

10 KEY FACTS

HOMEBASED WORKERS IN SOUTH ASIA



Homenet South Asia Trust

Association Of Homebased Workers In South Asia

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INTRODUCTION

HOMEBASED WORKERS IN SOUTH ASIA

A Statistical Profile

(FOR BANGLADESH, INDIA, NEPAL AND PAKISTAN)

Culled from the Statistical Briefs¹

Homebased workers are typically isolated and invisible because they work from home—in large numbers and over long hours—contributing to their families’ as well as to their nations’ economies. Without accurate data, which ideally comes from government data sources, it is a challenge to advocate on behalf of and to formulate appropriate policies, plans and programmes for homebased workers.

HomeNet South Asia² and WIEGO³ therefore examined the survey instruments of four countries, prepared technical guidelines for estimating the size and composition of homebased workers in respect to each country, used the country’s own available data sources, and finally came out with an estimation of HBWs in each country concerned. So far, resulting Statistical Briefs have been prepared for Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan⁴.

This document is a short regional profile based on the above four Briefs and, at a glance, provides basic statistics regarding homebased workers in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan. By way of conclusion, some key policy recommendations have also been suggested.

1. The data in this document has been culled from Statistical Briefs No. 9, 10, 11 and 12 as prepared by HNSA and WIEGO, which can be accessed at homenetsouthasia.net & wiego.org. The statistical briefs analyze data collected by National Sample Survey Organisation for India and by the Labour Force Survey for Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. In this document, we have cited data for the year 2011-2012 for India; 2005-2006 for Bangladesh; 2008 for Nepal; and 2008-2009 for Pakistan.

2. HomeNet South Asia (HNSA) is the sub-regional network of organizations of homebased workers. It operates in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. HNSA works towards building regional solidarity among homebased workers, especially women workers, empowering them to lead a life of dignity and free of poverty by obtaining decent work and social protection within a rights framework. HNSA strives to make homebased workers and their issues more visible, to help organize them, to improve their working and living conditions, to promote and advocate for formulation and implementation of national, regional and international policies for homebased workers, and to promote access of homebased workers’ products to local, national and international markets. For more information, visit www.homenetsouthasia.net or email homenetsouthasia@gmail.com

3. WIEGO (Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing) is a global research-policy-action network that seeks to improve the status of the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy. WIEGO draws its membership from membership-based organizations of informal workers, researchers and statisticians working on the informal economy and practitioners from development agencies (intergovernmental, governmental, nongovernmental) working on related issues. For more information see www.wiego.org.

4. These Statistical Briefs can be found at http://homenetsouthasia.net/recent_update.html or at www.wiego.org/wiego-briefs#statistical

SECTION 1 : HOMEBASED WORKERS

1. Who are Homebased Workers?

Homebased workers are a category of workers who carry out remunerative work in their own homes or adjacent grounds or premises. There are two kinds of homebased workers: (i) self employed or own-account workers and contributing family members; and (ii) sub-contracted or piece rate workers, also referred to as home workers, engaged in the production of goods and services for the market in their homes or in nearby areas.



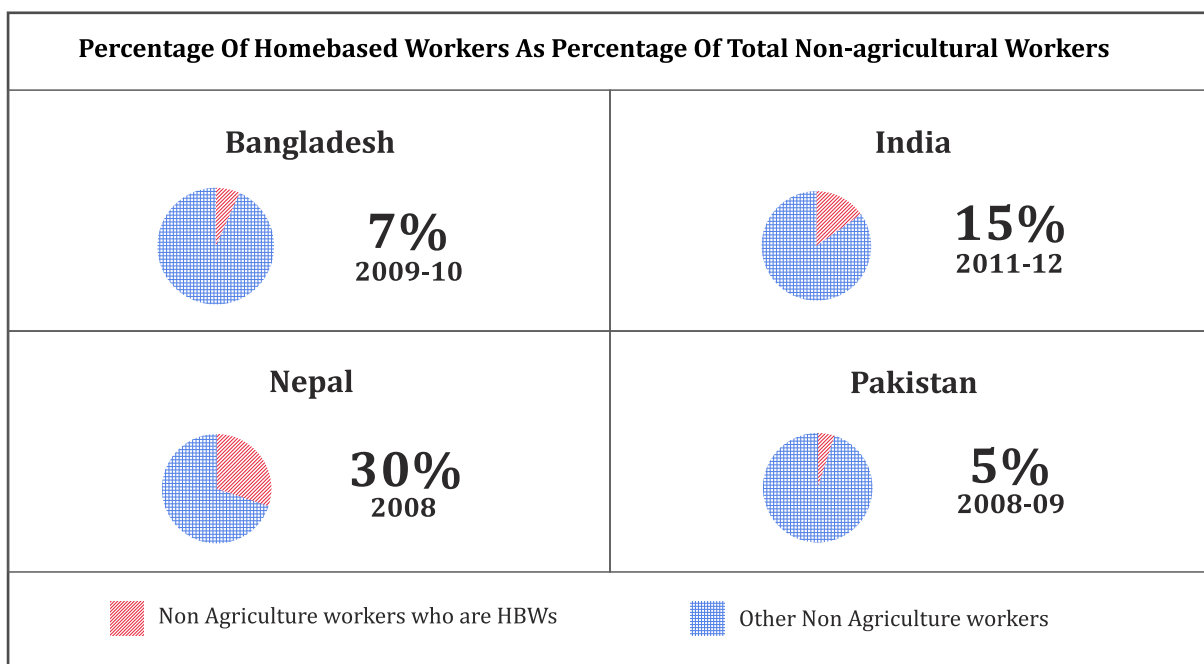
2. How many Homebased Workers are there?

- In 2009-2010, Bangladesh had 2 million HBWs.
- In 2011-2012, India had 37.4 million HBWs.
- In 2008, Nepal had 0.92 million HBWs.
- In 2008-2009, Pakistan had 1.43 million HBWs.

Based on country level data available for different years during the period 2008-12, it can be roughly estimated, that there are over 41 million HBW in 4 countries of South Asia at this time.

3. What Percentage of Non-Agriculture workers are Homebased Workers?

- In Bangladesh, nearly seven per cent of non-agricultural workers aged 15 and above were HBWs. (2009-2010)
- In India, nearly 15 per cent of non-agricultural workers aged 15 and above were HBWs. (2011-2012)
- In Nepal, 30 per cent of non-agricultural workers aged 15 and above were HBWs. (2008)
- In Pakistan, nearly five per cent of non-agricultural workers aged 15 and above were HBWs. (2008-2009)



Even in countries where homebased work forms a small percentage of non-agricultural employment, such as in Pakistan and Bangladesh, the actual number of HBWs is still large, estimated to be over one and a half million in Pakistan and two million in Bangladesh. In India and Nepal, homebased work is significant amongst non-agricultural workers both as a percentage as well as in sheer numbers.

Actual experiences on the ground shows that there is under enumeration of home-based workers, especially women home-based workers. Enumerators are often not trained to count home-based workers and therefore often list them as doing only 'domestic work'. Furthermore, home-based workers themselves often do not report themselves as being 'workers'. The relatively higher numbers of home-based workers in India are due to a change in the NSSO questionnaire as well as in the method of enumeration used in the 1999-2000 survey onwards.

4. Is Homebased Work Growing?

- In the period from 2005 to 2009, the number of men in homebased work in Bangladesh nearly doubled, growing faster in rural areas, while the number of women in homebased work decreased in both urban and rural areas, but especially in urban areas. The size of the workforce in homebased work increased by 41 percent in Bangladesh between 2005-2006 and 2009-2010.
- Homebased work as a source of employment for both women and men continued to grow in numbers across the 12 years in India. It grew from 23.3 million in 1999-2000 to 37.4 million in 2011-2012.
- In Pakistan, during the three-year period from 2005-2006 to 2008-2009, the number of homebased workers declined from 1.699 to 1.439 million, and the proportion of non-agricultural workers decreased from 6.59 to 5.27 per cent.

Homebased work is growing in India and Bangladesh.

SECTION 2 : WOMEN HOMEBASED WORKERS

5. How many Women Homebased Workers are there?

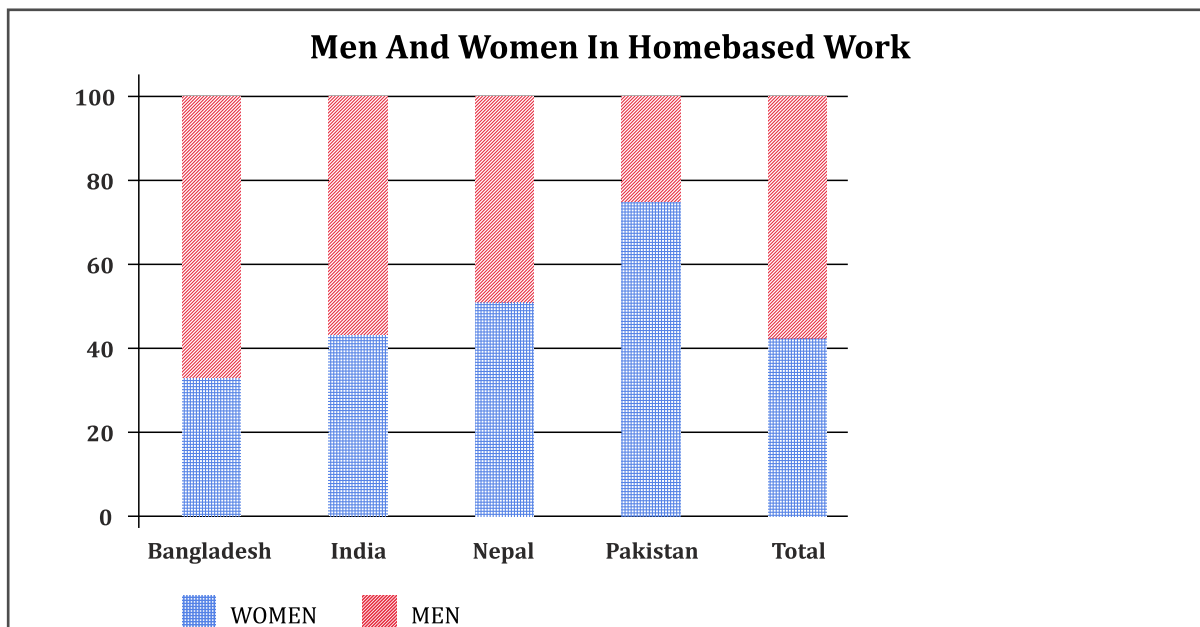
- In 2011-2012, India had 16 million women HBWs.
- In 2008, Nepal had 0.47 million women HBWs.
- In 2008-09, Pakistan had one million women HBWs.
- In Bangladesh in 2009, one third of all HBWs, about .66 million, were women.

Based on country-level data available for different years during the period 2008-2012, it can be roughly estimated that there are nearly 18 million women HBWs in these four countries.

6. Are there More Women than Men in Homebased Work?

Each country had different results when the number of men and women in homebased work were compared.

- In India, there were marginally more men than women in homebased work; in 2011-2012, women HBWs represented 43 per cent of all HBWs in India.
- In 2008, in Nepal, more women than men were in homebased work; 51 per cent of all HBWs in the country were women.
- In Pakistan, HBWs were largely women. In 2008-2009, 75 per cent of all HBWs in the country were women in Pakistan.
- Only one third of all HBWs were women in Bangladesh in 2009.

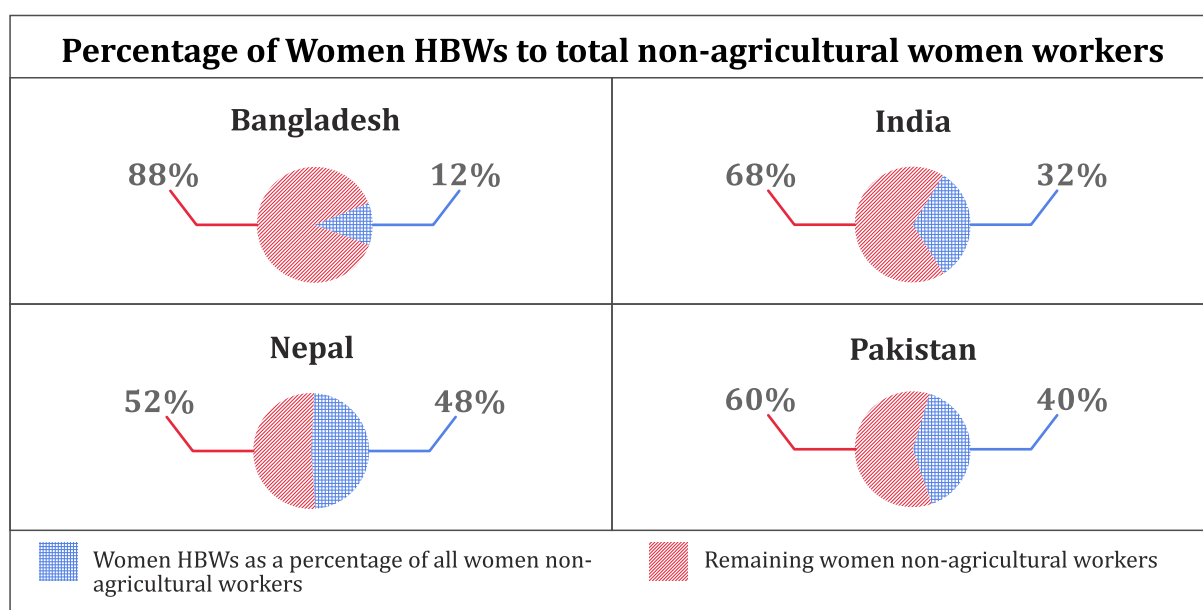


More men than women are homebased workers in India and Bangladesh while the reverse is true for Pakistan and Nepal. In Pakistan, an overwhelming 75 per cent of all homebased workers are women.

7. What Percentage Of Total Women Non-agricultural Workers Are Homebased Workers?

When the number of homebased workers is analyzed out of total women non-agricultural workers, the picture is even more striking. Amongst all the women workers who are not agricultural workers, a large number are homebased workers.

- In Bangladesh, 12% of total non agricultural women workers are HBWs.
- In Pakistan, 40% of total non agricultural women workers are HBWs.
- In India, 32% of total non agricultural women workers are HBWs.
- In Nepal, 48% of total non agricultural women workers are HBWs.



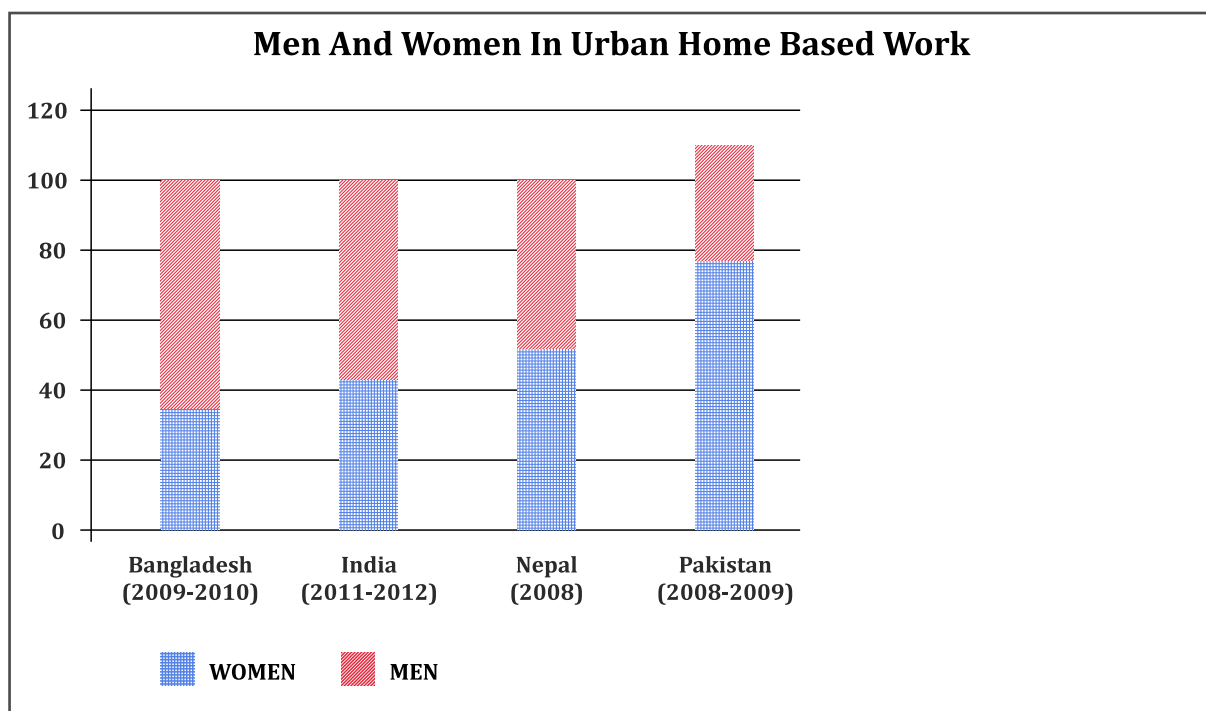
Home-based work is a major source of employment for women in India, Pakistan and Nepal. It was the most in Nepal, where nearly one-half of women non-agricultural workers in the country – specifically 47.6 per cent – were home-based workers compared to 21.6 per cent of men.

8. What Is the Percentage of Women Homebased Workers among total Urban Homebased Workers?

- A large number of women HBWs are located in rural areas in all these countries.
- Despite that, the sheer number of women urban HBWs is still large—roughly estimated to 8.04 million for all four countries based on country level data available for different years during the period 2008-2012.

Percentage of Women Amongst Urban Homes Workers			
Countries	Women urban HBWs	Total urban HBWs	Women as % of total urban HBWs
Bangladesh (2009-2010)	156,836	454,529	34
India (2010-2011)	7,340,000	16,950,000	43
Nepal (2010-2011)	120,000	230,000	52
Pakistan (2010-2011)	424,000	545,000	77
Total	8,040,836	1,817,9529	44

- Among urban homebased workers, there are far less women than men in Bangladesh and in India, but there is an almost equal proportion of men and women and men in Nepal. In Pakistan, an overwhelmingly large number of homebased workers are women.



Homebased work, which cuts across different branches of industry, accounts for a significant share of urban homebased employment in some countries.

9. Which Industrial Sectors have large Number of Women Homebased Workers?

- In Bangladesh, in 2009, manufacturing was the most important share of economic activity for women, accounting for 55 per cent of all homebased workers. Within manufacturing, apparel, handloom textiles, rice milling, food products, and bamboo and cane products emerged as the top five activities.
- Manufacturing was the most important branch of economic activity for women homebased workers in India in 2011-2012; 73 per cent of all homebased worked in this branch. Within manufacturing, the largest number women homebased workers worked in apparel, tobacco products and textiles.
- In Nepal, nearly one-third of homebased workers were in retail trade while about 12.3 per cent were in the industry group “manufacture of food products and beverages”. About 45 per cent of the homebased workers worked in these two groups.
- In Pakistan, 91 per cent of all homebased workers worked in the manufacturing sector in 2008-2009.

In all four countries, a significant proportion of homebased women workers are found in the manufacturing sector. The manufacturing of apparel emerged as one of women homebased workers' largest activity, especially in Nepal, India and Bangladesh.

SECTION 3 : HOME WORKERS

10. Who are Home Workers?

Among homebased workers, those workers who are dependent on a firm or its contractors for work orders, the supply of raw materials, and the sale of finished goods are referred to as sub-contracted workers, also known as home workers. Since they are not directly supervised by an employer and provide their own workspace and equipment, they are often classified as self-employed even in this dependent relationship, and are thus sometimes classified as wage workers. In reality, sub-contracted homebased workers—or home workers—occupy an intermediate status in employment between fully independent self-employed worker and fully dependent employee.

- In Pakistan, around one-third of homebased workers were home workers. Home workers comprised 15.6 per cent of women non-agricultural workers and less than one per cent of men non-agricultural workers in 2005-06.
- In India, in 1999-2000, home workers (sub-contracted workers) numbered about 7.8 million and constituted about 33.4 per cent of all homebased workers. Of women homebased workers, 45.0 per cent were home workers in contrast to 25.3 per cent of men homebased workers.

- In Bangladesh, information on dependent home workers with piece rate payment is only available for 2005, when around nine per cent of persons in homebased work were piece rate workers. Piece work was more common among women and among urban workers.
- The data elements required for a full identification of home workers were not included in the Nepal's Labour Force survey, so only a few home workers were identified there.

CONCLUSION

The above statistics give us a very rich regional profile of homebased workers in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan. Based on this profile, some generic policy recommendations are suggested:

- Homebased workers remain invisible and difficult to estimate at the national level. One of the ways to obtain national estimates of homebased workers is from national labour force surveys or similar instruments, and countries could approach their national statistical offices and request that their labour force surveys collect data on place of work as well as data on the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE).
- Since most enumerators are culturally disposed to regarding homebased workers as only undertaking domestic duties, special training for them is required.
- Policies and programmes targeting (non-agricultural) women workers for skill building, entrepreneurship development, etc.—need to take into account the home as a place of work for almost half or more of the women non-agricultural workers in all of these countries.
- Policies targeting homebased workers must be gender sensitive as a large number of HBWs are women
- Any policies targeting skill building needs to target homebased workers appropriately as, in the younger age group, more women as compared to men work as homebased workers, particularly in India and Pakistan.
- A large number of younger women as compared to men are HBWs, therefore childcare and reproductive health are real needs..

Statistical Profile of Homebased Workers in Bangladesh, India, Nepal & Pakistan

	Bangladesh (2009-2010)			India (2011-2012)			Nepal (2008)			Pakistan (2008-2009)			Total of 4 Countries		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
<i>Number of women Homebased Workers</i>	512,316	156,836	669,152	8,710,000	7,340,000	16,050,000	350,000	120,000	470,000	652,000	424,000	1,076,000	10,224,316	8,040,836	18,265,152
<i>Number of men Homebased Workers</i>	1,040,671	297,693	1,338,364	11,790,000	9,610,000	21,400,000	340,000	110,000	450,000	242,000	121,000	363,000	13,412,671	10,138,693	23,551,364
Total Homebased Workers	1,552,987	454,529	2,007,516	20,500,000	16,950,000	37,450,000	690,000	230,000	920,000	894,000	545,000	1,439,000	23,636,987	18,179,529	41,816,516
<i>Women HBWs as Percentage of all women non-agri workers</i>	14	9	12	33	31	32	55	35	48	50	31	40			
<i>Men HBWs as Percentage of all men non-agri workers</i>	7	4	6	13	9	11	24	16	22	2	1	1			
Total HBWs as Percentage of all nonagri workers	8	5	7	17	13	15	34	22	30	7	4	5			

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HomeNet South Asia Group (HNSA) comprises of HomeNet South Asia Trust and Association of Homebased Workers in South Asia. It is the sub-regional network of organisations of home based workers. Born out of the Kathmandu Declaration in 2000, HNSA Group currently has a presence in 8 countries of South Asia - Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. It aims to build regional solidarity among home-based workers, especially women workers, and empower them to lead a life of dignity, free of poverty, through obtaining decent work and social protection, within a rights based framework.



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