

‘Case Studies of Homebased Workers in Bihar, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh’

Report by:



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For Home Net India**

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Introduction

Background and Context

Home-based work refers to any type of production activity that is carried out at home, i.e. the home is also the work place. But the very fact of the home being the workplace makes these workers invisible and hence they are often not counted as workers in spite of spending many hours in economically productive activity. It is estimated that 80 percent of home based workers are women. Recent evidence shows that rather than a move towards the formalisation of the production process, there is a move towards increased out-sourcing of work from factories to homes. Homenet India is trying to contact other organisations working with home-based workers and to map activities that have not been documented.

HomeNet India (HNI) is a network of organisations working with home-based workers in India to provide greater visibility to home-based workers and their issues. HNI works to strengthen membership-based organisations of home based workers. HNI is endeavouring to expand its network in the country. This being carried out at two levels; first, increasing its membership-base by contacting other organisations working with home-based workers in different parts of the country, and second, by mapping trades and production processes where home-based work is being carried out. With this in mind HNI has decided to undertake a study of the socio-economic condition of home based workers in trades hitherto not garnered.

Scope of the study

Homenet has decided to undertake a study of home based workers in different trades in three states of the country. These workers are located in rural and urban areas of the states. Each of the study will focus on the following:

- Nature and conditions of work in these trades.
- Social and economic insecurities faced by the workers
- Key areas where further action is required.

State	Location	Trade
Bihar	Patna	Chocolate wrapping, <i>bansuri</i> (flute), <i>Mala and mori, chappal</i> (sandal)
	Gaya	<i>Agarbatti</i> rolling (incense sticks)
	Begusari district and Samastipur district	<i>Bidi</i> rolling
Punjab	Patiala	<i>Phulkari</i> (embroidery)
Uttar Pradesh	Rampur	Appliqué work
	Bareilly	<i>Zari-Zardosi</i>
	Lucknow	Box making

Proposed methodology

The study was carried out in a partnership between HNI and Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST).

Research methods: ISST carried out the research with grassroots organisations working with home based workers. Both qualitative as well as quantitative techniques were used in the study. Case studies, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted in each of these locations. Along with these, four surveys were conducted in the study sites with the help of local partners. One each in Bihar and Punjab and two surveys were conducted in Uttar Pradesh (one each in Rampur and Bareilly).

Since most of the HNI members are small-scale organisations with limited resources, ISST undertook research related capacity-building of these organisations.

Research focus

Each of the study was based on collection of primary data from the field. As most of these trades have not been studied earlier, this study will generate information on the situation of home-based workers in this trade. The study focused on the following issues:

- Working conditions of home-based workers in these trades.
- Earnings
- Production chains
- Conditions of housing and environment
- Livelihood opportunities
- Alternate skills

Ethical issues in research

The research was carried out within a framework of ethical guidelines. An ethics committee comprising of all partners delineated procedures and overlooked the implementation of the guidelines during the project period.

Homebased work in Bihar

Bihar is among the least developed states of India and has a per capita income of \$94 a year against India's average of \$255. A total of 42.6% live below the poverty line against India's average of 26.1%. The economy is mainly based on agriculture and trading activities. The vast swath of extremely fertile land makes it ideal for agriculture. Despite a number of rivers and good fertile soil, investment in irrigation and other agriculture facilities has been grossly inadequate. Agriculture is mainly dependent upon the vagaries of the nature. In regions without any irrigation facilities, people are forced to take non-agricultural jobs. A large number of people are also involved with a number of homebased trades in Bihar. Around 12% of women do some kind of home-based work.¹

Between September and November 2006, the ISST research team traveled to Bihar. The team talked to both women and men homebased workers at several locations. From several discussions with the organizations working on homebased workers in Bihar, it was found that in Bihar women are involved in a number of homebased jobs. A few of them are making leaf-plates (pattal), traditional form of embroidery (sujni and zari-zardozi), making rope, spinning and weaving jute, making mats from date palm leaves, bamboo work, tasar silk spinning and weaving and making of puffed rice (muri and chura). Other homebased occupations include rolling of incense sticks (agarbatti) and rolling of cigarettes (bidi), making of necklaces (mala) with plastic beads, making of bamboo flutes (bansuri), toffee wrapping and sandal (chappal) making. There must be a lot more trades women homebased workers are involved with. Among these listed trades except bidi and agarbatti the rest are located in Patna city. Several focus group discussions were arranged with women and men home-based workers in Patna.

¹ See "Mapping Homebased Workers: We Work at Home" by Home Workers Worldwide in August 2003. www.homeworkersww.org.uk/files/resources/we-work-at-home.pdf (accessed on December 20, 2006)

Background of Patna city:

Patna is the capital city of the Indian state of Bihar, and one of the oldest continuously inhabited places in the world. The city has been known by various names during its more than two millennia long existence—Pataligram, Pataliputra, Kusumpur, Pushpapura, Azimabad, and the present day Patna. It got its name of Patna during the reign of Sher Shah Suri, an Afghan ruler in the sixteenth century.

The modern city of Patna lies on the southern bank of the river Ganga. A bustling city of 1,200,000 people, the city is approximately 15 km long and 5 km to 7 km wide.

The walled old area, called Patna City by the locals, is also a major trading centre. This part of the walled city came to existence during the rule of Sher Shah Suri in the middle of the 16th century. He visualised a fort and a town on the banks of Ganga. Sher Shah's fort in Patna does not survive, but the mosque built in Afghan architectural style survives even today. Patna was described as a flourishing centre for the trading and manufacturing of paper, stone and glass industries in the Mughal documents written in late 16th century after the fall of Sher Shah Suri. The place is referred for its high quality of rice grown in the Gangetic plains.

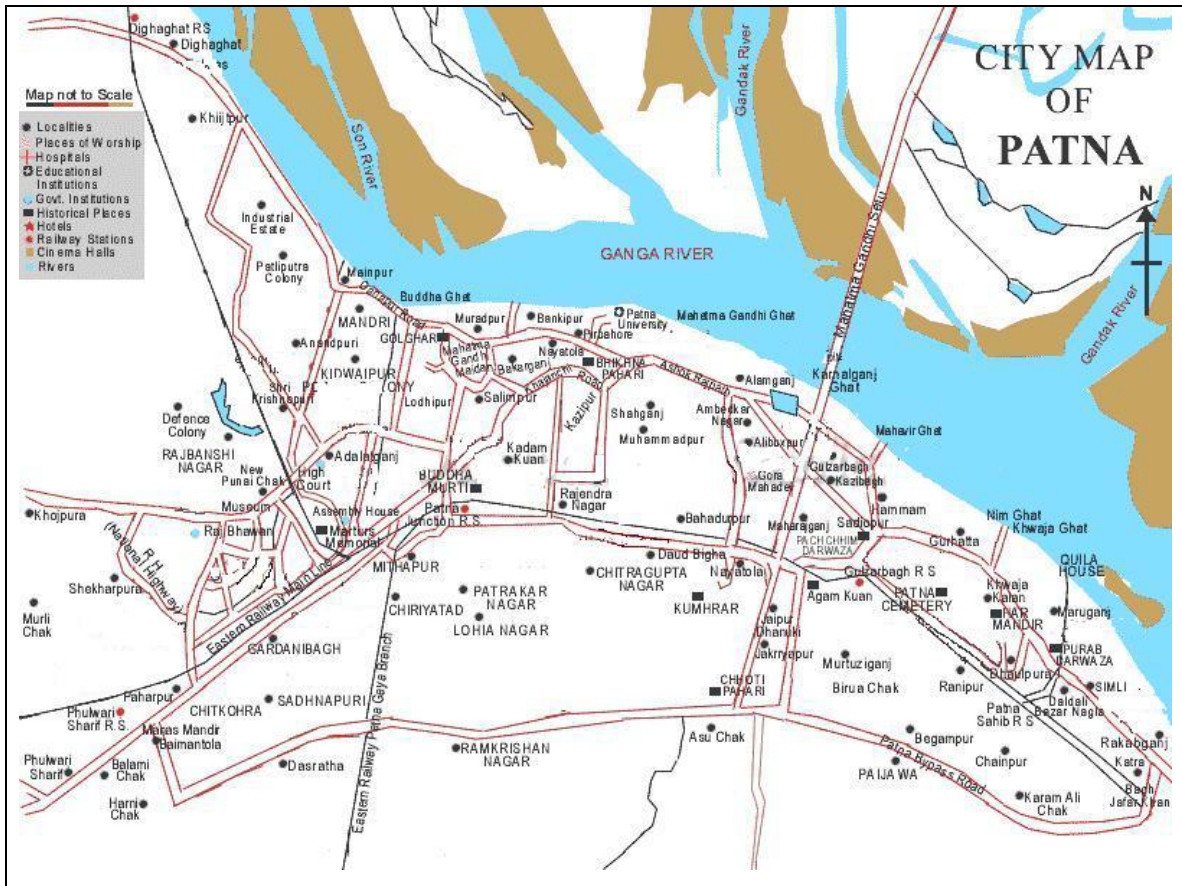
With the decline of the Mughal empire, Patna moved into the hands of the Nawabs of Bengal, who levied a heavy tax on the populace but allowed it to flourish as a commercial centre.

During the 17th century, Patna became a centre of international trade. The British started with a factory in Patna in 1620 for trading in calico and silk. Soon it became a trading centre for saltpetre, urging other Europeans—French, Danes, Dutch and Portuguese—to compete in the lucrative business. Peter Mundy, writing in 1632, calls this place, "the greatest mart of the eastern region". After the decisive battle of Buxar (1765), Patna fell in the hands of the east India Company and continued as a trading centre.

The population of Patna is over 1,285,470 (2001 census), which has grown from 917,243 in the 1991 census. The population density is 1132 persons per square kilometre. There are 839 females to every 1,000 males. Overall literacy rate is 62.9%, and female literacy rate is 50.8%.²

From the very ancient times Patna has had a rich socio economic background. Patna has long been a major agricultural centre of trade, its most active exports being grain, sugarcane, sesame, and medium-grained Patna rice. It is also an important business centre of eastern India. The hinterland of Patna is endowed with excellent agro-climatic resources and the gains of the green revolution have enabled the older eastern part of Patna (locally called as Patna City) to develop as a leading grain market of the state of Bihar, and one of the biggest in eastern India. Patna, being the state capital, with a growing middle income group households, has also emerged as a big and rapidly expanding consumer market, both for Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), as also for other consumer durable items. A large and growing population, and expanding boundaries of the city, is also spurring growth of several small scale manufacturing units and consequently a large unorganised labour force.

² Source : District Elementary Education Report Card 2004 of National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi (www.eduinfolndia.net)



Chappal /Sandal making in Patna

Background and context

Among the traditional manufacturing and trading of Patna, chappal or sandal (henceforth chappal) making occupies an important place there. Traditionally, the people from Ravidas (traditional leather workers) community from the Hindus and a few Muslim shoemakers used to control the entire manufacturing business in the city. It is said that Ravidas people have been living in this part of the city for centuries and were the sole supplier of chappals for the entire region. Later more and more people from Muslim community got involved in the business. Even today, none other than the Ravidas people among the Hindus are directly involved with the manufacturing.

The following sections have been developed on the basis of several focus group discussions with the people from both communities involved in making and selling of chappals in Patna. The first meeting meeting was held in the Charma Shilpi Panchayat Bhavan on September 9, 2006. The participants consisted of both men and women from the Ravidas community. (The leaders of the panchayat are members of the BJP.) A short meeting was held with the women home-based workers November 4, 2006. A third meeting was held on November 5, 2006 with the chappal makers from both Hindu and Muslim community. Apart from these, a few home visits were made and the family members were spoken to on the work and trade.

Raw Materials and Production Process

Leather was the primary raw material for this trade. However, for last couple of decades, use of leather has been reduced drastically due to non availability and high price. Presently, the use of leather is almost nil, instead they are using artificial leather like synthetic PU leather, rexin (an imitation leather), rubber and foam.

The raw materials like synthetic leather, foam, adhesives and other accessories are purchased from the local traders. There are numerous shops dealing with raw materials in the lanes and by lanes of Patna city, where the chappal makers live.

Chappals are made in the small units, locally called '*karkhana*' which are mostly located in the owner's home. Each *karkhana* has 4-6 workers on an average. In many cases the employer also works alongside the hired labour. Simple tools and machines are used in the manufacturing. Most of the jobs are done by hand. The people who have good business, hire workers from the same community on piece-rate basis, who come and work in those units. Several others take the job home, and work from home. A pair of chappal goes through several stages in the process of making. Eight to nine people are involved in making the chappal, if the entire process from getting material and packing is taken into account, then it goes through 15 stages. The entire process of making chappals is distributed within the locality.

At first, the leather is cut in sizes for the upper part and the lower part by specialised labour with a pair of scissors. In the next step, the cut pieces are scrubbed either by hand or through a motorised machine. For this job, either it is done at home using family labour and hired labour or sent to other units who only do scrubbing. The upper part is also plated with small pieces of leather, or decorated with beads and other materials. Plating and hand scrubbing is done mainly by women at home. Lower part of the chappal is done mainly by men. Once, both the upper and lower part of the chappal is ready, they are stitched or pasted together again by men in the karkhana. Finally chappals are printed with logos and put in the boxes before marketing.

In some of the designs, a wooden heel is used to make the chappal. For this wooden heel, they are dependent on the carpenters, who are solely involved in heel making. There are around 20 to 25 heel making units in Patna city. Wooden heels are cut and prepared with electric saw.

The core designs of the chappals are mostly copied from the branded chappals available in the market. The designs are adopted with some variations. Sometimes, the wholesale traders place some special orders with special designs.

Marketing

The finished chappals are sold to the local traders in Patna city itself. As the units are not registered, they are unable to market their product in the outside market. Not many of them even explored possibilities to market them outside Patna. There are even more markets in Bihar itself in Samastipur, Siwan and Hajipur. They find its difficult in transporting the products without proper papers with them. ‘The police stops us to check sales receipt, but we have nothing to show. So we are unable to cross the border and go to other states. Even when we take our goods to the city, the police stops us.’

The chappal makers say, they do not have much bargaining capacity and do not get the actual market price. There is also sharp competition among the chappal makers. Recently,

they have formed an association, comprising chappal makers from both Hindu and Muslim communities to organise the marketing of products, so that they get the right price.

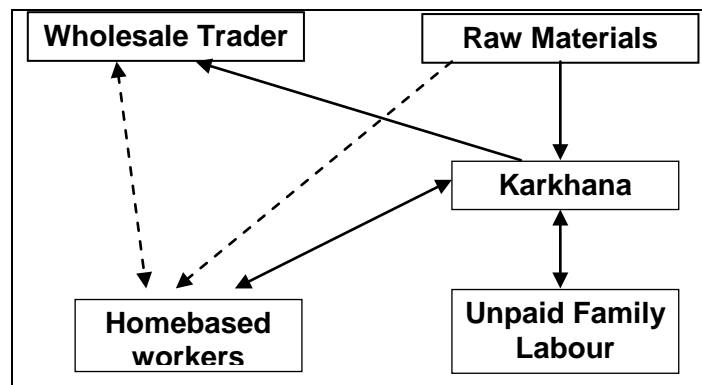
On the other hand, raw materials are bought on credit, and paid after selling the chappals to the traders. The chappal makers say, they lose in this edge also, as they cannot invest in raw materials for the lack of cash in hand.

Earlier the shopkeepers used to come to their homes to take chappals. There was a lot of demand. Now the workers have to go to deliver the chappals at the shops. Now the shopkeepers give only 50% of the payment at the time of delivery and the rest is staggered.

Labour and homebased workers

The leaders of the chappal making community said that they think that there are 10,000 people working on chappals in this area. Earlier they used to be self employed or work in the *karkhanas*. On an average, they make 12 pairs of chappals in a day. But said that if they had more capital to buy raw material, they would be able to make more in a day.

While Patna city is a major hub of chappal manufacturing in the informal economy, the mode of manufacturing process is varied. Depending on the size of the manufacturing unit and available capital, the production unit extends from small '*karkhanas*' employing six to eight labourers to completely family oriented home-based work.



Types of production processes

Type	<i>Karkhana</i>	Home-based work
1	At least 6-8 hired labour. Sometimes the workers live and work in the <i>karkhana</i> . All processes are done here.	If at all, only uppers are sent to women home-based workers. (piece-rate)
2	The owner along with the hired labour. Parts of the process are carried out in other units which specialise for that process. For instance, stitching, heel making, sole making, etc.	Unpaid family labour Uppers are sent to women home-based workers. (piece-rate) These specialised units may be home based. (own-account)
3	The workers work in the <i>karkhana</i> most of the time.	The workers bring home extra work to be done at home. (piece-rate) Women make uppers. (piece-rate) Workers work as own account workers sometimes.
4	-	All work is done at home by the family as the unit of production. (own-account and unpaid family labour)

In the chappal production process, women are totally home-based. They make all kinds of uppers for the chappals. For this they receive Rs.3 to Rs.10 per dozen according to the design. Women make about Rs. 25-30 in a day. They work for about 6-7 hours in a day and are helped by children. According to the people supplying work, there are at least 1000 women home-based workers in Patna City. The men in the family may or may not be associated with the chappal industry. One worker gets Rs.60-80 a day in the *karkhana* for making a dozen chappals.

The chappal makers of Patna city work six to eight months in a year. There is not much work in the rest of the months in the year in monsoon and in winter. Hundreds of families from the neighbouring districts migrate to Patna city in the peak seasons in post winter

and post monsoon months - February to May and August to November. They live on rent in the areas where there are lot of chappal making units. They live and work in the same place. Several other workers (men) come without their families and live in groups. According to a rough estimate, 40% of the workers migrate to Patna from neighbouring districts. The rest of the families have been living in this area. There has been a lot of migration from rural areas to Patna after 1989. Now a lot of people are joining this trade – Muslims, Punjabis, Bengali and Marwaris. However the actual chappal workers are still from the Ravidas and Muslim communities. Other communities are engaged in supplying raw material, selling chappals and other specialised tasks such as heel making.

Children start working at the age of 10 years. Most of them begin with helping their parents.

Housing

It is estimated that 60% of the workers are residents of the city for 20 or more years. However, many of them do not have their own houses here in Patna. They have been living on rent all these years. For the last 3-4 years people are having problems getting houses on rent as house owners want only small families.

Changes

The Ravidas community said that earlier they used to buy leather, make chappals and sell them to traders and shopkeepers. Now they feel that the Muslim community has a strong network and is seen as competitors and rivals. The group said that since the Muslims do not believe in caste, they don't mind doing leather work. They said, the suppliers of leather are Muslims and the *karigars* (workmen) are also Muslims. The group said that Muslims have most of the capital and buy most of the leather.

Loans

They do not get loans from traders/ shopkeepers, but from the cyclewala, mahajan or sardarji. This is given @ 10% per month. One person in the group mentioned that if the cyclewala provides a loan of Rs. 450 for 45 days, he takes Rs. 30 per day.

Basic facilities

The Ravidas community was very particular to mention that they give a lot of value to education. They pointed out that boys from their caste had studied up to matriculation or more. While children go to school, girls study up to only 5th or 6th class. When asked whether the younger generation is taking up this work – they said that they educate the boys as much as possible, but it is very difficult to get jobs now-a-days, so many boys have started doing this work. The participants in the FGD complained about the lack of health facilities in the area. They said that the government run health facilities are just not functioning.

Case Study of Geeta Devi: A Chappal worker in Patna City

Smt. Geeta Devi is a 35 years old married woman, lives in a rented room with her family in Patna city, has been working in the sector of chappal making for last 15 years. She brings home some specific jobs in the morning and delivers those to the contractor in the evening. She has three sons and two daughters, who assist her at times. Geeta Devi's husband Ramesh Das too works in the same sector. But he works in a chappal making karkhana. Geeta Devi's eldest son, who is 16 years old, also works in a karkhana with his father.

Geeta Devi gets jobs regularly for six months in a year. In the slack seasons i.e. in the monsoon and in winter she does not get enough jobs. On an average she gets jobs for three weeks in a month. She works whole day, whenever she frees herself from the household chores, her elder daughter helps her in doing the household chores.

Geeta Devi receives wages in cash from her contractor. But she does not get that regularly. At times, she gets her wages only once in a month or two. In the peak season, Geeta Devi earns around Rs. 500 in a month. Whereas, in the slack seasons she earns around Rs. 150. Whatever she earns from this job, she spend them to run the household. At times, she buys books or dresses for her children with this money.

Geeta Devi complains that, in last two years the volume of work has come down. As she has no other alternative source of income, at times it becomes very difficult for her to run the household. She also complains about the lack of credit facilities for chappal workers. At this moment, she also feels that there is a need for some training for the chappal workers.

Survey of *chappal* makers in Patna city

Respondent profile

A survey among *chappal* makers was carried in Patna City which constitutes the older part of Patna. The survey was canvassed to both Hindu and Muslim workers. Of the surveyed 88 were Hindu and 12 were Muslim. Eighty-seven percent of the respondents were from the scheduled castes.

Among the respondents, 49 percent were female and 51 percent were male. The mean family size is 5.7. Thirteen percent of family members of those survey are dependents (of six years of age or below and 60 years of age and above). The majority of the respondents - 87 percent - were married. Fifty percent of the households were illiterate and ten percent had completed at least high school. Ninety-three percent of the households had male heads.

Table: Respondent profile

Profile	Percentage
Female	49
Male	51
Hindu	88
Muslim	12
Urban residence	100
Scheduled caste	87
Married	87
Male headed households	93

Table: Educational level

Level	Percentage
Illiterate	33
Can sign name	17
Primary	17
Secondary	22
High school & above	11
Total	100

Table: Age-sex distribution of respondents in percentage

Age	Sex		
	Female	Male	Total
11-20	0	5	2.5
21-30	33	33	33
31-40	45	38	41
41-50	11	15	13
51-60	11	2	7
61-70	0	5	2.5
70 and above	0	2	1
Total	100 (36)	100	100 (76)

Housing

All respondents reported that they work inside the house and not in the courtyard or veranda. Fifty-one percent of the respondents owned the house in which they were living. Ninety-nine percent of the respondents were living on authorized land. Seventy-six percent of the houses had walls made of brick, 18 percent had mud walls and three percent had walls made of plastic sheets and bamboo each. Sixty-seven percent had brick roofs and 29 percent had bamboo roofs. The largest percentage (45%) had one room homes, 34 percent had two rooms and the rest 21 percent had more than two rooms. Ninety percent reported having only one window in the home.

All respondents keep the raw materials and finished goods inside the house. Lack of space for keeping materials and goods was reported by 82 percent of the respondents. Ninety-four percent had a tap in the house and no one had to go beyond 50 metres to get potable water. Electricity was available in 97 percent of the house with over 90 percent reporting getting electricity for more than 15 hours in the day. For cooking, 43 percent use kerosene stove and 33 percent use LPG for cooking. The remaining use wood or coal stoves.

Table: Basic amenities and infrastructure

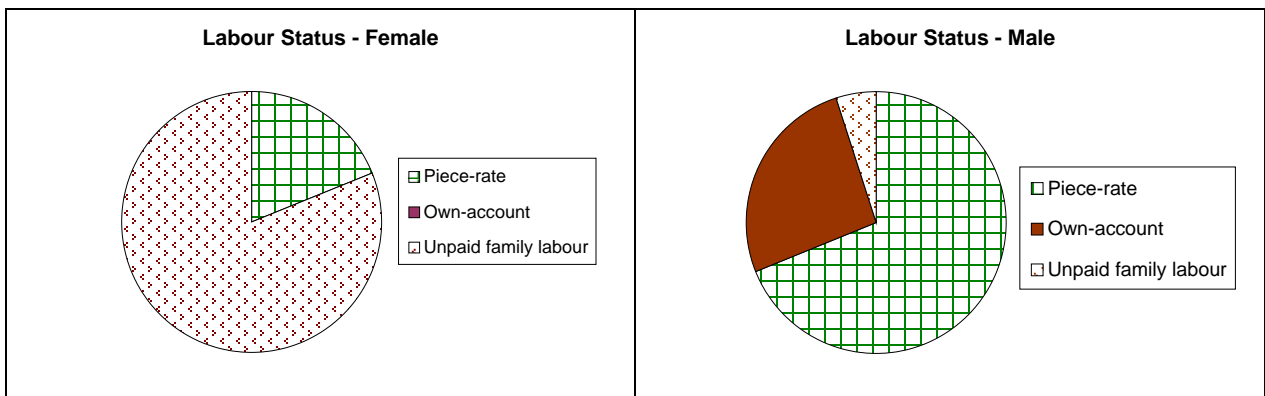
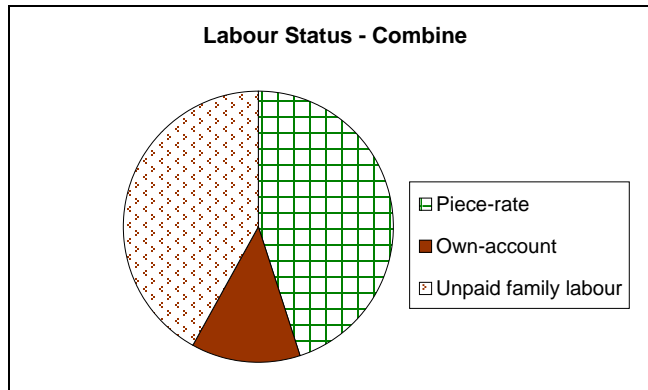
Level	Percentage
Own/family house	51
House on authorised land	99
Water tap in the house	94
Electricity connection	97

Labour status

Forty-five percent of the respondents were working as piece rate workers, 13 percent were own-account workers and 42 percent were unpaid family labour. A gender disaggregate analysis of the data shows that 81 percent of women respondents work as unpaid family labour.

Table: Labour Status by Sex

Labour Status	Female	Male	Combine
Piece-rate	19	69	45
Own-account	0	26	13
Unpaid family labour	81	5	42
Total	100	100	100



In the households of the respondents, 31 percent of the family members are of 14 years of age or below. Of these, 41 percent of children work in the sector. Fifty-two percent of these are girls and 48 percent are boys.

Work availability

Work is available for only about six months on an average. Men reported slightly more average number of work months for peak as well as lean period than women. Consequently women reported more months of no work than men. Ninety-nine percent of respondents said that they do not have any other source of employment during months of no work.

Table: Work availability

	Female	Male	Combined

Mean no. of months of work	5.92	6.38	6.16
Mean no. of months of peak time	3.95	4.92	4.45
Mean no. of months of lean time	2.05	3.26	2.67
Mean no. of months of no work	6.11	5.96	5.83

During peak periods of work, workers spend 12.63 hours making *chappals*. Men reported spending an average of 16 hours and women spent 9 hours in *chappal* making. In the lean period respondents reported an average of 4.64 hours of work.

Earnings

Most workers receive remuneration in form of cash. Fifty-nine percent receive cash payments and 40 percent reported receiving no remuneration.

The mean earnings of workers during the peak period reported by workers was Rs.1829 and the median peak period earnings was Rs.1550. For men the mean peak period earnings were Rs.3129.73 and the median earnings were Rs.3000. For women the mean peak period earnings were Rs.454.29 and the median earnings were Rs.300. During the lean period men reported mean earnings of Rs. 1408.11 and median of Rs.1500. For women the mean earnings were Rs.235.14 and median earnings Rs.150.

Table: Peak and lean period earnings in rupees by sex.

Period	Female		Male		Combine	
	Mean (Rs)	Median (Rs)	Mean (Rs)	Median (Rs)	Mean (Rs)	Median (Rs)
Peak period	454.29	300	3129.73	3000	1829.17	1550
Lean period	235.14	150	1408.11	1500	837.92	750

Changes in work situation

A decline in earnings was reported by 46 percent of the respondents, while 51 percent reported no change in earnings in the past two years. Regarding availability of work, 66 percent reported a decline and 33 percent said that there was no change in the preceding two years. Twenty-four percent reported that the costs related to *chappal* making had

gone up, 39 percent reported no change, while 29 percent said that they did not have any knowledge about the costs.

Needs of chappal makers

Based on the percentage of responses, most respondents said that they required credit facilities. Market information was reported as the next most important need, followed by skill training.

Table: Needs of *chappal* makes by rank

Rank	Need	Percentage of responses
I	Credit	33
II	Market information	21.5
III	Skill training	14
IV	Minimum wage	10.5
V	More work	9.5

Work – wrapping of locally made toffees.

The trade

Wrapping locally made toffees is done at home by women in Patna city. All the women who do this work live around the manufacturing unit. The factories here came up 14 years ago. The toffees are sold locally and have a small market. The market for this is shrinking due to competition from bigger companies.

An estimated 100-250 persons and about 50 households are doing this work in the area. Many children, especially girls help their mothers. The work is done only by women living in that locality. It is not given to people across the road. When the factory first started giving this work, the supervisors from the factory came to their locality looking for women willing to do this work. Gradually many women started doing this work.

When asked how is recruitment done, women said that they went with someone already working. But they were a bit vague about it. Earlier one woman acknowledged that she asked some women to do this work, but later she did not say that she provided any women with this work.

Availability of work

Work is available throughout the year but the quantum of work varies. Most of the work is available at time of Holi as the demand is maximum at that time. The lean time is during from mid July to mid September (*sawan- bhado*) which are the monsoon months.

At one time they are given five kilograms of toffee to wrap. When they return the five kilograms, they are given the next lot. In one day they are able to wrap 20-25 kgs. However this is done by not just by one person, she is helped by others, especially children in the family. Four- five people wrap five kilograms in one hour. There is a quota system for giving the toffees. The names of the women were noted at the factory and women had to go in the morning to the factory after finishing their morning household chores around 10am. They get the next batch when they return the previous one. The factory works between 10am and 5pm. When asked, whether there had been any changes in the availability of work, the group reported that the work of wrapping toffees was not increasing.

Earnings

The women are paid Re.1 per kg. and are able to earn 20-25 rupees in one day with assistance from family members. They used to get 0.50p for wrapping one kilogram ten years ago, which was later raised to 0.75p. They have been getting Re.1 for the past three years. Irrespective of the toffee size, the wage-rate is the same for wrapping.

The person in the factory checks the wrapping randomly. He puts his hand in a bundle and brings out the toffees. If the wrapping is not good, they have to do it again. Money is paid at the end of the month. The records of work are kept by the factory supervisor. Women said that at times there is difference in the weight when it is returned. This

happens because children sometimes eat the toffees. But the person always alleges more reduction in weight than is actual. Women said that even if the reduction is 100 grams, he alleges that 200 grams have been reduced. Some women also said that he does not weigh properly and so the weight of the wrapped toffees is always less. Since the money is given at the end of the month, they are not in a position to argue with him. The women said that for work of 30 days, they should get at least Rs. 600 a month but they don't get the entire payment. They are given only Rs 300-350 at the end of the month.

The wages that they get are not sufficient and many do other kinds of work. In the group some were traditional birth attendants, some make garlands and cow-dung cakes. One woman takes the neighbourhood children to school in the morning and brings them back in the afternoon. One woman with her husband also makes cardboard boxes for sweets using her own material. She seemed to be an intermediary between the factory and the women. She herself does not roll sweets but rolls duplicate poppins (colourful glucose candies). The husbands of the women were street vendors, or working in the local shops and manufacturing units. Some were also doing brick work.

All women wanted us to provide more work. Some other women came in the hope that we would provide employment. Women said that they needed more work as this was not providing enough earnings. Many said that they cook only once and are unable to provide enough food to the family.

Housing

The majority live in *kacha* houses or houses that are partly *kacha*. Most of the workers are living on government land, and are going to be displaced under the Patna urban plan. A few were living on authorised land. They all live in one room dwellings. There are no toilet facilities. They get water from a common source. There is no drainage system. The electricity is now privatised and they have to pay for 50 units per month for domestic consumption.

Basic facilities

While there is a primary school near-by, most children did not seem to be in school. Girls especially were at home. Regarding health services, people go to private practitioners for treatment. Even though there is a government health facility, they do not go there as it is not functioning.

Loans

When the people are in need of money, they take loan from the money lenders in the locality who give at the rate of Rs.10 per 100 per month. The factory people do not give any advance to the wrappers. People said that they do not borrow from neighbours as none of them has anything extra to lend.

Toffee wrapping in Patna City

- 100 to 250 persons from 50 households are involved in toffee wrapping in one particular locality in Patna City.
- This job has been available in this locality for last 10 years
- One person gets the job, the children help their mothers
- The work is available throughout the year, quantum of works varies
- Wage is received on piece-rate basis
- Wage rate: Re. 1 for 1 kg. of wrapping
- Work 8 to 10 hours a day
- One family earns maximum up to Rs. 25 a day
- On an average a family earns Rs. 300 – 350 a month
- Credit facility: No credit/loan facilities from the contractor

Mala making, Patna City

The Trade:

Mala (necklace) are made locally in the city of Patna especially for the local market. Mala is basically a colourful inexpensive beaded necklace, worn by women. The traders

of Patna, usually get the colourful plastic beads from Delhi or Kolkata in bulk. Nylon or plastic threads are used for making of these necklaces. The traders hire local women living in the neighbourhood for making the necklaces.

ISST research team met seven women in Patna City who have been involved in making malas with plastic and metal beads. Women work at home with the assistance of the children, especially girls. They are paid on piece rate basis as wage by the trader.

The group of women we met, all are getting regular work of making mala from 5-6 traders in the city. They get the information about the trader from other women in the locality. The trader, on verbal recommendation from the other workers, gives her job. The trader gives her the colourful beads, and nylon/plastic threads. He ensures the weight of the beads given to a particular woman. The woman takes the beads to her home and threads the beads with the help of needles according to the designs required by the trader. She involves her children in the job, to assist her. Afternoon is the prime time for her to do this job, after all her household chores. Sometime, her neighbour joins her in her house with her beads, threads and needles. Their children join, once they are back from the schools.

The women, whom we met in Patna, had been doing this job for past 6-7 years. Earlier, many of these women used to make *Rakhis* at home. But nowadays, rakhi making is no longer a home-based job. “Now, Rakhis are made at shops, and most jobs are done by men only”, a women from the group told us. “Rakhi making has become much more complicated job, you need several tiny items for making a single Rakhi. Hence, it becomes difficult to carry so many items at home and to fix them accordingly for a nominal wage. On the other hand, shopkeepers prefer to hire men at the shop to make them. You won’t find women in Rakhi making any more, except a few cases here and there.”

Earnings

The wage rate varies from Rs3 per dozen to Rs.10 per dozen of mala. The smaller beads are threaded with a needle. Some big beads are threaded in a nylon string which is done with out a needle. Women say, ‘though its look simple, its more strenuous, and we are paid less for these. The multi coloured mala with tiny beads look good, but we thread them with the help of needles. It can be done faster than the other one. We earn more for these kind of mala.’

Eight years ago when this work started, contractors had come looking for people willing to do this work to their area. At that time only a few people were willing to do this work. The wages were high. They used to get Rs.20 per dozen. Now it has come down to Rs.3 per dozen. The mala that they make for Rs.3 per dozen sells for Rs.5 per piece in the market. Now a lot of women are doing this work. “Earlier the quality of beads was also better. Now the cost of these beads has been reduced and the qualities of the beads also have become worse at the same time. They bleed colour when come in touch with moisture. The cost of mala has come down and subsequently our wages have also been reduced.” Another said ‘While the prices of food have gone up, the wages have come down.’

Decline in wages

Time	Wage
8 years ago (when the trade started)	Rs.20 per dozen
5 years ago	Rs.5 per dozen
1 years ago	Rs.4 per dozen
This year	Rs.3 per dozen

Housing

Nearly all the women in the locality own their own homes. All the women we met, belong to the carpenter caste. Adult men of the community are involved in various types of economic activities, primarily road side vendors. They live in *pukka* houses. They also said that now it is difficult to get houses on rent. One room costs Rs.500 per month and now as children are growing, at least two rooms are needed. Some people don’t give rooms if you have a big family. Those who do not have a gas or kerosene stove don’t get

room on rent. Kerosene is Rs.25-30 per litre in the market. Gas is Rs.390 on proper connection and Rs.500 in black. The women said that they spend more on cooking than on getting food.

Loans

If in need of money, people go to a cyclewala in the locality. For Rs. 500 loaned, one has to pay Rs.10 daily for 60 days. When asked whether they borrow from neighbours and relatives, people said that neighbours and family are in the same position as them and are not in a position to give.

Health

This work is affecting their eyes heavily. The beads reflect light that hurts the eyes. Many complained that their eyes pain and get filled with water while work continuously. With age, the ability to make necklaces has reduced. For health treatment, they go to private practitioners, and to the quacks. This is costly, but they cannot rely on government hospitals.

Mala making in Patna City

- 100 to 200 persons from 50 – 60 households are involved in mala making
- People in this locality has been involved in this trade for last 8 years.
- Women get the job, the children help their mothers
- The work is available throughout the year, quantum of works varies from season to season.
- Wage is received on piece-rate basis
- Wage rate: Rs. 3 to Rs. 10 per dozen
- Work for 8 to 10 hours a day
- One family earns Rs. 10 to Rs. 20 a day
- On an average one family earns Rs. 500 a month
- Credit facility: No credit/loan facilities from the contractor

Case Study of a mala and mori making family in Patna City

Mori is a special headgear used by the bridegrooms during the marriage. In northern part of India it is popularly called as 'pagri'. In Patna, the mories are locally made at homes by some selected families for the local market. Both men and women contribute in the making of Mori. At home they first prepare a paper-pulp structure, called 'khopa' for the headgear. For this stuff, they buy paper from the on their own. They soak the paper over night in water. Next day the paper pulp structure is prepared. Around hundred khopas are made in one day. Rest of the raw materials, like silky cloth, beads etc. are supplied by the wholesale trader. In the next stage, they cover the khopa with colourful cloths and beads etc. Once the products are ready, those are supplied to the respective wholesale traders. The workers receive wages on piece rate basis.

Paramanandji's family is one of the few families of Mala and Mori makers, in Patna City. For all the members of the family, the elderly couple and three of their daughters, making of necklaces and mori is the primary job. This family is one of the few families in Patna who work both on Mori and necklaces. For making of mori they spend less than a rupee for the raw materials, mostly on paper and glue. Rest of the materials they receive from the wholesale trader. Everybody together in this family make thousands of mories in one season. October to November is the peak season of this trade.

The final market price of each mori depends on the quality of the cloth and the decorations made over the mori. An ordinary mori costs approximately between Rs. 50 and Rs. 300. The workers earn between Rs. 2 to Rs. 4 per mori, as wage from the trader. The family is also involved in necklace making, among other things.

Flute (bansuri) making in Patna City

Flute making is a traditional craft which is also mentioned in mythological and religious texts. There are different types of traditional Indian flutes all of which are made from a variety of bamboo. Flute making is a traditional craft done by particular families. The skill is passed down through generations. Children learn this craft in the family, helping adults in making the flute. Some of the districts of Bihar where flute making is carried out are Chapra, Sheetalpur, Kathiyar, Muzafarpur and Siwan apart from Patna City.

A FGD was held with the Muslim flute makers in Patna City. This FGD was held only with men. Two types of flutes are made in this area, one made from bamboo and a smaller one made from a type of cane (*narkat*). The flute made out of bamboo is longer and more expensive. In Patna, most of the flute makers are no longer using bamboo as it has become very expensive to procure bamboo in the city. The flute makers here are only making flute made of *narkat*. But in other districts, bamboo flutes are made on a large scale as bamboo can be easily procured. All flute-makers can play the flute.

Narkat flute making process

Narkat is obtained from rural areas near the city. This is cut and brought back to the city. First the *narkat* is peeled and then cut into pieces of 12-13 inches. It is then dried in the sun for a few days. After that an iron rod is heated and put into the *narkat* to make a hollow. The *narkat* is wrapped in mud and baked. After this holes are made in the flute. The last part is polishing and decorating it with paper. The whole process takes a week. The entire family is involved in the flute making process, and there is a clear gender based division of labour. Children since the age of six start helping their parents. Procuring the raw materials and selling the flutes is done by men. Men peel the *narkat* and cut it into pieces. Women do all the things that involve the use of fire. Making a hollow with a hot iron rod, making holes for different notes and baking them is done by women. After the flutes are baked, women clean them, apply polish and decorate them with colourful paper.

Costs

They buy *narkat* growing in a patch of land from the owner. They then hire a labourer who cuts all the *narkat* and bring it to the city. The other costs incurred are on coal which is used for baking, cow-dung cakes, iron rod, spirit polish and decorative paper.

Costs incurred (September 2006)

Item	In Rupees
Transportation	50
Narkat	200
Labour for cutting	100
Coal	200
Spirit Polish	50

Earnings

The flute makers sell *narkat* flutes for Rs.600-700 per thousand to the trader. They have been selling at this rate since the last two years. They work all the year round. But the maximum work is around Durga Puja/ Dusherra (September-October). A few also sell on their own at fairs and during festivals. They sell the smallest flute for Rs.3 per piece and the bigger ones for Rs.5. They go to sell in the neighbouring states of Jharkhand and Orissa. But *narkat* cannot be taken to far away places. They sell in Patna city only during Dusherra. Some said that they sell most of the flutes themselves and sell the extra flutes to the trader.

Decline in number of people making flutes

There has been a decline in this work since the last 10-15 years as it became difficult to get bamboo. In recent times, *narkat* has become expensive. Many have stopped this work. Those who have stopped this work, now are hawkers or doing daily wage.

In Patna, bamboo flutes are not being made at all since the last five years since bamboo is difficult to get and is very expensive in the city. But people in neighbouring districts are

making the bigger bamboo flutes as bamboo is easy to get. Earlier around Patna there was bamboo, but now it comes from Assam. Not many traders stock it and it is difficult to procure it. There are many types of bamboo and 'kagzi' bamboo is the best for making flutes. But now that is not available, so the flute makers take a slightly thicker bamboo.

There is no decline in the demand for flutes, rather it is increasing, but there is a lack of capital that flute makers experience.

Flute making in Patna City

- 100 men with substantial assistance from women and children in the family make bamboo flutes in Karbala area of Patna City.
- It's a traditional craft
- Men procure the raw material on their own, and sell the finished products to the local trader.
- The whole process of making flutes takes about a week's time.
- The work is available throughout the year; however, quantum of work increases in the festive seasons.
- 1000 flutes sold for Rs. 600 to Rs. 700.
- Credit facility: No institutional credit facility is available for them.

Social protection

If money is required, at times the trader gives an advance, for instance at the time of festive seasons like dusserra. In most other cases, when they require money for treatment or any incidental expenditure, they take loans from the local money-lender. He gives Rs.600 on which they have to pay Rs.10 per day for 80 days. He does not give more than Rs.1200 at a time. If more money is required, they borrow from each other, sell ornaments and household goods. One person said that a few years ago his daughter

died because he did not have Rs.100 to pay for the medicines. They are unable to take bank loans as they do not have papers and no one who can be a guarantor.

The participants were aware of other schemes such as 'antodaya', annapurna' which are available to BPL families. But they do not have the BPL card. Ration cards have not been made, even though the form as been submitted. Some said even those who have a ration card do not get ration on it. Cards for handicapped persons are not being made. Only widow pension card are being made. Old-age pension is not being given. Flute makers in other districts have been given Rs.25000 to build houses. But in Patna, they have not received anything.

Housing

These families migrated to the city 50 years ago. They all are currently living on waqf board land. The waqf board has allowed them to settle on the land, in lieu of which they help out in the madresa and at times of festivals. None of the participants had a house of their own. They need land and housing. They take water from a government hand-pump. There is a well but it has brackish water. There were some latrines built but now are defunct. They do not have any access to electricity.

Health care

There is a government hospital but there are no medicines. They only save doctor's fees and bed charge in the government hospital.

Education

Some children go to the madarsa to learn. None of the children go to the government school as it is far away. There is no anganwadi. The group said that they want a training centre so that the girls can learn other skills.

Map of Bihar



Agarbatti Industry in Gaya, Bihar

Women workers constitute 90% of the workforce of the industry which has an annual production value of around Rs. 8.5 billion.³ It is estimated that about half a million people receive income from this industry, which earns about US\$400 million annually from domestic and export markets.⁴

Gaya is one of the important centres in India for rolling of agarbattis (incense sticks). Hundreds of quintals of agarbattis are produced here and exported to Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Calcutta and Indore to aromatise with various fragrances before packing and marketing in India and abroad. This is one of the traditional trades of Gaya like woodwork and textile. The trade has grown at a much faster pace in last couple of decades. Presently, hundreds of manufacturing units exist in both Gaya town and its suburbs, involving few thousand people mostly women.

Raw Materials and Production Process

In India, incense sticks, called *agarbatti*, consist of the incense mix spread on a stick of bamboo. The mix is carefully blended and rolled on a bamboo stick so that it burns slowly and evenly by itself in entirety. Each stick is rolled separately by hand. At first the mix is prepared primarily with charcoal and resin. Water is added to make a paste. Once the paste is ready, it is rolled on stick of bamboo. The upper portion of each stick is rolled over sawdust. The sawdust is highly absorbent and retains fragrance well. The sticks are kept in the open for sometime for drying. In the next step, bundles are made of 500 grams each. The open part of the bamboo sticks are dipped in coloured water, before packing and exporting to the big cities like Delhi and Bangalore. There, the bundles are dipped in the fragrance, before packing and marketing.

³ Bajaj, Manjul (1999) *Invisible Workers, Visible Contribution: a Study of Homebased Workers in Five Sectors across South Asia*, Working Paper WIEGO.

⁴ Hanumappa, H.G. (1996) Agarbathi: A bamboo-based industry in India, <http://www.inbar.int/publication/pubdetail.asp?publicid=20> (Accessed on 20 Dec,2006)

The whole process of making agarbattis has inter-state links. The charcoal comes from Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh. The bamboo sticks come from Assam. The big traders import raw materials and then handover the materials to the home-based workers for rolling. The sticks are selected and broken ones removed. The lower portion of the sticks is coloured and packed. These are sent to Delhi, Mumbai, Indore, Bangalore, etc where they are perfumed and sold by different companies.

Profit Mark-ups in Agarbatti sector

Raw material	Price	Amount	Cost (in Rs.)
Charcoal	Rs. 6.00 / Kg	1 Kg	6.00
Resin (Jigar)	Rs. 50.00 / Kg	250 gms	12.50
Bamboo stick	Rs. 16.00 / Kg	500 gms.	8.00
		1.75 Kg	26.50

Other expenses			
Labour, electricity, packing, Transport	@ Re. 1.10 / 100 gms.		19.25
	Total	1.75 Kgs.	45.75
	Good quality	1.60 Kg	
	Low quality (not properly made, wrong combination of masalas, discarded and sold in the local market in cheap price)	.15 Kg	

Average cost per Kg = Rs. 26.00 / Kg

Average selling price = Rs. 32.00 / Kg

One trader on an average exports 5 to 6 tons of good quality agarbatti every month to Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Kolkata, Indore, at the rate of Rs. 30.00 to Rs. 34.00 per Kg.)

One trader on an average sells 400 Kgs to 500 kgs. of waste products/discarded products in a month in the local market.(at the rate of Rs. 8.00 to Rs. 12.00 per Kg)

Total Expenditure in a month: (5 tons): 5500 Kgs. X Rs. 26.00 = Rs. 143000.00

Total earnings in a month :

Export : Kgs. 5000 X Rs. 32.00 = 160000.00

Local market: Kgs 500 X Rs. 10.00 = 5000.00

Total earnings : 165000.00

Margins: Rs. 165000.00 – Rs. 143000.00 = Rs. 22000.00

Two FGDs were held with agarbatti rollers, one was in Gaya town and one was held in a village about 10 kilometres from Gaya town. The two locations showed the commonalities of the production process and brought out interesting differences in the two locations. Rolling of agarbattis is done by women only and are helped by children, especially girls. In both locations women said that young girls start helping their mothers when they are 7-8 years old. Young boys rarely help in the rolling process.

There are four varieties of agarbattis based on thickness – very fine (*barik*), super, medium and MM. Payment for rolling depends on the type of agarbatti rolled. In Gaya town women are paid Rs.10 for rolling 1000 very fine agarbattis, Rs.9 per 1000 super and medium and Rs.8 per 1000 for rolling MM. workers used to be paid Rs. 3.50 to 4.00 per thousand eight years ago. After that it went up to Rs. 6 to 7 and for the last one year the rate has been Rs.8-10. In the rural location, women get Rs.8 for thin agarbattis and Rs.7 for thick agarbattis.

The workers are given a mixture of one kilogram *masala* and 350 grams of bamboo sticks (*tilli*). The *masala* is made up with $\frac{3}{4}$ of charcoal and $\frac{1}{4}$ of jigar. This is kneed with water and then rolled on the sticks. They are also given 200 grams of sawdust to roll the sticks. They have to return $1\frac{1}{2}$ kg of rolled sticks. However sometimes the rolled agarbattis do not come upto $1\frac{1}{2}$ kilograms, then the workers' wages are deducted or the workers have to add from their own pocket. In the village women said that the contractor

pays at the rate of Rs.8 but he deducts money at the rate of Rs.20. Another woman said that she spends Rs.30 every month to buy charcoal so that the weight of the agarbattis does not fall short.

In both locations women reported that this work started about 15 years ago and the women have been working for the last 10-12 years. Women were not doing any other economic activity before the agarbattis came to this area.

Housing and neighbourhood

In Gaya, all the women involved with this work were living close to the place where the ararbattis were distributed and packed. There are many transport companies in the area, and everyday you see trucks leaving with agarbattis. There are units where the charcoal is ground to a fine powder for making agarbattis. The women lived in slums, their families have been living in the city for the last 35 years. The walls of their houses are of brick with roof of tin sheets, straw and bamboo or mud/terracotta tiles. Many have their own house, and others have rented the accommodation. The rent is between Rs. 150-400 inclusive of electricity. This particular slum consists of muslim families, but the area is mixed with Hindus and Muslims. Their husbands are also daily wage earners. For this group of women workers, rolling agarbattis is a necessary part of the total household income.

In the rural area, the study location was close to the main road-link between Patna and Gaya. This was a Muslim village. There are two factories in the village. The material is brought to the village every 15 days. The participants do not own land. Most of them own their houses. They have been living here for decades. The houses were spacious and had more than one room. A few are living on rent. Rent varies from Rs.200-1000.

Their husbands do different types of work – rickshaw pullers, street vendors, small business, etc. For this group of women, agarbatti work is a supplemental income. One woman said, ‘When a woman works she becomes much stronger (*aurat mazbooy hoti hai*) She is able to withstand a lot. She can live on her own. If I want something, I do not

have to ask my husband for money every time (*Agar mujhe dukan se kuch laanaa ho to mujhe bar-bar nahin pochana padta*).’

Availability of work and earnings

Work is available throughout the year, but it is less during the monsoon. In Gaya town women said that due to the rains the sticks do not dry quickly so they have to wait for a longer time before getting the next lot. They do not have enough place to dry the agarbattis in the house. In the rural areas, women said that due to the rains, the material does not come to the village and hence there is less work. Here the houses are big and women said that they do not have the problem of drying the agarbattis.

In Gaya town a few women are paid for distributing and collecting agarbattis to women. They get Rs.20 for distributing the material. Some women do the work of selecting and eliminating the broken agarbattis. They get Rs.20 for selecting and eliminating (*chhatna*) the sticks of one sack (*bori*) which consists of 40 kilograms. It takes them the whole day to do the 40 kilograms. Despite getting more money for selection, women do not want to do that work, because it means that they will have to leave home and work in the shed.

The district administration has also made a shed for women agarbatti workers, women do not sit there and work. They prefer to work at home. Only distribution and collection is done in the shed. When asked about requirements, the women said that they do not want a shed, they would like to work with *Izzat* (respect/dignity) from home. But they wanted more work. Some of those who do not have this work requested us to provide us with some.

The home based workers in the village reported that work was increasing and not decreasing. Women make up to 2 kg in a day. Those who do not have responsibilities of the home, have daughters or others to do the household chores, make 3-4 kg in a day. Women start rolling agarbattis after doing household chores at about 10 am and work till the evening. They work for about eight hours in a day. They have been working for Rs. 7-8 per Kg for the last one year. Before that it was Rs.6-7. ‘They should increase our

wages, even a kilo of rice now costs Rs.12 and our wages have not come up to even that.’ The women said that they do not take all the money at once. They take earnings for 1-2 months together. There were no complaints about not getting payments on time, even when specifically asked.

The women in the village said that it would help if there was a shed to make agarbattis. They would prefer to work in the shed as the black powder spreads all over the house, and things become dirty. If they worked in a shed, then the house will remain clean. ‘Since we have stopped working for 15 days, you can see us nicely dressed. Otherwise our clothes become black when we are working.’ Initially when the factories were set up, they used to give the workers soap to wash the clothes but now that has also stopped. There were no issues of mobility or observing *pardah*.

Health

Regarding health problems associated with this work, women said that they inhale a lot of the agarbatti dust and this causes a problem. They reported pain in the shoulders due to constant bending and rolling. For medical treatment, women in both locations go to the private practitioners. In Gaya he charges Rs.60 inclusive of medicines. The better doctors charge Rs.100 and give better medicines. In the village, the private practitioner charges Rs. 30-40 with medicines. In neither of the places was there a government hospital. ‘We spend more on medicines than what we earn from agarbattis.’

Schooling

In Gaya town the workers reported that the government school in the area was not functioning. In the private school, the fee is Rs. 300 or 70 per month, they spend Rs.600 for books and Rs.400 for uniform. There is an anganwadi but people do not seem to be sending their children there. The residents said that the anganwadi workers in both the anganwadis are from the same family, and alleged that they have not been distributing the food for children as per required.

In the village there are private as well as government schools. There is one government school till 5th and one till 8th. The girls also go to school. 'Only this morning we had a meeting with teachers. The teachers told us that we must see that they do the work given to them. Yes – that is our mistake. We also complained that the *khichadi* they give is very watery, it is of bad quality.' Another woman said, 'One day my son found an insect in his food. I told him not to eat food in the school any more.' 'the teachers ask us to come to make food when we complain that they ask the older girls to do this.' 'they come to take the names of all our children and went from house to house to collect names. But they don't give the children all that they should get.' Young girls make agarbattis after school, they make ½ - ¾ kg in a day.

Loans

In Gaya town home-based workers said that in case of need for money, they pawn their jewellery to the gold-smith or take money from the 'punjabi'. They do not have enough to lend or borrow from each other.

Agarbatti rolling in Gaya, Bihar

- A few thousand people (exact figure not known) in and around Gaya are involved in agarbatti rolling.
- People have been working in this trade for last 12 to 15 years.
- Generally women get the job from the factory in the locality, the children help their mothers
- The work is available throughout the year, quantum of works varies from season to season.
- Wage is received on piece-rate basis
- Wage rate: Rs. 8 to Rs. 10 per 1000 agarbattis or per 1 Kg.
- Work for 8 to 10 hours a day
- One family earns Rs. 20 to Rs. 40 a day
- On an average one family earns Rs. 500 to Rs. 900 a month
- Credit facility: No credit/loan facilities from the contractor.

Beedi Workers in Bihar

Beedi rolling which is highly labour-intensive is done in almost all major states of India and it takes place mainly in the homebased unorganised sector. Government estimates of the total number of beedi workers is about 4.5 million, majority of who are home based women workers. This is important source of income, for women's earnings constitute on an average 45 to 50% of the total income.⁵ Trade unions claim that there could be about 7-8 million beedi workers in the country, especially if those engaged in beedi trade and the tendu leaf collection are also taken into account.⁶ ILO recognises that beedi manufacturing, is one of the largest industries providing employment in the country after agriculture, handloom and the construction sector.⁷ The majority of workers are from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other backward Tribes and Most Backward Castes, groups that are by and large below the poverty line.⁸

There are about 300 major manufacturers of branded beedis but there are thousands of small-scale manufacturers cum contractors who account for the bulk of the beedi production in India. Besides the general labour laws applicable (such as Minimum Wages Act and the Provident Funds Act), the Government of India has also enacted two major laws specifically for the beedi sector workers the Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966 to regulate the conditions of service of the beedi workers, the and Beedi Workers Welfare Fund Act, 1976, to provide for welfare schemes for the beedi workers and their families, relating to health, education, maternity benefits, group insurance, recreation, housing assistance etc. Under the fund, there are also special schemes to encourage education of children of beedi workers, especially for the girl child. In April, 1992, a Group Insurance Scheme for the Beedi Workers was also introduced under the social security scheme of Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India. This provides insurance cover of Rs. 5000/- in case of natural death and Rs. 25,000/- in

⁵ <http://www.uohyd.ernet.in/sss/dhistory/beedi/beedi.html> (Accd 20 Dec,2006)

⁶ ILO (Accd 20 Dec,2006) Beedi Sector in India: A Note,
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/newdelhi/programs/actnpgm.htm>

⁷ <http://www.deccanherald.com/deccanherald/apr132004/spt1.asp> (Accd 20 Dec,2006)

⁸ <http://www.uohyd.ernet.in/sss/dhistory/beedi/beedi.html> (Accd 20 Dec,2006)

case of accidental death to those beedi workers who have identity cards. The Beedi Workers Welfare Fund (BWFF) is an important measure legislated by the Government for the benefit of the beedi workers. It is administered through the Labour Welfare Organisation, headed by Director General, Labour Welfare, Ministry of Labour. About 3.8 million workers are currently covered under the BWFF. However, this leaves uncovered a large number of beedi workers.⁹

The beedi industry is spread in the rural areas of many districts in Bihar. This is the major source of livelihood for the rural landless. This is an account of the situation of home-based beedi workers in the districts of Samastipur and Begu Sarai. This is not representative for the whole district, and definitely not for the situation in the state as a whole. This is an exploratory study of the situation of beedi workers which is now a home based industry.

Methodology

The study was conducted using focused group discussions. All the FGDS were conducted with workers who are members of the beedi mazdoor union or in areas where the union is known. Many of those who participated were neighbours/relatives of members. Age group of participants in villages varied from late teens to 45 years.

The FGDs were held in Dalsingsarai with men and women union members, Chakbahauddin village, Bhagmatpur village all in Samastipur district and in Manurchak in Begu Sarai district.

Changes in the nature of production in the late 80s shifted the production of beedis from the factory to the house. Earlier there were several beedi companies in the area, but slowly all of them shut down. Now there is only one company operating, and that too, the head office has shifted to Kolkata. The company still has a network of contractors in the area, who distribute the work. The other type of beedi that is made is for local shops.

⁹ ILO (Accessed on 20 Dec,2006) Beedi Sector in India: A Note
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/newdelhi/programs/actnpgm.htm>

These beedis are smaller in size and bring less remuneration. The shopkeepers buy the raw materials and roll beedis.

Economic condition

All beedi workers are from landless households. There are more women beedi workers than men. In some areas, women roll beedis while men work as labourers. Children at the age of 10 are sent to work in Bombay and Delhi to work but now they are being sent back because of child labour issues. In other parts, the total economy is dependent on the beedi industry. Both men and women roll beedis. This is the only source of income for the rural landless. Workers said that if the beedi industry went away, they would have no other source of livelihood. Both the contractor (*commissiondar*) and the worker will suffer if the beedi industry moves out.

Housing

In rural areas, the majority of people have their own houses but here is a shortage of housing. Basic facilities are severely lacking. There is no tap water available. Some of the households have installed their own hand-pumps outside the house and let the others use it without charge.

Beedi Making Process

Beedi is made by rolling tobacco in *tendu* leaves. For making beedi, the leaves are soaked in water for half an hour. Then they are cut to size. Dry tobacco is rolled in the leaves, the ends of the roll folded in and tied with a thin string. Most workers make 500-1000 beedis in a day, in 5-6 hours. If four to five people in the family roll beedis, then they can make 2000-4000 beedis in a day. With age, the speed of making beedis reduces, especially after the age of 40. Older women said that they are only able to make 500 beedis in a day. Each bundle of beedis contains 25 beedis. Women said that they are able to roll one bundle in 10-15 minutes depending on the speed of making. Children from age of six start helping. First they learn to tie the rolled beedis with a thread. The next task they are given is to fold in the two ends of the beedi. After this they start rolling the beedis and lastly cut the leaves.

Earnings

Workers are paid on piece-rate basis for rolling 1000 beedis. The earnings were found to depend on whether the beedis were for big companies or for local shops. The beedis for the local shops are smaller in size than the company made ones. The wages for local beedis is much less than company brands. For local beedis the earnings varied from Rs.15 to 30 per thousand beedis. There is no provident fund given by the local shopkeepers. Only women were found to be rolling local beedis. For company brands, the wages are Rs.38 per 1000 beedis. As per the provision of Beedi Workers Welfare Act, the workers are also given provident fund. But this provident fund is available only to men. In the area, women received Rs.38.50 for 1000 beedis, while men received Rs.38.50 plus Rs.4 as provident fund. A few women who live some kilometres away from the contractor's village receive less wages for company beedis, some as less as Rs.31. Women's names are not registered with the company. If a woman is working, some other male member of the family may be registered and will receive the provident fund in his name. But if there no men in the household, the women worker will not get any provident fund. These wages have been in force for the past three years. Wages are given every week. In the past few years, leaves have become expensive, but the wage rate is not increasing even though the workers have asked for it.

There is also a link between the distance from the distribution centre and wage rate. As one moves away from the main distribution centre, the wages reduce for both local and company beedis. We found that the wages for company beedi reduced from Rs.38 to Rs.36 in a village just two kilometres away from the contractor's village. In interior villages, women were found to be rolling 1000 beedis for as less as Rs.15, and there was an intermediary between the main contractor and the worker.

To make 500 beedis, they are given 250 grams of leaves and 125 grams of tobacco (*sookha*). For 1000 beedis they are given 500grams of leaves and 250 grams of tobacco. But the minimum standards set for standard size beedis are 800 grams of leaves and 300

grams of tobacco.¹⁰ If leaves are good they make 500 beedis or else they make 450. In such a case, they have to buy tobacco and leaves on their own to complete the number. Workers reported that the quality of tobacco and leaves had deteriorated ever since beedi started to be made at home. Workers said that in 1000 beedis they are paying for 300-350 beedis from their pocket. Workers also spend on buying the thread for tying the beedis. Apart from this wages are lost if the beedis are found to be not properly made. The contractor randomly picks out some bundles and squeezes them. He rejects those beedis which open. The damaged beedis are removed and no labour is paid for the damaged beedis. The contractor also faces the same checks at the company.

Availability of work

A slight decline in beedi work started after 1977. At this time the work started to move from factory to the home. A steep decline in availability of work started in the 1990s. In the past few many factors have led to this situation. After the state of Bihar was divided, most of the beedi factories have gone to Jharkhand. The people feel that beedi making has reduced due to campaigns to reduce smoking and because of the growing popularity of chewing tobacco. They also feel that people have shifted from beedis to cigarettes. Women said that some of them are not getting work these days, some get work only four days a week these days. In some other areas they get work five days in a week, with no work on Fridays and Saturdays. Most of the rolling is done by women and helped by children, especially daughters. Except for the months of monsoon (*sawan-bhado*), they work throughout the year. In the lean period, they get 15 days of work. The volume of work given per person every day also reduces. The maximum work is in the month of March and April (*jeshtha-baisakh*).

Changes in the nature of work over a period of time.

¹⁰ ILO (Accessed on 20 Dec,2006) Beedi Sector in India: A Note
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/newdelhi/programs/actnpgm.htm>

Since the past few months, according to a new law, *beedi* companies have to put a ticket of quality control in bundles. The workers put ‘tickets’ in 6-7 bundles out of 40. Earlier when the beedis were being made in factories, shops and godowns, men used to make them. Women would only make the local beedis at home. But since the industry has become home-based, the majority of workers for all types of beedis are women. Even if godowns are next to the house, women will not go there to work. Local shopkeepers are slowly moving out of the trade as beedi making is getting expensive.

Contractor chain

There are 150-200 workers associated with one contractor. One worker is attached to one contractor, she/he does not change contractors. The contractors live in the same locality as the workers. Some of the contractors are former workers who have risen to being contractors. Members of their families also roll beedis. The company contractors receive Rs.1.80 for every thousand beedis. For local beedi, the owners/shopkeepers are from the village and there is no one between them and the worker. Shopkeepers may themselves become workers for others. Families of shopkeepers also roll beedis.

Loans

They take loans @ Rs.5 per Rs.100 per month. But when there is an emergency, they have to take loan for Rs.10 per 100 per month. At times they take money from the goldsmith by pawning or selling jewellery. They don't take loans from neighbours or relatives as no one has enough to spare. Most beedi contractors do not lend money. A few might advance a loan of Rs.500-1000 rupees at a time.

Social protection

While women are making beedis, only men's names are registered and the provident fund is given in his name. Those who have male members in the family, have registered their names, even if they are not involved in the beedi making. Women who do not have male members in the family lose the provident fund completely. In such cases, the contractor puts the names of his own family members. For the locally made beedis, there is no provision for any social welfare schemes. In this area a hospital had been set up as part of

the Beedi welfare fund by the company, which is now managed by the labour department. This hospital provides OPD services on two days in a week, for which some beedi workers come from as far as 40 kilometres. No medicines or other services are available. The beedi workers welfare act also provides a stipend of Rs.220 for two children. A few workers have received this benefit, but many have not despite having paid Rs.50 in the beedi fund. Earlier the workers used to get a mat made of jute to sit on and a 'soop' (a kind of tray made of cane) to work from the company once in a year. But this has stopped since the last five years. Under the *Beedi Mazdoor Yojana* if the worker contributes Rs. 5,000 the welfare fund will contribute Rs. 40,000 to build a house. But the people are unable to even give this much contribution. Those who had given this contribution 15 months ago, had not received the money for the house. The majority of the beedi workers are below the poverty line, but have not got the BPL card. The BPL card provides rice at Rs.5 per kilogram and wheat flour at Rs.3 per kilogram. Those who have the card are unable to get any ration on it. The vast majority of workers said that they are able to afford only one meal a day.

Beedi rolling in Bihar

- Beedi is a major homebased job in the whole of rural Bihar.
- Both men and women get the job from the local contractor.
- The work is available throughout the year, quantum of works may vary from season to season.
- Wage is received on piece-rate basis
- Wage rate: Rs. 15 to Rs. 30 per 1000 beedis (local beedi) and Rs. 38 for 1000 beedis (company brands)
- Work for 5 to 8 hours a day
- One person makes 500-1000 beedis in a day.
- Members together of a beedi making family can make 2000-4000 beedis a day.
- Credit facility: No formal credit/loan facilities from the contractor.

Issues on Minimum Wage:

In Bihar, 75 employments have been added in the schedule of minimum Wages Act, 1948. Out of which, minimum wages have been revised in 63 employments in Schedule I of the said Act and one employment (Agricultural labour) in Schedule II of the Act. The revised minimum wages in 62 employments in Schedule I is Rupees 68 for unskilled labour. The minimum wage for a bidi making labour is Rs. 66.00. The minimum wage for unskilled labour in agriculture in Schedule II of the Act is Rs. 66.00. (Source: website of the Dept. of Labour, Bihar. <http://gov.bih.nic.in/Depts/Labour/Labour.htm>)

Table: Sector, Location, Labour status, Payment

Sector	Location		Labour status	Regularity
	Place	Urban/Rural		
Toffee wrapping	Patna City	Urban	Piece rate basis	Fortnightly/monthly (Irregular)
Mala making	Patna City	Urban	Piece rate basis	Weekly/fortnightly (Regular)
Bidi rolling	Samastipur and Begusarai	Rural	Piece rate basis	Regular
Agarbatti rolling	Gaya	Urban & Rural	Piece rate basis	Weekly/fortnightly (Regular)
Chappal making	Patna City	Urban	Piece rate basis	Weekly (Regular)
Flute making	Patna City	Urban	Self employed	

Sector, Minimum wage, hours worked and availability of work

Sector	Minimum wage (Minimum wages as on 31.12.2004) Rs. 45.18 – Rs. 64.62	Wage earned in a day		No. hours worked in a day		Availability of work Number of months in a year
		Female	Male	Female	Male	
Toffee wrapping	Not listed	Rs. 10-20	-	8-10 hrs.	-	10-11 months
Mala making	Not listed	Rs. 10-20	-	8-10 hrs.	-	10-11 months
Bidi rolling	Rs. 66.00	Rs. 38.50	Rs. 42.50	8 -10 hrs.	8 -10 hrs	12 months
Agarbatti rolling	Not listed	Rs. 15-20	-	8-10 hrs.	-	8-10 months
Chappal making	Listed Rs. 68.00	Rs. 25-30	Rs. 60-150	6-7 hrs.	8-16 hrs.	6-8 months
Flute making	Not listed	Unpaid family labour				10-11 months

Phulkari Work in Patiala, Punjab

Background and Context

The Princely state of Patiala is known for its handicrafts, *juttis* and *parandies*. Recent observations suggest that phulkari embroidered suits, stitched in quintessential Patialvi styles are fast catching up in popularity in India and among the Non Resident Indian Punjabis.

- **History**

Phulkari, meaning “flower work”, is a style of embroidery peculiar to Punjab. This folk art of colorful embroidery and knitting developed by Punjabi women is an essential part of Punjabi tradition and is often seen as a component in basic education for girls.

Phulkari is also an important part of the everyday life of Punjabi people; in almost every ceremony in which women participate Phulkari is used on account of it being considered auspicious. It is also customary for parents and relatives to give hand-embroidered clothes to girls in marriage. By the 19th century, the accomplishment of a bride and her mother and the affluence of the family were judged by the number and elaboration of the Phulkaris she received as a part of her trousseau. ¹

- **Raw Materials and Production Process**

In Phulkari, the whole cloth is covered with close embroidery and almost no space is left uncovered. The piece of cloth thus embroidered is called Bagh meaning a garden. If only the sides are covered it is called Chope. The back ground is generally maroon or scarlet and the silken thread used is mostly golden. Phulkaris are embroidered with traditional patterns, various motifs such as birds, animals, flowers and sometimes scenes of village life.

¹ http://punjabgovt.nic.in/Culture/ARTS_CRAFTS.HTM
<http://handicraft.indiamart.com/process/phulkari-bagh/>

“The Phulkari stitch derives its richness from the use of the darning stitch placed in different directions: vertical, horizontal and diagonal. The embroidery is done from the wrong side. The pattern is controlled by the counting of the thread, but quite often the outline of the pattern is embroidered on the cloth in green thread. The needle picks up only one thread at a time, so that the back of the pattern is delineated with single lines of color in extremely fine stitches. In the front the stitch ranges from 1/2 to 1/4 cms in size. In the bagh, a single thread of the base material separates one pattern from the other. Thus an area is divided into twelve squares by this fine line, the squares themselves being covered with stitches going in different directions. As it is done on a thick material the embroiderer can work without a frame. The stitches used are darning, stem, herringbone, satin, straight, back, running, blanket, split, cross, and chain stitch”.²

- **Market potential and Employment Status³**

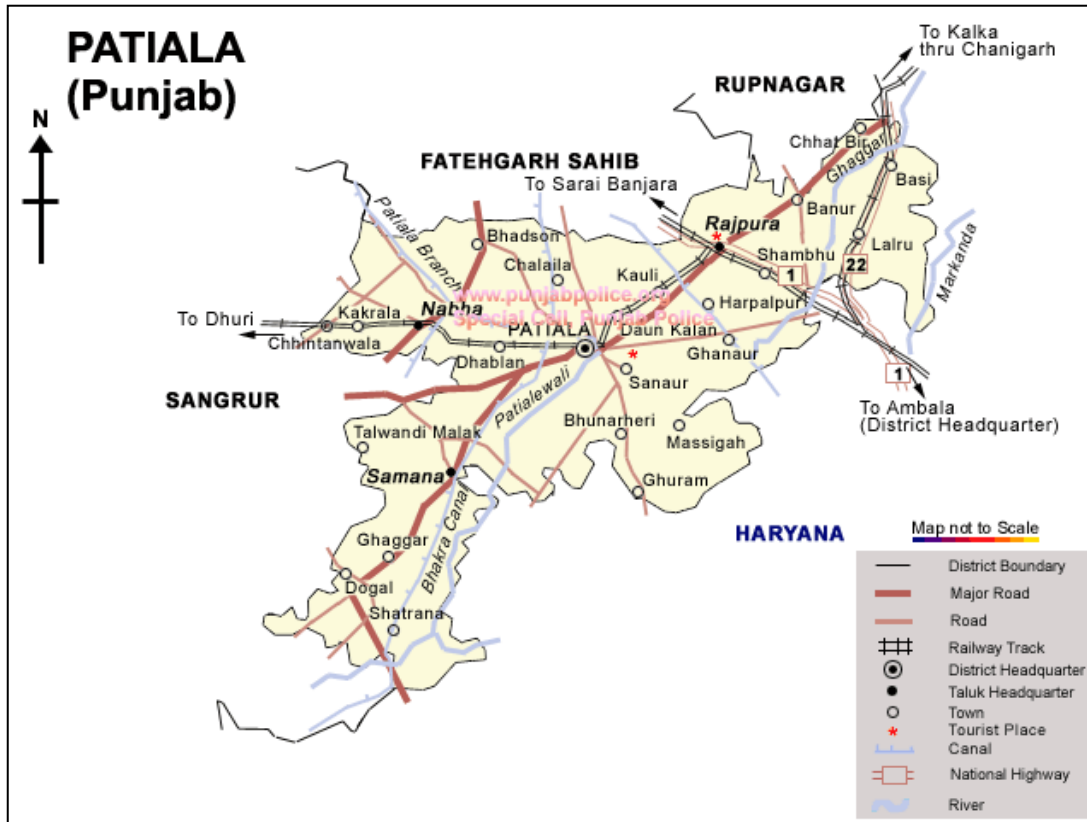
While there are no official estimates for the Phulkari market, recent trends suggest that it is a trade with immense marketing potential, especially with the NRI Punjabi community fuelling growth in demand and supply.

Research Methodology

The sample was selected based on mapping done with local partners on the work and nature of its geography. Certain areas were reached through known contacts and the sample snow balled into existence. Each area was covered and a total of locations were visited. Size from each location was decided based on the density of *Phulkari* work observed in the area. The sample includes 50 *Phulkari* workers who are female and home based.

² <http://handicraft.indiamart.com/process/phulkari-bagh/>

³ <http://patialvi.com/News/detail.asp?iData=406&iCat=251&iChannel=1&nChannel=News>



Number of respondents in each location

Area	Number of Respondents
Officers Colony (Urban)	10
Chunagra (Rural)	10
Samana (Rural)	10
Patyan (Rural)	9
Tripuri (Urban)	11
Total	50

58% of the sample is rural, while the remaining work is reported in urban areas. While the market for Phulkari products is relatively centralized, it is in a period of organization based on market driven trajectories of supply chain management.

Conversations with Phulkari related shop owners and workers revealed that the demand for such textiles is increasing with the increasing income and aspirations of communities in Patiala and beyond. One shop owner's comment highlights this phenomenon.

“People come from Delhi and Haryana as they know our work is good here. They buy our material and gift these items to friends and relatives back home. “

Demographic profile

- **Age**

Age(yrs)	Frequency	%
<10	0	0
11-20	13	26
21-30	16	32
31-40	18	36
41-50	2	4
>51	1	2
Total	50	100

The average age of our respondents was 29 years; the youngest person in the sample was 15 years-old, while the eldest was 60. A large percentage of 40% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 15 to 25 years, and as well 40% of the sample belonged to the age group of 26 to 35 years. Only 4% of the respondents were 45 years of age and above.

- **Marital status**

	Frequency	Percentage
Unmarried	15	30
Married	34	68
Separated / Divorced	1	2
Widowed	0	0
Total	50	100

Phulkari work appears to increase amongst the married section of the sample. 68% of our respondents reported themselves to be married while 30% were unmarried; the last 2% were separated or divorced.

- **Education**

	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	14	29
Can sign name	0	0
Primary	2	4
Middle	7	14
High school and above	26	53
Other	0	0
Total	49	100

The respondents engaged in Phulkari work report high degrees of education and literacy compared to often surveyed home based trades. More than half of the sample (53%) shared that they have finished high School or even studied above. While 29% of the respondents stated that they were illiterate; 14% of the sample has studied until middle school while 4% until primary school.

- **Household Details and Dependents**

The average household size was approximately 5 persons per family. On average in each household there were two dependent persons (below 18 years old and above 60 years of age) and 1 person below the age of 15.

Work Profile

- **Age and Entry**

The average age at which our respondents started working (including helping others in the family) was 16 years-old while the average age at which they started earning independently was 19.

In average our respondents were working in this sector for 12 years and were earning in this sector for 8 years. Considering the average age of the Phulkari worker in this sample is estimated at 29 years, this implies that she started working in Phulkari at the age of 17 and started earning at the age of 21. This signifies a significant apprenticeship period, where young women are engaged in Phulkari work for training and learning without pay.

Interviews with a few workers highlight the importance of this training period and women are often engaged to assist known members of their locality or family in this work for no pay. Poonam, 23 who has been gainfully working in the trade for the past year elaborates,

“I learnt through my family and neighborhood. Women would get together and do this work and I started helping them. After I got married, I realized it would be good to help the household with some work and I started earning on my own.”

Not surprisingly, 93% of the workers in the Phulkari sector were female workers while 7% were male workers. This hails from Phulkari and such handicrafts being traditionally female domains of production and recreation. On an average 2 women per household were working in the Phulkari sector.

- **Availability of work**

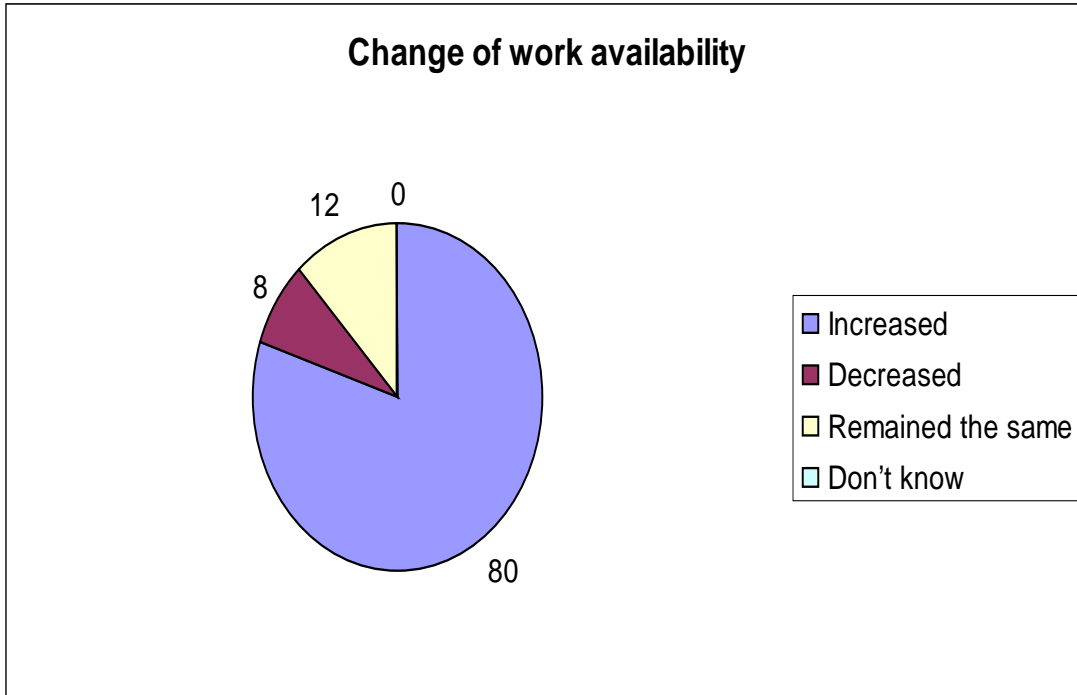
Respondents engaged in Phulkari work appear to be in a strong position in terms of work opportunities. On average, respondents stated that they were engaged in Phulkari work for 11 months in a year. Work availability peaked for 6 months in a year while it was difficult to get work for 3 months in the year.

Are there months when respondents are without this work?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	16	32
No	34	68
Total	50	100

A large majority of 68% of the sample reported that there were no months without Phulkari work whereas 32% found themselves without this work during some months. . During the lean months, women report finding Phulkari work for 13 days in average. Most women interviewed felt that rainy months caused work to dip and festivals and marriages made work availability peak. Gurnam, 34, explains,

*“Weddings are a good time for us and rains are bad as no weddings happen then!!
Further, it is tough to get supplies and thread gets wet sometimes.”*



In terms of perception of work availability, 80% of the sample report increase in work availability in the past two years. While 12 % of the sample reports that work availability has not changed in the past two years, only 8% register a decrease.

- **Hours of work**

Hours of work during the peak months

Hours	Frequency	Percentage
4	2	4
5	5	10
6	11	22
7	9	18
8	21	42
9	1	2
10	1	2
Total		100

The respondents were working in average 7 hours a day during the peak months. During lean months, the average work time was 4 hours per day.

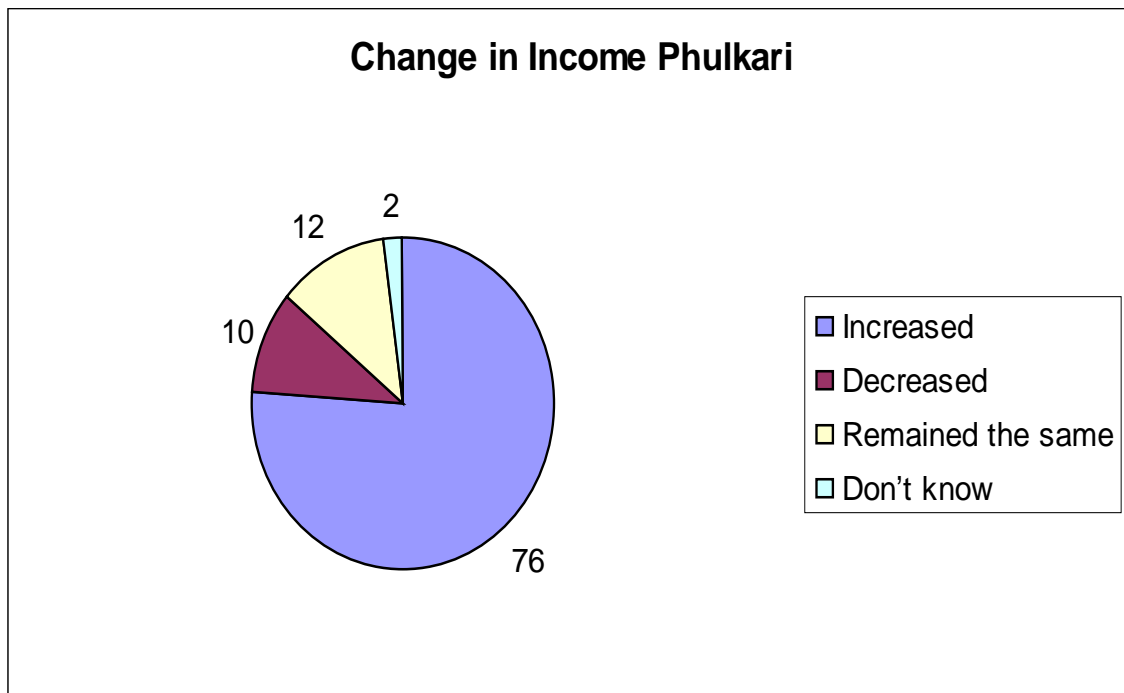
Part of the day in which work is done

		Percentage
Morning	0	0
Noon	7	14
Afternoon	24	48
Evening	0	0
Night	0	0
Whole day –whenever we get time	19	38
Total	50	100

62% of our respondents were working from noon and in the afternoon; none of them were working in the morning either in the evening or at night. 38% of our pool respondents answered they were working whenever they got time in the day.

- **Earnings**

On average, women involved in the Phulkari work received Rs 2889 in the peak months and this drops to Rs 1026 during lean months.



76% of the sample report increase in income in the past two years. While 10% reported decrease in income, 12% stated that their income remained the same. At the same time, Close to 96% of the sample felt that alongside income, work related expenditures had increased in the past two years.

- **Type of remuneration**

	Frequency	Percentage
Cash	44	92
In kind	4	8
Work in lieu of debt	0	0
Unpaid	0	0
Other	0	0
Total	48	100

For a large percentage of 92% the type of remuneration received for work in this sector is in cash, while for 8% of the workers the remuneration is received in kind.

- **Frequency of payment**

	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	11	23
Weekly	30	63
Monthly	5	10
Irregular	2	4
Total	48	100

A majority of 63% of the workers was paid weekly, 23% were remunerated daily, 10% were paid monthly and the last 4% were remunerated irregularly.

Housing and health

- **Housing**

Ownership status

		Percentage
Owned by self/ family	49	98
Paying rent	1	2
Total	50	100

98% of the respondents or their family owned their houses; a minority of 2% lived in rented houses. Ownership was in husband and his family name.

Type of walls

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Plastic sheets	1	2
Straw/ bamboo	0	0
Mud	0	0
Brick	49	98
Tin/ asbestos	0	0
Other	0	0
Total	50	100

A great majority of 98% of houses had walls made of bricks; the other 2% of houses had walls made of plastic sheets. 100% of the houses had a roof made of bricks. Housing was not experience many interviewed as a key concern in the region.

Source of potable water

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Well	0	0
River/ Nulla	0	0
Hand pump	11	23
Communal tap	2	4
Tap in the household	35	73
Total	48	100

The majority of 73% had access to potable water directly from a tap in the household, 23% used hand pump, while 4% were getting potable water from a communal tap.

Electricity connection

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	49	100
No	0	0
Total	49	100

100% of the sample had electricity connection and electricity was available on an average for 15 hours per day.

Kind of stove

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Mud	6	12
Kerosene	0	0
Gas	43	88
Coal / other	0	0
Total	49	100

A great majority of 88% of the respondents were using gas stove while 12% were using mud stove. Fuel and cooking related health concerns were not voiced.

- **Health**

Illness in past year

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	3	6
No	47	94
Total	50	100

6% of the respondents faced illness in the past year while this was not the case for 94% of the sample. Women complained of eye and knee joint related problems. Karminder, 33, elaborates on the nature of the problem,

“Working even a few hours causes problems as it is difficult on our neck, eye and knees. The work requires a lot of concentration and it’s a real craft to be able to properly get the stitch done.”

Needs

The key needs cited in this trade for Patiala stress in enterprise and income related priorities. 33% of the sample mentions the need for more work and this emerges as the top most priority for the section of Phulkari workers investigated.

Most important need regarding this sector

Needs	Frequency	Percentage
Housing	2	2
Credit / loans	8	8
Timely payment	15	15
More work	34	33
Skill training	3	3
Health care centre	3	3
Health insurance	1	1
Maternity benefits	0	0
Medicines	0	0
Storage space	2	2
Access to market information	8	8
Education facilities	0	0
Transport	5	5
Roads	1	1
Minimum wage	6	6
Other	14	13

15 % cite the need for timely payment as a key need in the sector. This is hardly surprising, considering several interviewed workers complained about payments being excessively delayed. 8% of the sample suggested that they needed assistance in marketing through more information about the Phulkari trade and potentials.

Home Based Trades in Uttar Pradesh: Zari-Zardosi, Applique, Box making

ZARI ZARDOZI WORK IN BAREILLY

Background and Context ¹

Zari and Zardozi work is done on garments, bags, purses and other allied items by skilled workers in the gangetic plain of Uttar Pradesh and is seen as an affluent market. Zari and Zardosi work is done by both workshop-based workers and home-based workers (Anand: 1999)². Further, a significant proportion of the *workers* are women. Other studies conducted observe that payments to workers, even for extremely complex work, are meek.

- **History**

The Mughal era brought richness to textiles and costumes of India. For the uninitiated, the *Ari* work or *Zardosi* is a kind of intricate hand embroidery believed to be introduced in medieval times during the reign of Muhammed Bin Tughlak. It reached its zenith during the rule of Emperor Akbar. The inspiration for the concept is both, the creation of *Zari*, the gold thread and *Zardozi*. Embroidery done on velvet, satin or any other heavy material came to be known as *Zardosi*. This gorgeous embroidery reveals artistic use of laid stitch with golden thread. The work is done by laying the gold threads over the material and is very heavy when the weight of the fabric and the metal wire used for embroidery are combined.

During the rule of Aurangzeb, the royal patronage extended to craftsmen was stopped. Many craftsmen left Delhi to seek work in the courts of Rajasthan and Punjab. The onset of industrialization in the 18th and 19th centuries was another setback. Most of the craftsmen turned to other occupations.

The art of *Zardozi* was revived along with many traditional methods of embroidery in the middle of the 19th century. *Zari* work was mainly done in Madras and *Zardozi* in Hyderabad until a few

¹ This section borrows from the following online sources - www.indian-embroidary.com
www.indiatourism.com
www.utsavsarees.com
www.nmc.com
www.chennaibest.com

² <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/newdelhi/download/wayforwd.pdf>

decades ago. Today, Uttar Pradesh is home to this finest work of gold and silver embroidery. This craft has caught on to a larger region of Bareilly such as Allampur, Faridpur, Biharkala, Nawabganj and Chandpur.

Zardosi used to be a work of beauty combined with display of wealth, but today other metals are used instead of gold. The earlier artisans of *Zardosi* used only exclusive *resham* thread and wire hand embroidery on materials. The designs were original and mainly of royal taste. Wealth was displayed in the garments worn by men and women. But today, we can witness a blend of the past with the present, the old with the modern, the north with the south and the east with the west. *Zardosi* has become well-known and fashionable hand embroidery.

The non availability of gold on a large scale became a hurdle in the making of *Zari* threads. The problem was overcome by combining copper wire with a golden sheen and gold colored silk thread. Another major problem was the availability of skilled *Zardozi* craftsmen. As the craft was on decline, the number of craftsmen decreased, as they had taken on other jobs. But with the revival of the craft, their number began to increase.

It can be seen in wall hangings, chain stitch on *Zardosi saris*, caps and other articles with heavy embroidery. As the embroidery is densely performed, designs done are extremely intricate. A *Zardosi* saree takes 4 to 6 months to make, depending on how complicated the designs. However, it all depends on the intricacy of designs and patterns to be created on the sari.

For the time being, Surat and Banaras remain the principal saree suppliers of *Zari* material and *Zardozi* crafts. Major handicraft shops sell these embroidered garments, which have become very popular now. Taking orders for embroidery to the customer's specifications is a major development brought into this art by the craftsmen. As a whole, the popularity of this extraordinary craft is quite on rise. All the saree stores in India have rich collection of *Zardosi saris*.

New designs and products have been introduced apart from the traditional ones. Some of the products are cushion and pillow covers, bedspreads, handbags, sandals and buttons. *Zardozi* on kurta-pajamas and chooridar- achkans (tight trousers and men's coat) have gained popularity among the men. *Zardozi* embroidered garments have become quite popular with

Indians abroad. Zardozi is also beginning to attract the attention of top fashion designers the world over.

- **Raw Materials and Production Process**

Zari, that means "gold" in Persian, refers to the metallic threads used in weaving. Zardozi embroidery involves the use of different shapes of metal wire like springs, coils, strips, ribbons and discs. Embroiderers carefully select from an elaborate assortment of components to create their own unique designs. The wedding vest is heavily adorned with such embroidery.

The making of *Zari* thread is a very tedious job involving winding, twisting, wire drawing and gold plating of thread. The embroidery of *Zari Zardozi* is performed in a very interesting manner. Gold wire is carefully revolved around a silver bar tapered at one end. Then they are heated in furnace till gold and silver alloy is formed. The gilt wire, when drawn through a series of holes made on steel plates, comes out glittering as gold. The gold-coated silver wire is then flattened and twisted around silk thread to obtain *Zari*.

Zardozi has remained as an appliqué method of embroidery. With one hand the craftsman holds a retaining thread below the fabric. In the other he holds a hook or a needle with which he picks up the appliqué materials. Then he passes the needle or hook through the fabric. After hours of painstaking labor, the result is an exquisite gold-veined work of art.

- **Market Potential and Employment Status³**

The State of UP is well-known for the high quality of *Zari* and *Zardosi* embellished products. In 1994-95, there were 12,500 *Zari* and *Zardosi* units in UP providing employment to 218,000 workers. The value of annual production was Rs.1.43 billion and the value of **exports was Rs.250 million** during the same period. In other words, **one-fourth of the total production was exported**. The total number of enterprises increased from 12,500 in 1994-95 to 16,134 in 1999-2000 thereby recording an increase of 29.1% in the said period. Further, the total number of workers employed in *Zari* and *Zardosi* work, during the same period, increased by about one-third. Thus, the industry is showing signs of expansion and export and employment potential. Moreover, the total value of production increased by 41.71% and the value of exports increased by 12% during the same period. These figures show that *Zari* and *Zardosi* products have considerable potential for market growth. In the case of Bareilly, the production of *Zari* and

³ Anand HR , The informal economy and The Way Forward, ILO –UNDP-SPPD , 1999

Zardosi products provided employment to 100,000 people and involved an annual turnover of Rs.150 million of which Rs.10 million worth of goods were exported.

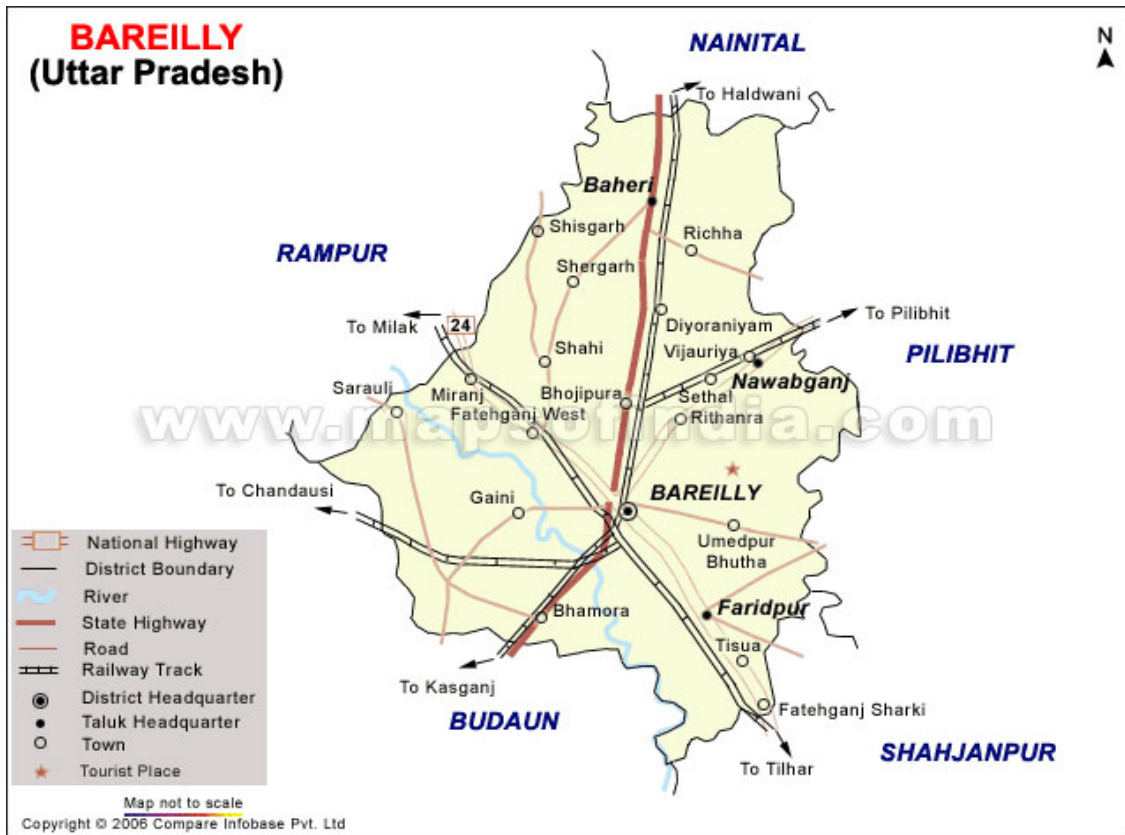
Research Methodology

The sample was selected based on mapping done with local partners on the work and nature of its geography. Certain areas were reached through known contacts and the sample snow balled into existence. Each area was covered and a total of 22 locations were visited. Size from each location was decided based on the density of *Zari Zardozi* work observed in the area. The sample includes 99 *Zari Zardozi* workers who are female and home based.⁴

The sample details are as follows.

Area	Number of Respondents
Purana Sheher	27
Partapur Choudhary, Aijaz Nagar	16
Katra Chand Khan	6
Bhojpura	6
Jagatpur	5
Bukharpura	5
Karaulaan Shazil	5
Faridapur Choudhary, Izzat Nagar	4
Subhash Nagar	2
	1
Malukpur	2
Tilak Colony	2
Mantalao	1
Shanti Vihar	1
Awadhपुरी	1
Maal Godam	1
Cantonment	1
Khana Veeldug	1
Qazi Tola	1
Katkuiya Sailani	1
Aajam Nagar	1
Semal Kheda	1
Chauk	1

⁴ The initial size of the sample was 100 from which one household was invalid.



Maximum work was noted in *Purana Sheher*. Local groups explained that this was the area that families which were involved with this work through royal patronage continued to habituate.

Work profile

- Age and Entry

Age of respondents

Age(yrs)	Frequency	%
<10	2	2
11-20	28	29
21-30	37	38
31-40	27	27
41-50	3	3
>51	1	1
Total	98	100

The average age of our respondents is 26 years with varying age groups registered as being involved in the sector. The youngest person in the sample is 1 year old, while the eldest is 55 years of age. A large percentage of 38 % belongs to the age group of 20 to 30 years. 29 % and 27

% of the sample is between the age of 10 and 20 years and 30 and 40 years, respectively. The number of people below the age of 10 years and above the age of 40 years is small.

Marital status of the respondents

Marital status	Frequency	%
Unmarried	42	43
Married	51	53
Separated/ Divorced	1	1
Widowed	3	3
Total	97	100

53 % report themselves to be married, while 43 % of the sample is unmarried. 3 % of the sample is widowed. One sample is separated/ divorced.

Entry into Zari Zardozi work

Sex	Frequency	%
Male	100	36
Female	182	64
Total	282	100

Entry into *Zari Zardozi* work is gendered, 36 % of *Zari Zardozi* workers found being male and 64 % found being female.

Age at which work started (including helping others in the family)

Age(yrs)	Frequency	%
<15	59	61
16-20	31	32
21-25	2	2
26-30	4	4
>31	1	1
Total	97	100

The average age of entry into *Zari Zardozi* work among our respondents is 15 years. The modal value suggests that entry into this work begins at the age of 10 years. Entry into *Zari Zardozi* work begins early. A majority of 61 % was initiated into the work before the age of 15 years, essentially from the age of 10 to 15 years. The next age group during which a sizeable percentage, 32%, entered this sector was between the age of 16 and 20 years, basically at the age of 20. Initiation after the age of 20 years was significantly weaker.

Age at which independent earning started

Age(yrs)	Frequency	%
<15	51	55
16-20	32	35
21-25	3	3
26-30	3	3
>31	3	4
Total	92	100

The average age at which independent earnings from zari zardosi work accrue among our respondents is 15.5 years. The modal value suggests that independent earning from this work starts around the age of 10 years. A majority of 55 % started independent earning from this work before the age of 15 years, largely from the age of 10 to 15 years. A considerable percentage of 35 % started independent earning in this sector between the age of 15 and 20 years, effectively around the age of 20 years. For a very small proportion independent earning from this work started after the age of 20 years.

Entry into Zari Zardozi work involves an apprenticeship period during which the person is essentially involved in unpaid family labour. Here, there is no earning for the person. This period on an average lasts for 6 months.

No. of years since work started in this sector (including helping others in the family)

No. of yrs	Frequency	%
<15	53	55
16-20	31	32
21-25	7	8
26-30	3	3
>31	3	3
Total	97	100

The average number of years since our respondents started work in this sector is 15⁵ years. A majority of them, 55 %, have been doing this work for less than 15 years, essentially the last 10 to 12 years. Another considerable percentage of 32 % started this work 16 to 20 years back. The number of those who began work in this sector more than 20 years ago is relatively small.

⁵ Average no. of yrs= 1462/97= 15

No. of years since earning in this sector

No. of yrs	Frequency	%
<15	50	52
16-20	33	35
21-25	6	6
26-30	4	4
>31	3	3
Total	96	100

The average number of years since the respondents have been earning from this work is 15.5 years. Maximum number of our respondents started earning from Zari Zardozi work 20 years back. For a majority of 52 % earning in this sector began during the last 15 years, largely in the last 10 to 12 years. A sizeable chunk of 35 % started earning from this work in the last 16 to 20 years. The proportion of those who started earning from this sector more than 20 years back is much smaller.

- **Household details**

Household size

No. of family members	Frequency	%
<3	11	11.3
4- 6	52	53.6
7-9	31	32
>10	3	3.1

The average household size is approximately 6 persons⁶ per family. Major section of the sample reports family size between 4 and 6 members.

The total number of *Zari Zardozi* workers reported across 99 households is 282.

Each household on an average reports at least 3 members who are engaged in *Zari Zardozi* work.

- **Education**

⁶ Average household size = $558/97 = 6$

Education of respondents

Literacy levels	Frequency	%
Illiterate	31	35
Can sign name	6	7
Primary	9	10
Secondary	17	19
High school or above	23	26
Other	3	3
Total	89	100

A considerable percentage of 35 % of the sample respondents stated that they were illiterate and 26 % shared that they had finished high school or studied above. 19 % stated that they had completed middle school while 10 % reported primary schooling. 7 % stated that they could sign their own name. The number of others, who claimed other forms of literacy, including *Kuranic* literacy, is the smallest.

Education of entire family by sex

Literacy levels	Frequency		%	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Illiterate	99	84	40	38
Can sign name	15	14	6	6
Primary	36	41	15	18
Secondary	41	30	17	14
High school or above	48	43	19	19
Other	10	10	3	5
Total	249	222	100	100

40 % women and 38 % men reported illiteracy. The percentage of men and women who had finished high school or studied above is the same at 19 %. 18 % men and 15 % women stated that they had completed primary school, while 17 % women and 14 % men stated they had finished middle school. 3 % women and 5 % men claimed other forms of literacy including *Kuranic* literacy. Thus, the difference in literacy levels among men and women in the sample is only marginal.

- **Earnings, Activity status and Viability**

Income from other sources

Sources	Frequency	%
Rent	1	2
Interest	7	10
Agricultural income	49	72
Any other	11	16
Total	68	100

For 69 % of the sample *Zari Zardozi* work is not the main source of income in the household. 72 % of this subset of the respondents who cite agriculture as the main source of income other than *Zari Zardozi* work. This follows from the observed trend in other sectors whereby agrarian crisis causes household members to find alternative employment. 10 % of our respondents also receive income in the form of interest. The percentage of those who receive income from rent in addition to that from home based work is the smallest at 2 %. 16 % of the respondents receive income from other miscellaneous activities.

The highest income registered during the survey was Rs. 6000. Workers reported an average working day of 7 hours during the peak season months. During the lean season this income drops to Rs. 324 per month and hours of work decrease to 4 hours.

Earning per month during peak period

Earning (Rs.)	Frequency	%
<1000	46	48
1001- 2000	32	34
2001- 3000	9	1
3001- 4000	5	1
4001- 5000	12	1
> 5000	2	0
Total	96	100

The average earning in a month among our sample during peak season was Rs. 2478. However, maximum number of the respondents, 48 %, earns less than Rs. 1000. For a sizeable percentage of 34 % the earning is between Rs. 1000 and Rs. 2000. The proportion of others who earn more than Rs. 2000 is significantly weaker.

Lean periods are around rainy months of July and August when transport and maintenance of such work becomes an added hassle. Parveen adds,

“Who can work in the rainy months? We have fields and cattle to take care of and there is hardly any light.”

Earning per month during lean period

Earning (Rs.)	Frequency	%
<500	58	61
501- 1000	14	15
1001- 1500	12	13
1501-2000	16	17
2001- 2500	0	0
2501- 3000	3	3
>3001	1	1
Total	94	100

The average earning in a month among our sample during lean season was Rs. 324. A majority of respondents of 61 % earns less than Rs. 500. 17 %, 15 % and 13 % earn between Rs. 1500 and Rs.2000, Rs. 1001 and Rs. 1500, and Rs. 1500 and Rs. 2000, respectively. The proportion of others who earn more than Rs. 2000 is significantly weaker.

Change in earnings in last 2 years

Change	Frequency	%
Increased	1	1
Decreased	32	34
Remained the same	34	36
Don't know	29	30
Total	96	100

The percentage of the respondents who shared that earnings had remained the same and those whose earnings had decreased in the last 2 years is similar, 36 % and 34 % respectively. 30 % did not know if there had been a change in earnings. A tiny percentage of 1 % thought that earnings had increased.

Labour status for this sector

Labour status	Frequency	%
Piece rate	81	86
Own account	6	6
Unpaid family labour	4	4
Contractor	4	4
Total	95	100

A majority of 86 % of our respondents are piece rate workers. The proportion of others, that is, own account, unpaid family labour and contractor, is significantly weaker, 6 %, 4 % and 4 %, respectively.

Frequency of payment received

Frequency of payment	Frequency	%
Daily	1	1
Weekly	51	52
Monthly	25	26
Irregular	20	21
Total	97	100

A majority of 52 % receive weekly payment. 26 % receive monthly payment and 21 % receive irregular payments. The percentage of others who receive daily payment is the smallest, 1 %.

Type of remuneration for work in this sector

Type of remuneration	Frequency	%
Cash	94	97
In kind	2	2
Work in lieu of debt	1	1
Total	97	100

For a large percentage of 97 % the type of remuneration received for work in this sector is in cash. The number of others who receive remuneration in kind or who work in lieu of debt is very small.

No. months in a year this work is undertaken

The average number of months in a year this work is undertaken by our respondents is 6.5 months. A large percentage of 82 % works in this sector for 6 to 10 months in a year, effectively 6 months. The percentage of those doing this work for less than 5 months and more than 10 months per year is small, 13 % and 5 %, respectively.

No. of months	Frequency	%
<5	12	13
6-10	78	82
>11	5	5
Total	95	100

No. of months this work is easily available

No. of months	Frequency	%
<3	10	10
4-6	84	87
>7	3	3
Total	97	100

The average number of months this work is easily available is 5 months. A majority of 87 % of our respondents shared that work is easily available 4 to 6 months in a year. The proportion of those for whom this work is easily available less than 3 months and more than 7 months per year is smaller.

Unavailability of this work during some months

	Frequency	%
Yes	82	88
No	11	12
Total	93	100

A large majority of 88 % finds itself without this work during some months. A small percentage of 12 % says that there are no such months when it is without this work.

Alternative work and income source

	Frequency	%
With	13	14 %
Without	80	86 %
Total	93	100 %

During this period 86 % said they engaged in no other work to earn income.

Availability of work during lean months

No. of days	Frequency	%
<5	54	59
6-10	27	29
11-15	8	9
16-20	2	2
>21	1	1
Total	92	100

The average number of days this work is easily available during lean months is 6. A large percentage of 59 % finds work for less than 5 days in this sector with ease during lean months. A

considerable proportion, 29 %, finds work easily for 6 to 10 days. The number of those who find work easily for more than 11 days a month during lean months is smaller.

Change in availability of work in last 2 years

Change in availability	Frequency	%
Increased	1	1
Decreased	35	36
Remained the same	28	29
Don't know	33	34
Total	97	100

36 % of the respondents shared that the availability of work had decreased in the last 2 years. 34 % could not say whether there had been a change in the availability of work or not. For 28 % of our respondents the availability of work had remained the same in the last 2 years. The percentage of those who thought that the availability of work had increased is the smallest at 1 %.

Change in costs incurred in last 2 years

Change in costs	Frequency	%
Increased	16	17
Decreased	8	8
Remained the same	32	33
Don't know	41	42
Total	97	100

42 % of our respondents did not know if there had been a change in the costs incurred in the last 2 years. **33 % shared that the costs had remained the same in the last 2 years.** 17 % felt that the costs incurred had increased. For a significantly weaker percentage of 8 % the costs had decreased.

Part of the day in which this work is done

Part of the day	Frequency	%
Morning	13	12
Noon	18	20
Afternoon	8	9
Whole day- whenever time is available	54	59
Total	93	100

A majority of 59 % undertakes this work during the whole day, whenever time is available. 20 % do this work around noon, 12 % in the morning and 9 % in the afternoon.

No. of hours this work is done in a day during lean months

No. of hrs	Frequency	%
<5	81	88
6-10	10	11
>11	1	1
Total	92	100

The average number of hours this work is done in a day during lean months is 4 hours. A majority of 88 % of the respondents undertakes this work for less than 5 hours per day. The proportion of those who do this work for more than 6 hours in lean months is significantly weaker.

No. of hours this work is done in a day during peak months

Hours	Frequency	%
<5	22	24
6- 10	69	74
>11	2	2
Total	93	100

Workers reported an average working day of 7 hours during the peak season months. Maximum number of people put in 8 hours in this work daily. A majority of 74 % of our sample undertakes this work for 6 to 10 hours on a daily basis. 24 % do this work for less than 5 hours per day during the peak season. The number of others with an average working day of more than 10 hours is the smallest.

- **Shelter and storage**

Ownership status

Ownership status	Frequency	%
Owned by self/family	85	87
Rented	13	13
Total	98	100

87 % of the respondents own their houses. Rest of the minority of 13 % lives in rented houses.

Type of walls

Type of walls	Frequency	%
Plastic sheets	1	1.0
Mud	8	9
Brick	83	85
Tin/asbestos	1	1
Other	5	5
Total	98	100

A majority of 85 % houses have walls made of bricks. 9 % of the houses have walls made of mud. The percentage of other types of walls, including those made of plastic sheets, tin and asbestos is small.

Distance from water source

Distance	Frequency	%
Within 50 meters	25	26
51-100 meters	1	1
101-500 meters	1	1
More than 1 km	2	2
Tap in the household	68	70
Total	97	100

For a majority of 70% the main water source was a tap located within their household premises. A considerable bulk of 26 % had access to a water source within 50 meters of the household. The proportion of those with a water source more than 50 meters from the house is significantly weaker.

Number of rooms in each household

No. of rooms	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	%
1	49	49	50
2	33	66	34
3	9	27	9
4	3	12	3
5	4	20	4
Total	98	174	100

The sample reports 2 rooms in each house, on an average. Half the sample reports one room in each house. 34 % of the respondents have 2 rooms in each house. The proportion of those with more than 2 rooms is small.

Electricity connection

	Frequency	%
With	76	79
Without	20	21
Total	96	100

21 % of respondents do not have an electricity connection.

No. of hours electricity is available in day

No. of hours	Frequency	%
<3	3	4
4-6	25	31
7-9	51	64
>10	1	1
Total	80	100

For those who do have electricity connection the average hours of electricity received is a dismal 6.5 hours in a day. For a majority of 64 % of the sample electricity is available for 7 to 9 hours daily, basically 8 hours. 31 % receive electricity receive for 4 to 6 hours per day. The percentage of others who receive electricity for less than 3 hours and more than 10 hours is tiny.

No. of respondents working inside or outside the house

	Frequency	%
Inside	44	45
Outside	5	5
Both	48	50
Total	97	100

50 % of the sample stated that they worked both inside the rooms of their house and outside in the courtyard. A considerable percentage of 45 % works solely inside the house. The proportion of others who work outside the house is the smallest.

Space for raw materials and finished products

	Frequency	%
Adequate	64	67
Inadequate	32	33
Total	96	100

67 % of the respondents shared that they had enough space to keep raw materials and finished goods. Still, a considerable percentage of 33 % stated that they had problems storing their finished goods.

Kind of stove used for cooking

Code	Frequency	%
Mud stove	32	33
Kerosene stove	2	2
Gas	62	64
Coal	1	1
Total	97	100

64% use gas for cooking. The next sizeable chunk of 33 % uses *chulha*. The number of respondents using coal or kerosene stove for cooking purposes is tiny.

- **Health**

Illness among respondents in the last year

	Frequency	%
Yes	90	95
No	5	5
Total	95	100

95 % report illness in the last year. Women complained of headaches and eye pain due to the stress on eyes from this work. Other complained about regular backache and knee pain due to the persistent hunched position women were in while doing the embroidery.

No. of people who sought treatment

	Frequency	%
Yes	84	93
No	6	7
Total	90	100

Out of the 90 that reported illness, 93 % sought treatment for their illness.

Source of treatment

Source	Frequency	%
Private	42	48
Government	18	20
Pharmacist	4	5
Self medication	2	2
Home remedies	5	6
Hakim/ Vaid	12	14
Jhadphook/ Tantrick/ Exorcism	1	1
Homeopathy	4	4
Total	88	100

48 % of the respondents, who sought treatment, did so through a private clinic. The source of treatment for 20 % and 14 % were government health facilities and Hakim or Vaid, respectively. The proportion of those who utilized other sources is significantly weaker.

- **Needs and Priorities regarding this sector**

Needs and Priorities	Frequency	%
Housing	17	6
Credit/ loans	16	6
Timely payment	48	17
More work	59	21
Skill training	10	3
Health Centre	4	1
Medicines	2	1
Storage space	21	7
Market information	48	17
Roads	9	3
Minimum wage	31	11
Other	21	7
Total	286	100

From the standard questionnaire, more work was cited by 21 % as an important need. Both, timely payment and access to market information were cited by 17 % of the sample. These were the top most cited priorities within the sample. For a considerable percentage of 11 % minimum wage an important priority. Storage space, housing and access to credit and loans were cited 7 %, 6 % and 6 %, respectively. A significantly weaker proportion cited skill training, roads, health centre and medicines as important needs.

APPLIQUE WORK IN RAMPUR

Background and Context

“Patti-ka-kaam”, as it is known in the region, once a favourite with the Nawabs and the royalty, is a form of delicate appliqué embroidery that originates in Rampur & Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh, India.

- **History**

Among the traditional textiles of India, the art of appliqué work occupies a distinguished place. According to the Webster’s dictionary, appliqué is a ‘decoration or trimming made of one material attached by sewing, gluing, etc. to another.’ It is believed that appliqué work made its way into western India either from Europe or Arabia in the Middle East through trade contacts.

- **Raw Materials and Production Process**

The appliqué work done in Rampur is based on organdy cloth and cotton. In some cases tissue cloth is also used. The tissue or organdy cloth is folded around sequins which are stitched on to the base cotton cloth, which contains a pattern or design. No machinery was being used and other implements contain a frame on which the specific part of stitching is done using needle and thread. The raw materials include the cloth along with the etched design and sequins are provided by the contractor to home based workers who stitch the appliqué format. These garments are returned to the retailers who wash and dry them and sell in the wholesale market for export to other states and within UP.

- **Market Potential and Employment Status**

A quick glance at internet sales and advertisements for appliqué work from Rampur seems to suggest a vast market⁷. However on local inspection, sales are dwindling from the region. National brand labels such as Nazneen are attempting to revive the tradition.

Research Methodology

The sample was selected based on mapping done with local partners on the work and nature of its geography. Certain villages were reached through known contacts and the sample snow balled into existence. Each tehsil was covered and a total of 15 locations were visited. Size from each location was decided based on the density of appliqué work observed in the area.

⁷ On Amazon, a well known retail website, a set of cushion covers made by Rampur appliqué workers was sold for 52 US dollars.

Table 1: Location of Sample

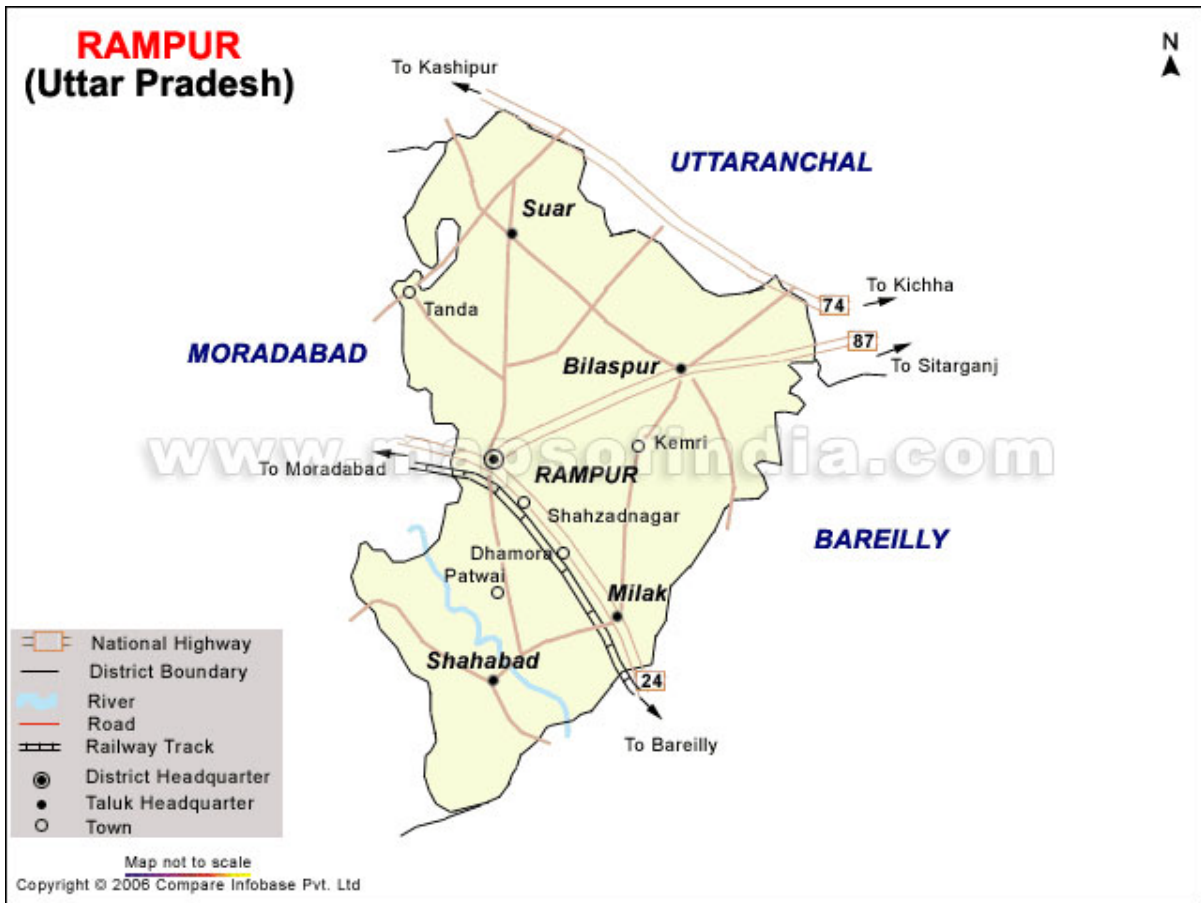
Details	Rampur
Urban	6 (5)
Peri-urban	18(13)
Rural	76 (56)
Total Number of respondents	100 (74)

The sample includes 74 appliqué workers who are female and home based.

The sample details are as follows.

Table 2: Sample Description

Block	Name of Location	Number of Respondents	Rural/Urban
Rampur Sadar	Rampur city	5	Urban
	Bhot	10	Rural
	Shimbouli	1	Rural
	Khizarburg	5	Rural
	Fatehganj	8	Rural
	Aliyaganj	2	Rural
Milak	Khatha Nangliya	6	Rural
	Roura Kala	6	Peri-urban
	Islam Nagar	4	Peri-urban
	Sarai	2	Rural
Bilaspur	Tanda	5	Rural
	Visharatnagar	3	Peri-urban
Swar	Chapra	1	Rural
	Khempur	1	Rural
	Mukrampur	11	Rural
	Mathkhedha	4	Rural
Total		74	



Maximum work availability is noted in the Rampur Sadar region which borders the city and the National highway route. In some areas work was claimed to be absent. In Shahbad, women said that they used to work in the appliqué sector, but now had changed to crochet work.

Work Profile

- **Age and Entry**

The average age of our respondent pool is 23 years with varying age groups registered as being involved in this sector. The youngest person in the sample is 10, while the eldest is 60 years of age.

Table: Age (in percentage)

Age	Respondents
15 & below	19 (14)
16-25	51(38)
26-35	22 (16)
36 and above	8(6)
Total	100 (74)

65% of the sample is unmarried, while 34 % report themselves to be married. One member of the sample is a widow. This is corresponding to field observations and interviews which suggested that younger unmarried girls would continue persisting in this work to earn personal disposable income or to contribute to their education and marital expenditures. Many such women said that they would discontinue such work upon marriage. Bano is 20 years old and lives with her father, mother and two brothers. She learnt appliqué work from watching her mother and now takes work herself from the local contactor in Tanda. She highlights the emotional and financial independence the work provides for women of her age,

I need to work to help my family. My father does not make enough money and I am faster at this work than my mother. My friend also does this work, so we spend time talking and laughing and finishing the day's work. This helps my family and I know that if I need anything I do not have to ask.

Talking to her friend Shaheen also highlighted how girls in certain cases feel obligated to continue this work and earn for a financially unstable family. As appliqué is a skill passed on within families, the work is easy for some in Rampur to access.

We have to work. We need to do something to help our homes stay afloat. This is tough work, but I know how to do it fairly well and earn enough to help my family a little. If I do not do this, who will?

Entry into appliqué work is gendered with only 8% of the 171 appliqué workers found being male.

Table: Age at starting work (in percentage)

Age	Rampur
15 & below	62 (46)
16-25	22 (16)
26-35	9 (7)
36 and above	7(5)
Total	100(74)

- **Household details and Dependents**

The average age of the reported head of the household is 41 years of age. Additionally, the average household size is approximately 8 persons per family. One family reported 18 members

and this was not seen as an unusual occurrence in Rampur. Each household contains 3 members who are dependents, while each household on an average reports atleast 2 members who are engaged in appliqué work.

Table: Demographic details of Respondents

Characteristics	In Percentage
Females	100 (74)
Males	-
18&above	57(42)
Below 18	43(32)
Illiteracy	30(22)
Ever married	66(49)
Number of dependents in household (average)	3
Average Household Size	8

Further, a gender division shows that each household approximately contains 4 women and 4 men. The size of the household appears as an important determinant for women to enter working in the appliqué sector. During an FGD with 6 women who lived in , a village in Sadar , this angle was explored. Shaheen started touching on issues surrounding dependents and women’s work.

I have to work as my father has too many people to feed.

Zuni added,

That is how I started work in my household and I am glad I learnt. If not, I would be on my own and have to deal with my husband’s frustrations and anger all the time.

Farida further elaborates,

If I want to buy new clothes or lipstick, my parents cannot help me. This way I earn and help my mother and help myself. What could be better? I do not have to put up with her annoyance at my requests.

Several accounts explicitly and implicitly suggest that burgeoning household size, the need for personal disposable income and assisting household cash liquidity culminate in motivating and maneuvering young and adolescent girls to take up appliqué based work from their local

contractor. For married women easing of marital tensions caused by their additional income is a key reason to continue in appliqué work. Finally, a sense of community and cohabitation associated with the work also carries with it the cause of entry. In conclusion, though the most attractive aspect of the work is its mere existence and simplified access to women in the villages where contactors exist, in addition to flexible working conditions which are conducive to women's reproductive roles and household duties. As Sheela and Nira put it,

I work as I know I can find this here and Begum is known to me.

I can manage the housework and work in my free time.

- **Education**

22% of the sample respondents stated that they were illiterate and 8% claimed Kuranic literacy alone. 21% stated that they could sign their own name, while the same percentage reported primary schooling. 18% stated that they had completed middle school while only 9% had finished high school or studied above.

- **Earnings , Activity Status and Viability**

If the art of a people is a true mirror to their minds (paraphrasing Nehru), then the appliqué worker in Rampur suffers a perturbed state of affairs. Survey findings show appliqué workers to be in an extremely precarious condition in terms of work and earnings. While this is a consistent trend across the various sectors where women home based workers are found, the data arrived at suggests a serious decay in appliqué work as a craft in the region. Additionally, the work is now seen as an ad-hoc source of income to meet additional household expenditures, and was not pursued as an active avenue of livelihood diversification in most villages visited as it was considered less and less reliable. However, most women said that the revival of the industry would benefit them through greater liquidity which it offered in the past, in the wake of agrarian insecurity.

Amongst the women surveyed, 57% majority cite agriculture as another source of income, while 39% cite other miscellaneous activities such as construction work, wielding iron and other workshop and shed based activities other family members were engaged in. Thus, for 96% of the sample appliqué work is not the main source of income in the household.

As per the survey, appliqué workers canvassed across the 4 tehsils in Rampur on an average earn Rs.305 in a month during the peak season. The highest income was Rs 800 in Milak. Workers

reported an average working day of 4.6 hours during the peak season months. During the lean season this income drops to Rs 110 per month and hours of work marginally decrease to 3.4 hours. 93% reported being piece rate workers and 3% were unpaid family labour.

Respondents on an average find work for 8 months in a year and from which 5 months are easier to find work. These are usually the months surrounding winters and eid. 92% stated that they faced months in which they had no appliqué work to do. During this period 82% said that they engaged in no other work to earn income. The remaining started work on other forms of garments such as crotchet designs and marginal stitching work.

Table: Number of months of work

Period	Rampur
Peak period	5
Lean period	3
Average Number of hours worked in peak season	5
No of days of employment per month in lean season	10

FGD's conducted in Milak and Suar districts suggested that women earn between Rs 20 to Rs 50 per cloth material on which appliqué work is done. A few women reported that payments were nonexistent as they never received the full amount due to them from contractors. This was often quoted as the main reason why *patti ka kaam*, once famous all over Rampur has declined off late. Varied rates were reported and contractors would pay women at ad-hoc rates and infrequently. Shaheen elaborates,

Why should we keep losing our money in this work? My mother used to work all day and she would only see pittance of her effort being rewarded.

Frustrations were further voiced in another village in Milak, when women agreed that earnings were extremely low and insecure. Ruksana elaborated,

They (contactors) always have excuses. But sometimes I know that they must also face problems with the seth. But we are the ones who suffer the most.

Bilaspur market was famous for its textile and garments shops. However an interesting aspect to the supply chain of appliqué work is that despite Bilaspur being the centre of such affiliated commercial activity, most appliqué work was not sold in the local market. One shop keeper alluded to religion and demand being the cause behind such a scenario.

No one wears this work here. This belongs to the Muslims. They (contactors) take it from here and sell it to the wholesale market in Rampur.

Although, women in this area felt they had work throughout the year, low earnings and irregularity of payment was again of moot concern.

The rates paid to women canvassed for qualitative work were ad-hoc and never uniform. In the same village we found different women being paid according to different rates. When asked, the contractor stated that this was due to the difference in quality of the work.

88% of the respondents work on a piece rate basis. 5% report themselves as unpaid family labour.

Table: Status of employment, in percentage

Labour status	Rampur
Piece rate	88 (65)
Self-employed	0
Unpaid family labour	5(4)
Casual labour	0
Other	7 (5)
Total	74

The remaining 7 % describe themselves in a situation where control over workers is exercised through accumulation of debt. These workers were working so as to claim the payments they were entitled to in the past through their work but were deferred.

73% of the sample stated that payments were received on an ad-hoc basis. 61% stated that they had experienced a drop in earnings from appliqué work in the past two years, while 54% stated that they had experienced a drop in work availability in the past two year time frame. 51 % also felt that expenses involved in appliqué work had increased in the past two years as well.

Table: Changes in availability of work in last two years

Change	Rampur
Increased	8(6)
Decreased	54(40)
Remained the same	36(27)
Don't know	2(1)
Total	100(74)

Salma, a contractor in Sadar, Explains,

We pay more for traveling to the town. My artists pay more for thread and needles and cloth sometimes too.

- **Shelter and Storage**

97% of the respondents own their houses. Majority of 81% houses have walls made of bricks and 72% report brick roofs. The sample reports 2 rooms in each house, on an average. For a majority of 99% the main water source was a tap located within their household premises. 49% of respondents do not have an electricity connection. For the remaining 51%, however the average hours of electricity received is a dismal 5 hours in a day.

Characteristics	In Percentage
Family/Own house	97(72)
Pukka walls	81(60)
Tiled or cement roof	72 (53)
Average no. of rooms	2
Land ownership	-
Tap in household	99(73)
Toilet in household	-
Electricity	51(36)
Average No of hours electricity is provided	5
Ventilation/Number of respondents with windows in their working area	58 (42)

91% of the sample stated that they worked both inside the rooms of their house and outside in the courtyard. The houses in the rural and peri-urban areas are larger in size compared to their urban counterparts and thus a minor 10% stated that they had problems in storing their finished products and raw materials. 89% use a *chulha* for cooking.

- **Health**

65% report illness in the past two years and this has much to do with the local habitation and work process. While some women complained of headaches and eye problems due to the concentration required for work, others cited viral diseases. Out of this percentage, 92% sought treatment for their illness. 89% of these respondents who sought treatment, did so through a private clinic.

- **Needs and Priorities**

It is significant to note that although assistance in social expenditures especially those relating to marriage were not given as options for answers in the standard questionnaire, regarding needs and priorities, from the 60 persons in the sample who were given the option, 92% stated that such assistance would be their top most priority. Shameen comments,

There is a lot that my parents shall spend on my marriage. If that were reduced then my father would not have to go into debt. He is already facing a burden from my sister's wedding.

Needs	Frequency	Percentage
Housing	4	5
Credit / loans	1	1
Timely payment	63	85
More work	61	82
Skill training	18	24
Health care centre	4	5
Health insurance	2	3
Maternity benefits	-	-
Medicines	3	4
Storage space	1	1
Access to market information	-	-
Education facilities	-	-
Transport	-	-
Roads	-	-
Minimum wage	60	81
Other	4	5

From the standard questionnaire, timely payment was cited by 85% of the sample as an important need. This was followed by the need for more work which was cited by 82% of the sample. Minimum wage was an important priority identified by 81% of the sample. These were the top three most cited priorities within the sample.

Box making, Lucknow

Background and Context

Packaging volumes for consumer packaging in India reached a total of 36,906 million units in 2002. The packaging industry in India is still growing and the market is dominated by flexible packaging formats.

While the organized packaging industry caters to the recent rise in urban middle class consumption of packaged consumer products such as fruit juices, canned vegetables and other consumer durables; the unorganized packaging units are seen to cater in greater density to local demand and be part of production chains surrounding consumer products such as garments, sweetmeat or shoes.

Within such realm, sweetmeat packaging and box making assumes significance as a trade that has the potential to engage many people, especially during times of festivities. According to conservative estimates, all the sweetmeat shops put together do a business of about Rs.2.5 lakhs during the four days of Deepavali (Gopal 2003).

Raw Materials and Production Process

Making packaging boxes varies depending on the nature of the product to be packaged, its market and the scale of production. In the case of box making for the traditional Indian *mitthai's* (sweets), the following analysis emerges from a field study conducted in Lucknow city in Uttar Pradesh in July 2006.



The process is initiated with the procurement of basic raw materials required for the boxes, which in this case were paper based. Cardboard is cut and folded into required shapes and sizes either manually or with the help of a cutting machine. The folding process is usually manual and contracted out to home based workers or done in sheds by hired labour. Precut cardboard pieces are supplied by the contractor which once folded are glued together with white paper and homemade adhesive made of heated flour (*maida*) and essence. The centre of the box is covered with silver aluminum foil. These boxes are left to dry after which are joined with lids and supplied back to the contractor or sold directly to the sweetmeat shopkeepers.

The procedure for making lids for the boxes are decided by the contractor based on the shop for which the box is made. If the concerned buyer is an established brand in the city, then they would themselves supply the contractor with paper containing the printed name of the shop and the logo or design which is then used for the lid. Such printed material is delicate and is either stapled into the required shape or glued with the previously mentioned paste. In some cases, contractors themselves print names and designs of the concerned shop, for which they are paid more. In cases where shopkeepers do not have any special requirements for design, name or logo, printed paper is bought and glued to a lid made from cardboard.

Contractors interviewed suggested markup prices for a 100 box set from Rs 4 for smaller size boxes to Rs 70 for fancy boxes. Rough estimates of investments made as mentioned by contractors interviewed are as follows,

Item	Annual Expenditure
Raw Materials	Rs 60,000
Machinery	Rs.15,000 - Rs 7000
Labour hired at site	Rs. 18,000 per person.

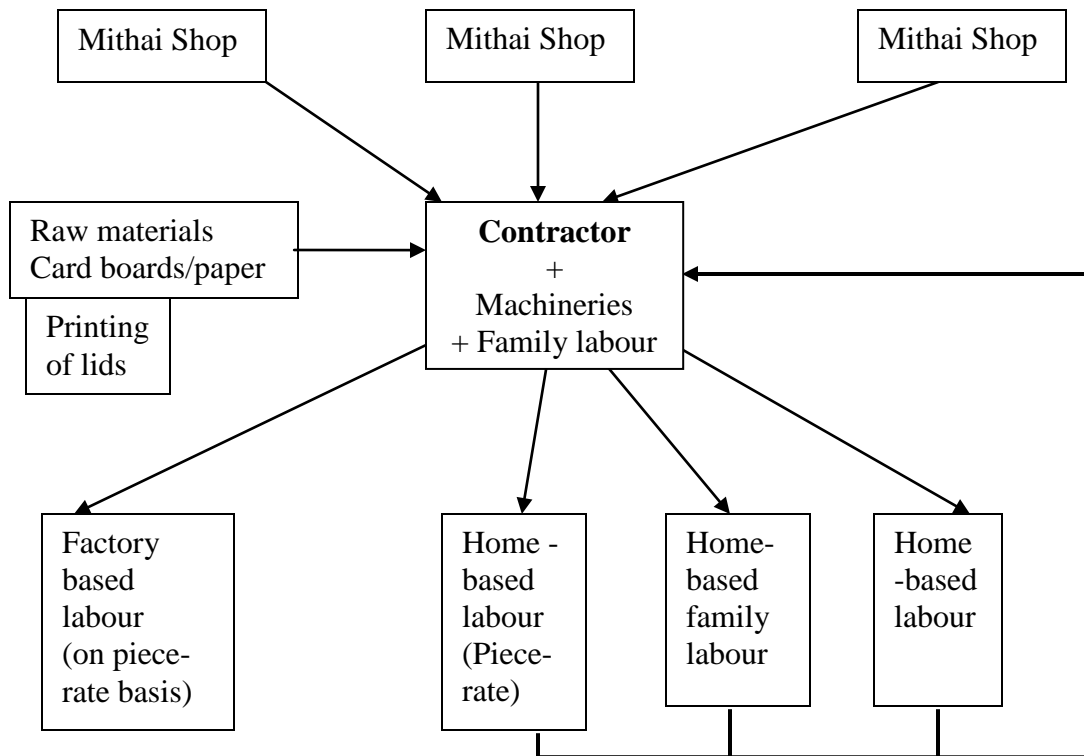
VALUE CHAINS IN BOX MAKING TRADE

Diagram 1.1 Earnings Analysis per month assuming 500 or 1500 boxes are supplied each day in a month as given by Mukherjee Contractor in Deen Dayal Nagar.

Mitthai shops	→	Contractor	→	Labour Hired at Site	→	Home based worker
Piece rate		Profits 13 Rs. for 100 boxes ⁸		Rs 50 per day		20 Rs for 500
Monthly income	500 / day	Rs 1950		Rs 1500		Rs 600
Monthly income	1500/ day	Rs 5850		Rs 1500		Rs 1800

Diagram1.2: Box making at Lucknow

⁸ Piece rate for profits and earnings as described by the respondent.



Home based work in the box making trade

During the field survey conducted in several locations in Lucknow, it was observed that the proclivity of women to be engaged in this trade, that too at home was an emerging trend. Interviews with contractors suggested that most work was conducted on piece rate basis, but was done in sheds or workshops. In most cases and areas observed men and women were both engaged in this



work at sheds, but women were involved predominantly in the lesser skilled folding process. Men would work with the cutting machines and gluing, stapling or printing process.

However, each of the four contractors interviewed stated that 2 to 3 women did take work home and bring boxes back to the sheds in the month. Furthermore they observed that in many cases where men were working at sheds, work would be taken home and women and children would be engaged in this trade on an unpaid basis.

Vulnerabilities

- **Participation and Training**

Each woman interviewed in Naka Chouk and those involved in the FGD had learnt the trade through a family member or friend, who was trained by a local contractor. None had accessed any formal source of training. However the male labour hired in Madaiganj and Deen Dayal Nagar stressed on the formality of learning as they had been trained by contractors to operate machines in sheds and workshops.

Infact training was seen as a key barrier by many contractors to paid female entry in the trade. Puruchand, the contractor interviewed in Madaiganj said that men were usually involved in this work as women needed more training and did only odd jobs associated with the work such as folding at home.

Persons engaged in this trade reported some levels of primary education. During FGD's the most educated female participant had studied till class 9th. Joining this work was seen as a last resort due to the lack of any better opportunities or due to restrictions on female mobility. Samita commented during her interview,

I was offered a job in a shop, but my parents refused as it was not safe. So I work here now.

- **Earnings and Work Availability**

FGD's conducted in Naka suggested that women earn between Rs 8 to Rs 10 for 100 boxes. A few women reported that the piece rate increases by Rs 1 each year during Diwali time and the actual amount they should have been receiving was Rs 10. However, varied rates were reported and contractors/wholesale box retailers would pay women at ad-hoc rates and infrequently. Gomti elaborates,

They pay us when they feel like. If they are in a good mood, then I get proper pay, but if he is in trouble, then I know I shall only see some part of my earnings.

There was also frustration voiced as male labour hired from outside the locality were paid more and had better assurance of work throughout the year. Rima says,

They come from outside. We are all sitting here with nothing to feed our families with. We all work hard and want to work more, but it is of no use. They hire outsiders.

Women working in Naka Chouk lived in a locality which was dominated by shops selling boxes. From the point of view of market proximity and direct relations with contractors, this would seem close to an ideal situation. Workers deal directly with the main contractor and receive raw materials from him directly. To solve any dispute regarding payment or supply requires a 5 minute walk from their houses. However, findings suggest that while such proximity to market activity does provide work opportunities, it does not guarantee employment or earnings security.

Women in the locality said that finding work was based on their own initiative and the whims of the contractors. Earnings were not stable and no such assurance was possible. Leela says,

Getting work is difficult. Women have to keep going and asking. We feel bad, but it is better than doing nothing.

In other areas, the rates paid to labour were ad-hoc and biased in favour of shed based labour. Contractors interviewed in Madaiganj said they would hire labour from outside and pay them 20 Rs for 500 boxes and 30 Rs for 600-700 boxes depending on the type of box.

During festival time in Diwali, they did not receive any bonus although some contractors would provide sweets or ghee for the family. This is a crucial point as this trade sees immense seasonality with bulk work being done during this period. Contractors in Madaiganj, Naka and Deen Dayal Nagar stated that they received their largest orders for close to 50,000 to 1 lakh boxes during Diwali.

Women in the FGD said that they would stay up all night working for these boxes during this time. They would make 800-1000 boxes in a day during the peak season and the lean season they would supply close to 500 boxes per day. The lean season was cited during Monsoons and rainy spells as the boxes would not dry properly. Samita in her interview offered an interesting explanation for the dip in demand around rainy months.

People eat fruits and mangoes especially then. They do not buy sweets.

Women in the area said that such work had been present in Naka for the past 25 years and recently their situation had deteriorated. Lata who had been working in this trade for the past 15 years said,

Earlier, the work was good but now they don't pay properly.

Anand Agarwal, a contractor interviewed in Madaiganj felt that in the past 10 years the demand for these products has reduced for individual contractors due to increasing competition. He stated that box making had become a major shed and workshop based trade in Lucknow with close to 3000 factories, where work was done faster with hired labour.

Now, he would barely earn close to 12% profit margins. He said that raw materials costs were increasing and his profit was dwindling.

In this situation, what are we to pay others and how do we survive?

Vishwapur Mukherjee, another contractor from Deen Dayal Nagar blamed the government for the slowdown in work. He suggested that people were facing grave troubles as there was an increasing shortage of raw materials as the VAT had increased prices of cardboard.

Women would be paid on a weekly basis and work was available throughout the year in Naka. However Lata in Madaiganj said that women would have to find other sources of work to keep their expenses going in her locality. She stressed on the need to improve garment and chikan work opportunities.

Finally, women in the FGD's stated that they hardly had any savings and that their incomes were the primary source of household expenses and for children's education.

Payal, one of the home based workers interviewed offers a clear illustration. Her husband worked as a rickshaw driver and would earn unstable amounts each month between Rs 1000-Rs 2500 per month. There would be months when he would earn lesser amounts as well. She earned close to Rs 3000 per month and this income allowed her to pay bills and run her household. Her comment stresses on issues surrounding the feminization of poverty.

Without these boxes, we would starve.

Overall in a month, female home based sweetmeat box makers would earn close to Rs 2000 per month in the lean season and Rs 3500 per month in the peak season. To average these figures, we can estimate that they could possibly earn close to \$717 in a year (Rs 2750 per month) which is 23% of Indian per capita income.

- **Lack of Information and Control**

Most women were unaware of household expenditures and earnings. Lata and her brother made boxes at home in Madaiganj. He purchased a machine which assisted in the cutting process of the cardboard while Lata and her mother assisted in gluing and folding. He bought the machine for Rs 15,000. They would earn a profit of Rs 14-Rs15 for 100 boxes. Lata herself could tell us very little about how much they spent and earned. They sold their products in Raniganj and Naka. If the quality of the boxes is better then their profit would reach 30-35 Rs.

Underlying power relations are expressed through indirect control mechanisms that shopkeepers and contractors employed while dealing with payments and supply of raw materials. Workers mentioned that they would rarely receive the full payment accruing to them and had to persist with working for the same contractor in hopes of receiving their full payment. Such behavior by shopkeepers towards contractors hurt the workers earnings as well.

Puruchand Srivastava and his wife Suhasini had recently lost their son who was involved in the box making trade. They had to persist with his contractor as he owed their son a large amount and soon such unpaid claims reached such heights that they were forced to continue working for this contractor on a full time basis using other labour as well.

They don't ever pay us properly. When my son died, they were good enough to show up at the house and give us some money but I have seen very little of what we should actually receive.

In Naka, close scrutiny of women and their work by the contractor makes organizing a difficult proposition. During the period of research, several workers were fearful of passersby as they felt talking to any third party about the nature of their problems would cause them to lose their means of livelihood. None had heard of any organization working for their welfare or of any welfare schemes.

- **Health and Child care**

Backaches, leg pain and headaches were reported by each FGD participant as the work process involves long hours where women are hunched and squatting throughout the day. During FGD's only one woman stated that she had faced serious illness due to which she went to the doctor. The participants said they preferred going to the local private doctor as the government hospital would take too much time. The private doctor in Naka charged Rs 30 for each visit.

Child labour is rampant in this trade as only one FGD participant noted that she started working in this trade after her marriage. As earnings potential (See Diagram 1.1) is dependent on the number of boxes supplied, the whole family is engaged to contribute in the production process.

- **Shelter and Storage**

Women in Naka expressed great concern about the sanitation and hygiene of the area they lived in. The local garbage was never collected and working in this situation exposed them and their children to great health risks. Rupa stated that one of her sisters had contracted cholera due to the water and dirt in the area. Rupa's neighbour Gita, who has been working in the trade for the past 10 years, expressed immense anger.

Look where we live. No one bothers to clean or give us any help. We pay each month, for this dirt? Before you talk of work, you should see if you can get this place cleaned up.

Houses were reported as one room shelters and only two women who were part of FGD's said they had windows at home. Each person reported that they had a toilet at home.

During interviews, Samita said that household rent varied each year and for the past two years her family had been paying 900 Rs per month for their small home. Electricity supply was another problem that emerged from the interviews. Women had a common water source which was a public tap in the centre of the slum locality.

The major work related problem observed and voiced surrounded storage. Boxes were seen spread out inside homes and outside on adjoining streets.

SAMITA: Life out of a Box



Samita at the age of 19 is called the local *shagird* (expert) on box making in Naka Chouk. She belongs to a family of 11 people in Lucknow, where she has 6 sisters, 2 brothers and her parents. She started work in the box making trade at the age of 6 and learnt this work from her sisters.

Our lives have been spent around boxes; I would wake up to see my mother and sisters folding them and go to sleep when they would be continuing this work.

Samita went to school but most of her time went in working at home and helping her family stay afloat. She failed her class 10 exams and has left schooling since. Her father works as a street vendor and earnings have been falling steadily in the past 5 years. The past month, he earned Rs 1200.

What he used to earn was never enough, but nowadays I see him and my mother more worried. I know times are hard, but we are all trying the best we can.

Her brother's work at a local garment shop as salesman and earn Rs 2000 each. However, as Samita points out, it is of no help to them as they are married and have their own children to feed.

Five of her sisters are married and have moved away, which was one her gravest concerns.

They don't live nearby and we worry. I visit them when I can and hope that they are being taken care of. Nowadays times are bad. I shall be very careful to choose partners.

She and her sister earned close to Rs 5000 each month with box making and she received some amount for herself to save so that she could travel to meet her sisters and buy cosmetics. However, she gave Rs 1500 to her mother for household expenditures.

Samita was not happy with her work, but suggested that in her situation, it was the best she could do. She was offered a job as a salesgirl in a nearby cosmetics shop where she would earn Rs 3000 alone, but her parents did not give their consent due to fear of ill repute and safety.

I want to work. My mother does not let me. She worries about what people think and what might happen. With what is going on in Lucknow nowadays, can you blame her?

When asked about her needs and priorities, she stressed on education and earnings. She said her hands would pain at the end of the day due to all the work she would do. Her working hours stretch from 10 in the morning, which is when her father would leave for work till 10 at night. During Diwali, she often works throughout the nights. The radio and the hopes for a better future are what she has for company.

SURVEY FINDINGS

While survey questionnaires were finalized and training was conducted with the Lucknow Mahila Sewa Trust, quantities of workers to justify a survey were not found in the locations sited and visited. Contractors mentioned 3000 factories engaged in this work, where male labour was larger in number and few home based workers were involved. Assuming one home based worker for each unit, an estimate of a minimum of 3000 home based workers in this trade emerges. This estimate though, based on comments from those interviewed and initial field visits and mapping, are predominantly male. None of the contractors suggested that they would give work to women on a continuous basis.

Thus, as a testimony to the invisibility of women's work's, only one of the areas visited gave any indication of women's home based involvement and this was in Naka Chouk, a locality where boxes are sold wholesale to shopkeepers. In other areas scanned, the work being done is completely invisible unless done in sheds where contractors are directly involved.

Thus, the idea of a survey in this trade was abandoned. A survey for an unmapped trade would require further field explorations and more training on mapping methodology.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- **Need for fixed piece rate implementation and identification**
- **Need to identify sources for more work in packaging for other products in combination with training.**
- **Smaller chains of production should be exploited to involve shopkeepers and contractors in a social security arrangements and dialogue.**

- Need to further explore the nature of factories and sheds where such work commences and understand the role women play in a seemingly male trade.
- Mapping methodology needs training and testing for newer trades.
- Shelter, Hygiene and Storage concerns should be taken up through above mentioned process.

FIELD REPORT

LOCATION: Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh
PERIOD OF STAY: 26 TH JULY-29 TH July
PURPOSE: Research on Box Makers in the city
PARTNERS: Lucknow Mahila Sewa Trust

ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN:

Day	Activity	Location	Output
26 th July 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner meeting • Field Visit • 3 Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LMST office, Vikash Nagar • Madaiganj 	Mapping of locations, work process Contractor-labour relation mapped Meeting related research assistants
27 th July 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field visit • interview Training of RAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deen Dayal Nagar • Naka Chouk LMST Office	Contractors Other locations sited 2 RAs at LMST were trained on canvassing of questionnaire and conducting FGDs
28 th July 2006	Field Visit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 FGDs (8,6) • 2 Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naka Chouk • Raniganj 	Vulnerabilities of female HBWs Other locations sited and explored.
29 th July 2006	Meeting with the partner organization	LMST Office	Discussions on the current field and future field visits

Conclusion

The study carried in the three states of Bihar, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh has brought out several interesting issues regarding home-based work. Today almost all the home-based trades are either challenged for their vulnerability in the fast changing regularised economy or highly marginalised and lost in the vast economic world. However, home-based jobs and the voices of home-based workers are hopefully not entirely unnoticed.

The present study is a modest attempt to map the production processes from three states. This process will help in the organising of home-based workers. Women form the vast bulk of home-based workers. In many instances, women's contribution as unpaid family labour has not been ever accounted for. There is hardly any home-based job, where women's contribution as labour is not sought for. It has been found most of the times, that women's contribution is neither recognised nor regarded as actual work. As far as the marketing is concerned, due to social restriction on their mobility, women traditionally never took any lead role in that aspect of the home-based trade except in some regions.

In the majority of cases homebased piece-rate workers do not even get the minimum wage as fixed by the state government. Even the wage that they get is the outcome of unpaid assistance of other family members which is invisible. The substantial part of this labour comprises young girls and women.

Many believe that too much pressure on the contractors/ middlemen to implement the minimum wage act may result in total shift of the business from the state, as has been experienced earlier. Today, it is easier to shift the entire trade to a new location where labour is cheap. In the case of agarbatti rolling in Gaya (Bihar), which is considered as one of the highest agarbatti producing centres in terms of volume, it has been found that entire raw material for this trade are brought from different parts of the country. The semi-finished products are then sent to a few trading centres for finishing and packaging.

The study also highlights the dismal living conditions of homebased worker. The large majority are below the line of poverty, but are unable to access any social protection measure of the state. In most places homebased workers are at the bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy and the fragile and insecure nature of their work does not help them come out of this precarious existence. To make matters more difficult, recent trends show that the wages are not improving while the prices of essential commodities are increasing.

Homebased workers are in need of credit facilities, but do not have access to these. They are unable to approach banks, as they are unable to provide the required documents to avail the facilities and no one to act as guarantor. They are dependent on money-lenders who charge a great deal of interest.

For homebased workers, the home is also the workplace, but they lack proper housing. In all regions, basic facilities such as sanitation are lacking. Many live in houses that are one room tenements lacking proper ventilation. As the home is also the workplace, homebased workers end up paying for many of the costs – such as electricity, pay for defects in raw materials which in the factory setup would have been the entrepreneur's responsibility, for instance the bad quality of leaves in beedi rolling sector. The lack of space and proper housing affects their productivity and increases risks regarding goods being damaged.

They suffer from a variety of ailments which is directly related to their work. But it is difficult to separate the occupational health problems from their life situation. The below minimum wages, lack of sanitation and safe drinking water and low nutritional status. They do not have access to public health care services and are dependent on private practitioners.

Thus homebased workers are in a situation where they are unable to get any social protection either from the state or from the industry even in situations where it is stipulated such as in the *beedi* sector.

Recommendations

The situation of homebased workers is complex and has to be addressed at various fronts. Homebased workers feel that if at least some of these needs are met they will be able to improve their economic situation. The most important needs of home based workers that emerged from the survey in the three states were:

- Timely payments
- More work
- Minimum wage
- Market information
- Credit facilities
- Skill training

These needs are not new and have been raised repeatedly. With growing informalisation of the production process and employment, meeting these needs will be essential in meeting the changing demands of the economy.

Homenet India – 2006
Survey of Home-based Workers

Schedule No: Name of organisation Interviewer's name	Trade State Place Type of area - Urban /rural/ peri-urban
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Card A – Personal and Household Details

A.1 Name

A.2 Age

A.3 Sex

A.4 Religion

A.5 Caste

A.6 Marital status

A.7 Literacy level

A.8 Head of household

A.9 Age of head of household

A.10 Total number of family members : ____

	Female	Male
Age: 0-14	A.11	A.13
Age: 15 and above	A.12	A.14

Members working in the household:

A.15 S.No	A.16 Relati onship	A.17 Age	A.18 Sex	A.19 Edu	A.20 Working in this sector	Area of work-1		A.22 Area of work-2		A.23 Area of work-3	
						Activity A.21.a	Labour Status A.21.b	Activity A.22.a	Labour Status A.22.b	Activity A.23.a	Labour Status A.23.b
1.	1. (Self)										
2.											
3.											
4.											
5.											
6.											
7.											
8.											
9.											
10											

Codes – Card A

<p>A.3 and A.18: Sex</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Female 2. Male 	<p>A.4: Religion</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Christian 2. Hindu 3. Muslim 4. Sikh 5. Other 	<p>A.5: Caste</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General 2. Other Backward Classes 3. Scheduled Castes 4. Scheduled Tribes 5. Not applicable
<p>A.6: Marital Status</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unmarried 2. Married 3. Separated/ Divorced 4. Widowed 	<p>A.7 and A.17: Literacy levels</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Illiterate 2. Can sign name 3. Primary 4. Secondary 5. High school and above 6. Other 	<p>A.8: Head of the household</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Female 2. Male
<p>A.16: Relationship</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self 2. Spouse 3. Father 4. Mother 5. Brother 6. Sister 7. Daughter 8. Son 9 Other 	<p>A.20: Working in this sector</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No 	<p>A.21b / A.22.b / A23.b: Labour Status</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Piece-rate worker 2. Self-employed 3. Working in lieu of debt 4. Unpaid family labour 5. Other

Card B – Housing

B.1 Ownership status - _____

B.2 Type of settlement – _____

B.3 Type of walls - _____

B.4 Type of roof - _____

B.5 No of rooms - _____

B.6 Source of potable water

B.7 Distance from water source

B.8 Do you have an electricity connection.

B.9 For how many hours in a day is electricity available

B.10 Do you usually work inside the house or outside the house

B.11 If you work inside the house, how many windows does that room have?

B.12 Where do you keep the raw materials and finished goods?

B.12.1 If other, please specify:

B.13 Do you have enough space to keep raw materials and finished products?

B.13.1 If no, then please specify how storage is done:

B.14 What kind of stove do you use to cook?

Codes – Card B

<p>B.1: Ownership status 1. Owned by self/family 2. Paying rent</p>	<p>B.2: Type of Settlement 1. Authorised 2. Unauthorised</p>	<p>B.3: Types of walls 1. Plastic sheets 2. straw/bamboo 2. Mud 3. Brick/tin/asbestos 4. Other</p>
<p>B.4: Type of roof 1. Plastic sheets 2. straw 2. tin/Asbestos 3. Cement 4. Other</p>	<p>B.6: Source of potable water 1. Well 2. River /Nulla 3. Hand pump 4. Communal Tap 5. Tap in the household 6.Other</p>	<p>B.7: Distance from water source 1. Within 50 meters 2. 51- 100 meters 3. 101 – 500 meters 4. 500 meters – 1 km 5. More than 1 km</p>
<p>B.8: Electricity Connection 1. Yes 2. No</p>	<p>B.10: Do you usually work inside or outside the house 1. Inside 2. Outside 3.Both</p>	<p>B.11 Number of windows 1. One 2. More than one 3. None</p>
<p>B.12 Where do you keep the materials 1. Inside the house 2. Outside the house 3. Roof top 4. Other</p>	<p>B.13 Do have enough space 1. Yes 2. No</p>	<p>B.14 Kind of stove 1. Mud stove 2. Kerosene stove 3. Gas 4. Coal 5.Other</p>

Card C – Work Profile

- C.1 At what age did you start working (including helping others in the family)
- C.2 At what age did you start earning independently
- C.3 Since how many years have you been working in this sector (including helping others in the family) –
- C.4 Since how many years have you been earning in this sector
- C.5 Labour status for this sector – _____ + _____ + _____
- C.6 For how many months do you do this work?
- C.7 Which part of the day do you work?
- C.8 For how many months is the work easily available (peak period)
- C.9 How many days in peak months do you get this work
- C.10 How many hours do you work in a day during the peak months?
- C.11 How many months is the work difficult to get (lean period)
- C.12 How many days during the lean months do you get this work?
- C.13 How many hours in a day do you work during the lean months?
- C.14 Are there months when you are without this work? _____
- C.15 If yes, for how many months are you without this work?
- C. 16 Do you get other types of work in those months when this work is not available?
- C.17 Type of remuneration for work in this sector –
- C. 18 How frequently do you receive the payment?
- C. 19 How much do you (only respondent) earn from this work in a month during peak period?
- C. 20 How much do you (only respondent) earn from this work in a month during lean period?
- C. 21 Has there been any change in earnings in last two years –
- C.22 Has there been any change in availability of work in last two years –
- C.23 Has there been any change in costs incurred in last two years –
- C.24 Has there been any change in time taken to complete the same work in last two years –
- C 25 Do you receive any other income from any other sources? (apart from home-based work)

Codes – Card C

<p>C.5 Labour status</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Piece-rate 2. Own-account 3. Unpaid family labour 4. Work in lieu of debt 5. Other 6. Contractor 	<p>C.7 When do you work</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. morning 2. noon 3. afternoon 4. evening 5. night 6. whole day – whenever get time 	<p>C. 14 & C. 16</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No
<p>C.17 Type of remuneration</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cash 2. In kind 3. Work in lieu of debt 4. None - help family 5. Other 	<p>C. 18 Frequency of payment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. daily 2. weekly 3. monthly 4. Irregular 	<p>C. 21, C.22, C 23, C.24 Changes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased 2. Decreased 3. Remained the same 4. Don't know
<p>C 25 income from other sources</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rent 2. Interest 3. Agricultural income 4. Any other 		

Card D: Needs and Priorities

D.1 What are your most important needs regarding this sector of work (any three): ----- +. ----- +-----

D. 2 Have you been ill in the last year? :

If yes,

What sort of illness D.3	Any treatment D.4	Where D.5

Codes – Card D

<p>D1 : Needs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Housing 2 Credit 3 Loans 4 Timely payment 5 More work 6 Skill training 7 Health care centre 8 Health insurance 9 Maternity benefits 10 Medicines 11 Storage space 12 Access to market information 13 Education facilities 14 Transport 15 Roads 16 Minimum Wage 17 Other (specify) 	<p>D.2: Illness in past year</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No 	<p>D. 4: Any treatment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No
<p>D 5 Source of treatment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Private 2.Government 3.Pharmacist 4.Self medication 5.Home-remedies 6.Hakim/Vaid 7.Jhad-phook /tanrick / exorcism 8.Homeopathy 9. Other (specify) 		