those engaged in food processing suffer from skin rashes caused by splashes of hot oil while cooking. Homebased workers complained of eye strain, pain or numbness in certain parts of the body (back, waist, hands, and feet), stomach ache when they do not eat on time due to pressure of work, dizziness from working too hard without enough sleep. The study in the Philippines highlights that not just the homebased worker but her children and other family members are also exposed to toxins and other problems because her place of work often doubles as place of dwelling for her family.

Except in Thailand, (where homebased workers get free medical treatment from government under the Thai universal health care system), homebased workers who get sick due to poor working and living conditions find difficulty in accessing affordable medical treatment due to an inability to pay or lack of access to medical facilities. They rarely enjoy social security, health insurance, and other forms of social protection, which will enable them to maintain and sustain their livelihood in cases of illness, sudden loss of income, death in the family, maternity and old age. Even where some systems of social security exist, home-based workers find it very difficult to access these for a range of issues. The most common barrier, as highlighted in the Philippines study, is the homebased workers inability to sustain their monthly contributions due to low earnings and seasonality of their work. Most of the homebased workers involved in the study say their priorities revolve around basic necessities such as food, shelter, and children's education. Health and social security thus become secondary concerns. Lack of awareness about the existence of the programmes and schemes is another barrier. Very few homebased workers in Cambodia know about the private Sky health insurance program, and even if they do, they cannot afford the service fee.

Education is a very high priority with homebased workers in SouthEast Asia, both for themselves and for their children. For the workers, basic literacy, skill development and improved access to technology are believed to be crucial to help them compete in a rapidly changing market. As with their counterparts in South Asia, the homebased workers are also very concerned about ensuring their children have an opportunity through education to escape the cycle of poverty, and are working hard to educate them. However, here too many said schools are too far away from slum communities, and alternatives are either not available or are not affordable given the homebased workers' very low earnings.

The homebased workers study highlighted the need for organizing, and building visibility and voice for the home-based workers and their livelihood needs in the urban context. The lack

of recognition, attention and support from community leaders and local government authorities render them invisible and excluded. Organizing homebased workers is therefore a clear priority in the context of Cambodia, both for employment generation and poverty reduction purposes, as well as to enhance social harmony and stability. In the Philippines, in the course of the FGDs and further interaction, homebased workers involved in the study realized the need for organizations that will serve as their voices – as women and as workers – to ensure their recognition and participation in the process of social change. Although many of them are already members of church-based organizations, solo parents associations, and self-help groups attached to microfinance institutions, these do not really focus on their urgent concerns as women workers, and do not represent their interests in urban local decision-making bodies.



Homebased Worker from Cambodia:- Making Bags

COMMON CORE RECOMMENDATIONS

URBAN POOR HOME-BASED WORKERS

All six countries in Asia came out with a wide range of recommendations with the goal of improving the livelihoods and living conditions of urban poor HBWs. What follows here is the set of common core recommendations with a special emphasis on what cities should do to support home-based workers. These have been grouped as direct and indirect livelihood support:

Direct Livelihood Support:

● Self-Employed HBWs:

- sector-specific industrial policies to help increase:
 - demand for goods, including targeted
 - ✓ investment policies
 - ✓ procurement policies
 - market knowledge and access, including targeted
 - ✓ incubators
 - ✓ learning hubs
 - ✓ industrial clusters
 - ✓ trade promotion fairs

● Sub-Contracted HBWs:

- sector-specific employment policies to help increase:
 - increase and guarantee piece-rates
 - enforce worker protections and benefits such as:
 - ✓ timely payments
 - ✓ paid sick leave
 - ✓ annual bonuses

● Both Groups of HBWs:

- financial services:
 - ✓ credit
 - ✓ savings
 - ✓ insurance: property and equipment

- business development services:
 - ✓ skills training
 - ✓ input supply: including group-based procurement of inputs
 - ✓ product design
 - ✓ improved technologies
- space and equipment
 - ✓ common workspaces and storage facilities

Indirect Livelihood Support:

● housing and basic infrastructure services

- in-site upgradation of homes=workplaces
- upgradation of informal settlements
- basic infrastructure services: accessible, reliable, and affordable
 - ✓ electricity
 - ✓ water
 - ✓ sanitation/sewerage
 - ✓ fuel

● health and occupational health & safety services

● social protection services: insurance and schemes to protect against

- ✓ illness
- ✓ injury/disability
- ✓ old age
- ✓ loss of work: e.g. urban employment guarantee schemes

● transport services: affordable and accessible for home-based workers to transport themselves and their goods to intermediaries or markets

● urban regulations

- ✓ mixed-use zoning regulations

PART 2

Summary-Countries



BANGLADESH

STUDY ON HOMEBASED WORKERS IN THREE CITIES
Jamalpur, Dhaka and Tangail

The study of homebased workers in Bangladesh was conducted in three cities: Jamalpur, Tangail municipal areas and Dhaka city, each chosen because of the high concentrations of homebased workers in these urban areas. Sixty-three in-depth interviews (IDIs) and 11 focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted. These were supplemented by additional interviews with city officials, NGO and development workers, city mayors, and journalists. In addition, 15 case studies of individual, family- and community-based conditions were collected to illustrate the circumstances and challenges facing urban poor homebased workers.

The main occupations of Homebased workers surveyed for the study include, in Dhaka: subcontracted garment work, handicraft and hand stitched items, tailoring and sewing, and to a smaller

reflected in the fact that 43 per cent of those surveyed could get only enough job orders to work for 2-5 hours a day. The remaining 57 per cent work longer hours, but for very little pay (around 29 per cent work 6-9 hours, 16 per cent work 10-12 hours, and 13 per cent work 13-16 hours a day).

Of those surveyed, about 16 per cent said that their monthly household income is less than BDT 2500 (less than US \$33), and for almost 29 per cent it falls between BDT 2500-5000 (US \$33-66) a month. Regarding earnings from homebased work alone, 86 per cent of respondents earn either below BDT 1000 (below US \$13) or between BDT 1000-5000 monthly. Moreover, the homebased workers noted that their work did not bring in 'supplementary income' (as 'extra' or discretionary income), but rather their income is spent on basic survival needs – mostly food and clothing, along with some expenditure for children's education, shelter and medical treatment. The FGD participants also noted that for the same work – same hours, and same effort and quality – 'formal' workers (in factories or workshops) receive double or triple what the homebased workers receive, and on top of this homebased workers have to pay for electricity, transportation, and other costs. As a participant in one of the FGDs (Jahanara) noted, the homebased workers' earnings are decreasing day by day due to the increasing number of workers and lack of sufficient work. This is particularly true in Dhaka as migrants move from village to the capital city, but it is true of other urban areas as well.



Living Condition-Bangladesh

extent broom making, block printing, chumki work of sequin or jewel setting and karchupi types of embroidery on cloth or other items. In Jamalpur homebased workers occupations include, in addition to the main ones cited above, well-known stitching/embroidery works (nakshikantha and others) and bamboo products; in Tangail, handloom weaving, pottery, bidi (traditional cigarettes) and other forms of homebased production predominate.

Livelihood Issues of Urban poor Homebased Workers in Bangladesh

The main problems for homebased workers are tied to insufficient work and very low wages, resulting in extreme poverty for the majority of urban homebased workers. Insufficient work is

There is no gender discrimination in pay though gender-related concerns are mentioned, during the FGDs, in terms of decision-making in the family and participation in community events. However, one problem that was repeatedly mentioned is that middlemen/contractors do not want homebased workers to have direct access to the factory or shop where they might get adequate and fair wages, and that Homebased workers often are not paid on time. About 56 per cent of the respondents had to face some sorts of problems in their profession in the form of harassment in getting payment/wage and exploitation by intermediaries'. As Jahanara, the FGD participant, also noted, 'If we got the job/work directly from the factory or big shops, we would get a higher price. But, no garment factory will

give us work directly since we have no linkage and social identity’.

Even in the best of circumstances, earnings are very low. The study found that the majority of homebased workers surveyed need to travel on foot to communicate with middlemen/women, since they cannot afford to use public transportation, and in the worst cases they had to reduce their meals to one at night rather than the two or three meals they managed in the past. Bamboo workers in particular stated that they did not make enough to allow even two meals a day (as Ruqaiya a bamboo worker, said, ‘if we do not work hard, we will die’). Pottery workers also mentioned that they cannot rest even when they are sick, given the demands of the work and their very low earnings – and despite all of this effort, they feel they cannot survive in the market, under present conditions. Given their poverty, child labour is commonplace, as noted throughout the study.

Moreover, the lack of adequate education and training programmes has resulted in a dead-end for the many homebased workers who find they cannot adapt to changing markets. Roughly one-third of the homebased workers surveyed have had no education at all; of the rest, 9.5 per cent had basic literacy (below primary), 16 per cent had primary, 27 per cent had below secondary, and only 14 per cent had a higher secondary level education. Almost all of those surveyed (90 per cent) learned their skills from senior family members, and very few had additional training that would allow them to modify their products according to changing demand.

Other main concerns cited in the study include problems associated with housing, urban services, and the lack of affordable health facilities, all of which have a negative impact on home-based work. Regarding housing, it was found that almost 75 per cent live in tin-shed houses, 5 per cent in thatched homes and only slightly over 20 per cent live in brick houses. Particularly in slum areas, the houses are very small with poor ventilation and poor environmental conditions. Moreover, crowding is a major problem, particularly for home-based work where the home is also the workplace. Over 44 per cent of the homebased workers surveyed have to live in a single room with husband, children and sometimes with parents and relatives (p. 31). Another 40 per



Dhaka-Bangladesh

cent have only two rooms, and only 16 per cent have more than two rooms.

Under these conditions, it is not surprising that access to potable water, electricity, gas, and sanitation services are major concerns to the homebased workers. Only 32 per cent of those interviewed have access to city-supplied water (68 per cent have to use tube-well water), and although 92 per cent say that they have access to electricity. These are reported as largely illegal connections administered by ‘vested interest groups who control the slums’. This is because slum dwellers, lacking land ownership papers, are not given a regular supply of electricity by the electric power distribution companies, and as a consequence the bill for using electricity can vary tremendously. (‘In some of the slums, they have to pay BDT 200-300 on average for using a bulb and a fan’.) In addition, given that the majority of homebased workers (62 per cent) have no access to gas facilities for cooking, almost all of them have to use firewood, or in a few cases kerosene or wood dust. Regarding sanitation, although sanitary latrines are available to 81 per cent of homebased workers respondents, most (68 per cent) of the homebased workers who have them say that the drains of the latrines are not cleaned regularly. Moreover, the majority (64 per cent) say that the waste from their localities is not disposed of on a regular basis either.

The picture created is one of crowded and unhealthy living conditions and neighbourhoods provided with few, if any, urban services. Together with other urban stresses such as pollution and general insecurity, these conditions contribute to the poor health of homebased workers and their families. However, of those surveyed, only 25 per cent report having health care facilities in their areas that they can access at a relatively low cost, while 75 per cent report having no such facilities. The study goes on to detail some of the main health problems of homebased workers, and chronic and acute problems associated with occupational safety and health (OSH) concerns – for example, the study further notes that, of the 36.5 per cent of respondents who use machine for production, over half said that the machines are risky and cause injuries. However, many of the homebased workers are too poor to see doctors, and it appears that medical and OSH personnel rarely go into slum and squatter areas.

The homebased workers' very low level of earnings also results in a lack of nutritious and balanced meals on a regular basis for the majority (84 per cent) of those surveyed. ('The FGD participants said that they had to suffer a lot to maintain their family let alone avail good and nutritious food'.) In addition, the homebased workers' are highly vulnerable to sudden reversals in the face of natural or man-made disasters such as floods, death or sickness in the family, but as informal workers they generally do not have access to any form of social protection – not through city of national government agencies, and not through most of the NGOs working in urban areas. (The homebased workers interviewed generally have harsh words for 'money-lending agencies doing their business in the "guise of so-called NGOs",' charging 20-40 per cent interest on loans.) The homebased workers surveyed generally rely on family members if they can in such situations, and have little in the way of savings or emergency funds ('savings is almost a dream to most of them').

RECOMMENDATIONS

Specific recommendations from the homebased workers interviewed reflect their current priorities: from the government, they are hoping above all for economic (financial) support (78 per cent), and support in educating their children (52 per cent). In response to different questions asked, they also prioritized medical facilities, help with shelter/housing, low-interest loans, land ownership, and water and sanitation facilities. Some also desired training programmes, increased security, help with storage areas, and food-related programmes. They expressed similar priorities regarding areas in which NGOs can provide support.

Recommendations

The key recommendations are listed below:

Securing Livelihoods

- The study segregates the needs of homebased workers who are self-employed from those who work as sub-contracted (piece rate) labour, and in pointing out that the types of trainings and support they need are somewhat different.
- The self-employed homebased workers need sectoral policies which will help increase demand for goods produced by homebased workers as well as increase the market knowledge and access of the homebased workers, including targeted incubators, learning centres, cooperative centres, industrial clusters and trade promotion fairs.
- Sub-contracted homebased workers, on the other hand, need sector-specific employment policies to help increase and guarantee piece-rates and enforce worker protection and benefits such as timely payments, paid sick leaves and annual bonus.
- All homebased workers need to access financial services including credit (for production, tools machines and raw material) and insurance (for property and equipment), as well as business development services including skills training and product design.

Housing and Urban Services

- Based on the study's findings, a number of recommendations are also made with respect to the provision of urban services. Homebased workers need adequate housing and support for the upgradation of informal settlements.
- Homebased workers also need accessible, reliable and affordable basic infrastructure and affordable and accessible transport services.
- Homebased workers need common workspaces and storage facilities.

Social and Legal Protection

- Homebased workers needed to be included under the social protection policies.
- The study recommends such initiatives as the passage and implementation of a National Policy for homebased workers, the revision of the Labour Act Law 2006 to include home-based workers as recognized and respected workers, and an affirmation of the homebased workers' right to form trade unions.
- Other general recommendations focus on the provision of basic education, literacy and awareness; assistance regarding occupational safety and health (OSH); and other policies and programmes involving different levels of government agencies and related sources of support.

Voice and Organizing

- For all homebased workers, the study emphasizes the need for the establishment of strong home-based workers organizations and networks, given that very few homebased workers are organized in Bangladesh. This will give them a voice, recognition as workers, and the ability to work with agencies and other supportive organizations, as well as to have access to many other benefits that are available to them as members of a larger entity, rather than as isolated individuals.

Media Coverage

The Daily Star
DHAKA TUESDAY JUNE 5, 2012

No utility services for home-based workers

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home-based workers in the city slums face difficulties in earning their livelihood due to shortage of electricity, water and gas supply in their living areas, speakers said at a seminar yesterday.

The workers, mostly women and children, act as supplementary wage earners of their families but 43 per cent of them cannot get enough job orders to work 2-5 hours per day due to the shortages, they added.

The seminar titled 'Favourable Urban Services for the Home-based Workers in Dhaka City: Reality, Challenges and Way Forward' was organised by OSHE Foundation in collaboration of HomeNet South Asia held at BIAM auditorium in the capital.

Organisers defined home-based workers as the people living in low-income areas who work independently at home like handcrafts, broom making, tailoring, and sewing.

"Normally the slums are built on government or low lands. These makeshift houses

have no holding numbers and for this reason Dhaka City Corporation can not provide them gas, water and electricity connections," said Engineer Anwar Hossain Pathway, former slum development officer of DCC.

He said that though the slums have no legal power, gas and water supply, the dwellers managed to get those services illegally.

"Some local goons and influential bodies manage them the services from the supply line at a higher price. But these services are not sustainable," he said.

Pathway said some projects run by the City Corporation and NGO's are underway in several slums to solve those problems but they were not proven effective.

A study on home-based workers of urban areas also revealed that most of them earn less than Tk 1000 per year, which is spent on basic survival needs.

Officials of OSHE Foundation and HomeNet South Asia and some workers were present.

Media Coverage - Bangladesh

महानगर
कानपुर

कानपुर | बुधवार | 24 अगस्त | 2012

घरेलू उद्यमियों को भी मिलेगी पेंशन

डायरेक्टर ऑफ इंडस्ट्रीज के अधिकारी ने बताया उत्साह



कानपुर में 2000 घरेलू उद्यमियों को पेंशन मिलेगी। उद्यमियों ने उत्साह व्यक्त किया।

कानपुर में 2000 घरेलू उद्यमियों को पेंशन मिलेगी। उद्यमियों ने उत्साह व्यक्त किया।

Media Coverage-Kanpur City Official Workshop

घरेलू कामगार महिलाओं का उत्थान जरूरी

कानपुर (एएसएनबी)। हिंदू महिला सभा के संस्थापक ने होमबेस्ड कामगार महिलाओं और इलेक्ट्रिक कनेक्शन के अभाव में घरेलू कामगार महिलाओं को प्रोत्साहित करने के लिए महिलाओं को उद्यमियों की जानकारी दी। उन्होंने कहा कि बिजली, पानी और गैस की सुविधाएं न होने से घरेलू कामगार महिलाओं का उत्थान जरूरी है।

घरेलू कामगार महिलाओं को प्रोत्साहित करने के लिए महिला सभा के संस्थापक ने उद्यमियों की जानकारी दी। उन्होंने कहा कि बिजली, पानी और गैस की सुविधाएं न होने से घरेलू कामगार महिलाओं का उत्थान जरूरी है।

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Media Coverage-Kanpur City Official Workshop

हित के लिए लड़ेगी हिंदू सभा

कानपुर, 24 अगस्त। हिंदू महिला सभा के संस्थापक ने उद्यमियों की जानकारी दी। उन्होंने कहा कि बिजली, पानी और गैस की सुविधाएं न होने से घरेलू कामगार महिलाओं का उत्थान जरूरी है।

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Press Release-Kanpur City Official Workshop

महिला मजदूरों की जागरूकता का अभियान

कानपुर, 24 अगस्त। हिंदू महिला सभा के संस्थापक ने उद्यमियों की जानकारी दी। उन्होंने कहा कि बिजली, पानी और गैस की सुविधाएं न होने से घरेलू कामगार महिलाओं का उत्थान जरूरी है।

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Press Release-Kanpur City Official Workshop

घर में रहकर रोजगार में लगी हैं 70 हजार महिलाएं

कानपुर | बुधवार

कानपुर में 70 हजार महिलाएं घर में रहकर रोजगार में लगी हैं।

कानपुर में 70 हजार महिलाएं घर में रहकर रोजगार में लगी हैं।

Press Release-Kanpur City Official Workshop

दैनिकी सारथी पुरिषा का सम्मेलन

कानपुर, 24 अगस्त। दैनिकी सारथी पुरिषा का सम्मेलन हुआ।

कानपुर, 24 अगस्त। दैनिकी सारथी पुरिषा का सम्मेलन हुआ।

Media Coverage-Kanpur City Official Workshop

Dialogues with City Authorities India & Bangladesh



Panel of City Authorities of different departments- Kanpur City Official Workshop



Inauguration of Kanpur City Official Workshop by City Commissioner-Narenedra Chauhan



Press Conference-Kanpur, India



Dhaka City Official Workshop



Panel of City Authorities of different departments- Dhaka City Official Workshop



Homebased Leaders from Kanpur, India



Homebased Workers from Bangladesh

Dialogues with City Authorities Pakistan & Thailand



Meeting with District Officer Health Department Gujranwala, Pakistan



Forum with Chiangrai Municipality, Thailand



Meeting with Secretary Labour Department Lahore and Advisor to Chief Minister Punjab, Pakistan



Meeting with Director, Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Lahore, Pakistan



Meeting with District Officer Labour Department, Assistant Director BISP, Programme Manager National Commission for Human Development (NCHD), Programme Manager GRAP Faisalabad



Meeting with Assistant Director Social Security Department Gujranwala, Pakistan



Forum with BMA (Bangkok Metropolitan Administration), Thailand

support target more the own account workers, specifically in Chiang Rai and Khon Kaen, where homeworkers' groups did not receive any such support. In Chiang Rai, government provided support in the form of product development and start-up funding to all the nine groups studied. However, no consistent government support for market access was provided, which meant that all groups had to do their own marketing with occasional use of sale space in government-sponsored trade fairs and community product sales centers.

Many homebased workers covered by the study remain scattered and unorganized. Generally, own account workers are more organized than home-workers, but the former's groups are often loosely formed, unstable, and with no clear vision, systematic management, and leadership accountability. Although savings groups were set up in some areas, they were not well-established and their activities were not sustainable. The homebased workers groups' decisions mostly depended on their chairpersons only, and their joint activities were minimal and discontinuous. These groups' capacity to form and manage membership-based organizations (MBO) needed to be developed. Supporting group organization and management among the scattered and organized homebased workers is a necessary first step. Building the homebased workers groups' capacities to become MBOs should follow in order to pave the way for their greater visibility and voice in policy and program advocacy, both at local and national levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study which provided rich information on what is already being done, mainly by local authorities, for homebased workers as well as what homebased workers' groups suggest can still be done, Homenet Thailand suggests the following recommendations:

Strengthening Income and earnings

- Facilitate homebased workers' access to new sources of work which pay fair wages and generate other occupations in the light of decreasing work opportunities, and give more employment alternatives.
- For the self employed, provide for policies which will help

increase demand for goods produced by homebased workers as well as increase the market knowledge and access of the home-based workers, for example, buyer coordination, free market space, OTOP (One Tambon One Product) trade fairs, and provincial product festivals organized by government agencies and other trade promotion fairs. Sub-contracted homebased workers, on the other hand need sector-specific employment policies to help increase piece-rates as well as enforce worker protections and benefits such as timely payments, paid sick leave, annual bonuses, etc.

- Enable homebased workers to access financial services including credit (for production, tools machines and raw material) and insurance (for property and equipment), as well as business development services including skills training and product design.
- Organize occupational business development training including skills training as well as study and exchange trips so that homebased workers' groups can learn from each other; in terms of livelihood ideas as well as production and marketing techniques.

Promoting Social and Legal Protection

- Provide knowledge of and raise awareness of occupational health and safety among homebased workers so that they can prevent health risks and protect their personal health, especially in highly vulnerable occupations such as buffalo horn carving, fishing-net making, and crispy roll production.
- Support mutual aid and strengthen management of savings activities for basic welfare benefits.
- Provide homebased workers with knowledge about workers' rights and legal protection of their rights so that they can use existing laws and policies to improve their quality of life.

Improving Housing and Infrastructure

- Support efforts to solve housing and infrastructure problems by coordinating with the Collective Housing Program and other organizations which can help build affordable houses in home-based workers communities, and/or provide support for upgradation of informal settlements.
- Provide accessible reliable and affordable basic infrastructure and affordable and accessible transport services for the home-based workers.

HomeNet Thailand, in cooperation with its regional networks – Northeastern Women's Network and Northern HomeNet – conducted a study to collect information about the working and living conditions of home-based workers. The objective of the study was to investigate the living and working conditions of poor urban homebased workers, prioritize their needs and challenges, and identify how they can be better heard and supported by government authorities, especially at local level. The study included a survey complemented by in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with homebased workers in the three cities of Bangkok, Chiang Rai and Khon Kaen. The study included own account workers, or those who produce their goods, using their own capital and tools, and sell to the market; homeworkers, who are paid to produce goods or provide services to others; and a combination of the two.

In the urban locations where these studies were conducted, some of the main occupations of homebased workers are:

Bangkok: production of crafts from buffalo horns, crispy rolls, embroidered hijab (head scarf) for Muslim women, organza embroidery, garments, and patched leather bags;

Khon Kaen; producing semi-dried fish, brooms from coconut palm ribs, salapao or Chinese stuffed bun and steamed dumpling, pork sausages, khanom dokchok (sweet fried snacks made from rice and kidney flour), sweet crispy rice, woven cotton and

plastic baskets, fishing nets and artificial flowers; some are also into garbage recycling; and Chiang Rai: traditional weaving, sewing Buddhist Monks robes, pearly bead embroidery and crocheting, food processing, and production of mulberry paper and tea pillows.

The youth, disabled and elderly are employed by some of these groups. Government authorities have encouraged organizing such groups to produce high-quality products based on indigenous knowledge and local wisdom. In Bangkok and Chiang Rai, which are tourist destinations, most of the home-based workers groups are engaged in textiles production more than any other kind of production. In Khon Kaen, homebased workers' production is focused more on food.

Livelihood Issues Of Urban Poor Homebased Workers

One of the key issues for homebased workers is low and irregular income. Homebased workers living in the central and inner city areas have higher incomes ranging from 150- 300 baht (USD5- USD10) a day because they have greater access to work, market and transport. Homebased workers living away from the city centers do not have this advantage and are forced to resort to home working at lower levels of the production chain. Most of the groups earning the lowest average daily income of 50-100 baht (approxUS\$1.5-3) live in suburban areas.

As they are not effectively organized, home workers lack the bargaining power to negotiate for higher wages, and in the case of own account homebased workers they lack greater access to capital and other productive resources.

Insecurity of employment threatens most homebased workers groups, since they are dependent entirely on employers and orders. Sometimes, groups have to stop production because their previously delivered goods have not been paid.

The homebased workers in Bangkok, particularly those in textile production, saw their work continue to diminish because the manufacturers have relocated to other countries. Those engaged in sewing and embroidery have experienced decreasing job orders due to competition from imported products. The introduction of new technology, such as computerized sewing machines, has made sewers using manual sewing machines



Homebased Worker from Thailand:- Making Footwear

redundant. Employers now prefer computerized embroidery to hand embroidery because the former can be produced more quickly and with more even quality. Employment insecurity can also be caused by the unavailability of raw materials, as illustrated by the case of the buffalo horn producers who sometimes could not work a whole month due to this problem. Even if raw materials are available, homebased workers groups may not have the capital to buy them.

The seasonality of the market is also an important factor. Buddhist robes, for example, can only have high sales during religious festivals, with negative effects on the sustainability of the producers' revolving funds. Sometimes, as in the case of tea pillows, the market can be saturated by the same type of product, resulting in decreasing sales and profits.

The living conditions of the homebased workers in inner and central city areas are congested and sometimes they fear eviction because their houses are on rented private lands. The landowner may want to use the land for some other purpose, such as building an apartment block. Those living in rented houses pay higher charges for electricity and water imposed at flat rates by the house owners.

Homebased workers in Bangkok suffer more from housing and transport problems than those in Khon Kaen or Chiang Rai because most of them are poor migrants from rural areas who built their homes on government or private land. When Bangkok became increasingly urbanized and the price of land began to rise, they were evacuated to the suburbs where the government provided them with low-priced land that they could pay for through long-term installments. Because these sites are far from the city center, relocated homebased workers experience inconvenience, high transportation costs, and difficulty in getting access to work. Flooding, resulting from the authorities releasing floodwaters from Bangkok to suburban areas, also causes difficulties for those living there and make it harder for them to get work. One case in point was the one-meter high flood, which lasted for one month at a particular housing estate in October 2008.

Aside from physical pain, stiffness or numbness (particularly in the legs, waist, and back), dizziness, urinary and posture

problems associated with long hours of standing or sitting, homebased workers also run against many other occupational safety and health (OSH) problems and the absence of a clear welfare benefit system. Some experience hand injuries due to cutting by plastic straps and piercing by nails and needles. Many homebased workers groups report the problems of eye strain, sore eyes, and blurred vision especially among older workers. Their workplaces have poor lighting conditions, and are often congested, hot, and stuffy, especially in the inner city areas. Exposure to dust and other irritants, such as the pungent smell of kerosene, result in allergies and respiratory diseases. Those engaged in food processing suffer from skin rashes caused by splashes of hot oil while cooking.



Living Conditions- Cambodia

Homebased workers get free medical treatment from government under the Thai universal health care system. There are also social security schemes and a Homeworkers Fund. Social security scheme with co-payment by government just started and it is only a government policy, not a law. Therefore, homebased workers still do not fully trust that long term support will be provided by government. As to the Homeworkers Fund, very few groups of homebased workers have had access to this fund due to lots of documents that need to be filled out and a lack of access to information regarding the Fund – just as most home workers and their employers know very little about the Homeworker Protection Act enacted in May 2011.

The government support for the homebased workers has been uneven and discontinuous. Bangkok-based urban homebased workers have received very little support from government, except for the Hijab Sewing and Embroidery Group that was given ten sewing machines by the city authorities. Government

and benefits such as timely payments, paid sick leave, annual bonus, etc.

- In addition, homebased workers need financial services such as credit, savings and insurance (for priority and equipment), as well as business development services including skills training and product design.

Housing and Shelter

- Community organizations with homebased worker membership should take part in consultations on zoning and land use planning, and should benefit from affordable local housing programs and projects.
- Homebased workers' groups in flood-prone areas should be able to participate in local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Councils (DRRMCs) and should be assured of basic services and livelihood opportunities when they have to be relocated to safer areas.
- LGUs should provide affordable and accessible transport services.

Social Protection

- LGUs should assist in providing and continuing social security and health insurance coverage to homebased and other informal workers' groups, as well as OSH services.
- LGUs should integrate OSH programs for homebased and other informal workers in their local health development plans with accompanying budgetary allocations.

PATAMABA (National Network of Informal Workers in the Philippines, part of HomeNet Philippines) conducted a study in pilot sites in Quezon City and Caloocan City, which are the key cities in Metro Manila. The objective of the study was to highlight the current situation of urban poor homebased workers in two cities; to explore and prioritize their key issues; and to identify how homebased workers can be recognized and assisted by city authorities and what policies and programs can be proposed for them.

The study looked at self-employed homebased workers in food processing, sewing of dresses and pants, rug making, producing metal products, fashion accessories and the like; and subcontracted workers in capiz shell making, garments, Christmas decor, rugs and potholders, peeling of onion skin, jackfruit seed and fruit pulp extraction and packaging. The methodology included a survey of 107 homebased workers followed by focus group discussions (FGDs) involving the survey participants in the two urban locations.

A majority of the homebased workers surveyed had at least a high school education, own their homes with water and sanitary facilities, and have cell phones, but very little access to training and to financial assistance.

Livelihood Related Issues of Urban Poor Homebased Workers in the Philippines

One of the key issues of the urban poor homebased workers is income and earnings. Own account homebased workers report that the prices of their finished products are low, and they are caught between the ever increasing cost of raw materials, electricity, equipment rental, etc., and the decreasing price of the products they sell at the market. Often, homebased workers have no recourse but to sell their products at cost or sometimes, even lower, just so they would have some earnings for the day. In the case of subcontracted workers (for instance those engaged in the production of Christmas decor), terms of payment are not clear because of the verbal and informal arrangements between the subcontractors and homeworkers. Children below 15 years assist their mothers in subcontracted work but do not receive any wage payments. When work is available, working hours can be long; for example, those engaged in jackfruit processing

(removing seeds, cutting the flesh into strips), report working from 10 a.m. to 7 a.m. the following day.

The homebased workers report that they lack knowledge and skills on how to access productive resources like capital for their small income generating projects or livelihood enterprise. Although many in the study report having accessed loans from microfinance institutions, some say the weekly repayments is a challenge due to delayed payment or non-payment of due wages. Some are forced to borrow at usurious rates from moneylenders. Homebased workers state that they need more information and knowledge about accessing markets, and harnessing appropriate technology to develop their products.

Although most homebased workers in the study own their homes, they do not own the land on which these homes were built. Those whose homes are located on private land pay a monthly rent, which was just Php50 (about US \$1.15) some years ago, but now has gone up to as much as Php500 (about US \$11.50). Some have applied to join the government-sponsored Community Mortgage Program (CMP), in which they have to share the high cost of surveying as well as pay a monthly amortization for 25 years. Lack of land security also gives rise to fear of eviction, especially when floods and other disasters strike, and whole communities are required to relocate to safer areas.

Law and order problems are also rife in the community, aggravated by increasing incidence of drug addiction and alcoholism among men. Violence against women happens inside and outside their homes.

Homebased workers also call attention to the unsafe environment especially for small children due to over population in the community, crowded streets, and garbage strewn all over the place, compromising the health of many residents. There are instances when raw materials and finished products are damaged due to improper storage, or as a result of unforeseen calamities such as floods and typhoons.

Homebased workers report that basic services in the community are no longer free, except during election time when local politicians facilitate the provision of free services as part of their campaigns. The health center may also be far, requiring time and resources for transport and travel. The homebased workers report that they have not had any access to reproductive health training or to orientation on violence against women in the community. They are not aware that the 5 per cent Gender and Development (GAD) budget may be used for these purposes.

OSH emerged as one of the major concerns. The homebased worker's place of work doubles as a dwelling unit for the family. Such an arrangement has an impact not only the homebased workers but also on their children and other household members who are exposed to toxins and other problems in the home as a work environment. Moreover, as invisible workers, women homebased workers rarely have any assistance when they run into serious OSH problems as they work within the confines of their homes.

It is difficult for homebased workers not only to become members of the Social Security System (SSS) and Phil Health, but also to maintain/sustain their monthly contributions to these entities because of the insufficient, irregular and seasonal incomes. Some report that they have experienced unfriendly treatment from SSS/Phil Health employees when they claim their benefits. Most of the homebased workers involved in the study say their priorities revolve around basic necessities such as food, shelter, and children's education, health and social security thus become secondary concerns. Some homebased workers have set up an informal savings mobilization scheme called "Impukan" from which they can borrow money in case of emergency. The scheme has its merits but is vulnerable to financial mismanagement, and many homebased workers concede that depositing money in cooperatives or in a bank is a safer and better alternative.

In the course of the FGDs and further interaction, homebased workers involved in the study realized the need for organizations that will serve as their voices, as women and as workers, to ensure their recognition and participation in the process of social change. Although many of them are already members of church-based organizations, solo parents associations, and self-help groups attached to microfinance institutions, these do

not really focus on their urgent concerns as women workers, and do not represent their interests in local decision-making bodies. Homebased workers need to advocate for skills training to enhance their productivity, safe conditions in the workplace, social protection, decent work towards a decent life, and capacity building so that they can push for their rights, be self-reliant, and empowered.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recognition and Participation of Homebased workers as Workers and as Women

- Homebased workers should be recognized as a distinct group with specific needs and interests that have to be addressed by local government units (LGUs), and not lumped together with the urban poor and/or with other workers in the informal economy.
- Organizations of homebased workers and other civil society organizations should be given the opportunity for genuine exercise of citizenship through participation in LGU bodies, as well as increased networking and collaboration with LGU partners.
- Homebased workers' organizations, which by their very nature are composed mostly of women, should be able to access LGU programs and budgets for women's concerns (e.g., reproductive health, microfinance, addressing violence against women) and gender mainstreaming.
- LGUs should be able to collect and collate sex-disaggregated, occupation-related, and other types of data to identify, locate, and assist homebased and other invisible workers in the informal economy.

Livelihood Support

- LGUs should enhance their capacity to create jobs and facilitate employment for the homebased workers. For the self employed, sector-specific industrial policies are needed which will help increase demand for goods produced by homebased workers. In addition, homebased workers need market knowledge and access, including targeted marketing facilities (such as free space in city hall premises and grounds) and trade promotion fairs. Sub-contracted homebased workers, on the other hand, need sector-specific employment policies to help increase piece-rates as well as enforce worker protections

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study makes policy recommendations that focus in particular on national level rather than city-level policies and practices. This is due in part to the fact that in Pakistan, the local government bodies have been dissolved, and the local population can no longer elect representatives at the level of the Union Councils/Towns. The possibility of having influence at the local level is therefore highly restricted.

The recommendations, therefore, include following (detailed recommendations are available in study):

- Urban policies need to be developed using an integrated and coordinated approach, with development authorities in specific districts and provinces working together and closely monitoring the growth of the local population and urbanization.
- Homebased workers is a distinct category of urban poor and the large number of women working as homebased workers needs to be recognized in policy arena. In particular, it needs to be acknowledged that homebased workers work from home and lack of and/or poor quality of housing and infrastructure services have a bearing on their productivity and earnings.
- Housing and infrastructure services are livelihood support for the homebased workers; upgradation of informal settlements and housing; and provision of accessible, reliable, and affordable basic infrastructure services are critical for strengthening their livelihoods.
- There must be an appropriate level of compliance with building and sanitation rules, and a focus on housing, location of businesses including promoting mixed used zoning regulations, and other considerations in policy-making with a clear view of the economic implications, particularly for homebased workers.
- The National Policy on home-based workers and ILO Convention C-177 (on subcontracted homebased workers) need to provide the guiding principles for policies that have an impact on homebased workers.
- Free registration of all homebased workers needs to be carried out and recognized at different government levels; this should also entitle homebased workers to social protection and insurance provisions.
- Urban planning requires sex-disaggregated data, along with gender-responsive budgeting, at the different levels of government agencies. The database should include and reflect the issues and needs of women homebased workers, among others.
- Development and government agencies need to do gender analyses that go beyond simple data collection based on sex, by looking into the complex needs of specific population groups including women homebased workers.
- The capacity of the organizations working with and for homebased workers needs to be strengthened.
- Peoples' awareness about urban policies should be raised and communities need to be involved in such areas as sanitation policy, local government ordinances, health policy, etc.



THE PHILIPPINES

Exploring Homebased Workers' Issues and Local Level Responses as Entry Points for Organizing Two Cities of Metro Manila, The Philippines

This study, carried out in five cities in the province of Punjab, Pakistan (Lahore, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi, and the Federal capital of Islamabad), focuses mainly on the infrastructural and service-related problems of the cities as they affect homebased workers, and women homebased workers in particular. The methodology involved conducting six focus group discussions (FGDs) with a total of 112 women homebased workers.

The main occupations of the women interviewed in Pakistan for the study in all the locations was embroidery, stitching, sewing, needlework (including attaching small stones on cloth), stitching footballs, winnowing grain, beans and pulses from chaff and waste, making vermicelli, and packing different types of goods.

Livelihood Related Issues of Urban poor Homebased Workers in Pakistan

The study observes that most of homebased workers have low levels of earnings. In Faisalabad, for example, a woman who cleans 40 kg. of pulses and beans (grains, pulses and beans are separated from chaff and waste) receives only 30 rupees (about US \$0.34); a sewer of quilt covers earns five rupees per cover, with 8-10 covers made in one day when electricity or sunlight are available; and a woman packing thread spools earns 4.5 rupees for packing 120 thread spools. In none of these cases do the contractors pay for transportation or such items as glue for packing or pasting stickers on the thread spools. In Gujranwala, for one dress a homebased worker can earn 60-70 rupees per day (about US \$0.69-0.80), and making coloured vermicelli gets 60-70 rupees a day (approximately US \$0.60-0.80 cents). Footballs bring 12-13 rupees per piece, and each rice bag brings 1-1.5 rupees, for applying stones using an iron, they receive five rupees for pasting a 'Pepsi lid'-size of stone.

Some of the main problems highlighted by the study are high cost of housing in urban centres contributing to difficulties in carrying out homebased work as well as accommodating several members of the family in the same premises. The residential areas are noted as lacking in reliable supplies of electricity, water and sanitation facilities, along with problems associated with poor streets and housing. Frequent power outages have a very sharp impact on homebased work since they are very dependent on a regular supply of electricity.

most cities, forcing the poor to stay in very crowded units without enough space, light or ventilation. The women homebased workers interviewed in Rawalpindi were packing henna in congested homes that required high rents (2500 rupees for a single room for an entire family), with high utility bills. In Lahore, women faced high costs of rent and despite that did not have sufficient housing facilities, space and enough light.

Water and sanitation are important to the homebased workers. The Pakistan study highlights how insufficient or contaminated water (with expensive drinking water for purchase being beyond their means in many cases), together with unsanitary conditions and environmental pollution, results in health problems in the slum areas/informal settlements where homebased workers spend both day and night, which in turn seriously compromises their ability to work and undermines their productivity. (The contrast here is made with other types of informal and formal work where workers go outside slum areas/informal settlements during daytime hours.) The study in Lahore points out that the water supply lines and sewage mix together, causing a variety of water-borne diseases that affect almost every household in the area. Though a water filtration plant had been established in one location, the source of filtered water is located too far away for the homebased workers to access, resulting in their having to drink the contaminated water, negatively impacting the health of the women and their families. In Gujranwala, the water is said to be contaminated because of waste from oil factories in the area, there is little in the way of sanitation, and water-borne diseases are common. Faisalabad did not face a water shortage but the women complain of low pressure and contaminated water (again, a mixture of drinking water and sewage), causing them to purchase privately supplied drinking water.



Homebased worker from Pakistan-Doing Embroidery

percent of those surveyed feel that they have been able to increase their bargaining power and more than 8 per cent feel that they have developed their leadership ability through membership in the organizations; significantly, more than 90 per cent say that they have already benefited from being a member of their own organizations. They are hope to be able, through association with other homebased workers and by working with authorities, to increase their level of earnings, gain greater access to markets and basic urban services and facilities, and receive social security benefits.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to meet the basic livelihood and other needs of urban poor homebased workers, it is first of all recommended that homebased workers, and informal workers in general, have more systematic input into decision-making on the city and national levels. At the moment, 92 per cent of the homebased workers interviewed feel that the municipality does not include them in any urban policies or programmes. ('There are no direct linkages established between people and authorities for participation.' .)

The recommendations emerging from the study included the following:

Promoting Homebased Workers'

Livelihoods as well as Decent Work and Living Conditions

- For the self employed, provide for policies which will help increase demand for goods produced by homebased workers as well as increase the market knowledge and access of the homebased workers, including targeted incubators, learning centres, cooperative centres, industrial clusters and trade promotion fairs.
- Meet the needs of sub-contracted homebased workers for sector-specific employment policies to help increase and guarantee piece-rates and enforce worker protection and benefits such as timely payments, paid sick leaves and annual bonus.
- Enable homebased workers to access financial services including credit (for production, tools machines and raw material) and insurance (for property and equipment), as well as business development services including skills training and product design.

- Organize occupational business development training including skills training as well as study and exchange trips so that homebased workers groups can learn from each other in terms of livelihood ideas as well as production and marketing techniques.

Promoting Social and Legal Protection

- Facilitate informal workers' access to social security and other insurance and schemes to protect against illness, injury/disability, sanitation/sewage and fuel.
- Pass and enforce labour laws that protect against exploitation and irregularities and ensure that the national accounting system recognizes the contribution of homebased workers, especially the women homebased workers.
- Establish new policies (e.g. a National Policy on Homebased Workers) that will strengthen the position of home-based workers.

Improving Housing and Infrastructure

- Help planners and anticipate and respond adequately to the problems of urbanization and migration and ensure that the government of Nepal supplies more housing for the urban poor as well as provide support for upgradation of informal settlements.
- Provide accessible, reliable and affordable basic infrastructure and affordable and accessible transport services for the homebased workers.
- Provide for common workspaces and storage facilities.

Voice and Security

- In order to have effective input into decisions affecting their lives, it is recommended that homebased workers receive ongoing support in their attempts to form groups, organizations and networks that are truly representative of the many types of homebased workers that work and live in poor urban areas.
- Finally, it is clear that education — both for the homebased workers themselves and for their children — is clearly prized by the homebased workers. Education, literacy and specific training programmes are thus seen as crucial for both the families and their communities, and this should include both trainings for elderly homebased workers who depend on this work for their livelihoods and specific types of non-formal livelihood trainings (in labour, market, saving and credit, and related concerns) that will help homebased workers in their efforts toward ensuring sustainable livelihoods and strong community-based enterprises.

Another key problem cited in the study is flooding and 'flow-back', where poorly designed and maintained roads that create a backflow of dirty and contaminated water into homes, causing damage to homebased workers goods and supplies, disrupting production, and resulting in serious health problems. Homebased workers in Lahore observed that when it rains the water flows back into their houses, which has a serious impact on their work and productivity. 'Some women complained that they had to spend all of their savings to buy new things and getting some of the costly ones repaired due to the flow-back. Others complained that the flow-back is always a setback to their income because they cannot work on their work contracts but instead get busy in saving goods, cleaning and other sorts. Sometimes they compromise on food intake to avoid extra pressure on savings, which is liable to take place in the absence of work' (p. 8).

The urban service-related hazards faced by homebased workers include problems of sewage, open drains and poor waste management and garbage collection. In Faisalabad, there is no publicly administered waste collection, causing each household to pay PKR 450 (about US \$5.14) for the disposal of waste to private collectors, where they are available. In Rawalpindi, the interviews indicated that they are subject to periodic flooding from the main sewage drain that runs through the city.

Electricity and water is only available to the homebased workers – both critically important for their work as well as living requirements – through illegal connections, which can be cut off at any time. This, together with the regular load shedding (power cuts), affects both the livelihoods and health of the women. As explained in the study, 'in those circumstances, livelihood options ... get the most affected. These women have weaker eyesight due to the long hours of working in the night. They have to work till late night to compensate the loss of their time which is stolen away by the domestic chores, including fetching of water due to the low pressure. The interruption of electricity supply forces these poor to spend more and more on candles. The cost of candles has also skyrocketed since load shedding has gripped the country'. This is one reason many of the women began making candles at home.

In Gujranwala, the need to burn wood and coal due to the lack or high cost of natural gas is said to have resulted in indoor and

outdoor pollution, and in some cases, suffocation. In Islamabad too, the supply of natural gas is equally difficult to come by. As a consequence, it is said that almost the entire population of 800 households are forced to rely on wood and coal, causing pollution problems and 'posing serious threats to women and children, especially infants who already have minimum health options in such localities due to waterborne diseases and malnutrition'.

Health problems are also a major concern: the study notes that football stitching can result in deformed fingers, both in women and, even more so, in their children who also stitch footballs from an early age. However, the women say that there are no health facilities in their town, even though health department personnel do visit them periodically to give their children vaccinations. In Faisalabad, the study notes that 'in a community of 30,824 individuals, there is no mother and child health centre; similarly, in Gujranwala, the nearest hospital is 4 km away and in case of emergency, people must walk for 10 to 15 minutes to the place where any vehicle can reach them and sometimes, the patient expires on the way. 'And in the case of pregnancies, women suffer the most.'

Among other serious problems, the lack of education is a major one for the women homebased workers and their families. Most of the homebased workers interviewed are illiterate, and their children – especially girls – are reported as not going to school because the family cannot bear the expenses of their education. Instead, the girls are also working as homebased workers alongside their mothers.



Homebased Worker from Nepal:- Weaving

HomeNet Nepal conducted a study to collect information about the conditions and concerns of urban poor homebased workers in two cities: Kathmandu Metropolitan City and Bhaktapur Municipality in Kathmandu Valley (contiguous urban areas), and Hetauda City in Hetauda Municipality. The objective of the study was to explore the current situation of homebased workers in these urban locations and identify their key challenges and priorities, especially vis a vis the cities in which they live. A total of 123 household surveys and five focus group discussions (FGDs) were carried out with homebased workers, and several informal interviews were held with leaders of home-based workers groups in the cities surveyed.

The main occupations of the homebased workers in the urban location where these studies were conducted included weaving (27 per cent), sewing (17 per cent), and embroidery and patchwork (16 per cent), along with incense rollers, knitters, traditional painters and others. Many of these occupations are often sex-specific; for example, more men are involved in traditional painting while women in weaving. The prevalence of homebased work, particularly in low-income families and communities, is high in the areas under study, and is indicated by the following: 'In Kathmandu there are 66 clusters of slum/squatters and in Hetauda, there are two clusters as reported by Nepal Mahila Ekata Samaj... As per estimation of Nepal Mahila Ekata Samaj there are 30 to 40 per cent homebased workers in each cluster'.

Livelihood Related Issues Of Urban Poor Homebased workers In Nepal

The study notes that the conditions facing urban homebased workers have become more challenging in recent years due to

rapid urbanization, the loss of much of the garment-related production that provided jobs in previous years, and government's approach which, until recently, focused on rural rather than urban poverty. As is true in other South Asian countries, most urban homebased workers face increasing competition from new migrants and new sources of competition (e.g., cheap imports). Moreover, the contributions of homebased workers to the household, local, national and international economies go largely unrecognized, and women homebased workers in particular are not generally regarded as 'real' workers and thus lack labour and other rights.

Regarding key concerns of urban poor homebased workers, the study finds that the homebased workers in these urban areas of Nepal face a very wide range of problems. In the FGDs conducted in Nepal, the homebased workers stated that their main concerns and priorities were health, low earnings, and housing – all of which are closely tied to their livelihood requirements. When asked what they discuss most in meetings, the homebased workers identified the following concerns: how to increase incomes, access to markets, urban issues (including the lack of urban services), and their lack of access to social security.

The problem of insecurity of jobs and employment – i.e., irregular and insufficient work – together with low wages is a key concern. The study also found that the majority of those surveyed work almost seven days a week, with less than 15 per cent earning more than NPR 5000 a month (about US \$70; this is more representative of the income of a family in which 2-3 members are doing full-time homebased work). Most of the homebased workers surveyed (almost 70 per cent) were able to save less than 10 per cent of their income, and around 60 per cent were relying on loans to meet their needs. Moreover, in Nepal many of the homebased workers face gender-based wage disparities: almost 45 per cent of the women homebased workers interviewed earn less than their male counterparts.

In addition, the lack of ability to negotiate for fair wages is often cited in the study. 'For instance, they are paid just NPR 8 per meter as a wage for weaving cotton cloth and for the same cotton cloth if they want to buy it from the retail market they

have to by NPR 150 (US \$2). If they raise the voice against this unfair wage to increase their wages there is every possibility that they might be fired by the employer immediately' (pp 105-106). Moreover, the study indicates that it is difficult to get orders on a regular basis, and for this reason 43 per cent report never being able to negotiate with their employer because they are worried about losing the work, while 56 per cent report some degree of negotiating ability but found it to be insufficient.

Housing in urban areas, the study reports, is becoming increasingly difficult to find. The price of land and housing is high, as is the rental; thus, many homebased workers are forced or compelled to squat on public land due to absence of any institutional housing provision from the government at an affordable rate. Homebased workers who are staying in the rented houses usually have one room accommodations, as the rent in the major city like Kathmandu is quite high and it is not possible for the poor homebased workers to have more than two rooms at the most, including their workplace.

In spite of inadequate housing, the study finds that ownership rates are relatively high among those surveyed, with 57 per cent living in houses owned by family members – usually a father- or mother-in-law (40 per cent) or husband (30 per cent) or by the homebased workers women themselves (20 per cent). Only about one-third of those surveyed live in rental units, with squatters accounting for only around 10 per cent, which is slightly higher than the national average of 7 per cent. These patterns may not continue on indefinitely, however, given that the rising price of both land and housing was again cited throughout as a major concern. Moreover, the quality of the housing/workplace owned by homebased workers' families is generally poor both in terms of space and safety, including vulnerability to earthquakes and other natural disasters. Regarding work space – within the homebased workers' own home, or in local neighbourhood locations – more than 70 per cent cite the lack of adequate workspace as a key problem, and 63 per cent report a lack of adequate storage space.

Another key concern is associated with poor urban infrastructure and services. For example, the lack of adequate infrastructure was cited by 37.5 per cent of homebased workers interviewed as their major problem, with almost half reporting the water supply as the main issue, followed closely by electricity. All the homebased workers reported that load shedding (power cuts) has been hampering their work on an average 3.75 hours per day. Almost half – 49 per cent – of the homebased workers use alternative energy (candles, kerosene light and power back-up/ emergency

light) for their works. As a homebased worker from Kathmandu stated, 'In most of the cases [with load shedding] we are unable to fulfil the order and in some cases the orders are cancelled. The alternatives like candle are not as easy and useful as electricity. The candle light is dimmer and after completing work there is pain our eyes and also there is deposition of tar or carbon on the inner walls of nostrils'. There is already shortage of water and when there is supply of water from the corporation they could not use their water pump due to load shedding thereby aggravating the problem of water further. Time spent at collecting water eats into productive time for the homebased workers: almost 10 per cent homebased workers spend more than two hours to fetch water and more than 30 per cent spend almost two hours to fetch the water.

The lack of safe public transportation emerged as another key concern of homebased workers, with old and poorly maintained public transport vehicles and traffic rules seldom being followed by service providers. In one of the FGDs, a serious concern regarding security in large urban centres was expressed as well, which can have an impact on ability to earn a living and survive in a very low-income urban context. The homebased workers interviewed felt that law does not adequately protect them, and the lack of security has become one of their key concerns.

Both women's health issues and environmental pollution-related issues were often cited as significant concerns in the FGDs. Problems associated with a lack of health facilities and services – particularly the lack of services provided to very low-income areas – are coupled with worries about health problems tied to the lack of safe drinking water. There is a strong linkage between water supply, sanitation facilities and poor health. Most of the time the homebased workers families suffer from different types of diseases associated with lack of access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation facilities.' Moreover, according to the study, women homebased workers in particular have difficulty gaining access to health care since they are often not seen as 'breadwinners' in spite of the fact that their earnings support the family, either in conjunction with others or, in some cases, as the sole earner. ('In my case, I need ask my family head to get permission to go to the hospital. And I am fully dependent on them due to lack of access to resources and low income of my work,' – a home-based worker from Hetauda explained.)

A majority of homebased workers surveyed already rely on MBOs for saving schemes and credit/loan services, as well as for skill training and market information, all of which are seen as crucially important for their livelihoods. In addition, almost 13

Recommendations for Decision-Makers in Government

Homebased workers mentioned that if they could talk with decision-makers in government, they would make requests, which could be categorized as follows:

Ensuring Employment, Adequate Incomes, Access to Productive Resources

- Provide for regular jobs and regular income to address unemployment and seasonality of work for Homebased workers.
- For the self employed, provide the necessary policies to help increase demand for goods produced by Homebased workers as well as to increase the market knowledge and access of the Homebased workers, including export and local markets for handicraft products, and setting up model urban locations for handicraft work in order to attract the tourists.
- Create the sector-specific employment policies needed by sub-contracted Homebased workers to help increase piece-rates as well as enforce worker protections and benefits such as timely payments, paid sick leave, annual bonuses, etc.
- In addition, Homebased workers need financial services such as credit, savings and insurance (for property and equipment), as well as business development services including skills training and product design.
- Set up accommodation for differently-abled Homebased workers to stay in and provide regular jobs with good pay. They also need group-based procurements of inputs (especially zippers, buttons, and thread) at cheaper prices, and common work places and storage facilities.
- Provide affordable and reliable transport services and/or affordable fuel.
- Help Homebased workers secure access to raw materials by encouraging the growing of natural material such as ropeak in local areas; also help them to access improved technologies including tools for making xylophones (a kind of musical instrument) and other local products.

Providing the Required Utilities and Infrastructure

- Provide Homebased workers with the needed basic, accessible and affordable infrastructure services including water, electricity fuel, as well drainage systems, and good roads, pumps, and toilets/latrines.
- Prevent eviction of Homebased workers from their workplace, which is their home; and initiatives to upgrade their homes and informal settlements.
- Set up sample village for handicraft work in order to attract the interest of tourists.

Creating a Safe and Secure Environment

- Provide health and occupational health and safety services.
- Create a safe environment for people to live and work in, as well as to travel, especially for women Homebased workers.
- Support the education of Homebased workers' children.
- Increase social protection and services for the vulnerable groups like drug users, differently abled, migrants and the ultra poor.



NEPAL

STUDY ON URBAN ISSUES OF HOMEBASED WORKERS IN
SELECTED CITIES Kathmandu Valley and Hetuada

The Artisans' Association of Cambodia (AAC) conducted a study of the urban poor homebased workers in the cities of Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. The intent of the study was to find out more about the current situation of urban poor homebased workers in the two cities, together with their main challenges and priorities, especially vis-a-vis the cities in which they live and work, and begin to come up with recommendations about how to meet their stated goals. Some of the questions the study sought to explore were: What are the current issues faced by most women homebased workers in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap city? Which of these do they consider to be of top priority? And how can local governments help?

The study included both the subcontracted homemaker (53 per cent), and self employed or own account workers (38 per cent). Of the 109 homebased workers interviewed from both cities, 83 per cent were women. Homebased workers make all kinds of toys, bags, baskets, boxes, flute containers, beaded jewelry, coconut key rings, musical instruments, items made of recycled plastic bags, wood carvings, document holder, drawings for wall hanging. They also produce smock (fish, flowers, birds, drawing containers and other items made of palm leaves) and wooden herons to sell in markets and the complex at Angkor. They sew pants, student uniforms, front door foot cleaning mats, sewing hammocks, neckties, hand gloves. They also weave scarves and make sewing bags made of mat, wooden ox-carts and horn jewelry. Homebased workers in Phnom Penh were found in all parts of the city, and most of them were migrants from other parts of Cambodia, while the home-based workers in Siem Reap were born in the province.

Homebased workers in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap cities took up the job as home-based workers for a number of reasons – poverty, lack of other opportunities, domestic obligation, lack of transport to travel to jobs, etc. Some other homebased workers took on this work because it gave them control over their time and they had a sense of independence, while some others had disability, and/or were in poor health so they could not work outside their homes.

Livelihood Related Issues of Urban Poor Homebased Workers in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap

The earnings are low: almost half – 44 per cent of the HBWs interviewed earn a monthly income between US \$10-40, and the next biggest group – 36 per cent – get between US \$50-80. In other words, more than three-fourths of those interviewed do not earn enough income even if they work full-time and try to make ends meet by working other jobs. Homebased workers, especially the subcontracted ones, do not have regular employment, and the own account or self-employed workers such as



“Homebased Worker from Cambodia:- Making Bamboo Baskets

those in Siem Reap produce and market their products with or without orders. Working hours are long, 51 per cent say they work eight hours a day, about one-third report that they work far longer, ranging from 10 to 17 hours a day, with some (5 per cent) even saying they work “non-stop.” This accounting of hours spent refers only to productive work and does not include the interspersed time devoted to cooking, cleaning, child care, and other types of reproductive work.

Almost four-fifths (78 per cent) of the interviewed homebased workers had difficulties in producing and selling their products. They lack information on actual and potential markets, and are dependent on orders from organizations or private companies or middlemen/women. They do not have their own capital to invest in bulk-buying of raw materials, including zippers and thread, which are increasingly becoming more expensive. Homebased workers have no or limited resources for the repair of their sewing machines and other tools. Often they borrow money from micro-credit institutions and private lenders who charge interest; this was mostly true for those who had to bear all responsibilities for raw materials.

Among the Homebased workers interviewed, 64 per cent reported having problems with housing – lack of adequate space for the family members; hot or leaking roofs; and weak structures that cannot stand strong winds. Since their home is also a work space, all these have implications on the working environment. It gets to be too hot during the dry season and too inconvenient during the rainy season because it leaked and they had no good space for storing their raw materials. The working and living environment is much worse for 26 per cent of the Homebased workers interviewed who reported the absence of water drainage, and proper garbage collection, as well as the presence of mice, insects, bad-smelling canals and ponds.

Fifty-five per cent of the Homebased workers interviewed who worry about eviction can be divided into two groups. The first group own their houses in Siem Reap but are afraid that the government/land owning authority may move them to a new location far away from their source of livelihood. The second group who rent rooms, mostly those in Phnom Penh, are fearful of being evicted if they are unable to keep up with the rent payments. Many say that the rent is high and they find it hard to pay regularly, given the irregularity of their income.

Almost three-fifths (59 per cent) of the Homebased workers interviewed feel insecure about the presence of crime and drugs in their neighborhood. Women are afraid to walk around at night time and mothers fear that their sons might be harmed by neighborhood gangs or get hooked on drugs along with their friends.

Sixty-two per cent of the Homebased workers interviewed say they have problems with transportation. Even though the majority (61 per cent) has a bicycle or motorcycle to transport their products, they still need to pay for fuel and for maintenance of the vehicle. Those in Phnom Penh commute a lot to look for jobs or orders, and to get or purchase the raw materials, and deliver the products to those who order them; the Homebased workers in Siem Reap rely on collectors who come to their location to get the products for their buyers. (Some of Homebased workers in Siem Reap use their own bicycles to transport their products to markets and sell by themselves). Besides that, Homebased workers in Siem Reap travel only when they need to collect raw material such as palm leaves and ropeak from the forest. They go in a big car and share the cost between them.

In Phnom Penh, the urban governor provides water and electricity connections. In Siem Reap, these connections are not yet available so Homebased workers use water pumps, battery-operated lamps, gasoline lamps and electricity from small private electricity businesses in the village. Most of the Homebased workers interviewed have access to water either from the city government or from the pumps, but a small minority (16 per cent) says the water is too expensive. Twenty-three per cent of the Homebased workers complain that electricity is costly, and thus they hesitate to turn on the light or the fan, which affects their working conditions.

More than half (54 per cent) of the Homebased workers interviewed report that they have health problems. They suffer from occupational health and safety issues including pain or numbness in certain parts of the body (back, waist, hands, and feet), stomach ache when they do not eat on time due to pressure of work, dizziness from working too hard without enough sleep and eye strain from working too long. Female Homebased workers also suffer from fatigue after childbirth or after abortion. Homebased workers do not seek any treatment from doctors or hospitals for these health problems or even for other serious illnesses because of lack of information and resources. They often rely on traditional medicines such as herbs, leaves, and barks. Very few know about the Sky health insurance program, and even if they do, they cannot afford the service fee.

Homebased workers who have children in school are not sure if they can keep them there because fees for higher education is increasing and their earnings are irregular; or because the school is far away and the Homebased workers' family has no bicycle or other means of transportation.

The study states that the Homebased workers are invisible and isolated. They cannot be heard by the government unless they are organized and have a representative to voice their issues to the proper authorities. When Homebased workers are organized in a group, for example, this not only helps them to articulate their views, it also helps them to market their products and eventually have regular jobs with regular income. Organizing Homebased workers is therefore a clear priority in the context of Cambodia, both for employment generation and poverty reduction purposes, as well as to enhance social harmony.



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