



A home-based worker in Faisalabad, Pakistan works on an embroidery panel that will adorn fabrics and decorative tapestries. Photo courtesy of HNSA



Home-Based Workers in Pakistan A Statistical Profile

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In recent years, home-based work has grown in Pakistan. This growth is due to an increase in the number of women doing home-based work, while the number of men in home-based work has declined.

From 2013/14 to 2017/18, the number of home-based workers increased from approximately 3.59 to 4.37 million, while the share of home-based workers in total employment remained constant at 7 per cent (**table 1**). The increase was due to the growth in the number of women in home-based work

— from 2.67 million in 2013/14 to 3.59 million in 2017/18 and from 22 per cent to 28 per cent of women's total employment. By contrast the number of men in home-based work declined from 925,000 to 786,000 and from slightly above to slightly below 2 per cent of men's total employment.

In 2013/14 there were twice as many home-based workers in agricultural as in non-agricultural employment, but in 2017/18 the number in non-agricultural home-based work were greater than in agricultural: home-based workers in non-agricultural employment increased to 2.47 million while those in

Table 1: Home-based workers (HBWs): Numbers and per cent (in parentheses) of total, agricultural and non-agricultural employment by sex: 2013/14 and 2017/18

	Total		Women		Men	
	2013/14	2017/18	2013/14	2017/18	2013/14	2017/18
Total HBWs	3,591,565 (6.6)	4,371,441 (7.3)	2,666,403 (21.8)	3,585,436 (28.0)	925,161 (2.2)	786,005 (1.7)
HBWs: Agricultural employment	2,450,194 (10.8)	1,896,870 (8.5)	1,986,771 (22.3)	1,581,650 (18.7)	463,422 (3.4)	315,221 (1.4)
HBWs: Non-agricultural employment	1,141,371 (3.6)	2,474,571 (6.6)	679,632 (20.5)	2,003,786 (46.2)	461,739 (1.6)	470,784 (2.3)

About this Brief

This update of an earlier brief, *Home-based Workers in Pakistan: Statistics and Trends*,¹ is based on the Labour Force Surveys (LFS) of 2013/14 and 2017/18, conducted by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

The earlier brief, published in 2013, compared the data from the LFS of 2005/06 and 2008/09. Because the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics made changes in the status in employment and the industry classifications in the 2013/14 survey, it was not possible to include the 2008/09 data in this analysis. The estimates of home-based workers in the current brief are not exactly comparable to those in the previous report in several important ways.

- First, home-based workers in agriculture are included in the current brief but not in the earlier one.
- Second, the categories in the place of work question, which are used to identify home-based work, are different in the two briefs. In the earlier brief, two location categories were used: i) “at his/her own dwelling”; and ii) “at the family or a friend’s dwelling”. In the current report, a stricter definition based on only at “his or her own dwelling” is used to define home-based workers.
- The third difference reflects the classification of contributing family workers. Previously, contributing family workers were classified as self-employed. However, in the new International Classification of Status in Employment-18, they have been reclassified as dependent workers.

¹ *Home-based Workers in Pakistan: Statistics and Trends* was prepared by Sajjad Akhtar and Joann Vanek and published in 2013 as WIEGO Statistical Brief No. 9, available at <https://www.wiego.org/sites/default/files/publications/files/Akhtar-HBW-Pakistan-WIEGO-SB9.pdf>. It is also available on the HomeNet South Asia website: <https://hnsa.org.in/sites/default/files/Statistical%20Brief%20-Pakistan.pdf>.

agriculture dropped to 1.90 million. This increase was again among women. Women non-agricultural home-based workers more than doubled from around 680,000 in 2013/14 to 2 million in 2017/18 and their share of women’s non-agricultural employment increased from 21 to 28 per cent. Non-agricultural home-based work became a primary source of employment for women in Pakistan. Conversely, the number of women in agricultural home-based work dropped from nearly 2 million in 2013/14

to 1.6 million in 2017/18 and their share of women’s agricultural employment dropped from 22 to 19 per cent. Among men, the numbers in agricultural and non-agricultural home-based work in 2013/14 were similar, around 460,000. By 2017/18, the number of men in agricultural home-based work had declined to about 315,000 workers while the number in non-agricultural home-based work had increased slightly. Among men, the share of home-based workers dropped in agricultural



*A home-based worker in Lahore, Pakistan works outside her home making cleaning brushes crafted from natural fibres.
Photo courtesy of HNSA*

employment from 3 to 1 per cent while in non-agricultural employment, it increased slightly to around 2 per cent.

In 2017/18, 75 per cent of all home-based workers, around 3.3 million workers, are in rural areas (**table 2**). This reflects a lower share than in 2013/14, when 84 per cent of home-based workers – about 3 million – were in rural areas. The majority of agricultural and non-agricultural home-based workers are in rural areas: 95 per cent and 59 per cent, respectively; this remained the same across both time periods. Among agricultural home-based workers, the largest share (80 per cent)

Table 2: Home-based workers by urban/rural for total, women and men, 2013/14 and 2017/18: Number and percentage distribution

	Total		Women		Men	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
2013/14						
Total	585,850	3,005,715	359,384	2,307,021	226,467	698,694
Per cent of all home-based workers	16.3	83.7	10.0	64.2	6.3	19.5
Agriculture	122,267	2,327,927	74,585	1,912,187	47,682	415,740
Per cent of agricultural home-based workers	5.0	95.0	3.0	78.0	1.9	17.0
Non-agriculture	463,583	677,788	284,799	394,834	178,785	282,954
Per cent of non-agricultural home-based workers	40.6	59.4	25.0	34.6	15.7	24.8
2017/18						
Total	1,100,000	3,271,441	872,784	2,712,652	227,216	558,790
Per cent of all home-based workers	25.2	74.8	20.0	62.1	5.2	12.8
Agriculture	94,396	1,802,474	64,796	1,516,854	29,600	285,621
Per cent of agricultural home-based workers	5.0	95.0	3.4	80.0	1.6	15.1
Non-agriculture	1,005,604	1,468,967	807,988	1,195,798	197,616	273,169
Per cent of non-agricultural home-based workers	40.6	59.4	32.7	48.3	8.0	11.0

are women in rural areas, while only 15 per cent are men in rural areas. Among non-agricultural workers, almost half (48 per cent) are women in rural areas and one-third are women in urban areas. This represents an increase in women's share of home-based work in both rural and urban areas. Men as a share of home-based workers fell in both rural and urban areas to 11 and 8 per cent, respectively.

Independent and Dependent Home-Based Workers

In 2017/18 among women home-based workers, the share of dependent workers was larger than among men (59 per cent in contrast to 36 per cent), largely because far more women than men are in dependent piece-rate work.

Box 1: Identifying home-based workers: Definition and a challenge

Home-based work is employment that takes place in one's own home or in a structure or grounds attached to one's home. Home-based work includes a wide range of activities, including professional occupations in the service sector, manufacturing, and agricultural work that takes place near to the home. Farming and kitchen gardening are not included as agricultural home-based work. In this brief, home-based workers in agriculture are thus comprised of those engaged in:

- animal production
- support activities to agriculture and post-harvest crop activities.

A challenge in identifying home-based workers in Pakistan arose because some construction labourers, security guards and domestic workers reported "own dwelling" as their place of work. These workers may be provided with a place to stay in the home or building in which they work that they reported as "own dwelling". These workers are not home-based workers and are excluded from the analysis.

In 2017/18, dependent home-based workers represent a larger share of total home-based workers than did independent workers (55 per cent in contrast to 45 per cent). This reflects a small decrease in dependent home-based workers; in 2013/14, 59 per cent were dependent and 41 per cent independent (**table 3**). By 2017/18, the share of dependent home-based workers was larger among women than among men (59 per cent in contrast to 36 per

Box 2: Identifying Independent Self-Employed and Dependent Home-Based Workers

Home-based workers may be either independent or dependent workers. Independent home-based workers are employers or self-employed workers with no employees, referred to as own account workers.¹ Dependent workers include employees, contributing family workers and sub-contracted piece-rate workers. Sub-contracted piece-rate workers have contractual arrangements of a commercial nature to provide goods or services for another economic unit, are not employees of that economic unit but are dependent on that unit for the organization and execution of that work and for access to the market.² They are also referred to as homeworkers. The 2017/18 labour force survey captured workers whose mode of payment is piece-rate. As a result, sub-contracted piece-rate workers who are often misclassified as independent home-based workers are classified as dependent home-based workers in this brief.

¹ Contributing family workers were classified as self-employed under the previous International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-93). However, under ICSE-18, contributing family work is considered a dependent work arrangement and these workers are therefore considered as dependent in this analysis.

² International Labour Office (ILO) 2018. Resolution concerning statistics on work relationships. 20th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), Geneva.

Table 3: Home-based workers by sex, dependency, agriculture and non-agriculture, 2013/14 and 2017/18: Numbers and per cent

	All		Women		Men	
	Independent	Dependent	Independent	Dependent	Independent	Dependent
2013/14						
Home-based workers	1,488,695	2,102,870	931,979	1,734,426	556,718	368,444
Per cent of all home-based workers	41.4	58.6	35.0	65.0	60.2	39.8
Agriculture	1,007,309	1,442,885	696,405	1,290,367	310,905	152,518
Per cent of agricultural home-based workers	41.1	58.9	35.1	64.9	67.1	32.9
Non-agriculture	481,386	659,985	235,574	444,059	245,813	215,926
Per cent of non-agricultural home-based workers	42.2	57.8	34.7	65.3	53.2	46.8
2017/18						
Home-based workers	1,970,626	2,400,815	1,467,152	2,118,283	503,473	282,532
Per cent of home-based workers	45.1	54.9	40.9	59.1	64.1	35.9
Agriculture	734,929	1,161,941	527,801	1,053,848	207,128	108,093
Per cent of agricultural home-based workers	38.7	61.3	33.4	66.6	65.7	34.3
Non-agriculture	1,235,697	1,238,874	939,351	1,064,435	296,345	174,439
Per cent of non-agricultural home-based workers	49.9	50.1	46.9	53.1	62.9	37.1

cent). This represents a drop from 2013/14 in the share in dependent employment for both women and men home-based workers (65 and 40 per cent, respectively). Among women, the share of dependent home-based workers is higher in the agricultural sector than in non-agriculture (67 per cent in contrast to 53 per cent). In 2013/14, 65 per cent of women home-

based workers were dependent workers in both agricultural and non-agricultural work. There was a large drop in the share of dependent home-based workers among women non-agricultural workers, but only a small decline among women agricultural workers. Among men the majority of home-based workers in each survey and in both the agricultural and

Table 4. Home-based workers by status in employment, sex and urban/rural areas, 2017/18: Number and percentage distribution

	Urban		Rural	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Women				
Independent	403,298	46.2	1,063,856	39.2
Employer	976	0.1	0	0.0
Own account	402,322	46.1	1,063,856	39.2
Dependent	469,486	53.8	1,648,797	60.8
Paid employee	20,540	2.4	20,247	0.7
Casual paid employee	48,214	5.5	32,773	1.2
Piece-rate worker	236,283	27.1	393,189	14.5
Contributing family worker	157,637	18.1	1,201,810	44.3
Others	6,812	0.8	778	0.0
Men				
Independent	144,280	63.5	359,193	64.3
Employer	4,257	1.9	1,496	0.3
Own Account	140,023	61.6	357,697	64.0
Dependent	82,935	36.5	199,596	35.7
Paid employee	22,428	9.9	15,943	2.9
Casual paid employee	16,502	7.3	29,654	5.3
Piece-rate worker	22,511	9.9	17,655	3.2
Contributing family worker	21,494	9.5	135,282	24.2
Others	0	0.0	1,062	0.2

non-agricultural sectors are independent. There was little change in the share that were independent among men in agriculture; however, in the non-agricultural sector, the share that was independent increased from 53 per cent in 2013/14 to 63 per cent in 2017/18.

Self-employed with no employees, referred to as own account workers, is the single largest status category for women and for men in urban areas, comprising 46 per cent of women home-based workers and an even higher 62 per cent of men (**table 4**). Among *urban* workers,

Box 3: Defining the Categories of the International Classification of Status in Employment

Employers own the economic unit in which they work and control its activities on their own or in partnership with others (including temporarily but excluding their partners and family helpers) – and in this capacity, employ one or more persons to work as an employee on a regular basis.

Own account workers are owner-operators without employees who operate an enterprise for profit alone or with one or more partners or contributing family workers; they do not employ any person to work in the enterprise on a regular basis as an employee.

Contributing family workers assist a family member or household member in a market-oriented enterprise operated by the family or household member or in a job in which the assisted family member or household member is employed. They do not receive regular payments, such as a wage or salary, in return for the work performed, and they do not make the most important decisions affecting the enterprise or have responsibility for it.

Employees are workers for pay who do not hold controlling ownership of the economic unit in which they are employed. They are remunerated in cash or in kind in return for time worked or, in some cases, for each task or piece of work done or for services provided.

Casual paid employees are workers who are hired each day, as distinguished from employees who are hired for a longer period of time.

Piece-rate workers are supplied with raw materials/inputs by the customers (who are either wholesalers/retailers/suppliers/individuals) and are paid a piece rate for each unit produced.

piece-rate workers are the next largest status category, accounting for 27 per cent of women in home-based work and 10 per cent of men. Also in urban areas, contributing family workers are 18 per cent of women and 9 per cent of men home-based workers. In *rural* areas, contributing family workers are the single largest category for women home-based workers at 44 per cent, followed by own account workers at 39 per cent. Women piece-rate workers constitute the third largest group of rural women home-based workers at 15 per cent. Among men in rural areas, own account workers are the largest group (64 per cent) followed by contributing family workers (24 per cent).

Industry

Between 2013/14 and 2017/18, the number of women in home-based manufacturing tripled; almost all of the increase was in the manufacturing of textiles and apparel.

Table 5 reports the composition of home-based work across the major industry categories in 2017/18 with 43 per cent in agriculture, 46 per cent in manufacturing, and 11 per cent in services. The number of home-based workers in agriculture declined from 2.45 million in 2013/14 to 1.9 million in 2017/18, while the number in manufacturing increased from 762,424 to somewhat over 2 million. There was a small growth in the services sector between the two dates, from 378,949 to 457,069.

In 2013/14, three-quarters of women in home-based work were in agriculture; in 2017/18 the proportion dropped to less than half (44

per cent). By contrast, manufacturing was only 19 per cent of women's home-based work in 2013/14 but rose to 50 per cent in 2017/18.

Table 5: Home-based workers by industry and sex, 2013/14 to 2017/18: Number and percentage distribution

	Total		Women		Men	
	2013/14	2017/18	2013/14	2017/18	2013/14	2017/18
Agriculture & other industries	2,450,194	1,896,870	1,986,772	1,581,649	463,422	315,221
Per cent of total home-based worker employment	68.2	43.4	74.5	44.1	50.1	40.1
Raising of cows and buffaloes	64.2	41.0	70.8	41.9	45.3	36.6
Raising of sheep and goats	3.9	2.3	3.6	2.1	4.5	3.3
Others	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2
Manufacturing	762,424	2,017,500	517,912	1,773,189	244,512	244,311
Per cent of total home-based worker employment	21.2	46.2	19.4	49.5	26.4	31.1
Food Products	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.4	1.3	1.0
Textiles and apparel	13.4	39.4	15.6	45.0	7.2	14.0
Leather and footwear	1.3	1.6	0.7	1.5	2.8	1.9
Wood and paper	1.0	1.5	0.6	1.2	2.2	2.8
Construction/infrastructure	2.1	1.1	0.0	0.0	8.0	5.9
Other	2.9	2.1	2.2	1.4	4.9	5.5
Services	378,949	457,069	161,721	230,598	217,228	226,471
Per cent of total home-based employment	10.6	10.5	6.1	6.4	23.5	28.8
Repair services	1.0	0.5	0.0	0	3.7	2.6
Retail services	3.0	2.8	1.1	1.1	8.5	10.8
Education	1.2	1.1	1.3	1.1	0.8	1.1
Health	1.1	0.4	0.7	0.2	2.0	1.2
Personal services	1.3	2.1	1.0	1.8	2.0	3.3
Other	3.1	3.6	1.9	2.3	6.3	9.7

The latter reflected a tripling of the number of women in home-based manufacturing – from 517,912 to 1,773,139 workers – almost all in the manufacture of textiles and apparel. Women in agriculture are mainly engaged in raising cows and buffaloes.

Between the two dates, the number of men in home-based manufacturing in contrast to women remained roughly the same at around 244,000; the share of men's home-based work in manufacturing, however, increased from 26 to 31 per cent. The main sub-sector for men in manufacturing, as for women, is textile and apparel but this reflects only 14 per cent of men's employment in home-based work, up from 7 per cent in 2013/14. In the agricultural sector, the number of men in home-based work declined from 463,422 to 315,211 and their share declined from 50 per cent to 41 per cent.

Home-based work in the services sector grew by about 80,000 between the two dates. Services sector employment is only 6 per cent of women's home-based work at both points in time and a larger share of men's home-based work: 24 per cent in 2013/14, increasing to 29 per cent in 2017/18.

Table 5 reports the composition of home-based work by industry sub-categories. **Table 6** reports home-based workers as a per cent of total employment in each of the major industry sectors and detailed sub-categories. In 2017/18, manufacturing is the only sector where home-based workers account for more

than 10 per cent of total employment. However, for women, employment in manufacturing is overwhelmingly home-based. Home-based work accounts for 83 per cent of women's employment in manufacturing and an even higher 92 per cent in textiles and leather goods and footwear. Home-based work also predominates in the manufacture of wood and

paper products, accounting for 84 per cent of women's employment in the sector.

Home-based work is generally less than 2 per cent of men's employment in manufacturing and services. However in several sub-categories of manufacturing and services, the percentage of home-based work for men is slightly higher: in

Table 6: Home-based workers as per cent of total employment in major industry and sub-industry sectors and sex, 2013/14 and 2017/18

	Total		Women		Men	
	2013/14	2017/18	2013/14	2017/18	2013/14	2017/18
Agriculture	10.8	8.5	22.3	18.7	3.4	2.3
Raising of cows and buffaloes	43.2	36.5	47.9	40.5	29.9	23.9
Raising of sheep and goats	25.8	13.9	37.0	24.1	15.2	6.2
Others	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Manufacturing	6.6	14.3	33.2	83.5	2.4	2.0
Food Products	2.3	2.0	22.3	36.5	1.5	0.7
Textiles and apparel	13.9	39.7	32.5	91.9	3.0	4.3
Leather and footwear	21.0	22.2	84.3	92.7	13.3	5.9
Wood and paper	11.3	14.2	87.3	83.5	6.7	5.5
Construction/infrastructure	1.8	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	1.0
Other	4.1	2.8	35.9	25.6	1.9	1.4
Services	1.9	2.0	9.2	10.4	1.2	1.1
Repair services	3.0	0.1	16.2	0.0	2.9	1.5
Retail services	1.7	1.8	16.1	20.3	1.3	1.3
Education	2.0	1.8	4.6	3.9	0.6	0.5
Health	4.6	1.8	9.2	2.9	3.0	1.4
Personal services	6.1	9.7	7.0	14.0	5.1	5.6
Other	1.3	1.5	22.6	27.2	0.7	0.7

leather and footwear as well as wood and paper products, and in personal services, around 6 per cent of men's employment is home-based.

In the agricultural sector, a higher proportion of women's than men's employment is home-based – in 2017/18, 19 per cent for women in comparison to 2 per cent for men. Within the sub-category of raising cows and buffaloes, 41 per cent of women's employment and 24 per cent of men's is home-based.

Table 7: Piece-rate home-based workers in manufacturing, 2017/18: Number and percentage distribution by sub-sector and sex*

	Total	Women	Men
Manufacturing	674,247	634,081	40,166
Per cent	100.0	94.0	6.0
Sub-sectors			
Textile and Apparel	589,901	569,676	20,225
Per cent	87.5	84.5	3.0
Leather goods and Footwear	39,901	34,135*	5,766
Per cent	5.9	5.1	0.9
Other manufacturing	44,445	30,270	14,175
Per cent	6.6	4.4	2.1

* This number includes 4,610 women who responded that they were casual workers in the status in employment classification but designated piece rate as mode of payment so were reclassified as piece-rate workers.

Piece-rate Home-based Workers

Almost all piece-rate workers are women who work in the manufacture of textiles and apparel.

As tables 4 and 6 show, many dependent women home-based workers are piece-rate workers engaged in the manufacture of textiles and apparel. There is special interest in this group of workers because they are often part of global supply chains and are a category of “dependent contractors” (the new status category in the International Classification of Status in Employment-18) and are predominantly women. In Pakistan, 94 per cent of piece-rate workers are women; only 6 per cent are men (**table 7**). Additional tabulations, not in the tables here, show that 55 per cent of women working in manufacturing are piece-rate workers, while only 7 per cent of men in manufacturing are piece-rate workers. Further, three-quarters of women in home-based manufacturing are piece-rate workers in comparison to just 15 per cent of men.

The overwhelming majority (94 per cent) of home-based piece-rate workers are women. Women comprise 85 per cent of piece-rate home-based workers in textile/apparel manufacturing, 5 per cent in the manufacturing of leather goods and footwear, and 4 per cent in other manufacturing industries. Men comprise only 3 per cent of home-based piece-rate workers in the manufacturing of textiles and apparel and 2 per cent in other manufacturing.



Home-based workers in Faisalabad, Pakistan package spools of thread that will be sold in local markets. Photo courtesy of HNSA

Hours of Work

In addition to their time in domestic and family care responsibilities, women's average work week in home-based work is 30 to 34 hours. Among men, the average work week is 39 to 52 hours.

The average workweek for women in home-based work is significantly less than for men: 30 to 34 hours for women in contrast to 39 to 52 hours for men (**table 8**). However, this is only part of the full workweek for home-based women as they also have responsibility for most household chores and family care responsibilities. Among

Table 8: Percentage distribution of weekly hours of work and average workweek of home-based workers by dependency, sex, urban/rural, and industry sector, 2017/2018

	Weekly hours: Independent Home-based Workers				Avg. hours/ week	Weekly hours: Dependent Home-based Workers				Avg. hours/ week
	<35	35-40	41-55	56+		<35	35-40	41-55	56+	
	Women					Women				
Urban										
All industry	42.2	33.8	20.4	3.6	33.6	52.7	28.6	15.0	3.7	32.0
Manufacturing	40.6	35.1	21.1	3.2	33.8	50.2	31.1	15.8	3.0	32.2
Services	53.7	24.3	15.0	7.0	32.0	61.8	19.5	12.3	6.4	31.1
Rural										
All industry	52.7	32.1	14.4	0.9	30.2	43.9	32.6	21.2	2.3	32.9
Manufacturing	52.2	32.4	14.6	0.9	26.7	43.2	33.4	21.4	2.0	33.0
Services	74.7	18.6	5.4	1.3	30.1	57.7	16.7	17.6	8.0	31.1
	Men					Men				
Urban										
All industry	9.6	11.1	38.1	41.2	52.0	15.5	12.9	45.8	25.8	47.7
Manufacturing	11.9	13.9	49.4	24.7	48.2	15.0	11.9	44.7	28.4	48.6
Services	6.7	7.5	23.8	62.1	56.7	16.1	14.0	46.9	23.0	46.7
Rural										
All industry	33.5	22.6	27.5	16.4	39.0	19.0	20.4	35.5	25.0	44.4
Manufacturing	38.2	19.6	26.0	16.2	37.7	20.1	21.3	37.7	20.9	42.8
Services	10.9	37.0	34.5	17.7	45.0	15.3	17.6	28.6	38.5	49.5

women, the average workweek is fairly similar for urban and rural and dependent and independent home-based workers.

Among men, urban home-based workers tend to have a longer average workweek than those in rural areas. Men who work as independent

home-based workers in urban areas have the longest average workweek at 52 hours, with those in services working an average of 57 hours a week and those in manufacturing 48 hours. Men who are *urban* dependent home-based workers have the next longest average workweek at 48 hours, with little difference



A young home-based worker in Gujarat, Pakistan stitches sequins onto a traditional dress. Photo courtesy of HNSA

between those in manufacturing and services (49 and 47 hours, respectively). Among *rural* men, dependent home-based workers have a longer average workweek than those who are independent, with those in services working an average 50 of hours a week and those in manufacturing an average of 43 hours.

For urban and rural women, whether independent or dependent, between 76 and 85 per cent of home-based workers in the manufacturing and service sectors work 40 hours or less per week. Among urban men, between 70 and 80 per cent of dependent and independent home-based workers work

between 41 to 56 or more hours per week. The corresponding number for men in rural areas is lower, ranging from 34 per cent for independent to 51 per cent for dependent workers.

Age and Marital Status

The majority of women in home-based work are married and between 25 to 54 years of age.

Among women, the composition of age and marital status is fairly similar for urban and rural home-based workers (**table 9**). Around one-third are married and between 35 to 54 years of age; another 20 per cent are married and ages 25-34. An additional 23 per cent of urban women and of rural women are between 15 to 24 years of age and never married. Among men, the pattern is different for urban and rural home-based workers. For those in urban areas, 45 per cent are married and ages 35 to 54, while only 30 per cent of men in rural areas are in this category. And among urban men, a smaller share (16 per cent) are ages 15 to 24 and never married, in comparison to 25 per cent of rural men. A striking difference is the share of rural men working at older ages (21 per cent) in comparison to urban men (6 per cent). Also, a larger share of women home-based workers in rural areas (12 per cent), than in urban areas (7 per cent), also work at age 55 and older.

Table 9: Home-based workers by age, marital status, sex and urban/rural areas, 2017/18: Percentage distribution

	Age				All
	15-24	25-34	35-54	55+	
All home-based workers					
Never married	21.2	4.1	1.0	0.1	26.3
Married	9.4	20.4	31.1	7.2	68.0
Widow/widower	0.0	0.4	2.4	2.0	4.8
Divorced	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.8
All	30.7	25.1	34.7	9.5	100.0
Urban women					
Never married	23.1	5.1	1.3	0.4	30.0
Married	6.6	19.4	33.3	2.9	62.3
Widow/widower	0.0	0.2	3.1	2.8	6.1
Divorced	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.4	1.6
All	30.0	25.2	38.2	6.5	100.0
Rural women					
Never married	20.3	3.1	0.8	0.0	24.3
Married	12.0	22.9	30.0	5.9	70.3
Widow/widower	0.0	0.6	2.5	1.6	4.7
Divorced	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.7
All	40.1	22.3	26.5	11.0	100.0
Urban men					
Never married	15.5	8.4	0.5	3.7	24.7
Married	1.0	14.3	44.7	13.3	73.3
Widow/widower	0.0	0.0	0.3	1.0	1.3
Divorced	0.0	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.7
All	51.0	24.8	18.6	5.6	100.0

Table 9 (cont'd): Home-based workers by age, marital status, sex and urban/rural areas, 2017/18: Percentage distribution

	Age				All
	15-24	25-34	35-54	55+	
Rural men					
Never married	24.5	5.1	1.5	0.2	31.3
Married	5.0	12.3	29.2	17.4	63.9
Widow/widower	0.0	0.0	1.4	3.2	4.6
Divorced	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2
All	29.5	17.4	32.1	21.0	100.0

Education

Two-thirds of women home-based workers in rural areas have no education compared to just over one third in urban areas; fewer men in home-based work have no education.

Among women, there are large differences in the education levels of home-based workers in urban and rural areas. The differences are greatest for those having no education (38 per cent in urban areas and 67 per cent in rural areas) and those with secondary level education (35 per cent in urban areas and 12 per cent in urban areas) (**table 10**). Although urban men who are home-based workers have higher levels of education than rural men, the differences are not as large as among women. Among men, 30 per cent in urban areas have no education in contrast to 41 per cent in rural areas; and 36 per cent in urban areas have secondary level education in comparison to 32

per cent in rural areas. The education levels of women home-based workers in urban areas are only slightly lower than men's at all levels, except among those having "no education". But the education gap between women and men home-based workers is quite significant in rural areas: women are far more likely to have no education while men are much more likely to have secondary education.



*A home-based worker in Pakistan makes ropes from reeds to be used in crafting baskets and for other household chores.
Photo courtesy of HNSA*

Table 10: Home-based workers by highest level of education by sex and urban/rural areas 2017/18: Number and percentage distribution

	Total		Women		Men	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Number	1,099,999	3,271,442	872,784	2,712,652	227,215	558,790
No education	36.1	62.5	37.7	67.0	30.2	40.6
Below primary	4.9	5.3	5.0	4.8	4.7	7.6
Primary	17.8	15.0	17.1	14.4	20.5	17.5
Secondary	35.3	15.8	35.1	12.4	35.8	32.4
Tertiary	5.9	1.4	5.1	1.3	8.8	1.9
	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.9*	100.0	100.0

* Does not add to 100 due to rounding.

This brief was prepared at the request of and in collaboration with **HomeNet South Asia** ([HNSA](#)). HNSA is South Asia's network for home-based workers in the region.

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