

# Home-based Workers in Lahore, Pakistan

by Bilal Naqeeb, Dr. Rubina Saigol, and Ume-Laila Azhar

August 2014

● Lahore



# Informal Economy Monitoring Study: Home-based Workers in Lahore, Pakistan

Field research for this report was conducted in Lahore between August – October, 2012. The Lahore Research Team consisted of Bilal Naqeeb, Rubina Saigol and Kishwar Sultana.

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# About the Informal Economy Monitoring Study

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The Informal Economy Monitoring Study (IEMS) is a major, longitudinal study of the urban informal economy being undertaken initially at two points in time, 2012 and 2015, in 10 cities around the world: Accra, Ghana; Ahmedabad, India; Bangkok, Thailand; Belo Horizonte, Brazil; Bogota, Colombia; Durban, South Africa; Lahore, Pakistan; Lima, Peru; Nakuru, Kenya; and Pune, India. The study combines qualitative and quantitative research methods to provide an in-depth understanding of how three groups of urban informal workers – home-based workers, street vendors, and waste pickers – are affected by and respond to economic trends, urban policies and practices, value chain dynamics, and other economic and social forces. The IEMS will generate panel data on the urban informal economy.

In each city, a team of five researchers worked in collaboration with a local membership-based organization of informal workers from April 2012 to April 2013 to collect and analyze the first round of the data.

All city research reports, as well as sector reports (one each for home-based work, street vending and waste work), a global report, and other information on the study can be found at [www.inclusivecities.org](http://www.inclusivecities.org) and [www.wiego.org](http://www.wiego.org).

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## Executive Summary

Recent statistics show the majority of workers in developing countries earn their livelihoods in the informal economy. The Informal Economy Monitoring Study (IEMS) is a qualitative and quantitative study of workers in 10 cities. Conducted by the Inclusive Cities Project partners and led by Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), the study is designed to provide credible, grounded evidence of the range of driving forces, both positive and negative, that affect the realities of home-based workers, street vendors and waste pickers. Informal workers and their membership-based organizations (MBOs) are at the centre of the analysis.

### *The Research on Home-Based Workers in Lahore*

In Lahore, WIEGO partnered with HomeNet Pakistan, a network of 360 organizations working for the recognition and labour rights of home-based workers. Together, these organizations include over 30,000 women who work at home for remuneration on a sub-contracted basis or as own account workers. Often, they belong to the poorest class in the economic strata of Pakistan.

Fieldwork for the study consisted of 15 focus groups, held in 2012, involving 75 workers. A survey was conducted with those workers, plus another 75 for a total of 150. Study participants were divided into two categories: self-employed own account workers who market their own goods, and industrial outworkers (also called sub-contracted homeworkers) who work for an employer or intermediary. The women were further categorized as either working in the garment or non-garment sector (mainly jewellery making, shoe making, food processing, paper bag making, and decorative items). Location was also used when selecting participants from the urban towns of Lahore. At least one third worked in the outlying industrial area (“the periphery”).

### *Key Findings*

#### *Individual, Household and Enterprise Characteristics*

The dependency ratio of workers and non-workers in households is approximately one to five. About 4 per cent of the study respondents reported that they are the only ones supporting their families. However, 24 per cent claimed they are major contributors to the overall income of their households. Almost all the households (91 per cent) rely on the informal economy for their income. An insignificant proportion (1 per cent) said their household income depends on family members working in the formal sector.

The home-based workers earn very low pay due to various reasons, including the commissions taken by middlemen, lack of awareness about the worth of their inputs, and poor negotiation skills. Another reason is lack of organization that can help to protect and safeguard their rights. While remuneration for products was excessively low across the spectrum of home-based workers, both the quantitative and qualitative portions of the study found that in the non-garment sector, where piece rate work was more common than own account work, workers work more hours and earn less than those in the garment sector, where own account workers were in greater numbers.

Apart from some small exceptions beyond family, most home-based workers’ households do not have any other types of support. The highest percentage (7 per cent) reported remittances or financial support from persons outside the household, followed by pensions and government grants (3 per cent each).

Approximately half of the home-based workers in the study have little or no education. Only 12 per cent reported that they had some secondary or higher education.

#### *Driving Forces*

The study uncovered both negative and positive driving forces that impact home-based workers and their enterprises.

#### *Macroeconomic Forces*

Home-based workers in Lahore are affected quite significantly by larger economic conditions. Inflation was overwhelmingly cited as the most important macroeconomic factor, impacting the lives of workers in 14 of the 15 focus groups. Persistent and double-digit inflation rate has had a hugely negative impact. The high price of raw materials, transport, food and other essentials also has had a

serious effect on their work and households. The women indicated that even meeting the basic food needs of the family is increasingly impossible. They spoke of despair.

To cope, they said they reduce household expenses – sometimes decreasing to one meal each day – take children out of school or move them from private to public schools, consume more second-hand goods, restrict socializing, and take on debt. The focus groups reported a rise in interpersonal tension and in illness, but said they were unable to seek proper health services because the cost of health services was also rising rapidly.

Price increases also impact negatively on the women's work activities. With high inflation, the numbers of orders are affected as people's buying power diminishes. Two main trends were reported: an increase in the intensity of work and a fall in earnings and surplus. Some workers increased their work hours and worked nights to make the same amount of money they had before.

Workers also responded by shifting monies from basic consumption to income generating activities. In other cases, workers were replacing expensive raw materials with cheaper alternatives, or changing their product mix to make more sellable items.

### **Government Policies**

#### **Energy Shortages**

Electricity shortages and load-shedding have had severe effects on the livelihoods of home-based workers. A majority of study respondents reported that when shortages occur, they cannot work. Reduced production, simply put, reduces the ability to meet daily food requirements.

Home-based workers reported that they have to work harder and longer hours when electricity is available to complete their orders. They complained about time being wasted due to the energy crisis, which in turn leads to a decrease in income. If they cannot get their orders completed, the intermediary gives work to others instead. The women cannot get enough sleep as they work late into the night, which is affecting their health. Children go to school hungry as food cannot be prepared. Where electrical pumps are used to draw out the water, it is not possible to access water during the electricity interruptions. Domestic violence from the tension caused by load shedding was also said to be on the rise.

They use candles and kerosene lamps as well as rechargeable lights, which are expensive. Although they would prefer to adopt alternate energy sources, most are difficult to afford. Many workers have shifted to manual machines, so that they can work in daylight to complete their work. But this has significantly reduced their production, and the expenditure of personal energy is greater with manual machines. Strained muscles and greater fatigue result.

#### **Infrastructure and Services**

Home-based workers in the study had both positive and negative reactions to current municipal infrastructure initiatives, revealing their dependence on public services. About one-quarter of home-based workers reported poor access to basic services. They see health, education, training and the provision of roads/transport as basic rights to which they are entitled.

Transport issues emerged as significant for home-based workers, who must travel (sometimes long distances) to obtain raw materials and supply produced goods. The workers reported that the construction of bridges across main roads helps them to navigate easily. The reconstruction of road and streets was similarly identified as positive. However, the building of roads and bridges was sometimes seen as negative as it hinders workers' ability to reach the markets easily. They are constrained to cross roads at specific points located some distance away. This is particularly problematic because some women carry large loads as they pick up materials or take products to markets.

The new bus service, "First Bus", makes transportation for home-based workers easier. Their time is saved, and they do not have to wait for long hours to travel to the markets. The home-based workers also found it positive that there are petrol pumps everywhere; they no longer have to go far away to fill up, and it is much easier for them to travel with their husbands on motorbikes. In many cases, the male kin fetch the raw materials or deliver the products to the markets, so the proximity of petrol pumps affects the efficiency and cost of their work.



Issues with water safety were also raised, but some home-based workers said they appreciate that clean water filters had been installed in their area, and they now have access to clean water due to the new connections by city authorities.

Municipal services have improved a lot over the last few years; for example, the provincial government's Solid Waste Management Program has been effective in the elimination of waste. There are dustbins around for garbage. The sewer has been improved, and this has directly affected the environment, health and mobility of the home-based workers.

Other levels of government received mixed reviews as well. The provincial government's education and health schemes are seen in a good light. A number of home-based workers expressed appreciation for government schools, especially ones that have parks for children. They deeply appreciated health services provided by the Punjab government, even while noting that these services were inadequate. Also, while they were generally very critical of the federal government for inflation and the energy crisis, workers appreciated the issuance of National Identity Cards, which enable them to engage in financial transactions more easily.

Other issues raised included inadequate or lack of storage space, problems in obtaining a business license, and the treatment the workers receive from local authorities.

### ***Contributions and Linkages***

It was found that there is enormous diversity of the markets from which materials are procured and to which products are sold, especially in the garment sector, including wholesale, retail, upmarket and second-hand markets. In the non-garment sector, where industrial outworkers often engage through piece-rate work, there is much greater reliance than in the garment sector on intermediaries. Most home-based garment workers sell their products in the local markets or local communities, and some are connected to the formal economy through regular orders placed by factories or shopkeepers.

The home-based workers in Lahore outlined several contributions to the city. Four types of contributions were recurrent: the good quality and low-priced products they make for Lahore's citizens; the benefit to factories and other businesses, which earn money because of home-based work; the benefits to Lahore city from taxes they pay on all utility services and every product they buy; and the beauty their products add to Lahore. They believed that their work also helps the economy of the country as a whole as some of their products are exported, and the country earns foreign exchange from the exports.

Some also noted that because they are educating their children, this will have future benefit for the city.

### ***Relationship to Institutions***

When asked about institutions that help their work, a sizeable number defined HomeNet Pakistan as useful because it has helped them become organized and provided them information. Some said that HomeNet has helped increase the prices of their products – in the past, they were doing more work for the same earnings. HomeNet has also provided awareness that the poor should have improved lives and more rights. Some stated that it has helped them network with other women in a similar situation, and they now feel part of the larger network of home-based workers. They found HomeNet Pakistan to be an important focal organization for addressing their issues and concerns. None reported any negative experiences relating to the membership-based organization.

A number of other important institutions' roles and types of impact were discussed. Micro-finance institutions were appreciated, but according to the respondents, need to provide better training. The media is seen as both negative and positive as it gives information and knowledge, but at the same time, workers believe it has negative influence on youth due to its violent and sexual content and its perceived ultra-liberal values.

There is high demand for services such health, education, information, and technical assistance. An overall finding is that the non-governmental sector is better able to provide certain facilities and social services as compared to the public sector.

## ***Policy Recommendations***

The main policy recommendations that emerge from the qualitative study are as follows:

First, home-based workers and their activities, like formal workers and formal firms, are impacted by macroeconomic trends such as high inflation. Most often, economic policymakers do not consider the impacts of policy choices on informal workers. Policymakers need to consider measures to address the impact of inflation on informal workers, whose incomes are low and very insecure.

While respondents reported some improvements in the infrastructure in Lahore, poor infrastructure remains a significant area that requires a policy response. Most important among infrastructure issues are chronic shortages in the delivery of basic utilities such as electricity. This should be the number one priority area for policymakers. Importantly, for home-based workers whose home is also the workplace, a lack of a reliable source of energy impacts on both their production activities and their household activities such as cooking. The delivery and safety of water is also very poor in some areas and needs to be addressed.

Where infrastructure improvements have been made, such as in the increased availability of public transportation, the home-based workers reported noticeable benefits to their enterprises. Further improvements to safe public transport facilities should be provided by the provincial government to enable secure and inexpensive mobility for home-based workers. Finally, greater availability of provincial social services such as health care would also have a large impact on improving the lives of home-based workers.

Lahore has a progressive policy on home-based work, The Home-Based Workers' Policy, which was developed in consultation with civil society and experts. This policy recognizes the needs of this large but often overlooked workforce, and should be adopted and implemented by the provincial governments.

## Introduction

### Study Objectives

It is now widely recognized that the majority of workers in the developing world earn their livelihoods in the informal economy. Advancements in official statistics show that informal employment accounts for more than half of total non-agricultural employment in most regions, and as much as 82 per cent in South Asia and 80 per cent in most of sub-Saharan Africa (ILO-WIEGO 2013). Though many studies offer theories to explain the persistence, characteristics and growth of informal employment, few have evaluated the grounded realities of work in the informal economy – and none have done so over time and across a sufficiently large number of sectors and cities. The IEMS seeks to fill this gap.

More specifically, the objective of the study is to provide credible, grounded evidence of the range of driving forces, both positive and negative, that affect conditions of work in the informal economy over time. The study places informal workers and their organizations at the centre of the analysis, examining not only the impact of these forces but also informal workers' strategic responses to them. It is based on a collaborative approach between researchers and membership-based organizations (MBOs) of informal workers to monitor, on an on-going basis, the state of the working poor in three sectors – home-based work, street vending, and waste picking – and also to build the capacity of MBOs to assess and mediate the driving forces that affect their work.

The study is based in 10 cities, as follows:

|                        | Sector(s)                       | Local Partner   |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Africa</b>          |                                 |   |
| Accra, Ghana           | Street Vending                  | Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) and StreetNet Ghana Alliance |
| Durban, South Africa   | Street Vending, Waste Picking   | Asiye eTafuleni (AeT)   |
| Nakuru, Kenya          | Street Vending, Waste Picking   | Kenya National Alliance of Street Vendors and Informal Traders (KENASVIT)                   |
| <b>Asia</b>            |                                 |   |
| Ahmedabad, India       | Home-Based Work, Street Vending | Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)  |
| Bangkok, Thailand      | Home-Based Work                 | HomeNet Thailand  |
| Lahore, Pakistan       | Home-Based Work                 | HomeNet Pakistan  |
| Pune, India            | Waste Picking                   | Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (KKPKP)   |
| <b>Latin America</b>   |                                 |   |
| Belo Horizonte, Brazil | Waste Picking                   | Instituto Nenuca de Desenvolvimento Sustentável de Belo Horizonte                           |
| Bogota, Colombia       | Waste Picking                   | Asociación de Recicladores de Bogotá (ARB)  |
| Lima, Peru             | Street Vending                  | Federación Departamental de Vendedores Ambulantes de Lima y Callao (FEDEVAL)                |

### Conceptual Framework

In the IEMS, the term “driving forces” is used to refer to systemic factors that may impact, in either positive or negative ways, the occupations or livelihoods of urban informal workers. Three categories of “driving forces” anchor the study. First, the IEMS explores **the economy** as a driving force: that is, the macroeconomic conditions such as inflation, recession, and patterns of growth that may influence working conditions in the informal economy. Second, the IEMS examines **government policies and practice**, specifically, but not exclusively, at the city level, including urban planning and policies, zoning regulations, sector-specific policies, regulatory norms, and urban infrastructure and service

delivery. Third, the IEMS considers sector-specific **value chain dynamics**, including the power relations between informal workers and their suppliers and buyers, and the role of intermediaries in the value chain. The framework also allows for the identification of other driving forces, such as migration, that may have a significant impact on working conditions in a particular sector or city.

The IEMS assumes that the impact of these driving forces is mediated by institutions and actors related to the particular sector under study in each city. The study examines a range of institutions including government institutions, civil society organizations, and, fundamentally, MBOs of informal workers. It explores the responses of informal workers to key driving forces in each city, as well as the economic, political, and spatial linkages within each sector. Finally, through its sampling design, the study allows for comparisons at the individual level by sex (in cities in which both men and women belong to the partner MBO), employment status, and location of the workplace.

## **Methodology**

The IEMS is based on both qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative component consists of a participatory informal economy appraisal (PIEA), an innovative method designed to capture systematically the perceptions and understandings of informal workers in their own words, in a focus group setting.<sup>1</sup> Each city team conducted 15 focus groups (per sector), in which nine tools – organized around the themes of sector characteristics, driving forces and responses, the institutional environment, and contributions of the sector to the city – were used to generate data related to the conceptual framework. The results of the focus groups were recorded in reports of about 12 pages, on average, immediately after each focus group was conducted; those reports were then analyzed. The quantitative component consists of a survey questionnaire administered to all focus group (FG) participants, plus another 75 workers. Thus an overall sample size of about 150 was achieved (with minor variation in the sample size in some cities/sectors). The questionnaire is designed to supplement the data collected through the focus groups by collecting information on the household profile and income sources of the workers; the assets profile of the workers' households; detailed information on the enterprise or occupation of the workers; and linkages between the informal economy and the formal economy. The questionnaires were administered using a data-capture tool. It took approximately 90 minutes for each respondent to complete the questionnaire.

Collectively, the focus groups and questionnaires provide data on the context within which informal workers earn their livelihoods and the forces that impact, both positively and negatively, on workers' incomes and working conditions. We are also able to understand how workers adapt their work strategies in the face of these economic, social and institutional forces.

The sampling approach was designed to maintain comparability in the results across the 13 city-sectors, on the one hand, and to allow some flexibility as demanded by local circumstances, on the other hand. While sex was a determinant in other study samples, in Lahore all study participants were women.

To the maximum extent possible, the following principles were followed in Lahore:

- Women home-based workers of urban towns of Lahore were selected.
- Study participants were divided into two categories: self-employed own account workers, and industrial outworkers (also called sub-contracted or piece-rate workers).
- At least one-third of respondents from each category worked in the outlying industrial area (called in this report "the periphery") as many home-based workers work in certain industrial zones of Lahore.
- Home-based workers were categorized as either in the garment or non-garment sector.
- The home-based workers from the non-garment sector were mainly engaged in jewellery making, shoe making, food processing, paper bag making, and making decorative items.

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<sup>1</sup> The methodology was developed collaboratively with Caroline Moser, Angélica Acosta, and Irene Vance, who also trained the city teams in the data collection methods and later in data analysis. PIEA is an adaptation of earlier participatory methodologies developed by Chambers (1994), Moser and Holland (1997), Moser and McIlwaine (1999, 2004), and Moser, Acosta and Vásquez (2006).

| Table 1 - Details of Sample by Categories |             |             |           |                      |             |           |             |
|---|-------------|-------------|-----------|----------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| Women home-based workers                  | Own Account |             |           | Industrial Outworker |             |           | Grand Total |
|   | Garment     | Non Garment | Sub-total | Garment              | Non Garment | Sub-total |             |
| Focus Group participants                  | 23          | 11          | 34        | 7                    | 34          | 41        | 75          |
| Non-Focus Group participants              | 15          | 10          | 25        | 30                   | 20          | 50        | 75          |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>38</b>   | <b>21</b>   | <b>59</b> | <b>37</b>            | <b>54</b>   | <b>91</b> | <b>150</b>  |

### ***Profile of Membership-Based Organization (MBO)***

HomeNet Pakistan, a member of HomeNet South Asia, is a network of organizations working for the recognition and labour rights of home-based workers. These workers are women who work at home for remuneration on a sub-contracted basis or as own account workers. They often belong to the poorest class in the economic strata of Pakistan. Given that large numbers of women are involved in these occupations and that incomes are very low, it is essential for women in the informal economy to organize themselves and collectively to negotiate with the government and other relevant parties. Without such initiatives, home-based workers will not get proper recognition for their work or social protection, both of which they need and deserve.

Home-based work is generally carried out in isolation and is invisible to the public. This is one of the factors that explain the absence of the representative organizations and the scant attention devoted to homeworkers by the trade union movement.

Thus HomeNet Pakistan, registered under the Societies Registration Act on November 2, 2005, took up the major task of organizing and mobilizing home-based workers organizations and home-based workers. To date a total of 360 home-based workers organizations are registered with HomeNet Pakistan from all over the country; these organizations represent over 30,000 women home-based workers. This process initially started in 2005 when it was realized that collecting statistics would provide solid grounds for advocating for laws and policies for these home-based workers, specifically women, who make a major contribution to the national economy through their efforts. Most importantly, it was felt that strong networks of home-based workers' organizations and the mobilization of home-based workers themselves would allow these workers to learn from each other and share experiences, and this would ultimately help them in getting recognition and giving voice to their views.

It has become apparent from various surveys and research conducted over the years that women home-based workers need a great deal of support at different levels. Support needs to address a wide range of issues (Roots for Equity 2011). They want support in information, knowledge, capacity building, developing contacts, presenting issues, advocacy skills, designing and marketing, collective bargaining, etc. In addition, home-based workers want to develop linkages with: i) Lahore based institutions like government, skill development institutions, and micro financing institutions; ii) individuals who could play a role to support them so that whatever knowledge and advocacy they are doing could possibly materialize into something concrete and tangible; and iii) organizations with strong networking like HomeNet Pakistan.

HomeNet Pakistan thus believes that home-based women workers should be seen as more than poor women, deserving charity and some welfare schemes. They should be recognized as workers and producers. Their productivity has to be increased with skill development training, improved technologies, access to credit and direct access to the market. They also need to be adequately reflected in statistics and recognized as workers in the labour laws of the country, thus making them eligible for social protection.



HomeNet Pakistan currently aims at developing a multi-pronged strategy in Punjab Province to address the challenges faced by the home-based workers. The home-based workers' Punjab Policy is concentrated on three main issues:

- a) the lack of recognition of home-based workers as workers
- b) home-based workers' lack of access to resources such as land, labour, capital and markets
- c) home-based workers' lack of social protection

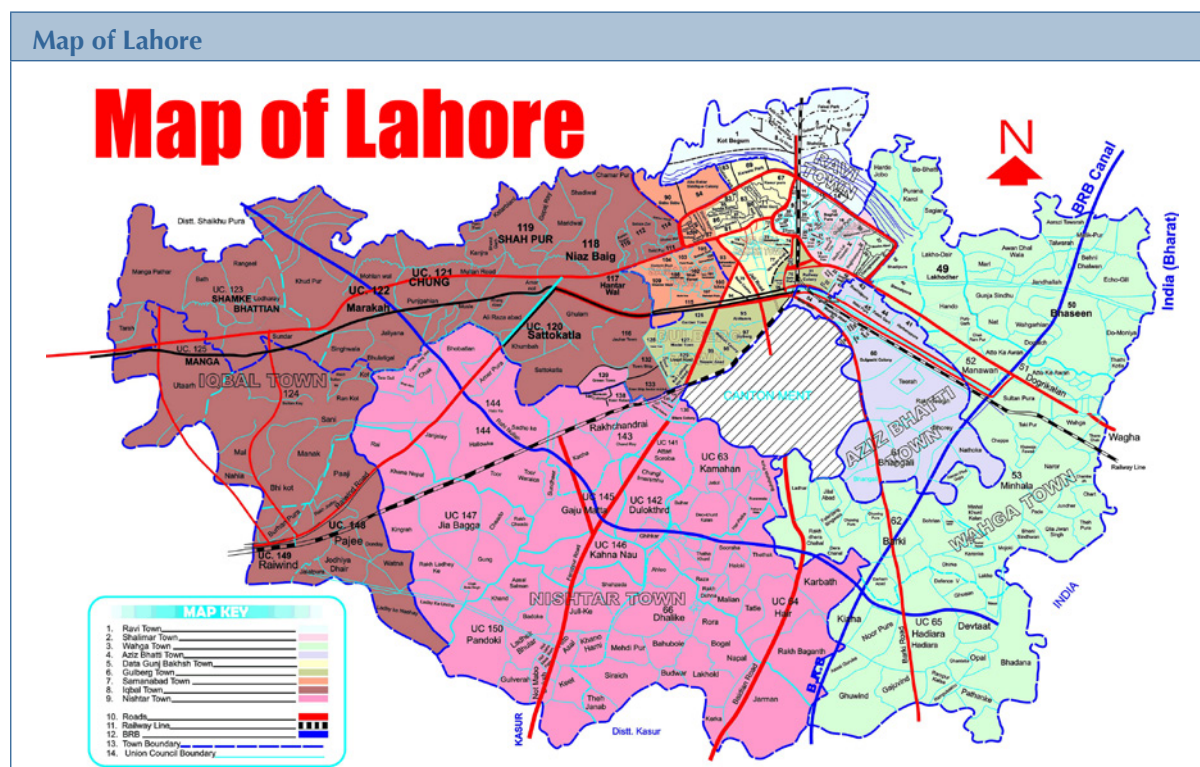
Therefore HomeNet Pakistan aims to strengthen the capacities of the organizations and networks of home-based workers in Pakistan to promote affirmative policies for improving the working and living conditions, leading to safe and secure livelihoods for home-based workers and respectable status among the working community.

HomeNet Pakistan puts a special focus on:

- organizing and networking of home-based workers and their organizations
- supporting development of policy and advocacy on key issues with the government
- demonstrating pilot approaches for social protection of home-based workers
- promoting fair trade practices
- strengthening and building linkages with labour unions
- facilitating the linkages development for home-based workers with government departments

### Overview of Lahore and Home-Based Work

Lahore is the capital of the Pakistani province of Punjab. With a population of about 10 million, it is the second largest city in Pakistan after Karachi. Administratively, Lahore consists of eight towns: Shalimar, Wahga Town, Nishtar, Gulberg Town, Data Ganj Baksh Town, Ravi Town, Aziz Bhatti Town, and Samanabad Town.



Historically, the main city of the undivided Punjab is often called the Garden of Mughals because of its rich Mughal heritage. However, its oldest factory areas reflect the nature of rural-urban migration. Here, communities are engaged in various labour activities, earning low incomes and living in abysmal conditions. These areas developed, or more precisely sprang up, during the phase

of nationalization in the 1970s when agriculture was becoming less lucrative for small land owners, sharecroppers and small farm-workers who were forced to move to cities in search of livelihoods (HomeNet Pakistan 2010).

### ***Home-Based Worker Types in Lahore***

There are two main types of home-based workers at Lahore: industrial outworkers, or those working for an employer or intermediary, and own account workers, or those marketing their own products. It is important to distinguish between these types, both conceptually and statistically. While all those who carry out market work at home or in adjacent grounds or premises, whether as own account or as paid workers, are homeworkers of the piece-rate variety, those home-based workers who carry out paid work for firms/businesses or their intermediaries, typically on a piece-rate basis, constitute industrial outworkers.

Industrial outworkers receive work from subcontractors or intermediaries, employers, traders or firms and are paid on piece-rate basis according to the items produced. These workers usually do not have any direct contact with the markets for the goods they produce. Often, they have to buy the raw material from the factories or contractors and also purchase the tools and other implements needed. They must cover the cost of electricity, infrastructure, utilities and raw material, which therefore cuts into their earnings. Some of the workers' products are part of international chains of production involving products such as garments, footwear, electronics, and plastic footballs. Others work in local product chains such as garments, *bidi* (local cigarettes), *agarbatti* (incense), and textiles. Certain forms of craft-work like weaving and basket work, while apparently traditional, are now done on a subcontracted basis. This trend is also growing in non-manufacturing areas such as agro-processing (cashew nut, cotton, horticulture, floriculture, and animal husbandry).

In Pakistan, home-based workers are unrecognized and unregulated as "workers". Since they do not currently fall under any regulation or legislation and are unregistered, skills development training and micro-financing are not available to them, and licensing of work and safety and health regulations and other facilities are not available to them.

The available data and reports of government and non-government sectors inform us that most women home-based workers have low (below grade 5) educational levels (Budlender 2009) and usually come from poor, lower, or lower-middle income backgrounds. Young girls aged 6 to 14 help their mothers make and finish the tasks assigned to the mothers by middlemen. The women receive extremely low remuneration while working 12-16 hours daily (HomeNet Pakistan 2010).

There are concentrations of particular types of home-based work in specific parts of the city. For example, women home-based workers who live in Shalimar Town and Kot Lakhpat are more engaged in the embroidery, stitching and sewing sectors. Those living in Bata Pur in Wahga Town are involved in shoe making or making the upper parts of shoes. As nearby leather shoe and glove factories outsource some of their work to economize on their cost of production, women home-based workers also make small leather items and stitch leather gloves.

### ***Living Conditions for Home-Based Workers in Lahore***

In many of the low-income areas in the city, living conditions are very bad. In Kot Lakhpat, the sewage system is between two and five decades old. The underground water in Wahga Town and Kot Lakhpat is not drinkable (Sultana No date). Water supply lines and underground sewage mix, leading to high levels of gastrointestinal infection, hepatitis, and diarrhoea among the population. The problem is especially bad in summer and the rainy season. Where utilities are provided, these tend to be inadequate. In Wahga Town, near the Mint Gate, for example, government installed a water filtration plant because a leather shoe factory rendered the underground water totally unusable, but the filtration plant is located so far off that the home-based workers are unable to use it (Ibid). Consequently, they still drink the unclean water. This badly impacts on the women's health (Ibid).

These poor living conditions and consequent poor health place a heavy burden on home-based workers. This is exacerbated by the rising costs of services such as gas, electricity, and food items. In Pakistan, the electricity tariff has gone up 100 per cent in the past decade, which strains the home-based workers' already limited income. These problems together have a very negative impact on family life.

Other important challenges are the conditions of roads, housing and physical infrastructure as home-based workers rely on this infrastructure to earn their incomes. In a number of focus group discussions organized by HomeNet Pakistan in 2010, the workers complained that the streets and roads in their areas were constructed or paved above the level of their houses at certain points. This causes the rain water to flow back into their houses, doing damage. This water problem continues to sap their time, energies and money.

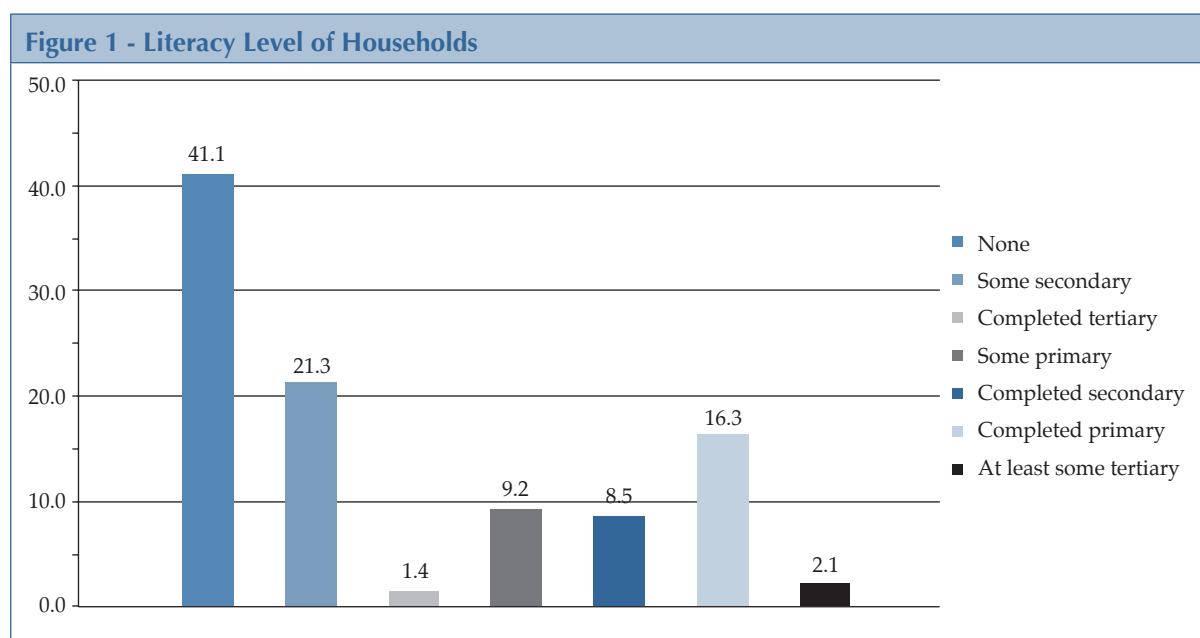
The construction of roads and streets above house level is happening in areas mostly where home-based workers live. In one of HomeNet Pakistan's 2010 focus group discussions in Shalimar Town, one of the women respondents said she had to spend all her savings of the past three years to replace ruined household items, which meant she had to compromise her daughter's college admission fees. In this sense, the lack of infrastructure development itself is a source of problems and deprivation in many pockets of Lahore. The consultant who organized the 2010 focus groups also reported that she met two women councillors cum home-based workers who revealed that their male counterparts never took them seriously whenever they raised issues related to the construction plan of roads and streets.

## Part 1: Characteristics of Workers, Households and Enterprises/Sectors

This section is based on the description of the home-based workers' personal, household and work characteristics. Household size, levels of education, types of work, and income are defined. Various sources of household income are outlined along with the relationship of the workers to production. Within worker type, the section identifies the percentage of workers in the garment sector as compared with those in the non-garment sector. It also describes whether they work on an own account or an industrial outworker basis. The section then outlines the kinds of products workers produce and the range of activities in which they are engaged. The section also highlights spatial arrangements in terms of the distances between the workers' homes and the markets from which they buy materials and to which they sell their products, making note of the kinds and cost of the transport they use.

### 1.1 Characteristics of Individual Workers and Households

The average household size of home-based workers in Lahore is 6.71, which is slightly higher than the average size indicated in the Household Integrated Economic Survey 2011 of 6.38. Approximately half of home-based workers have little or no education, which includes 41 per cent with no schooling and 9 per cent with some primary education. Only 12 per cent of the home-based workers reported that they have some secondary or higher education.



In the sample, about 4 per cent of the respondents reported that they are the only ones supporting their families. Another 24 per cent of respondents claimed that they are major contributors to the overall income of their households. The dependency ratio of workers and non-workers in households is approximately one to five. The households with family members working in the formal sector were 13 per cent of the total sample. The regular and fixed amount of income from such family members was seen as a necessary contribution to meet their regular needs.

A large number of households (91 per cent) are dependent on informal employment. Among the study respondents, three quarters of the home-based workers relied on the income of other family members, who are also engaged in informal work. An insignificant proportion (1 per cent) shared that they are dependent on the other family members working in the formal sector. Table 2 shows that the great majority of home-based workers have little access to other forms of income.

| Table 2 - Access to Other Types of Household Income (%) |       |
|---|-------|
| Categories  | Total |
| Remittances   | 6.67  |
| Pension   | 2.67  |
| Government grants                                       | 2.67  |
| Child maintenance                                       | 2.00  |
| Rental income   | 2.00  |
| Unemployment payout                                     | 1.33  |
| Retrenchment package                                    | 0.67  |
| Health coverage/insurance                               | 0.00  |

**Source:** Lahore IEMS survey data (2012)

Apart from some small exceptions beyond family, most home-based workers' households do not have any other types of support. The highest percentage (7 per cent) reported remittances/financial support from relatives/persons other than the household members, followed by pensions and government grants (3 per cent each).

Only 2 per cent of home-based workers said that they receive support from other relatives/persons in the form of child maintenance allowance. Only about 1 per cent received unemployment pay-outs and retrenchment packages.

Significantly, not a single home-based worker or her household has been provided with health coverage/insurance by the employer. As a consequence, the qualitative data revealed that the free health services provided by the provincial government were deeply appreciated despite being inadequate. Many of the women in the focus groups mentioned access to free medicines and healthcare but reported that the quality of the services was low and the medicines were occasionally spurious.

Similarly, the need for education was expressed by several of the respondents during the focus groups. As educational benefits for children or the workers themselves are not provided by any establishment that utilizes home-based work, there was a need expressed for the government and non-government organizations to provide education and training.

The educational initiatives of the provincial government, however, were praised as they keep workers' children in school and out of trouble on the streets. Some examples of the importance of education for home-based workers' children are illustrated in these comments: "Education vouchers are good and Punjab government has given us that" (FG 15); "Education is free up to class 10 for our children. Even the books are free now" (FG 6); "Government gives vouchers for education, previously it was expensive. They give some books and some we buy ourselves" (FG 12).

Overall, the findings suggest that while household sizes are large, there are usually a few household members earning a livelihood. There is insignificant contribution from the formal sector to household income. Income from other sources is also extremely meagre. Family members pitch in to increase income levels and to help the home-based workers in completing their orders on time. The qualitative research also indicated that this is the case.

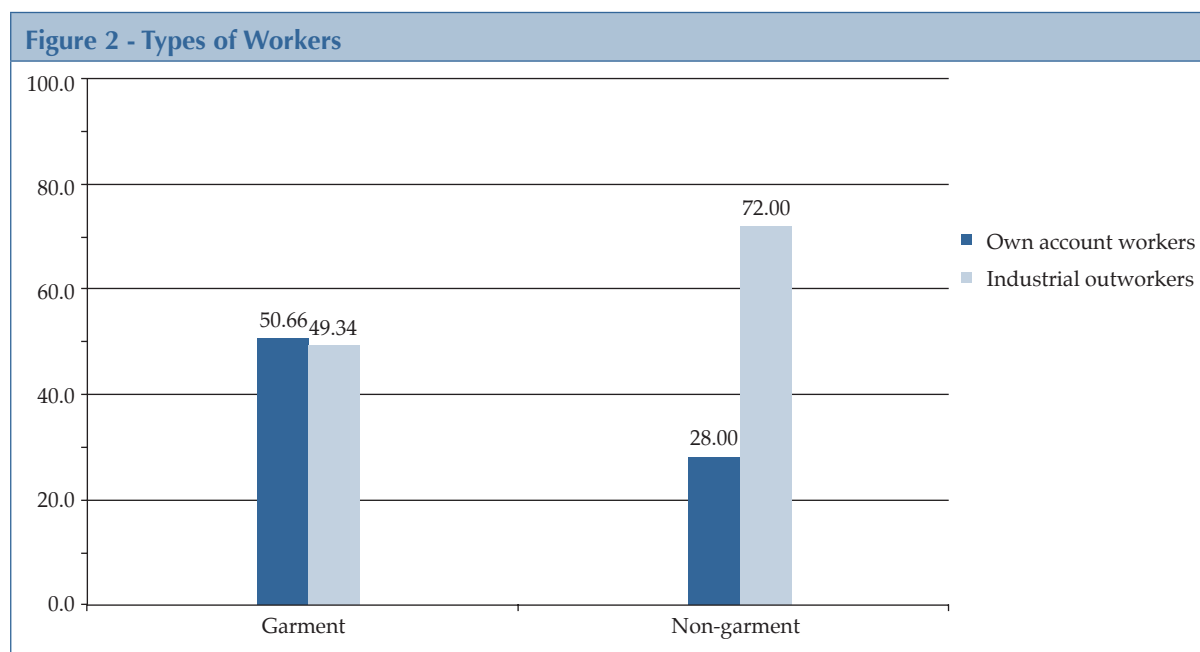
Most of the home-based workers have little or no education and non-existent health facilities. The qualitative data supports these findings as most of the home-based workers reported the need for health and education while praising the provincial government for such services even if they lacked quality.

## 1.2 Characteristics of Individual Enterprises

This section reveals some of the work characteristics of home-based workers in Lahore. It shows the division of home-based workers into those who are self-employed and conduct their procurement, production and marketing activities themselves (own account workers) and those who work as industrial outworkers who are employed on a piece-rate basis. The section describes the range of products produced and the mean working hours of the different types of workers. The section also describes the kinds of support workers receive from family members and/or other workers and the workers' coping mechanisms in case of absence from work for some duration.



## Types of Workers



Among the selected sample, 61 per cent were industrial outworkers and 39 per cent were own account workers. As figure 2 demonstrates, among garment workers, there was an almost equal number of own account workers and industrial outworkers in the sample. However, the non-garment sector consists of 72 per cent industrial outworkers and 28 per cent own account workers, a difference brought about by the non-governmental sector conducting more outreach to industrial outworkers than to own account workers.

**Table 3 - Types of Products Made by Home-Based Workers**

| S.No.    | Categories and Sub-categories                             | Quantity  |
|----------|---|-----------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Stitching</b>  | <b>20</b> |
| 1.1      | Trimming cloth for final finishing                        | 5         |
| 1.2      | Shorts /knickers  | 1         |
| 1.3      | Stitching of uniforms                                     | 2         |
| 1.4      | Stitching shirts and trousers/dresses                     | 11        |
| 1.5      | Unstitching pants for alteration                          | 1         |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Clothing /Apparels</b>                                 | <b>7</b>  |
| 2.1      | Block printing on napkins and bed sheets                  | 1         |
| 2.2      | Putting beads on cardboard to make necks and sleeves      | 5         |
| 2.3      | Ironing cloth and packing suits                           | 1         |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Embroidery / Bridal Dresses</b>                        | <b>9</b>  |
| 3.1      | Embroidering  | 5         |
| 3.2      | Making bridal dresses and embroidering dopattas and shirt | 3         |
| 3.3      | Designing clothes (bridal dresses)                        | 1         |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Designing</b>  | <b>1</b>  |
| 4.1      | Putting beads on cardboard                                | 1         |

| S.No.                            | Categories and Sub-categories                              | Quantity  |
|----------------------------------|--|-----------|
| <b>5</b>                         | <b>Brushes, Wipers, etc.</b>                               | <b>4</b>  |
| 5.1                              | Making brushes, wipers                                     | 4         |
| <b>6</b>                         | <b>Traditional Beds</b>                                    | <b>8</b>  |
| 6.1                              | Charpoy making   | 5         |
| 6.2                              | Making polyester rolls for quilts                          | 2         |
| 6.3                              | Cutting foam for mattresses                                | 1         |
| <b>7</b>                         | <b>Bags / Upper parts of shoes</b>                         | <b>16</b> |
| 7.1                              | Making paper bags / shoppers' bags                         | 2         |
| 7.2                              | Decorating upper parts of shoes                            | 8         |
| 7.3                              | Making cardboard and shoe boxes                            | 1         |
| 7.4                              | Making pouches and purses                                  | 4         |
| 7.5                              | Making shopper bags from scraps                            | 1         |
| <b>8</b>                         | <b>Cooked Food</b>   | <b>3</b>  |
| 8.1                              | Making Samosas and selling toffees                         | 2         |
| 8.2                              | Catering foods and delivering at work places               | 1         |
| <b>9</b>                         | <b>Food Processing</b>                                     | <b>3</b>  |
| 9.1                              | Grinding and processing of food                            | 1         |
| 9.2                              | Peeling dry fruits   | 2         |
| <b>10</b>                        | <b>Jewellery</b>   | <b>8</b>  |
| 10.1                             | Affixing beads on jewellery / attaching clasps             | 8         |
| <b>11</b>                        | <b>Chemicals and washing oil to supply in local market</b> | <b>1</b>  |
| 11.1                             | Filling of washing oils                                    | 1         |
| <b>12</b>                        | <b>Vegetable Vendor / Owning shop at home</b>              | <b>2</b>  |
| 12.1                             | Selling vegetables to neighbours                           | 2         |
| <b>13</b>                        | <b>Other</b>   | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Total types of activities</b> |  | <b>85</b> |

Source: Lahore IEMS focus group data (2012)

### **Types of Work**

As table 3 shows, home-based workers in Lahore engage in a wide variety of work. From a total of 70 home-based workers interviewed for the focus groups, 85 different types of activities emerged because several of the women do more than one type of work. Stitching (shirts, trousers, frocks, and dresses) was the most common category. Making the upper parts of shoes was the second most common category followed by embroidery for bridal and other dresses, making jewellery, peeling vegetables, and grinding spices. The women bring a wide variety of skills to the different tasks. Those who sell their own products put in a great deal of time and money to go to the markets. Public transport is not equally good in all areas of the city, and occasionally, workers share rickshaws and transport to save on the cost. Sometimes the work is seasonal, which is why workers engage in other activities during off-season.

The majority of the women home-based workers sell their products through an intermediary. The payment for the products is extremely low, but the workers cannot demand more as the work is then given to others. For example, one woman makes a thousand shoe boxes a day but receives 100 rupees

(equal to US \$1.05<sup>2</sup>). The woman who applies beads on cardboard for decorative shirts gets 5 rupees per cardboard on which she affixes 150 beads. Another woman who makes dresses and gets 120 rupees each said, “They sell it for 5,000 in the market” (FG 6). Noor, another respondent, places decorative items on necklaces. She gets 7 rupees per dozen necklaces. It takes her 10 to 15 days to make one dozen (FG 10). She gets work only occasionally.

The workers often work late hours, diversify and do extra work due to the pressure to earn higher incomes. Zarina removes threads from embroidered cloth. She gets 70 paisa (less than 1 rupee) per yard, and it can take a whole day to complete one roll (20 yards). The contractors deduct money if the cloth gets cut accidentally. As Zarina said, “What can we do? We are so poor that we have to do it. ...I work till two a.m. After three days I deliver a dozen” (FG 10). Farzana stitches shirts and trousers for a factory and gets six rupees per dress. All the materials, such as cloth and thread, are delivered to her. She makes two dozen per day working alone. “When there are fewer orders I make shopper paper bags. When on order then they give 15 rupees per thousand bags” (FG 9).

Frequently, family members work together to meet the orders, and daughters help their mothers with the work to meet orders on time. At times, the husbands help with transporting materials and products. Sometimes, the women brought little children with them to the focus group discussions as they don’t have any childcare arrangements.

### **Earnings vs. Turnover**

The data presented in this report were generated through a question designed to capture **turnover** – that is, the total value of sales or payments for pieces. They **do not** take into consideration the costs incurred in generating these payments. The literature on income clearly establishes that it is very difficult to capture distinctions between turnover, gross earnings, and net earnings reliably. As with similar studies, these data should not be taken out of context and should be interpreted with caution.

Data on turnover from all cities included in the IEMS study showed very high standard deviations and means that far exceeded medians. Means (rather than medians) for turnover are presented in the IEMS city reports.

### **Turnover**

The highest mean turnover, 10,525 rupees per month, was observed for home-based workers (n=58) working in the garment category from the peripheral areas.

However, in central parts of the city, turnover is much lower (3,315 rupees per month; n=17). It is important to note that these numbers represent gross turnover – not net earnings, as expenditures have not been deducted (see box: Turnover vs. Earnings). The lower income trend among central area in comparison with the periphery is because sub-contracted workers are mainly approached in nearby communities from local markets and business opportunities in the central part of the city, and often they are exploited due to high competition among home-based workers.

**Table 4 - Mean Monthly Turnover by Type of Worker**

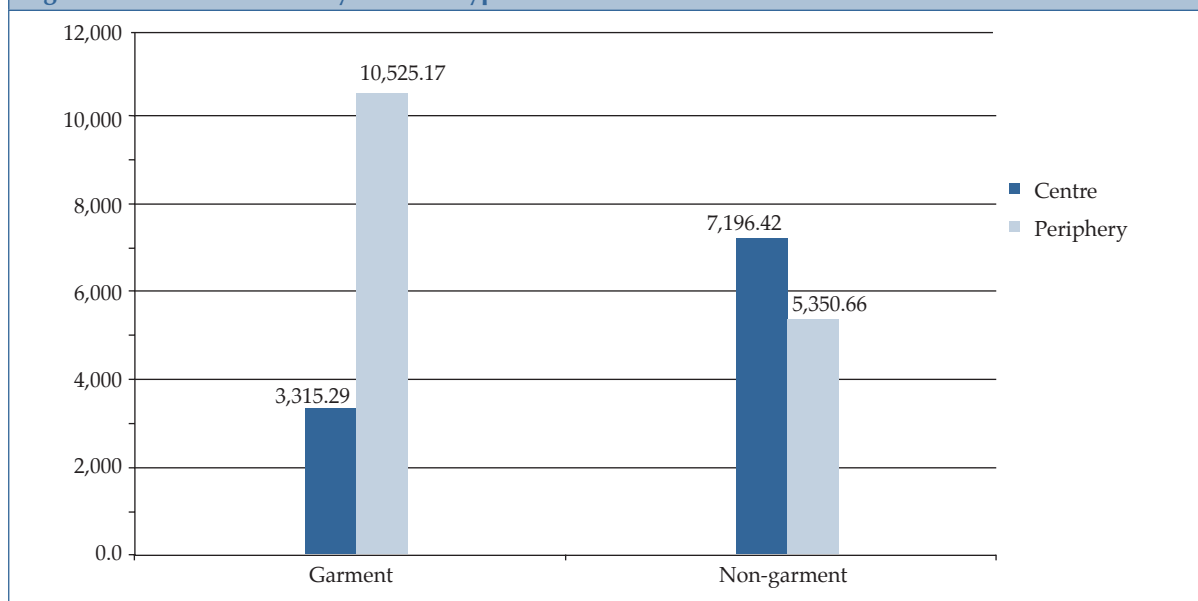
|                                | <b>Own Account</b> | <b>Industrial Outworker</b> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Mean monthly turnover (rupees) | 13180.7            | 3931.8                      |
| <b>N</b>                       | <b>59</b>          | <b>91</b>                   |

**Source:** Lahore IEMS study data (2012)

The difference in turnover between own account and industrial outworkers appears highly significant; own account workers bring in an average of 13,181 rupees per month, compared to an average of just 3,932 rupees per month for industrial outworkers. Incomes for individual workers will vary based on particular product, level of skill and ability to access markets. It is important to remember that these turnovers do not take into account the cost of producing goods. Own account workers must purchase their own raw materials, for example, and are more likely to have to pay to transport and market their final products.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pakistani Rupee (PKR) was equivalent to US \$0.0105 on September 1, 2012 (www.xe.com, mid-market rate). All conversions in the document use this rate.

**Figure 3 - Mean Turnover by Product Type and Location**



**Source:** Lahore IEMS study data (2012)

On the other hand, in the non-garment category, high mean income is recorded in the central part of the city – 7,196 rupees per month (a mean average from 30 workers) and somewhat less for the peripheral areas, at 5,350 rupees per month (a mean average from 45 workers). The overall income of the garment workers is higher, and their mean income is pushed up as it is high in the peripheral areas. The overall income of the non-garment sector is lower, but it is higher closer to the centre of the city.

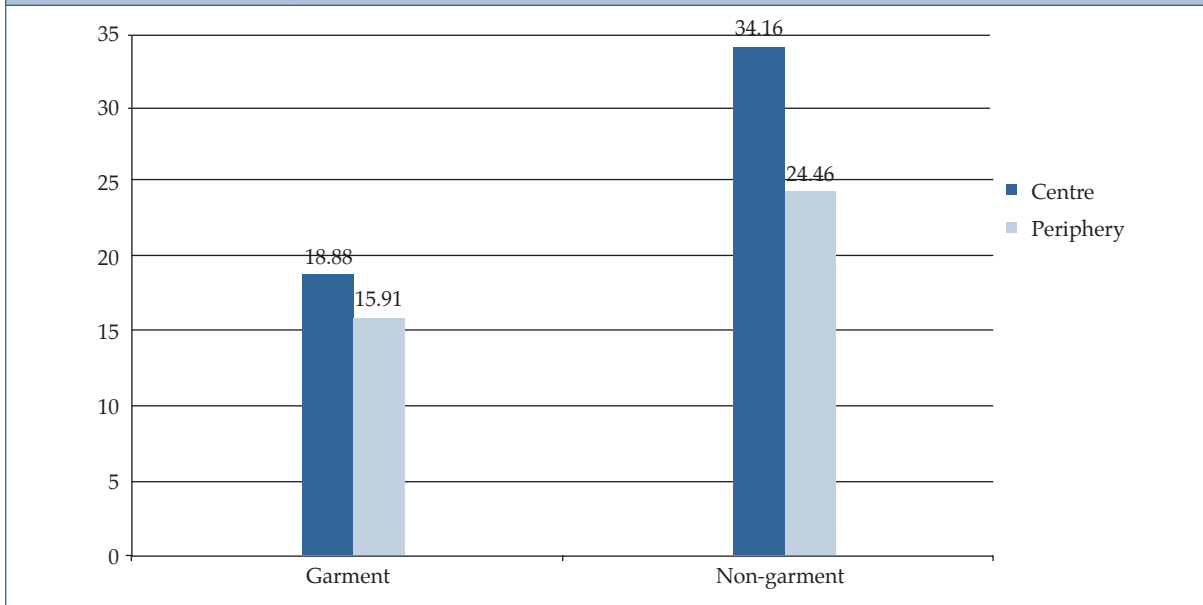
The home-based workers are significantly underpaid due to various reasons which include the commission of middlemen, lack of awareness about the worth of their inputs and poor negotiation skills. Another reason is lack of organization that can help to protect and safeguard their rights. This finding is corroborated by the qualitative data, which also found that the remuneration for products was excessively low across the spectrum of home-based workers.

### **Working Hours**

As figure 4 shows, the highest mean working hours recorded per week were 34.16 for home-based workers working in the non-garment sector in the central part of the city (n=30). In the peripheral areas, working hours were reduced to 24.46 (n=45). However, this was higher than hours for home-based garment sectors workers if they were working in central part or in peripheral areas. The mean working hours for the garment workers were 18.88 in the central parts and 15.91 in the peripheral areas. It seems that in the non-garment sector, where piece rate work was more common than own account work, workers work more hours and earn less than those in the garment sector, where own account workers were in greater numbers. This reveals that home-based workers seem to have more work opportunities in the non-garment sector, but they earn less compared with home-based workers working in the garment sector. Conversely, garment workers earn more, so can afford to work for less hours. This finding is supported by the qualitative research, which shows some of the lowest forms of compensation were reported for the non-garment sector; for example, one worker was paid one rupee for applying beads on cardboard to make jewellery.

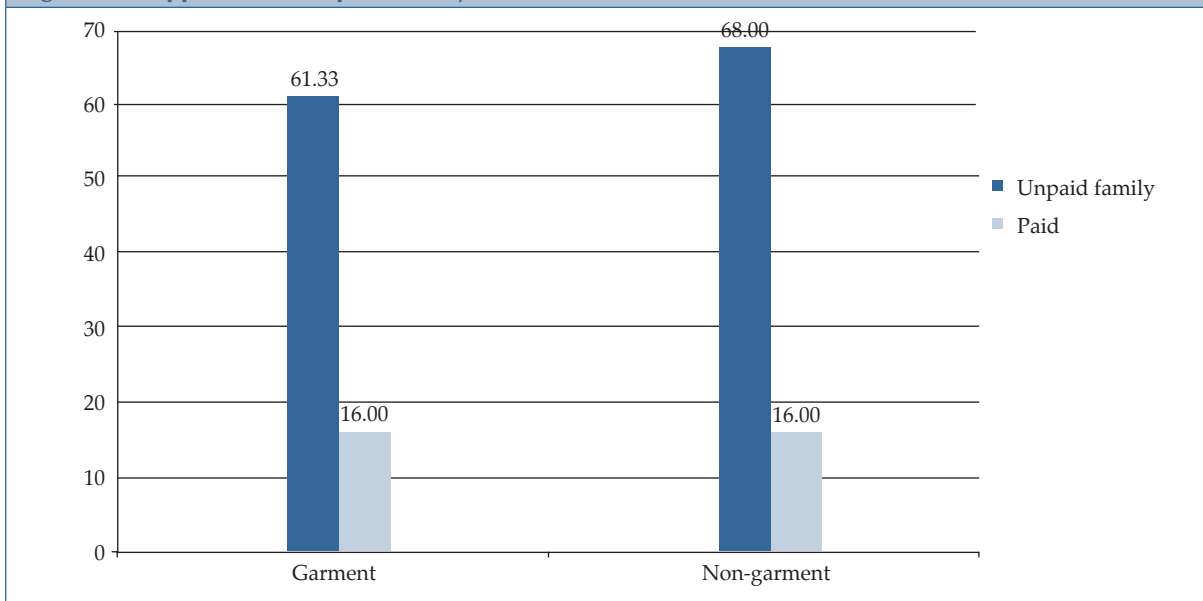
Own account workers reported working an average of 18 hours per week, while the industrial outworkers worked an average of 25 hours per week.

**Figure 4 - Mean Hours per Week (Based on the Previous Week)**



With regard to paid and unpaid helpers, the trends are more or less similar during the normal and busiest times of work. As figure 5 shows, while over 60 per cent of both garment and non-garment workers reported that unpaid family members helped with the work, only 16 per cent in both categories engaged paid help. The unpaid members were mostly blood relatives and did not have any concept of monetizing their support for the services provided. Almost all the home-based workers accessing paid additional support were unable to compensate their helpers adequately.

**Figure 5 - Support from Unpaid Family and Paid Workers**



### **Help from Others**

Because a large number of home-based workers have very low income, any kind of interruption in their work may negatively affect them and result in a fall in their earnings. When asked about their alternate options in case they are not able to continue work, 46 per cent of home-based workers reported that other household members would take over their responsibilities, a finding that the qualitative research supports. Most primary workers do not hire external paid help as it is not affordable.

One-fourth of home-based workers were found to take advantage of work opportunities within families and respective communities. This situation was largely found in the garment sector where home-based workers serve as tailors to stitch clothes for women and children. These findings are corroborated by the



focus groups, where the home-based workers reported that other household members had to help them meet their targets as they could not do so alone. In most cases the daughters and daughters-in-law help the primary workers with stitching garments. However, marketing and buying of materials, such as wood from nearby jungles, is done by husbands and/or sons.

Over one-third of all workers reported no support when work is interrupted (table 5). Garment workers were more likely to report having no support, while non-garment workers were more likely to rely on family and friends. However, 44 per cent of respondents in both categories said that they made up for their absence by working more after their return, making this the second most common solution for home-based workers.

| Type of Support                        | Garment    | Non-Garment | Combined Categories |
|--|------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Household member will take over        | 34.67      | 58.67       | 46.67               |
| Will work more on return to work       | 44.00      | 44.00       | 44.00               |
| No support                             | 42.66      | 32.00       | 37.33               |
| An employee will take over             | 9.33       | 5.33        | 7.33                |
| Friend will take over                  | 2.67       | 6.67        | 4.67                |
| Another informal worker will take over | -          | 2.66        | 1.33                |
| <b>N</b>                               | <b>150</b> |             |                     |

**Source:** Lahore home-based workers IEMS survey data (2012)

As shown in table 6, a simple majority of own account workers reported no backup support mechanism. Another 41 per cent of own account workers reported that they have substitute support within the family to take over the work. On the other hand, industrial outworkers will rely equally on having household members take over and on increasing their own number of work hours on return to work.

| Type of Support                        | Own Account | Industrial Outworker |
|--|-------------|----------------------|
| No support                             | 55.07       | 32.97                |
| An employee will take over             | 8.47        | 6.59                 |
| Household member will take over        | 40.68       | 50.55                |
| Friend will take over                  | 5.08        | 4.40                 |
| Another informal worker will take over | 1.69        | 1.10                 |
| Will work more on return to work       | 32.20       | 51.68                |
| <b>N</b>                               | <b>59</b>   | <b>91</b>            |

**Source:** Lahore home-based workers IEMS survey data (2012)

Due to lack of sufficient work in the primary field area, 21 per cent of the home-based workers reported that they had to depend upon more than one source of income. This trend was most frequently observed among industrial outworkers associated with the non-garment category (31 per cent), followed by industrial outworkers working in the garment sector (27 per cent). Interestingly, not a single home-based worker associated with the non-garment sector was found in the own account group.

### **Generating More Income**

The large variety and multiplicity of tasks performed by the women may be the result of high inflation and their need to meet expenses.

| Table 7 - Home-based Workers Performing Second Job by Status in Employment (%) |             |             |                      |             |                |
|--|-------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Second Job   | Own Account |             | Industrial Outworker |             | Combined Total |
|  | Garment     | Non-garment | Garment              | Non-garment |                |
| Home-based workers having a second job   | 10.53       | 0           | 27.03                | 31.48       | 20.67          |
| N  | 4           | 0           | 10                   | 17          | 31             |

Source: Lahore home-based workers IEMS survey data (2012)

The most common types of jobs that workers took on to earn a second income included working as domestic workers followed by stitching clothes, making shoe uppers, and making artificial jewellery. The following table provides the detail for each type of work undertaken by the home-based workers.

| Table 8 - Types of Second Jobs |           |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Types of Second Jobs           | Frequency |
| Domestic Workers               | 5         |
| Garment products               | 8         |
| Non-Garments products          | 14        |
| Skill-based services           | 4         |
| N                              | 31        |

Source: Lahore home-based workers IEMS survey data (2012)

### 1.3 Characteristics of Sector/Value Chain

This sub-section is based on a description of the production chain from the procurement of materials to the completion and marketing of the product. It describes the sources from where materials are obtained, what kinds of products are made, and where and how they are marketed. The pricing mechanisms are also discussed with regard to how they are determined along with the kinds of problems faced by the home-based workers in their work and lives.

#### Types of Work

Figure 6 shows the diversity and complexity of home-based work in Lahore, where at least six categories of work are reflected. The tool shows that the women produce for their own neighbourhoods as well as large markets and that sometimes they get orders from factories. It also shows that one woman can be engaged in two or more types of work at the same time. For example, one home-based worker reported that she stitches shirts and trousers for factories as her main work, but sometimes there is not enough work. She said, "When there are fewer orders I make shopper bags; when on order, they give 15 rupees per thousand bags" (FG 9).

| Figure 6 - Focus Group Tool   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Tool 1: Opening Exercise – What Kind of Work Do You Do as a Home-Based Worker?</b>         |   |
| Stitching clothes for people in the neighbourhood   | Making/decorating upper parts of shoes for?           |
| Peeling vegetables and grinding ginger and garlic for cooking for people in the neighbourhood | Stitching shirts and trousers for factories on orders |
| Making polyester rolls for quilts for?  | Making shopping bags                                  |

## Markets

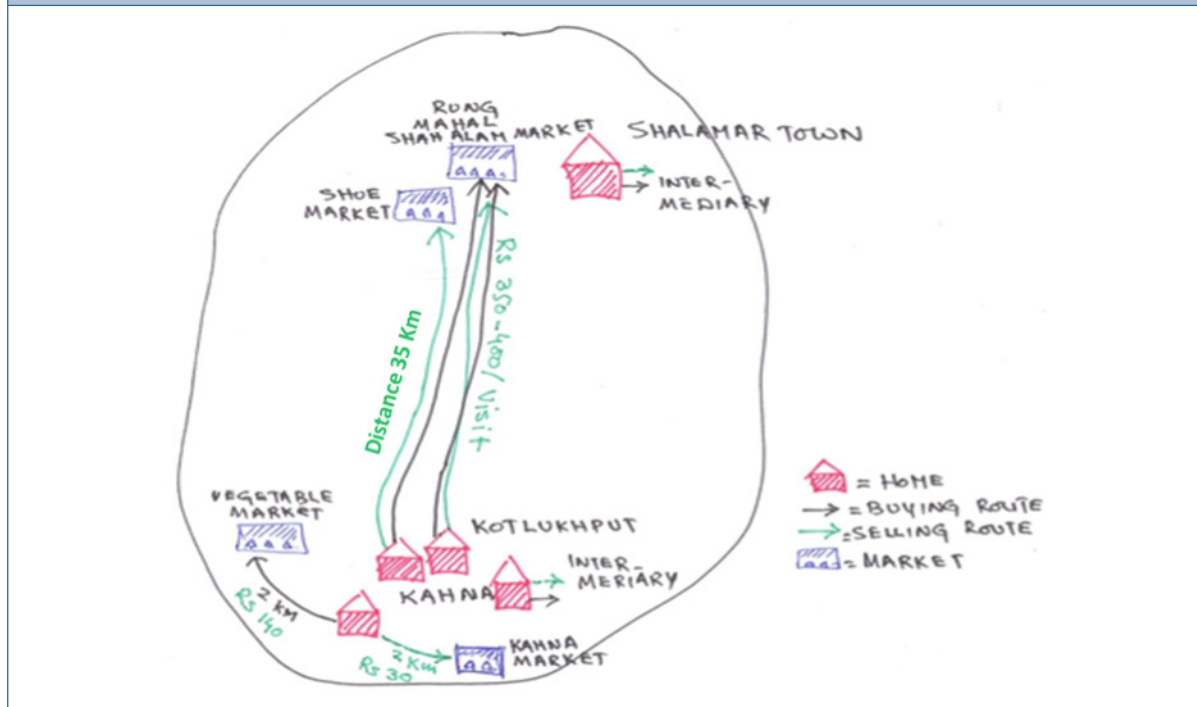
Table 9 reflects the diversity of markets used to procure materials as well as to sell them. Shah Alam is a wholesale market, Landa Bazaar is a second-hand market and Anarkali is a retail market. Most of these markets are located in the north of Lahore while Kahna and Kot Lakhpat are located in the south.

| Buy from         | Materials bought       | Product                  | Sell to          |
|------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Shah Alam Market | Beads, needles, thread | Shirts with pasted beads | Shah Alam Market |
| Landa Bazaar     | Used clothes           | Strings from used cloth  | Landa Bazaar     |
| Anarkali Bazaar  | Beads, needles, thread | Shirts with pasted beads | Anarkali         |
| Intermediary     | Beads, needles         | Jewellery                | Intermediary     |

Source: Focus Group 13

As can be seen figure 7, the home-based workers have to travel long distances to buy materials and sell products. It can take around two hours to travel from Kahna or Kot Lakhpat to Shah Alam Market, Shalimar Town and the Shoe Market. The cost to travel from Kahna to Shah Alam Market is between 350 to 400 rupees. This travel cuts both into workers' time and into the already meagre income they earn.

Figure 7 - Spatial Map of Travel Distances of Home-Based Workers to Buy Materials and Sell Products (FG3)



The women of the group shared the issues of travel cost and stated that it takes two hours both ways and often they walk this distance.

“The rickshaw can take up to 50 rupees one way. We carry our stuff and walk for hours and use Panadol for headache as we get tired. One person buys her materials in Shah Alam market and Mughalpura market. When she goes to Shah Alam it can five to six hours. Buses take a long time but rickshaws are faster. Rickshaws can take 200 rupees and buses take 100 but much longer.”

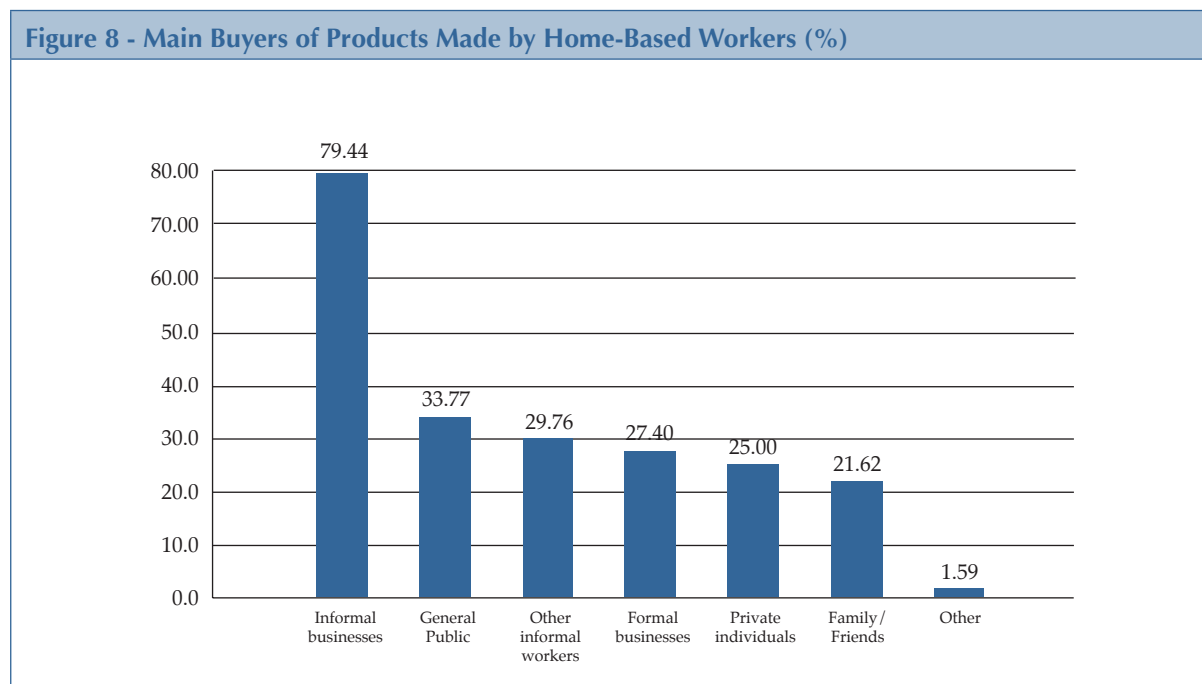
Home-Based Worker, Focus Group 6

The quantitative data supports the qualitative finding that markets and outlets are located at a distance from home-based workers' homes, forcing them to seek mobility. However, in the case of workers who work only through intermediaries, the cost and time of transportation is diminished.

### Buyers

Figure 8 shows that 79 per cent of respondents reported that informal businesses are their main customers, while 34 per cent said their main buyer was the general public. Economic relationships between home-based and other informal workers are quite strong, as 30 per cent of home-based workers reported that they sold their products to other informal workers. Twenty-seven per cent of home-based workers reported that formal businesses were their main customers.

One fifth of home-based workers sold their products within families and respective communities, a situation largely found in the garment sector, where home-based workers serve as tailors to stitch clothes for women and children.



Source: Lahore home-based workers IEMS survey data (2012)

**Table 10 - Main Destination for Goods that Are Sold (%)**

| Main buyers of products        | Own Account | Industrial Outworker | Combined Total |
|--------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Buyers in the local area       | 44.07       | 86.81                | 70.00          |
| Buyers in town/ city vicinity  | 5.08        | 1.10                 | 2.67           |
| Buyers from within the country | 8.47        | 5.49                 | 6.67           |
| International buyers           | 1.69        | 2.20                 | 2.00           |
| Local community buyers         | 35.60       | 3.30                 | 16.00          |
| <b>N</b>                       | <b>59</b>   | <b>91</b>            | <b>150</b>     |

Source: Lahore home-based workers IEMS survey data (2012)

As table 10 shows, the major portion of the products made by home-based workers are sold in the local markets (70 per cent) followed by products sold to local community buyers. Local markets clearly dominate as the destination for industrial outworkers' products at 87 per cent, while other categories are quite insignificant. Along with the aforementioned travel data, this indicates that these home-based workers need support to increase their outreach to the markets located at greater distances and to help with heavy transport costs.

The percentage of products sold in local markets was quite high in the non-garment sector (80 per cent) in comparison with the garment category (58 per cent). On the other hand, the trend is reversed among local community buyers, where products sold from the garment sector are on the high side (27 per cent) and those products sold from the non-garment sector are noticeably lower (5 per cent). Some 6 per cent of home-based workers knew that their products were being sold in the other parts of the country. Other distribution categories included local customers and /or local buyers with 3 per cent each. International buyers were reported by the lowest number of respondents.

As table 11 shows, well over one-third (39 per cent) of the self-employed own account workers market their products themselves. This indicates that the need for transportation exists for close to 40 per cent of the workers in this category. Close to 42 per cent of the self-employed deliver their goods to the local markets, which, as figure 7 shows, are located at considerable distances. Those sub-contracted by others do not market the goods themselves as selling is mainly conducted by the lead firm or intermediaries.

The data also shows the degree of mobility between own account and industrial outworkers. Some 39 per cent of own account workers have outreach to access markets and to sell their products directly to potential buyers. Another 36 per cent of own account workers sell products through lead firms. Own account workers sell goods to contractors and middlemen at rates of 16 per cent and 8 per cent respectively.

Almost half of all goods produced by own account and industrial outworkers were sold to lead firms. Middlemen had access to the goods produced by industrial outworkers at a rate of 33 per cent, which reflects industrial outworkers' limited mobility or ability to access the markets to directly sell the products. Industrial outworkers may also lack capital investment to manage their work independently.

| <b>Table 11 - Final Customer for Goods Sold, by Status in Employment (%)</b> |                    |                              |
|--|--------------------|------------------------------|
|  | <b>Own Account</b> | <b>Industrial Outworkers</b> |
| Contractor   | 16.67              | 10.26                        |
| Lead firm  | 36.11              | 56.41                        |
| Middleman  | 8.33               | 33.33                        |
| Self   | 38.89              | 0.00                         |
| Total  | 100.00             | 100.00                       |
| <b>N</b>   | <b>59</b>          | <b>91</b>                    |

**Source:** Lahore home-based workers IEMS survey data (2012)

## Part 2: Changes in the Sector

### 2.1 Negative Driving Forces in the Sector

This section is based on an analysis of the social, economic and political forces in the workers' environment and the impact of these forces on their lives. The forces that have been positive and enabling have been identified along with those that hindered or hampered work. An analysis has been provided in terms of which forces have had positive effects on work, the manner in which these forces have helped the worker, and the means by which they could be even more helpful in the future. Similarly, there is an analysis of the negative forces that have acted as impediments in the work and lives of the home-based workers. The resulting effects have been outlined along with an analysis of the manner in which the workers coped with and addressed the negative forces. Additionally, this section also covers the federal, provincial and city level institutions in the public, private and non-governmental sectors that the home-based workers found hindered or furthered their work. Also included are the workers' suggestions in terms of the way in which the institutions could be improved to become better vehicles of support for their activities.

| Table 12 - Negative Factors that Affect the Work of Home-Based Workers |    |    |    |    |    |           |               |
|--|----|----|----|----|----|-----------|---------------|
| Factors  | R1 | R2 | R3 | R4 | R5 | Frequency | %             |
| <b>Macroeconomic</b>   |    |    |    |    |    | <b>17</b> | <b>31.48</b>  |
| Inflation  | 9  | 5  |    |    |    | 14        | 25.93         |
| Unemployment   |    | 1  | 1  |    |    | 2         | 3.70          |
| Rising energy prices   |    |    |    | 1  |    | 1         | 1.85          |
| <b>National/City government policies</b>                               |    |    |    |    |    | <b>28</b> | <b>51.85</b>  |
| Electricity and gas load shedding                                      | 6  | 6  | 4  |    |    | 16        | 29.63         |
| Water and sanitation services  |    | 2  | 2  | 1  | 1  | 6         | 11.11         |
| Inadequate health facilities   |    | 1  | 2  |    |    | 3         | 5.56          |
| Market rules for stalls  |    |    |    | 1  |    | 1         | 1.85          |
| Transportation   |    | 1  |    |    |    | 1         | 1.85          |
| No cheap housing schemes   |    | 1  |    |    |    | 1         | 1.85          |
| <b>Value chain dynamics</b>  |    |    |    |    |    | <b>5</b>  | <b>9.26</b>   |
| Availability of raw material   |    |    | 2  |    |    | 2         | 3.70          |
| Not being paid on time   |    | 1  |    |    |    | 1         | 1.85          |
| Low compensation   |    |    |    |    | 1  | 1         | 1.85          |
| Seasonal work  |    |    |    |    | 1  | 1         | 1.85          |
| <b>Other</b>   |    |    |    |    |    | <b>4</b>  | <b>7.41</b>   |
| Attitude of local community / socio-cultural                           |    |    | 1  | 1  |    | 2         | 3.70          |
| Use of drugs / crimes  |    |    | 1  | 1  |    | 2         | 3.70          |
| <b>N</b>   |    |    |    |    |    |           | <b>100.00</b> |

The data in table 12 were arrived at through a process of listing and ranking during the focus groups. Each participant was asked to list the factors that hindered or impeded her work. The listings by each set of five home-based workers were ranked according to the number of times a specific factor was mentioned. The factor that appeared the most times was given the highest ranking, while the one that appeared the least number of times was given a low ranking. The ranks of all the 70 home-based workers were then integrated to find out the most highly ranked issues arising from the macroeconomic arena, city / district / provincial / national government factors, value chain dynamics, and other factors. Thus, R1 was the highest rank, which means that with regard to the macroeconomic factors, inflation reflected the highest frequency. Among city / district / provincial / national government factors, the most frequently mentioned was electricity and gas load shedding,



which received an R1 (highest) rank. The same process was used for positive factors and city/provincial/national institutions that played a positive role in the work and lives of the home-based worker. The table above only depicts the negative forces.

### **2.1.1 Macroeconomic Forces**

This section is based on the impact of macroeconomic forces on the lives and work of the home-based workers.

#### **Inflation**

Inflation was overwhelmingly the most important macroeconomic factor impacting on the lives of the workers interviewed in 14 of the 15 focus groups. The high price of raw materials, transport and those items needed for daily life appears to have had a serious effect on their work, impacting as well on family health, education, food intake and interpersonal relations.

The home-based workers highlighted a number of impacts of inflation on their work and lives. They reported that while their incomes remained static, their expenditure on consumable goods was increasing as a result of the increase in the price of these goods, making it increasingly difficult for them to make ends meet. The impact of inflation on food prices is keenly felt by the home-based workers. As one worker said, "This really affects us, we can't buy anything. We can't even afford flour to make our daily bread," and "How do we eat?" (FG 2).

In focus group 3, participants said:

- "Children don't get proper food as it is expensive."
- "We eat only twice a day instead of three times. We rearrange meal times so that two meals suffice."
- "Some even eat once a day."
- "We can't give children good clothes and food."

The feelings expressed by home-based workers as a result of inflation and the inability to feed, educate or provide healthcare to their children are very strong. The sense of despair this inability brings was expressed by one worker, who said, "sometimes we feel like committing suicide as we can't feed our families." The reduction in budget for food items meant that households were now eating less, which was being felt especially by children. Several women in different focus groups reported that in the past they could afford to give their children milk but now cannot even afford flour, which is a staple.

Inflation has also led to effects on health and educational opportunities for their children; in focus groups, workers said "We take children away from schools as we can't afford them." Another added: "Health also is beyond our means."

The home-based workers try to mitigate the effects of inflation by various means. One worker reported, "We try to get more work." Yet another worker reported, "Now we need several incomes in the family and one income cannot cover expenses" (FG 3).

This reduction in consumption was leading to severe tensions in the household, of which one consequence was domestic violence. One worker reported "We fight with our husbands and beat the children when they pester us for things" (FG 15). Workers in focus group 9 said "There is domestic violence." Another added, "The atmosphere at home is bad and there is tension and children become mouthy." Another worker reported that children ask why the mother gave birth to them if she can't feed them (FG 6).

Some home-based workers reported that "people start fighting and committing suicides" (FG 6), which shows the workers' level of desperation from being unable to make ends meet.

Price increases also impact negatively on the women's work activities. Two main trends were reported: an increase in the intensity of work and a fall in earnings and surplus. Some workers increased their hours of work. Many of them reported increasing their work hours and working nights to make the same amount of money. Overwhelmingly, workers reported that the increase in the level of prices was leading to a fall in the demand for their products as consumers reduced their own consumption levels.

Debt levels appeared to be increasing among the workers in the focus groups with some workers reporting that, due to the fall in their incomes because of price increases, they have no option but to maintain a basic level of consumption by taking on more and more debt. As a result, they end up working more and more simply to pay off their debts.

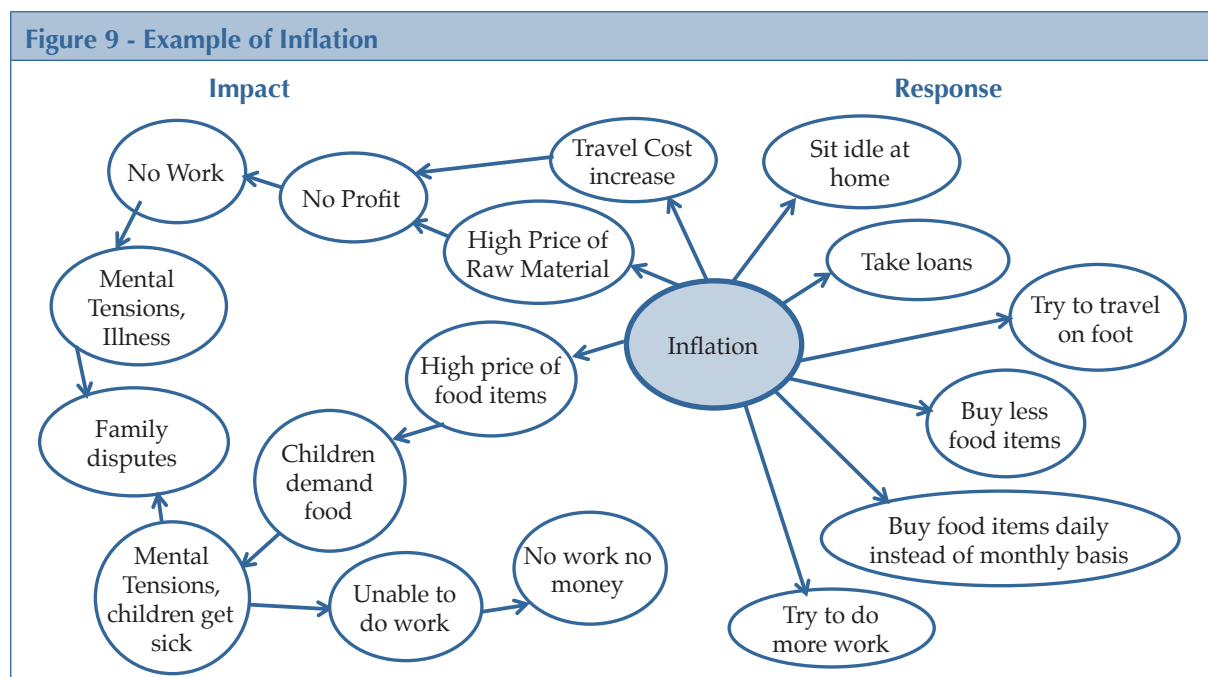
A number of workers reported that the higher prices of their inputs and the general increase in prices have reduced their number of customers, which is forcing them to absorb the impacts of inflation. They cannot raise their product price as the orders can go to someone else. The piece-rate workers reported that if they ask for higher prices, middlemen pass the work on to others. Thus, the workers have no option but to continue to sell their products at low prices, while their materials costs, over which they have no control, are increasing at an alarming rate.

The high level of inflation in Lahore (and all over Pakistan) is impacting on general household vulnerability. For example, one of our respondents reported “Homeowners throw us out when we can’t pay rent. Where should I go with my young daughters?” (FG 10).

There was also some evidence that social pressures, which impact negatively on workers’ livelihoods, are now being felt more acutely. One worker reported that “We can’t get our daughters married because the dowry demand is so heavy. So they join us in the work” (FG 10). Social and cultural pressures thus rise as a result of crippling inflation.

Collectively, these negative factors have a worrying impact on workers’ health. The focus groups reported a rise in tension and illness. Moreover, workers were unable to seek proper health services because the cost of health services was itself rising rapidly. As one worker reported, “Doctors are so expensive. I eat Panadol or Disprin and then go back to work” (FG 15).

Another of the impacts of inflation and the resulting frustration is the surge in criminal activity. As one worker reported, “Crimes are going up due to frustration.” A number of the respondents mentioned that social tension and crime in the communities had increased, and so had rates of suicide. Issues such as crime were in turn having a negative influence on workers’ income, with a number of the workers having to alter their work patterns to cope with rising crime. As one worker reported, “We are afraid to come home at night because they may steal the materials or our products” (FG 3). The children turn to crime as they are pulled out of school, and the family becomes vulnerable to police abuse as policemen charge money to release their children (FG 9).



As shown in the table 13, home-based workers’ major overhead costs are materials, utilities and transport. Materials’ expenditures are on the higher side with an average of Rs. 6,480 for own account workers followed by Rs. 6,080 for industrial outworkers. The trend for utilities is on the higher side for industrial outworkers at an average of Rs. 2,540 and on the lower side for own account workers at

an average of Rs. 2,176. The transport costs are, on average, Rs. 1,110 for own account workers and Rs. 910 for industrial outworkers. In the non-garment category (not shown in the table), the expenditure is much higher, rising to Rs. 9,335 (N=17).

| Items     | Own Account | Industrial Outworkers | Combined Average |
|-----------|-------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Materials | 6,480.32    | 6,080.00              | 6,382.68         |
| Utilities | 2,176.29    | 2,539.82              | 2,410.29         |
| Transport | 1,110.00    | 910.00                | 1,010.00         |
| <b>N</b>  | <b>59</b>   | <b>91</b>             | <b>150</b>       |

**Source:** Lahore home-based workers IEMS survey data (2012)

The expenditures reported in the quantitative data correspond to the findings of the qualitative research.

### **2.1.2 Value Chain Dynamics**

One of the major issues highlighted by home-based workers regards the lack of standard wages they receive for their work. As shown in figure 10, a majority of industrial outworkers (84 per cent) have to accept the prices set by their middlemen, and 15 per cent have to accept prices set by direct buyers. On the other hand, 56 per cent of own account home-based workers shared that they determine the prices of their products. These workers revealed that 24 and 20 per cent of prices are set by direct buyers and middlemen respectively.

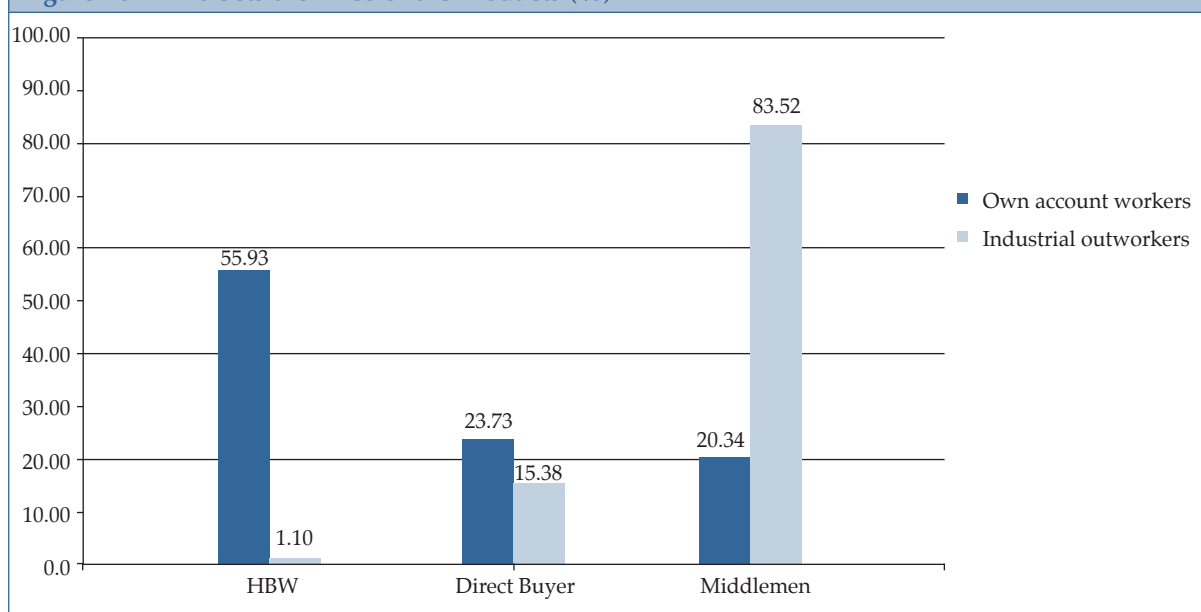
Around 30 per cent of home-based workers from the garment sector reported that they decide the prices of their products. On the other hand, in the non-garment sector, only around 14 per cent claimed that they decide the price of their product. A significant 50 per cent of the garment and 65 per cent of the non-garment workers have no or little control over pricing, which is largely determined by intermediaries.

A simple majority of own account workers (56 per cent) set the prices of their products. Direct buyers set prices for 24 per cent of own account workers, and middlemen set prices for 20 per cent.

The large majority of industrial outworkers are dependent on middlemen to decide the price of their products (84 per cent). Direct buyers set 15 per cent of prices. Only 1 per cent of industrial outworkers set prices.

The qualitative data also revealed that the prices of the products were very low, and several of the women reported that they had to accept whatever was offered or the work would be given to some other worker. This suggests that there is an oversupply of labour in the market, and the fear of losing work ensures that remuneration for products is out of the control of workers. Another reason for low prices is that home-based workers are isolated in their homes and often do not have the market knowledge or bargaining power to negotiate higher piece-rates.

**Figure 10 - Who Sets the Price of the Products (%)**



**Source:** Lahore home-based workers IEMS survey data (2012)

The most commonly reported work-related problem was the low prices of the products made by home-based workers. Around 93 per cent reported this issue, while 86 per cent of workers said the major reason for the low prices was the workers' inability to bargain with contractors. The trend here is highest among industrial outworkers (96 per cent). Around 67 per cent of all workers said that they did not have consistent work orders. The other issues included lack of access to basic services (57 per cent), high costs of the material to make goods (52 per cent), inconsistent demand of goods by customers (51 per cent), lack of training or skills required (29 per cent) and difficulty in accessing markets (9 per cent).

**Table 14 - Work Related Problems by Product Type (%)**

| Work Related Problems                                      | Own Account | Industrial Outworker | Combined Total Average |
|--|-------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Prices for the products are too low                        | 91.53       | 93.41                | 92.67                  |
| Inability to bargain with contractor (for sub-contractors) | 71.19       | 95.60                | 86.00                  |
| Work orders not consistent                                 | 57.63       | 72.53                | 66.67                  |
| Poor access to basic infrastructure services               | 44.07       | 65.93                | 57.33                  |
| Costs of the materials need to make goods are too high     | 62.71       | 45.05                | 52.00                  |
| Customer demand for goods is not consistent                | 47.46       | 52.75                | 50.67                  |
| Lack of training or skills development                     | 32.20       | 27.47                | 29.33                  |
| Difficulty in getting goods to markets                     | 18.64       | 3.30                 | 9.33                   |
| <b>N</b>   | <b>59</b>   | <b>91</b>            | <b>150</b>             |

**Source:** Lahore home-based workers IEMS survey data (2012)

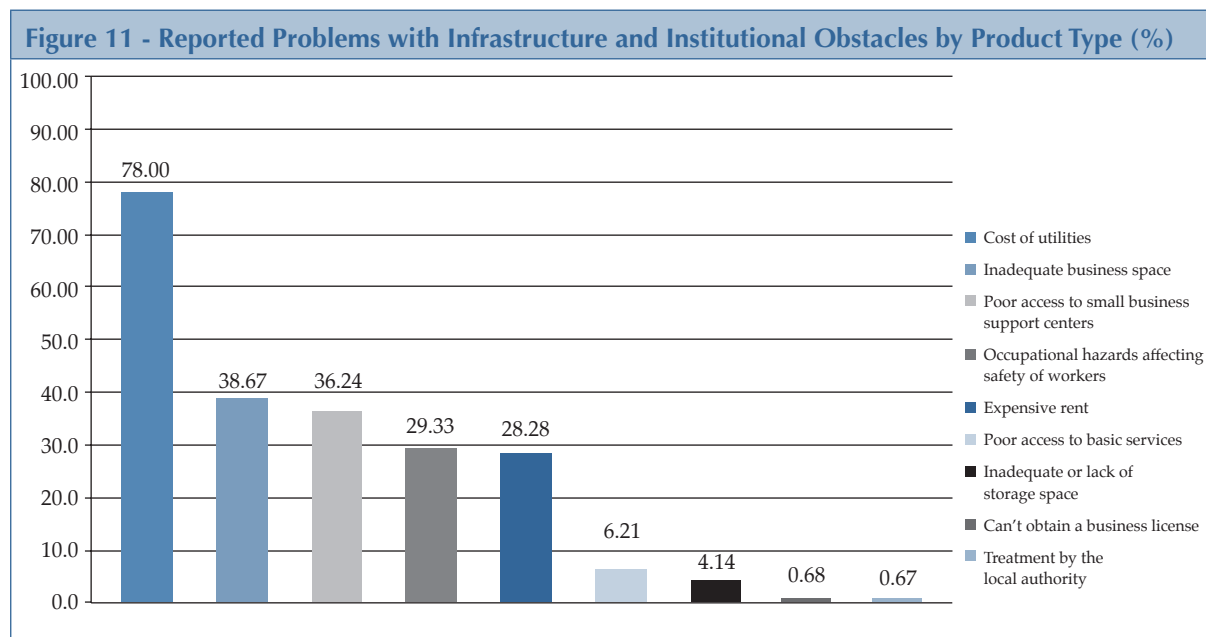
There seems to be some inconsistency between the quantitative and qualitative findings with regard to the major problems faced by home-based workers. The focus groups found that home-based workers consistently reported that energy shortages and inflation were persistent issues that plague their work and lives. However, in the quantitative data, the three main problems listed include the low selling prices of their own products, the lack of capacity to bargain, and inconsistent orders. Inflation, expressed in terms of high prices of materials, is fifth in terms of the percentage of workers

who reported it to be a major issue, and energy shortages are not even mentioned. One reason for this inconsistency may be that the qualitative methods involved five workers giving information collectively while the quantitative methodology was based on each worker's individual interview. It appears that workers in the focus groups tended to repeat what another worker said, so that responses were influenced by the group.

However, there is some consistency between the qualitative and quantitative results as the low prices of products may have been expressed in relation to the prices of materials. In other words, the workers' need to raise the prices of their goods seems to be based on high inflation and the high prices of their materials.

On the other hand, when it came to reporting institutional problems, the home-based workers did mention inflation, especially the cost of utilities. Since home-based workers spend most of the time at home and use their domestic space to do their economic activities, work-related problems also equally affect their personal lives.

### 2.1.3 Institutional Obstacles and Infrastructure Problems



Source: Lahore home-based workers IEMS survey data (2012)

#### Lack of Space and Amenities Conducive to Business

The high cost of utilities was a major issue reported by 78 per cent of the total home-based workers interviewed. This issue was followed by inadequate business space, which was reported by 39 per cent of the workers. Due to limited living space, the social life of all household members was badly affected. Owing to the lack of organizing opportunities for home-based workers, the third most serious problem cited was poor access to small business support centres with around 36 per cent of workers reporting this problem.

Approximately 29 per cent of home-based workers stated that they are living in rental accommodations and that it is very difficult to pay the rent from their low monthly income. One fourth of home-based workers also reported occupational hazards that affect worker safety.

The other issues included inadequate or lack of storage space, problems in obtaining a business license, and the treatment they receive from local authorities.

### 2.1.4 Government Policies and Practices, Especially at the City Level

This section outlines the impact of city, district, provincial and national governments and their associated institutions on the work of the home-based workers. The workers were asked to highlight the institutions that have positive, negative, or both positive and negative impacts on their work and lives. They were asked to identify the extent of the institution's impact as well as what the institution could do to facilitate their work.

**Table 15 - Negative Impact of Urban Policies on Home-Based Workers**

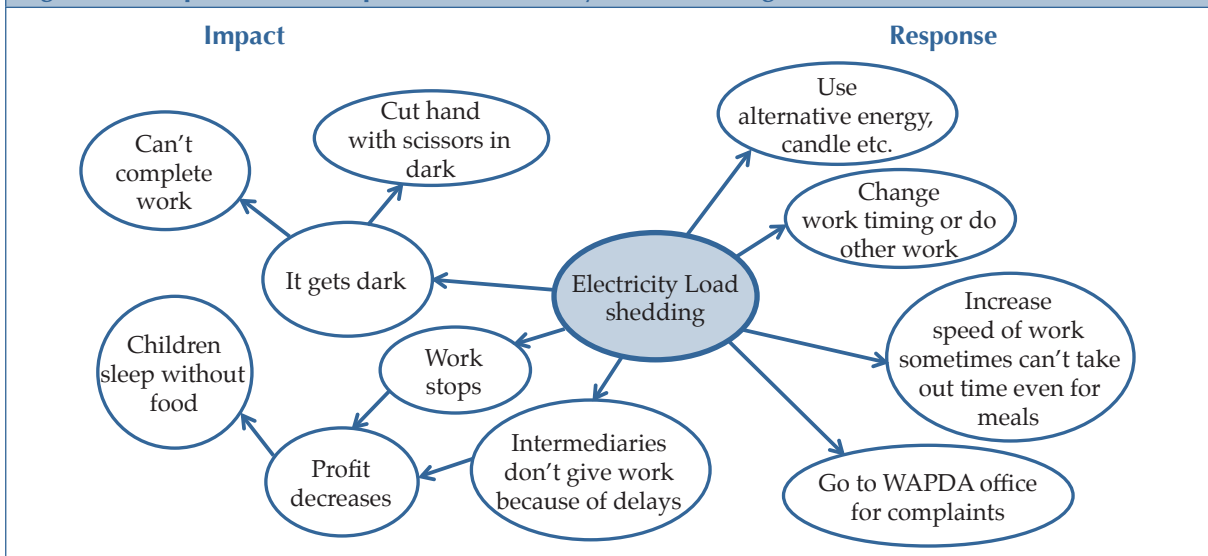
| Factors                           | Ranking |    |    |    |    |       |              |
|-----------------------------------|---------|----|----|----|----|-------|--------------|
|                                   | R1      | R2 | R3 | R4 | R5 | Total | %            |
| <b>National/City policies</b>     |         |    |    |    |    | 26    | <b>51.85</b> |
| Electricity and gas load shedding | 6       | 6  | 4  |    |    | 16    | <b>29.63</b> |
| Water and sanitation services     |         | 2  | 2  | 1  | 1  | 6     | <b>11.11</b> |
| Inadequate health facilities      |         | 1  | 2  |    |    | 3     | <b>5.56</b>  |
| Market rules for stalls           |         |    |    | 1  |    | 1     | <b>1.85</b>  |

Among negative forces related to government policies, the shortage of electricity and gas was reported highly by the participants of focus groups. Persistent energy shortages have impacted negatively on the lives of home-based workers in general and on livelihood and economic activities specifically.

**Electricity Shortages**

Electricity shortages have severe effects on the livelihoods of home-based workers. A majority of the study respondents reported that when shortages occur, they cannot work and their time is wasted. Due to reduced production, home-based workers earnings are insufficient to fulfil their daily food requirements. This reduced production and income is particularly troublesome at a time of rising costs. Some workers reported that those who rent out stalls have halved the size of the stall to keep costs from eating up all revenue (FG 2).

**Figure 12 - Impact of and Responses to Electricity Load Shedding**



During general discussions, the participants shared the aspects of their daily life that electricity shortages have made miserable; for example, home-based workers reported that they have to work harder and longer hours when electricity is available to complete their orders. They complained about time being wasted due to energy crisis, which in turn leads to a decrease in their income. They cannot get enough sleep as they work late into the night, which is affecting their health. Children go to school hungry as food cannot be prepared. As one participant said, “Anyone who has never been hungry cannot know what it is like. Those who have clothes cannot understand those who don’t. We need resources” (FG 1).

The stresses of load shedding are causing an increase in domestic violence, which is badly affecting women and children in particular. As one worker reported, “Mothers start beating up the children when they irritate them. The men beat up the women. Tensions really increase” (FG 8). In some cases, people mentioned the thought of committing suicide because of the violence and stress. Some mothers also shared that the children are not inclined to stay home and are getting into bad habits like stealing and getting into trouble with the law enforcing authorities.



In most of the areas where electrical pumps are used to draw out the water, it is not possible to access water during the electricity interruptions. The water shortage thus seems to compound the problems already faced by the workers.

Electricity is the main source for production in industries, and due to unavailability of the electricity, local industries are closing down and laying off workers, which is an important factor in the increase in unemployment. As one participant said, “All business has collapsed due to no electricity” (FG 2).

Home-based workers shared that adopting alternate energy sources is difficult due to their heavy costs. Workers would like to have Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) equipment to prevent interruptions, but its cost is prohibitive. Similarly, other available products, including rechargeable lights, are not affordable. When the workers cannot meet orders, the work is given to others, leading to a further fall in the income. As one HBW said, “Those who give orders fight with us and try to give work to others” (FG 13).

The entire production cycle seems affected, as those who run businesses and factories also suffer the effects of power shortage. As one worker said, “We get less work as electricity is out everywhere so those who give work also have less of it” (FG 13).

Most of the women home-based workers shared that they have shifted to manual machines, so that they can work in daylight at least to complete their work. But this has significantly reduced their production, and the expenditure of personal energy is greater with manual machines. This causes strained muscles and greater fatigue.

Some of the workers said they are thinking of changing their line of work because they cannot work without electricity. One worker reported that she was trying to do different kinds of work with a preference for jobs that can be done during daylight, e.g. packing and sewing on beads. This kind of job shift indicates a shift within the sector imposed by energy shortages.

Many other women shared that they have to work in candlelight and use lanterns to meet the deadlines agreed on with middlemen. A woman working for a garment factory shared that she had to use needle and thread and was unable to see clearly while working in the dark. Once she experienced scissor cuts on her hands, and finally she had to stop working.

### 2.1.5 Other Negative Forces

This section outlines some of the socio-cultural and other factors that have an impact on the work and lives of home-based workers. Since the majority of these workers live in relatively conservative and religious localities of Lahore, they have to occasionally suffer harassment at the hands of neighbours on account of economic activities conducted outside the home.

| Table 16 - Other Driving Forces              |         |    |    |    |    |          |             |
|--|---------|----|----|----|----|----------|-------------|
| Factors                                      | Ranking |    |    |    |    |          |             |
|  | R1      | R2 | R3 | R4 | R5 | Total    | %           |
| <b>Other</b>                                 |         |    |    |    |    | <b>4</b> | <b>7.41</b> |
| Attitude of local community / socio-cultural |         |    | 1  | 1  |    | 2        | 3.70        |
| Use of drugs / crimes                        |         |    | 1  | 1  |    | 2        | 3.70        |

Most of the localities in which the home-based workers live are socio-culturally conservative areas. It is considered inappropriate for women to stay out late or interact with unrelated men. Some of the home-based workers reported that if they return home late, the neighbours and/or community frown upon them. In a society where gender-based discrimination in general is fairly visible and exists in an extreme form, quite a few home-based workers reported harassment from various corners in the quantitative study. Around 2 per cent of home-based workers reported harassment from family members while less than 1 per cent reported harassment from neighbours or from contractors.

|  | <b>Own Account</b> | <b>Industrial Outworkers</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|--|--------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| Harassment from neighbours               | 0.00               | 1.10                         | 0.67         |
| Harassment from family members           | 1.69               | 2.20                         | 2.00         |
| Harassment from a contractor / middleman | 0.00               | 1.10                         | 0.67         |
| <b>N</b>                                 | <b>59</b>          | <b>91</b>                    | <b>150</b>   |

**Source:** Lahore home-based workers IEMS survey data (2012)

However, these issues were not reported significantly in the focus groups. This may be due to the fact that high inflation has forced many families to take up home-based work and its acceptability has increased among communities, particularly as the work is done at home and home is regarded as a woman's proper place. Those working through intermediaries do not have to go to markets and, therefore, did not report any harassment or socio-cultural disapproval.

## **2.2 Positive Driving Forces**

The home-based workers also highlighted some positive factors that have helped them in their work and enabled the creation of a helpful environment. Most of these factors refer to the work of the city / district government, although a few of the positive factors are related to the work done by the federal government.

The next table depicts the positive factors in the macroeconomic environment, the city / district / provincial / national government levels, the value chains, and other factors that had a positive impact on workers' work and lives. The home-based workers were asked to list the positive factors, which were assigned rankings based on the frequency with which a certain factor was reported. The next table is an integration of the rankings obtained for various institutions, organizations, and factors in the economic, governmental, and non-governmental sectors in terms of their positive contributions to the work.

| <b>Factors</b>   |           |           |           |           |           |              |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
|  | <b>R1</b> | <b>R2</b> | <b>R3</b> | <b>R4</b> | <b>R5</b> | <b>Total</b> |
| <b>Macroeconomic</b>   |           |           |           |           |           | <b>1</b>     |
| Loans facility   |           | 1         |           |           |           | 1            |
| <b>National/City Urban planning</b>  |           |           |           |           |           | <b>35</b>    |
| Physical infrastructure (new roads, bridges)   | 3         | 1         | 4         | 1         |           | 9            |
| Free education services  | 3         | 5         |           |           |           | 8            |
| Water and sanitation services  | 4         | 1         |           |           |           | 5            |
| Health facility  | 1         | 1         | 1         |           |           | 3            |
| Making Identity Cards  |           | 1         |           |           | 1         | 2            |
| Government's support services and environment friendly initiatives (Parks, dustbins, general facilitation) |           | 1         | 4         | 1         |           | 6            |
| Transportation   |           |           |           | 1         |           | 1            |
| Provision of gas connection  |           |           | 1         |           |           | 1            |
| <b>Value chain dynamics</b>  |           |           |           |           |           | <b>2</b>     |
| Fashion industry   | 1         |           |           |           |           | 1            |
| Home-based workers support mechanisms  | 1         |           |           |           |           | 1            |
| <b>Other</b>   |           |           |           |           |           | <b>2</b>     |
| HomeNet Pakistan's support   | 1         |           | 1         |           |           | 2            |

### **2.2.1 Infrastructure and Services**

The workers reported that the construction of bridges across main roads helps them to navigate easily. The reconstruction of road and streets was similarly identified as positive. They found that sanitation is good now as there are dustbins around for garbage. The sewer has been improved, and this has directly affected the environment, health and mobility of the home-based workers. Municipal services have improved a lot over the last few years; for example, the provincial government's Solid Waste Management Program has been effective in the elimination of waste.

The home-based workers were appreciative that clean water filters had been installed in their area, and they now have access to clean water in their homes due to the new connections by city authorities.

A number of home-based workers expressed appreciation for government schools, especially ones that have parks for children. It was appreciated that the government has opened new schools and colleges in the community. The Punjab government's new program on education provides free vouchers for education along with free books for the children of home-based workers.

They were also happy that the government has recently provided gas in their areas. They appreciated the free health and public education facilities provided by the Punjab government. The provincial government has launched a dengue fever awareness campaign, and the communities of home-based workers are happy that their areas have been included in the campaign and receive continuous sprays. This has made their areas cleaner and free of pollution that was causing diseases.

The new buses in Lahore, namely "First Bus", have recently begun operating, which makes transportation for home-based workers easier. Their time is saved, and they do not have to wait for long hours to travel to the markets. The home-based workers also found it positive that there are petrol pumps everywhere; they no longer have to go far away to fill up, and it is much easier for them to travel with their husbands on motorbikes. In many cases, the male kin fetch the raw materials or deliver the products to the markets, so the proximity of petrol pumps affects the efficiency and cost of their work.

### **Services**

**National Identity Cards:** Home-based workers reported that it is now easier to get National Identity Cards (NIC) provided by the federal government. The focus groups participants widely appreciated the cards as they felt that the cards give them citizenship rights and help them to become recognized in Pakistan. They now feel that they have an identity and can open accounts in banks and use ATMs. This has made financial transactions easier. Previously, they had to rely on their male kin to open bank accounts and deal with the money.

**Micro-financing:** Home-based workers now have access to credit from micro-finance institutions such as Kashf. This has made their lives easier as they have started small businesses, which have improved their living conditions.

**Policing:** Some of the home-based workers claimed that the law and order situation in Lahore has improved due to city police officials. The workers feel secure while away from their home, and if they are travelling late in the evening, they do not feel as threatened as before. However, some women from different areas reported that the police do not let them work in peace (FG 2). This indicates that the law and order situation is not consistent across Lahore. It is also significant that in 2 out of the 15 focus groups, the workers insisted there are no positive factors and only negative trends exist.

### **2.2.2 Value Chain Dynamics**

This section is based on the economic linkages of home-based work with the formal economy and shows the production chain of the garment and non-garment sectors from procuring materials to making marketing products. The primary value chain actors are home-based workers, intermediaries, wholesale markets (Shah Alam), Baghbanpura Market, second hand markets (Lunda Bazaar etc.), retail markets (Anarkali, Ichhra), upscale retail markets (Liberty, DHA), factory owners, and shopkeepers.

**Figure 13 - Value Chain for Garment Workers**

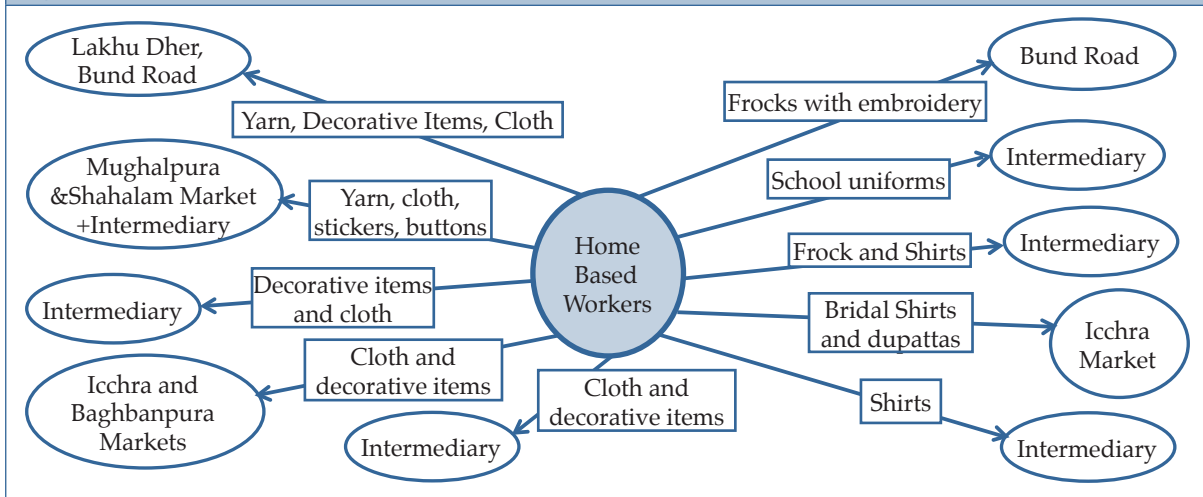
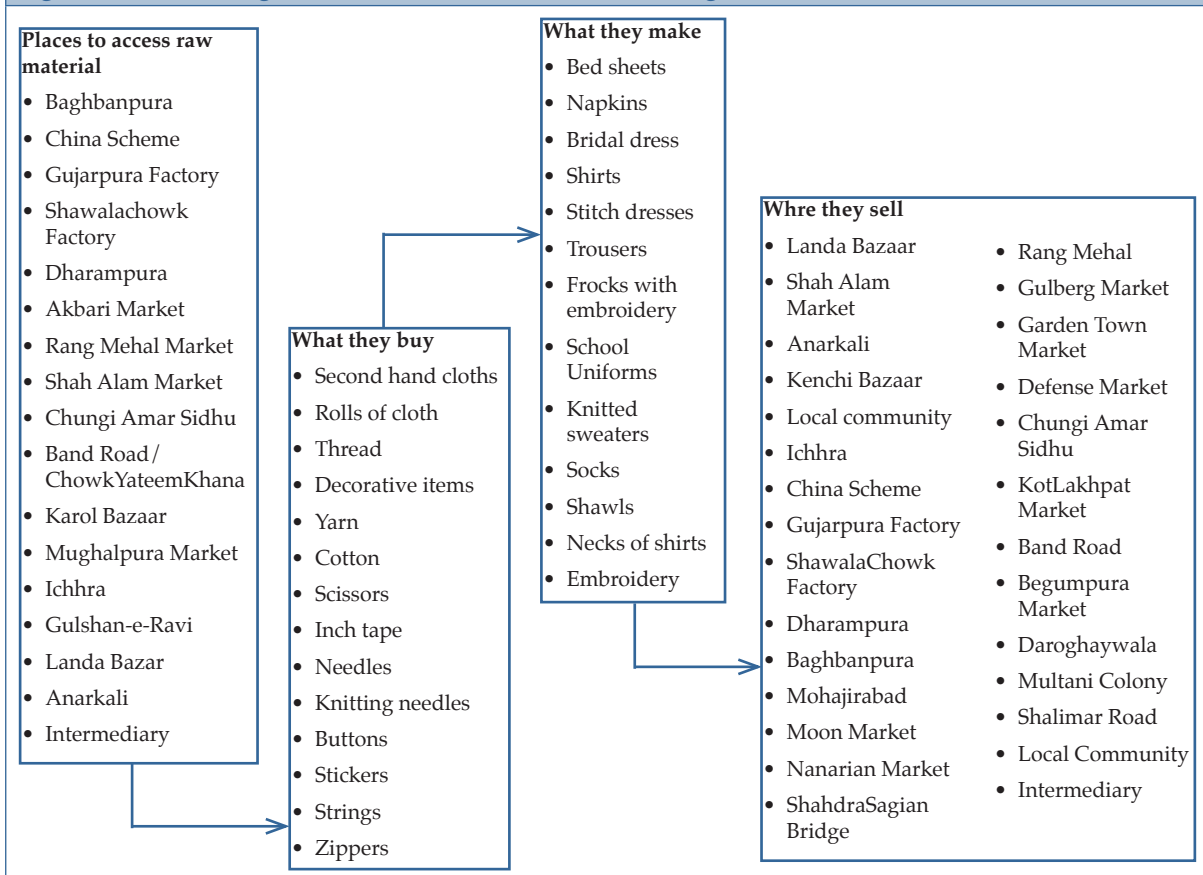


Figure 14 shows that workers buy different materials from diverse markets (Mughalpura, Baghbanpura or Shahalam markets) or receive them through intermediaries. These materials include cloth, thread, yarns, buttons and decorative items. After finishing the garments, including shirts, frocks, bridal dresses, school uniforms and embroidered dresses, they may sell them at Ichhra and Band Road markets or through intermediaries. Most home-based garment workers sell their products in the local markets or local communities, and some are connected to the formal economy through regular orders placed by factories or shopkeepers.

**Figure 14 - Flow Diagram of Economic (Value Chain) Linkages for Garments**

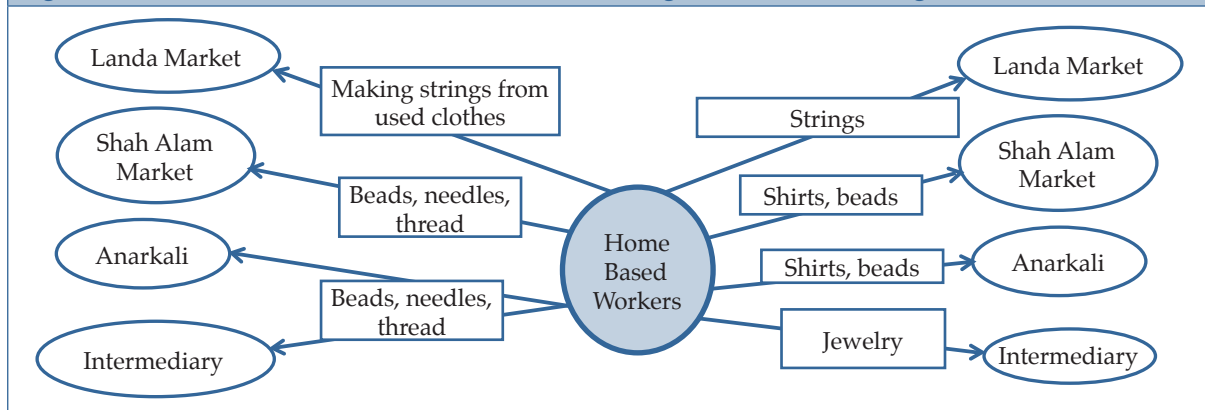


**Buying of Material and Delivery/Selling of Goods**

As figure 14 shows, there is enormous diversity among the markets and sources that garment makers use to acquire materials. A total of 17 different types of sources for the acquisition of materials were

identified. These included wholesale and retail markets as well as intermediaries who drop off the materials at the houses of home-based worker. These markets are located in different areas of Lahore with vast distances separating them. A total of 14 different types of materials were identified for garment making, and the home-based workers identified 13 different types of products they make to sell in the markets. A total of 28 different types of markets and methods were identified for selling products. These markets included upscale as well as wholesale and retail markets spread all over Lahore at considerable distances from one another.

**Figure 15 - Wholesale and Retail Markets for Purchasing Materials and Selling Products**



In some cases, intermediaries pick up the finished products. However, in cases where the home-based workers themselves deliver the products, they have to travel vast distances at great cost to acquire materials as well as sell their products. As reflected in many of the focus groups, these complex chains tend to undergo changes with the development of new roads, bridges and upcoming areas in the city. They are also subject to change as a result of market dynamics; for example, with high inflation, the numbers of orders are affected as people’s buying power diminishes.

Sometimes materials such as thread and cloth are delivered by intermediaries, who also pick up the product. At other times, home-based workers buy the material themselves, but the finished product is picked up and marketed by intermediaries. For example, one home-based worker said, “I pick up the stuff like almonds and peanuts from someone’s house and some items are delivered by intermediaries. I delivered the peeled nuts back by myself but for jewellery I go to Shagorabad Market and buy the material. I walk there by myself near Karol Bazaar and it takes 30 minutes both ways” (FG 12). Another worker said, “I buy old sweaters from the Landa Bazaar (second hand market in Lahore). The machine to make the charpoy material is my own and I use scissors to take apart the sweaters for wool” (FG 13).

It appears that the non-garment sector is more dependent upon intermediaries than the garment sector. The quantitative data also indicates that there is a higher percentage of own account workers in the garment sector and that the percentage for piece-rate workers is greater in the non-garment sector. In other words, greater numbers of non-garment workers are industrial outworkers who make products at home and deliver them to factories.

**Figure 16 - Flow Diagram of Value Chain Linkages for Designing Shoe Uppers**

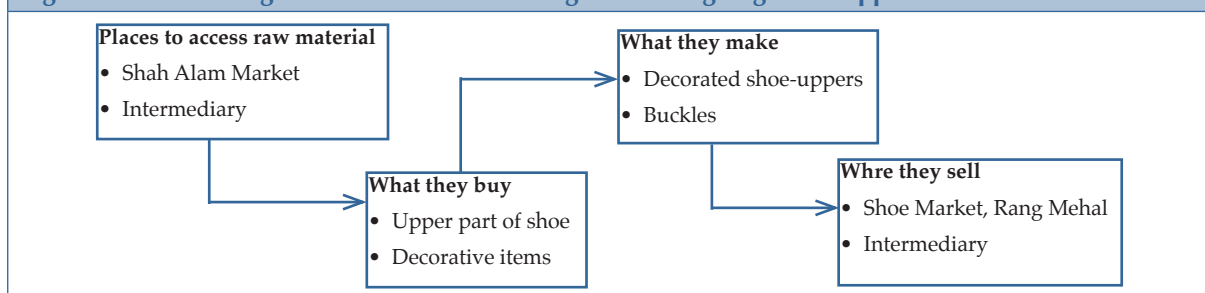


Figure 16 shows the economic linkages for non-garment workers who make the uppers of shoes, demonstrating that they primarily acquire materials from two sources: Shah Alam Wholesale Market and from intermediaries. Home-based workers decorate the shoes then market them through



intermediaries at the Rang Mehal Shoe Market. Of four individual cases examined, intermediaries were used for both material acquisition and marketing. Only in one case was the wholesale and retail market used.

At times, the home-based workers get orders from shopkeepers from whom they pick up the materials. Later, the workers will drop the products off at the shops. Occasionally, factories place a large order, which is dropped off and picked up by factory vans. At other times, home-based workers market products in local and nearby communities and receive orders directly. There are instances where local women act as intermediaries.

Occasionally, workers take a rickshaw, bus or a local *chingchi* (auto rickshaw) to go to the local markets like Shah Alam or Akbari Gate to buy material. This takes a lot of time and can be expensive because local transport costs are high. Because the local *chingchi* and buses are comparatively cheaper than rickshaws, workers plan their visits jointly to distribute the travel costs. When they deliver products in posh areas, those who order pay the costs of transportation. Sometimes, the workers change buses two or three times to reach the local market to get materials from Akbari Gate or Rang Mehal, located in the North of Lahore.

The building of roads and bridges, which is often identified as a positive factor, is sometimes negative as it hinders workers' ability to reach the markets easily. They are constrained to cross roads at specific points located some distance away.

Sometimes, the women pick up material from the homes of the people ordering and drop the products back to them. The stress experienced by the workers while marketing products was expressed by one worker like this: "We carry our stuff and walk for hours and use Panadol for headache as we get tired" (FG 6).

### ***Fashion Industry***

The fashion industry was designated as a positive factor for it has brought new designs in formal and casual dress wear, which have helped income generation by creating more work.

### **Summary**

The main findings of this section are that persistently high inflation and acute energy shortages negatively affect the work of home-based workers in Lahore. As a result of these negative forces, home-based workers and their families experienced a reduction in income, a fall in number of orders, the inability to meet demand, domestic tension and violence, health issues, and reduced consumption of food and non-food necessary items.

However, there are also some positive factors that enabled home-based workers' work and lives, which included better roads and sanitation, health facilities, education vouchers for their children, and measures attributed to the provincial and city government. While the study participants were generally very critical of the federal government for inflation and the energy crisis, however, workers also appreciated the issuance of identity cards, which enable them to engage in financial transactions more easily.

It was found that there is enormous diversity of the markets from which materials are procured and to which products are sold, especially in the garment sector, including wholesale, retail, upmarket and second hand markets. In the non-garment sector, where industrial outworkers often engage in piece-rate work, there is much greater reliance than in the garment sector on intermediaries. The cost of transporting goods is high and sometimes gets distributed between several workers. Family members help workers not only in making products but also in transporting goods and materials.

Other factors that occasionally affect workers emanate from socio-cultural and religious attitudes, especially for workers who transport their goods and procure materials themselves as they have to leave home to do so. However, socio-cultural and harassment factors did not figure in a significant way as the income from home-based work has become vital due to high inflation.

### **2.3 Responses to Negative Forces**

This section is based on the responses of the home-based workers to the negative effects of inflation and energy shortages on their lives and work. As is clear from table 19, the home-based workers employ an array of strategies to deal with their issues.



| Table 19 - Responses to Negative Forces |  |                              |                   |                          |          |           |
|---|--|------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Driving Force                           | Responses  | Responded by                 |                   |                          |          |           |
|   |  | Individual                   | Household/ family | Organization/ collective | Total    |           |
| Electricity Shortages                   | Use alternative energy sources (candle, torches) | 3                            | 3                 |                          | 6        |           |
|   | Wait for electricity to come                     | 1                            | 1                 |                          | 2        |           |
|   | Try to work faster                               | 1                            | 1                 |                          | 2        |           |
|   | Go to WAPDA to make complaints                   |                              | 1                 | 1                        | 2        |           |
|   | Don't waste time on cooking food                 | 1                            | 1                 |                          | 2        |           |
|   | Do other work                                    | 1                            | 1                 |                          | 2        |           |
|   | Store water                                      |                              | 1                 |                          | 1        |           |
|   | Protest  |                              |                   | 1                        | 1        |           |
|   | Increase speed of work                           | 1                            |                   |                          | 1        |           |
|   | Change work timing                               | 1                            |                   |                          | 1        |           |
|   | <b>Sub-total</b>                                 |                              | <b>9</b>          | <b>9</b>                 | <b>2</b> | <b>20</b> |
|   | Inflation  | Decrease overall expenditure | 2                 | 2                        |          | 4         |
|   |  | Cuts on food expenditures    |                   | 4                        |          | 4         |
| Access to loan                          |  | 1                            |                   | 2                        | 3        |           |
| Take more work                          |  | 2                            |                   |                          | 2        |           |
| Search for new markets                  |  | 1                            |                   | 1                        | 2        |           |
| Try to travel on foot                   |  | 2                            |                   |                          | 2        |           |
| Sit idle at home                        |  | 1                            |                   |                          | 1        |           |
| Don't send children to school           |  |                              | 1                 |                          | 1        |           |
| Protests against government             |  |                              |                   | 1                        | 1        |           |
| <b>Sub-total</b>                        |  |                              | <b>9</b>          | <b>7</b>                 | <b>4</b> | <b>20</b> |

**Source:** Lahore Focus Groups 2, 4 and 6

The most important response is that workers seek avenues for increasing their incomes by diversifying their work activities or by increasing the intensity of their work. For example, they reported undertaking work where they would be paid immediately. As a consequence, they had to reduce the amount of work they did where the time for payment was longer, even when this meant lower income.

At the household level, workers are making quite substantial changes to their consumption. As one worker poignantly reported, "Some days we just don't earn. At times we try to make the food stretch for days" (FG 1). Some workers said that they are now buying more second-hand goods such as clothing, which would previously have been purchased new.

Workers also respond by shifting monies from basic consumption to income generating activities. One worker reported, "We cut down on our kitchen budget in order to keep getting orders" (FG 13). In other cases, workers have replaced expensive raw materials with cheaper alternatives, and others have changed their product mix. For example, one of the respondents said, "We try to stitch frocks because shirts are going out of fashion, and women are wearing frocks so we make frocks" (FG 1).

Workers also change their consumption of public services as a response to their lower incomes. For example, some workers reported that they walked a lot more and reduced their expenditure on transport. Some workers reported that they altered their households' consumption of education,

sometimes taking children out of school completely to work, and in other instances, shifting children from more expensive private schools to public schools. Some have also reduced their expenditure on going out and visiting, an important social activity among workers in Lahore.

A number of workers reported that many more family members, including children, were now being forced to work in their enterprises in order to sell more products and thereby maintain their rapidly eroding incomes levels. Daughters and daughters-in-law, in particular, are engaged to meet the orders on time.

As reported above, one of the workers' other responses to inflation was to increase debt levels. Some workers further reported that they were forced to reduce their meagre level of savings. As a whole, high inflation had a severe impact on the finances of workers' households and was increasing workers' levels of risk and vulnerability.

Government anti-poverty and social protection measures were not having the desired impacts because of public's general perception about bureaucratic hurdles and corruption. For example, the federal government's Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) was allotted 70 billion rupees, from which each eligible woman is given 1,000 rupees per month as income supplement. The women in the focus groups reported corruption in that the supplement was given to women in the areas where the federal government fetches votes and to its own members.

As may be expected, the main response of workers to power cuts is to seek alternative forms of power and lighting: the use of candles, torches and the like. Both individually and in their households, workers looked for ways to deal with the fact that the power supply, so vital to their livelihoods as home-based workers, was unreliable. Workers responded by altering their work patterns and arrangements: some workers took on more work, others increased their work intensity, and yet others shifted their work to the times the power supply was a little more predictable. Although not reported by many workers, there is some evidence of collective forms of action and protest against WAPDA, the electricity supply company.

Workers' responses to inflation were a lot more varied. However, reducing expenditure was the dominant response, which itself took a number of forms: a general decrease in consumption, reduction in food expenditure, and a reduction in household expenditure on schooling, health and transport. Collectively, reducing consumption was 50 per cent of the responses reported. As is evident from the table, a minority of the workers interviewed adapted their work patterns and arrangements by taking on more work to meet the higher cost of consumable goods, took on more debt, and engaged in social protest.

Figure 17 reveals that the workers' families have reduced their overall consumption on food and other items, thus reducing their calorie intake. The home-based workers are finding it hard to provide adequate food for their children as it is too expensive, so the families respond by stretching one meal over two days and trying to buy cheaper vegetables. As a result, families' nutritional needs are not being met, which itself results in heightened tensions within the family, illness, and an inability to work properly. This, in turn, means that families have even less money to make ends meet. The workers respond by taking loans and getting into debt to meet basic needs and expenses. They begin looking for more orders of work to meet their needs. This means that there is even greater expenditure of personal energy and time on work, which leads to further complications.

**Figure 17 - Impact of and Responses to Inflation**

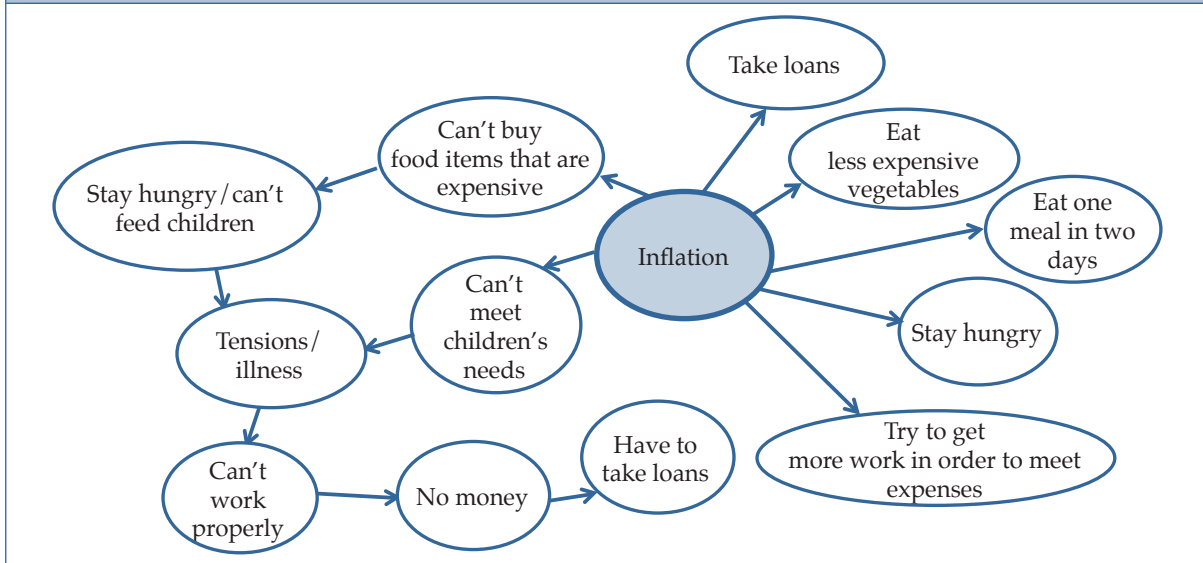
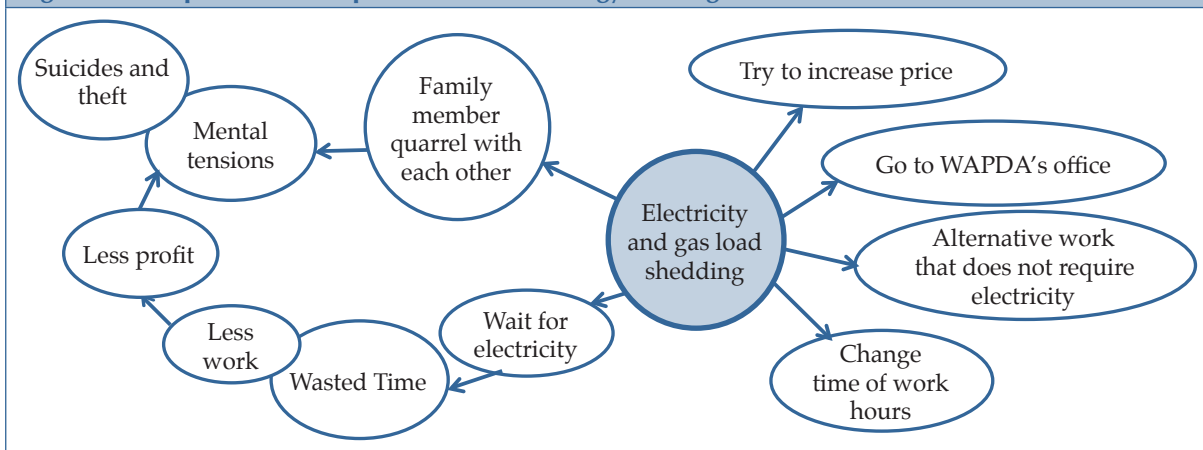


Figure 18 reveals that when workers are affected by electricity and gas shortages, they begin to experience mental tensions, which occasionally lead to suicides and/or theft. A great deal of time is wasted in waiting for electricity to be restored and, as a result, family members begin to quarrel with one another. Domestic violence has increased as a result of excessive power shortages. The workers respond by trying to increase the price of their products in order to have sufficient income although price setting is seldom in their control. They also go with their complaints to the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) to complain and ask for restoration of power. Another strategy is to find work that does not require electrical power, which means they are diversifying into other areas. Some reported that they change the timing of work to make it compatible with electricity availability. This obviously has effects on other household chores, and women's burden increases as they must do tasks around the schedule of power outages.

**Figure 18 - Impact of and Responses to Acute Energy Shortages**



**Reported Changes in Home-Based Work over the Past Year**

In order to analyze the changing trends in home-based work, workers were asked to observe their work over the last year and to think about what they may experience in the year to come. Among all home-based workers, 37 per cent saw no change in the work orders during this year in comparison to the last year. However, 27 per cent of home-based workers were fortunate to have more work orders. Significantly, however, one third (33 per cent) had comparatively fewer opportunities. Only 3 per cent were unable to observe any trend.

Just more than half (51 per cent) of home-based workers were optimistic in that they assumed they would have more work orders for the next year. But about one fifth of home-based workers said they have no hope for stable or improved business conditions in the next year.

The number of customers increased for 20 per cent of home-based workers, while 37 per cent of workers had the same number of customers. For various reasons, one third of workers lost their regular customers. Thirty-five per cent of these workers were hopeful they would have more customers in the next year. However, one fourth of home-based workers remained under threat of losing their regular customers in the year to come.

The majority of home-based workers (58 per cent) expected the cost of supplies to remain approximately the same for the current year and for the next year. The remaining workers did not have knowledge about the costs of supplies for both in the current and next year.

An increase in competitors was observed by 36 per cent of home-based workers in the current year and expected by 42 per cent of workers for the next year.

| Table 20 - Reported Changes in Home-Based Work over the Past Year (%) |       |       |               |            |
|---|-------|-------|---------------|------------|
| Changing trends   | More  | Less  | Stay the same | Don't Know |
| Number of home-based workers with work orders                         | 26.67 | 33.33 | 36.67         | 3.33       |
| Number of customers/buyers  | 20.00 | 20.00 | 36.00         | 24.00      |
| Buying quantity at each purchase                                      | 20.00 | 12.00 | 34.00         | 34.00      |
| Cost of supplies  | 58.00 | 0.00  | 0.00          | 42.00      |
| Competitors   | 36.00 | 4.00  | 43.33         | 16.67      |

Source: Lahore home-based workers IEMS survey data (2012)

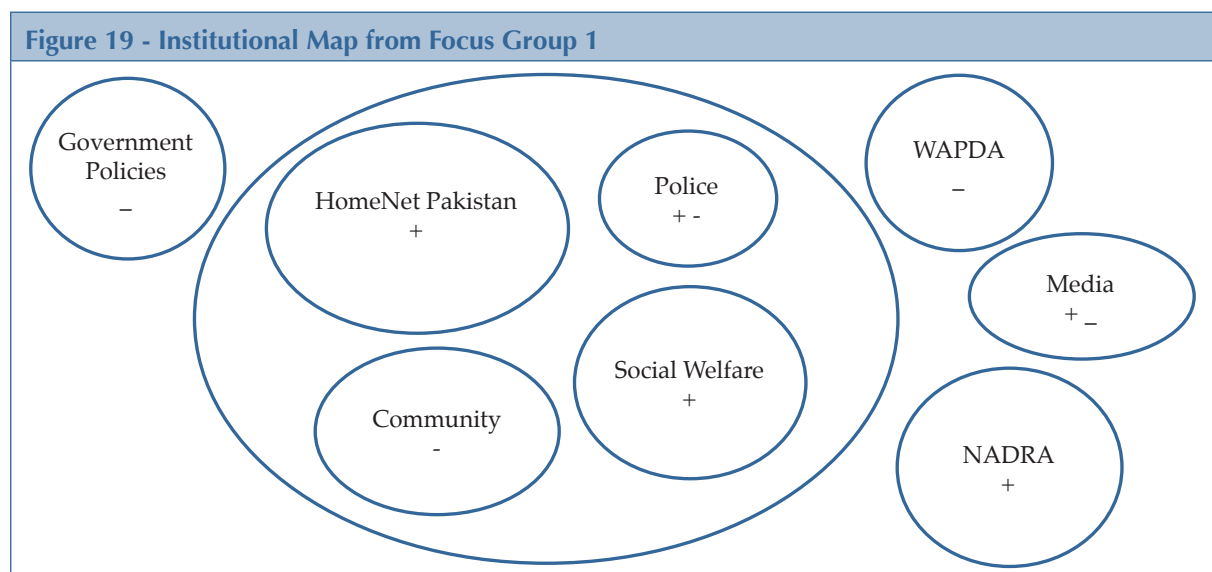
## 2.4 Intermediary Factors

### Institutions and Actors

#### Federal Government

Figure 19 shows that the home-based workers negatively perceive federal government policies. Since the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) was also a federal government agency at the time of the study, it is also seen as a very negative institution because home-based work is strongly affected by continuous power shortages. However, the National Database Registration Authority (NADRA), also a federal institution, is seen as a positive player. This may be due to the fact that NADRA has expedited the process of issuing National Identity Cards (NIC), which enables workers to access social and financial services as well as citizenship rights.

It was also observed that the institutions of the federal government are less responsive as compared with provincial level public sector departments. The distance in terms of the location of the federal government may be one reason why access to federal services is weak at the provincial levels.



### ***Media***

The media is seen as both negative and positive as it gives information and knowledge, but at the same time, workers believe it has negative influence on youth due to its violent and sexual content and its perceived ultra-liberal values.

However, the introduction of cable television was reported as a positive factor as it enables workers to know about the world. The media has, in their words, given them knowledge. Some of them were proud that they had been interviewed on TV channels when in the past they were completely invisible.

### ***Non-Governmental Sector***

Institutions in the non-governmental sector such as HomeNet Pakistan and similar organizations are seen as more reliable support mechanisms as compared to the public sector. HomeNet is acknowledged for providing information and access to social services institutions as well as for helping workers organize to promote and advocate for their rights with policy making institutions.

### ***Local Community***

The local community is seen as very negative because people in the neighbourhoods criticize workers' character and morality. The police are seen as both positive and negative support for home-based workers as they sometimes respond to the workers' issues but occasionally ignore their complaints.

### ***Social Services***

The Social Welfare Department, which is a provincial institution, is regarded as a positive support for home-based workers due to its provision of free health care and skill development opportunities through government vocational centres.

The overall finding is that the demand for services such health, education, information, and technical assistance is high. It appears that, at times, the non-governmental sector is better able to provide certain facilities and social services as compared to the public sector.

### ***Institutions Impacting on Workers' Lives***

The manner and process by which the institutions impact on the lives of the workers are elaborated in the table below. WAPDA has a direct impact on the working lives of the workers, since the provision of electricity is a critical input into home-based work. Alternatively, if load-shedding was more predictable, it may have had less of a negative impact on workers livelihoods and households.

A number of other important institutions' roles and types of impact are described in the tables. The latter tables also show what changes are required within these institutions; for example, micro-finance institutions need, according to the respondents, to provide better training. In a number of the focus groups, workers identified the need for better infrastructure provision by the local government, especially improved roads and bridges. In areas where this infrastructure has been provided, workers identified this as a positive force.

**Table 21 - Home-Based Worker Responses to Institutions that Support or Hinder their Work**

| Institution   | How They Help   | How They Hinder   |
|---|---|---|
| Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA)           |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fails to provide electricity</li> <li>• Children cannot study</li> <li>• Stops work and reducing income</li> <li>• High electricity bills</li> <li>• No schedule of load shedding</li> <li>• Work remains incomplete</li> <li>• Increase in unemployment</li> <li>• Cannot sleep at night</li> <li>• Reduction in daily / monthly income</li> <li>• Factories are closed due to excessive load shedding</li> <li>• Demand bribe to install meters</li> </ul> |
| Microfinance Institutions (Kashf, Akhuwat, BRAC, Aasha) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Akhuwat gives credit and they don't charge interest and don't engage in too much paperwork</li> <li>• Kashf gives loan in case of spouse's death</li> <li>• BRAC Pakistan give credit without the requirement of bank account</li> <li>• Kashf also gives advice to set up business.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kashf does not give training to loanees.</li> </ul>  |
| HomeNet Pakistan  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives information and access to institutions</li> <li>• Helps organizing and guides us regarding education</li> <li>• Give us confidence and hope</li> <li>• They give us training to cooperate with one another</li> <li>• Arranged skill development opportunities</li> <li>• Linkages with line departments</li> <li>• Help increase income through guidance</li> <li>• Recreational activities</li> <li>• Taught us to bargain and fight for rights</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family suffers when HomeNet engages us in meetings and trainings</li> </ul>  |
| City District Government                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure is improved and now we can easily cross the roads</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It takes longer to walk and cross the bridges</li> <li>• City district government has stopped financial support</li> </ul>   |



**Table 21 - Home-Based Worker Responses to Institutions that Support or Hinder their Work (cont'd)**

| Institution                             | How They Help  | How They Hinder  |
|---|--|--|
| Health Department                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free medical care and medicines</li> <li>• Free help in emergencies</li> <li>• Spray against dengue mosquito</li> <li>• Free vaccination services</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor services</li> <li>• Doctors are not present most of the time and call us to private clinic and prescribe expensive medicines</li> <li>• Hospitals are over-crowded most of the time</li> </ul>   |
| Education Department                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some government schools are good</li> <li>• Free books and uniforms up to matriculation</li> <li>• Fee is nominal</li> <li>• Teach English courses</li> <li>• Teachers are trained</li> <li>• Children are getting government jobs</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low quality free education</li> </ul>   |
| Water and Sanitation Authority          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They have improved drainage system</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor solid waste management system</li> </ul>   |
| Police                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sometimes police helps when they are harassed</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sometimes police does not help in difficult times</li> <li>• Police take bribes</li> <li>• They don't turn up for duty and they don't reach on time when they are called</li> <li>• They don't file our complaints and talk rudely</li> <li>• They arrest our children on false acquisition and release them after taking money</li> <li>• Our children are stopped to going work and their money is taken away</li> <li>• They snatched motor bikes</li> </ul> |
| BISP (Federal Government)               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some people got benefit from BISP</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "We have not been given any benefit through BISP."</li> </ul>   |
| Intermediary                            |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not give money on time</li> <li>• Irregular visits and erratic work</li> </ul>   |
| Baitul Maal (Social Welfare Department) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They have hostel for orphans</li> </ul>   |  |
| Utility Store                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cheaper provision</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited amount of items can be procured</li> </ul>  |
| Pakistan Telecommunication              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phones are helpful in getting businesses</li> </ul>   |  |

| Institution                                      | How They Help  | How They Hinder   |
|--|--|---|
| Membership based Organization                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They linked us with HomeNet Pakistan</li> <li>• They led demonstration against inflation</li> </ul> |   |
| Media  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give information and immediately reaches when violence occurs</li> </ul>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unacceptable/vulgar stuff on entertainment channels</li> </ul> |
| National Database Registration Authority (NADRA) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes ID Cards and gives us identity</li> </ul>   |   |

The workers were also asked to indicate in each case what the institution should do to improve its services for them. The table below shows some of the responses to this question.

| Table 22 - Home-Based Workers' Solutions for Helpful or Unhelpful Institutions |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Institution  | How they help or hinder  | What should they do?   |
| WAPDA  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No electricity; children can't study; stops work reducing income</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should diminish or end load shedding and reduce electricity bill</li> </ul>   |
| Media  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives information; reaches when violence occurs; pornography on internet and waste time watching TV</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should provide more information to the public and make governments departments accountable</li> </ul>   |
| NADRA  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes ID cards, takes bills without long lines and gives us identity</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should also issue birth certificate and end fee</li> </ul>  |
| Social Welfare   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives free medicines and dispensaries and provides vocational training</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The free medicines should be for all, not only mill workers</li> </ul>  |
| Police   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When we are harassed they come and help and sometimes they don't</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When we go out they bother us and should refrain from it</li> </ul>   |
| Community  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criticizes character and makes negative comments on our morality</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They should support us and cooperate with us</li> </ul>   |
| HomeNet Pakistan   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They give us confidence and hope; they give us training and to cooperate with one another; they provided awareness; they taught us to work collectively; they helped organize us; they give us information and access to institutions; guides us regarding education</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They should continue to enable our networking and training</li> <li>• Should link us with micro-finance institutions; should give us a platform for market access</li> <li>• HomeNet should buy our products and sell them</li> </ul> |
| Government Policies  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inflation has impacted our lives a lot</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Govt. should work honestly to reduce inflation and there should be more utility stores and ration cards should be issued</li> </ul>   |

**Table 22 - Home-Based Workers' Solutions for Helpful or Unhelpful Institutions (cont'd)**

| Institution     | How they help or hinder   | What should they do?  |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Health Dept.    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free dispensaries are good and medicines are easy to come by; they do spray in localities against dengue mosquitoes; polio drops are good</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spray should continue so that illnesses are avoided; trees should be sprayed; house to house spray is needed; there should be good doctors and poor should not be given bad doctors; ordinary medicines should be cheap; medicines should not be spurious; should be qualified dispensers</li> </ul>                                     |
| Education Dept. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some government schools are good; free books and uniforms were given to the poor and orphans; fee is only nominal; they teach English courses which helps our children; teachers were trained so they are better</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers should be hardworking and capable; should know how to deal in class and should not beat up the children; should have good morals; should have religious education and Quranic teaching; should have fewer <i>madrassas</i> and <i>molvis</i> (religious clerics); religious education should be proper and not wrong</li> </ul> |
| WAPDA           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High electricity bills and no electricity; there is no schedule of load shedding; work remains incomplete and our money is not paid; increases unemployment</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WAPDA should cooperate with us; they should have scheduled timings; they should not do in the daytime so that factories can work; should give time to pay our bills</li> </ul>   |
| Police          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They take a lot of bribes; they don't turn up for duty; if we call them they don't reach on time; they should cooperate and do their work properly and deal with us with respect instead of abusing us verbally; they don't file complaints and are rude; they catch children and take bribe to release them; they make false accusations to make money</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should come to duty on time and reach us on time and should file complaints and be polite and avoid bribes and avoid false cases against our children</li> </ul>   |

**Source:** 15 focus groups

The responses in table 23 were ranked in order of importance in terms of the institution that had the most impact to ones that were mentioned least. The workers were asked to explain whether their impact was negative, positive, or both and whether their impact was large (L), medium, (M) or small (S). This was indicated through the size of the circle drawn for the institution in a diagram. As can be seen from the table, the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) was mentioned most frequently; its impact was described as large, and it was seen very negatively. HomeNet and the credit institutions, on the other hand, received positive ratings.

| Table 23 - Importance of the Institutions and their Attitude towards Home-Based Workers |           |            |   |   |                      |    |     |
|---|-----------|------------|---|---|----------------------|----|-----|
| Institution   | Frequency | Importance |   |   | Positive or negative |    |     |
|   |           | L          | M | S | +                    | -  | +/- |
| Water and Power Development Authority   | 16        | 14         | 2 |   |                      | 14 | 2   |
| Micro Finance Institutions (Kashf, Akhuwat, BRAC, Aasha)                                | 8         | 1          | 3 | 4 | 6                    |    | 2   |
| HomeNet Pakistan  | 8         | 3          | 4 | 1 | 7                    |    | 1   |
| City District Government  | 8         |            | 4 | 4 | 3                    | 2  | 3   |
| Health Department   | 7         | 2          | 3 | 2 | 6                    | 1  |     |
| Education Department  | 6         | 1          | 4 | 1 | 5                    |    | 1   |
| Water and Sanitation Authority  | 3         |            | 2 | 1 | 1                    | 1  | 1   |
| Police  | 3         |            | 1 | 2 |                      | 1  | 2   |
| BISP (Federal Government)   | 2         | 1          |   | 1 |                      |    | 2   |
| Intermediary  | 2         |            | 2 |   |                      | 1  | 1   |
| Baitul Maal (Social Welfare Department)   | 2         |            | 1 | 1 | 2                    |    |     |
| Utility Store   | 1         |            | 1 |   | 1                    |    |     |
| Pakistan Telecommunication  | 1         |            | 1 |   |                      |    | 1   |
| Membership-Based Organization   | 1         | 1          |   |   | 1                    |    |     |
| Media   | 1         |            |   | 1 |                      |    | 1   |
| National Database Registration Authority (NADRA)  | 1         |            | 1 |   | 1                    |    |     |

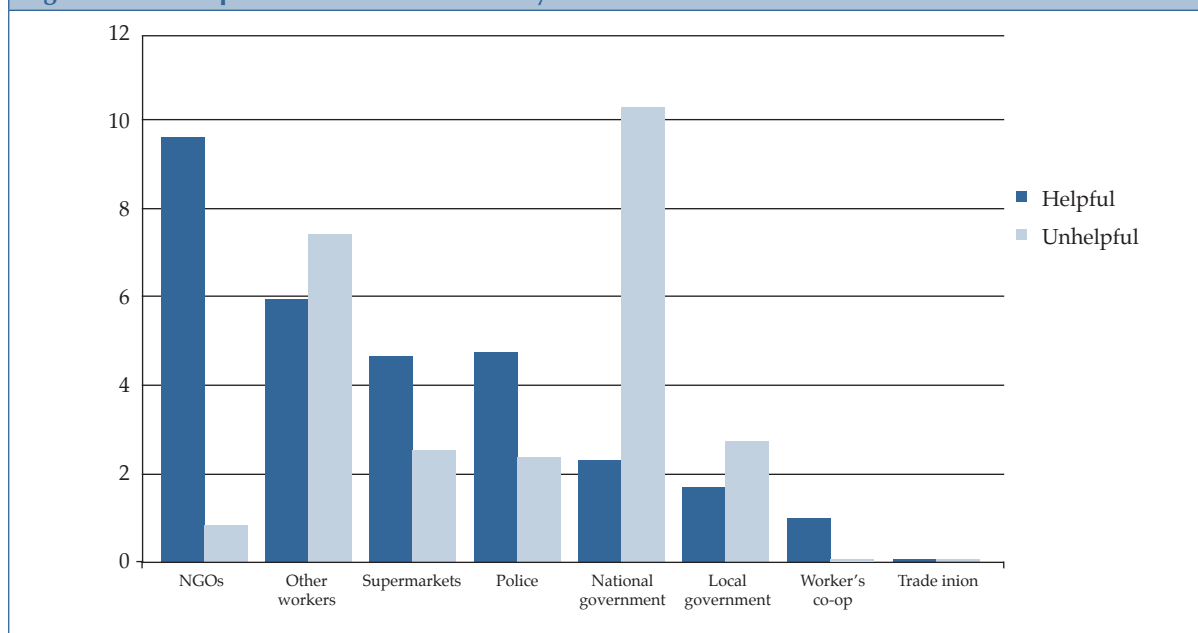
**Source:** 15 focus groups

Figure 20 shows that, among the many trends shown, the positive role of NGOs is highly recognized by home-based workers. This perception is followed by positive perceptions of other workers and supermarkets as local buyers of their products. In addition to the awareness-raising on the common issues and rights to be claimed from concerned authorities, the NGOs are seen as support mechanisms to develop the skills that ultimately increase the work opportunities. In addition, the NGOs' role of providing micro-credit for small income generation initiatives is equally important for workers.

On the other hand, the national government is seen most unhelpful mainly because of the energy crisis and high inflation rates, and because it has failed to address these issues at any stage.

The opinion about the role of other workers is mixed. On one hand, they are seen helpful as they share work opportunities with each other. On the other hand, other workers are seen as a reason of low compensation when they try to provide services at lower rates due to competition with each other.

**Figure 20 - Perceptions about the Role of Key Institutions Towards Home-Based Workers**



### **Membership-Based Organizations**

The role of membership-based organizations as non-governmental institutions was seen as significant and imperative by the home-based workers. HomeNet Pakistan’s role was seen as a more reliable support mechanism than the public sector. The home-based workers were very appreciative of the support by HomeNet Pakistan specifically and other membership-based organization in general for their level of understanding around home-based work, for providing awareness, strengthening linkages, and advocating for policies beneficial to home-based workers. HomeNet was also acknowledged for providing information and access to social services institutions as well as helping workers organize to promote and advocate for their rights with policy making institutions.

A sizeable number of home-based workers defined HomeNet Pakistan as useful because it has helped them become organized and provided them information. Some of them said that HomeNet has helped increase the prices of their products – in the past, they were doing more work for the same earnings. HomeNet has also provided awareness that the poor should have improved lives and more rights. Some stated that HomeNet has helped them network with other women in a similar situation, and they now feel part of the larger network of home-based workers. They found HomeNet Pakistan to be an important focal organization for addressing their issues and concerns.

The quantitative study found similar results about the recognition of the role played by membership-based organizations. Significantly more home-based workers who reside in the periphery than those in the centre consider membership-based organizations as important to building their confidence and hope, giving them learning opportunities to develop various skills, providing awareness, and helping them to jointly advocate for their rights. None of the home-based workers stated that a membership-based organization had been unhelpful to them at any stage.

### **Summary**

The findings related to this section suggest that home-based workers employ a multiplicity of techniques and methods to overcome the effects of inflation and energy shortages. With regard to inflation, families cut down consumption of food as well as non-food items by rearranging meal times, reducing the number of meals a day, buying cheaper and fewer food items. They buy cheaper materials from different markets to bring down the cost of production. They also cut down expenses on health and education by buying cheaper medicines instead of going to the doctor. They remove children from school and put them to work so that orders can be completed on time.

In order to deal with acute energy shortages, the workers try to reorganize their work routine around the availability of electricity. Sometimes they work late at night when there is electricity. They use candles and kerosene lamps as well as rechargeable lights, which are expensive. The workers try to

shift to manual technologies, which require a greater expenditure of personal energy, leading to health problems. Some workers also shift to other types of work that do not require the input of energy. They try to use daylight hours for their work and organize housework around the available of electricity and gas.

With regard to institutions, the home-based workers generally regard the federal institutions responsible for the supply of electricity in extremely negative ways; however, the federal institution that issues identity cards is seen as positive. The city / district and provincial government institutions are seen more positively as they provide roads, sanitation, drainage and local transport such as buses. The provincial government's education and health schemes are also seen in a good light despite questions about the quality of the services. The non-government institutions that provide training, knowledge and awareness are seen positively along with those that provide credit facilities. The workers see health, education, training and the provision of roads/transport as basic rights to which they are entitled.

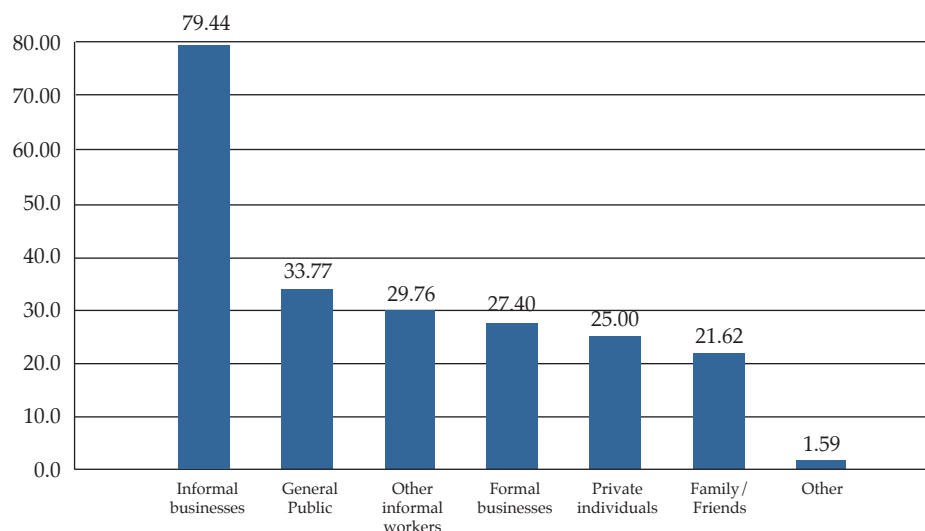


## Part 3: Linkages and Contributions

### 3.1 Linkages to Formal Economy

This sub-section describes the linkage of the informal home-based economy to the formal one. It defines the major buyers and retail and wholesale outlets of the products made by the home-based workers.

Figure 21 - Main Buyers of Products Made by Home-Based Workers by Product Type (%)



Source: Lahore home-based workers IEMS survey data (2012)

More than 27 per cent of home-based workers said they supply products to formal businesses, which indicates that the quality of work being produced by home-based workers meets the formal buyers' standards. Fully a third of respondents sell goods to the general public, which suggests they are also competing with formal businesses for these customers. This suggests home-based workers have the full potential to set up or scale up their home-based work into a formal business if they are supported.

As discussed in the following section, the home-based workers are vital players in formal value chains, providing labour to local businesses/factories and to exporters.

### 3.2 Contributions

This sub-section describes the contributions that home-based workers feel they make to the local and national economies. The focus group participants were asked to describe the ways in which their work has an impact on the economy and conditions of Lahore. Table 24 records their responses and indicates how frequently they were mentioned.

| S.No. |  | Frequency |
|-------|--|-----------|
| 1     | Lovely and low-priced foods and products available to citizens and local markets | 17        |
| 2     | Our work leads to factories/other businesses for products/earnings               | 16        |
| 3     | Lahore benefits from our taxes   | 16        |
| 4     | Make Lahore beautiful and bright   | 11        |
| 5     | Give energy to make Lahore more developed and prosperous                         | 9         |
| 6     | Contribute in local economy through buying items and purchases of raw materials  | 4         |
| 7     | Contribute in local and external exports   | 3         |
| 8     | Educate our children to give educated citizens to city                           | 3         |
| 9     | Good workers are being trained   | 1         |
| 10    | Contribute to country's development  | 1         |
| 11    | We are giving honour to Lahore by doing decent work                              | 1         |
|       | <b>Total</b>   | <b>82</b> |

**Source:** 15 focus groups

As can be seen from table 24, the home-based workers in Lahore outlined several contributions to the city; however, four types of contributions were recurrent: the good quality and low-priced products they make for Lahore's citizens; the benefit to factories and other businesses, which earn money because of home-based work; the benefits to Lahore city from taxes they pay on all utility services and every product they buy; and the beauty their products add to Lahore. They believed that their work also helps the economy of the country as a whole as some of their products are exported, and the country earns foreign exchange from the exports.

## Part 4: Key Findings and Policy Implications

### *Key Findings*

This section provides a summary of the key findings from the qualitative and quantitative methods used to study home-based workers in Lahore. Based on the salient findings, policy recommendations are provided for the federal, provincial, and district governments along with some suggestions for the non-government sector.

Home-based workers in Lahore engage in a wide variety of work, and there is enormous diversity in the kinds of products they make. They use different ways of procuring their materials from wholesale, retail, and second-hand markets, and also from intermediaries. They sell their products through a variety of markets, factories and intermediaries.

The value chain that the occupation is linked with has a bearing on incomes. Generally, garment sector workers fare a little better than the non-garment group with regard to income and status. Those working on an own account basis fared better than those on piece-rate basis. The findings from the qualitative research through focus groups conducted in Lahore revealed that inflation and energy shortages were the two most important negative factors that affect the work and lives of home-based workers working in the garment and non-garment sectors.

A major impact of high inflation was that the cost of production increased greatly and income levels declined. For piece-rate work, while the compensation for work remained static, there was a rise in the cost of materials and the transport needed to procure them. Consequently, net earnings fell. The high rates of inflation, combined with recession, resulted in fewer buyers in the market. As a result, the number of orders declined, and competition among the workers for the orders increased. The home-based workers worked longer hours in the hope of preventing income levels from falling further. Other members of the household had to help with the work in order to make ends meet. Children were taken out of school and set to work to enable the families to survive.

A major impact on the lives of the workers was that families were eating fewer meals and rearranging meal times in order to save on food, the cost of which is spiralling. Some families could never afford meat, eggs, or milk – even vegetables and flour (staples) were too costly. Less nutrition also meant deteriorating health; different disorders, such as hypertension, diabetes, headaches and fever, were reported.

One of the consequences of the deterioration in the quality of life was the spread of violence in the home and crime on the streets.

Electricity and gas shortages compounded the problems of the home-based workers. Chronic shortages complicated the schedules of workers and led to them being unable to meet orders on time. As a result, those placing the orders (factories, shopkeepers and intermediaries) quarrelled with them and threatened to give the orders to other workers. Workers' output capacity declined immeasurably due to energy crisis, and they had to shift to manual methods, which take longer and are more energy consuming. This caused physical health problems since manual sewing machines require a greater expenditure of human energy.

Excessive energy shortages imposed long working hours on workers as they resorted to working at night when there was electricity availability. Additionally, they began to work in candlelight, and this led to effects on their eyesight and general health. It also caused quarrels with the other family members who could not sleep at night due to the lights being on. The workers would like to rely on battery-operated Uninterrupted Power Systems (UPS) and rechargeable lights, but these are costly to buy and maintain. The overall cost of production became high, and many workers switched to other work that does not involve electricity and can be performed during daylight hours. The diversification of work and added responsibilities meant that their burdens increased and other family members had to join in the work. The burdens were further multiplied by the fact that the male kin were out of jobs due to the shut downs of factories due to the energy crisis. Thus, the income earned by male kin also fell.

Both energy shortages and inflation were the result of policy failures of the Federal Government; therefore, federal institutions received a great deal of opprobrium. The Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) received the greatest criticism for its inability to supply continuous power. The

only initiative of the federal government that was praised was the issuance of identity cards, which enabled access to citizenship rights. On the other hand, the initiatives of the provincial and city governments were praised. The provision of education vouchers and free health facilities by the provincial government was applauded although the quality of services was questioned. The provincial government's initiatives in building roads and bridges, and its sanitation work were praised; however, in some areas the building of new roads caused hindrances for the workers. The home-based workers appreciated HomeNet Pakistan for organizing them and providing a platform for their voices to be heard. The need for organized credit institutions was widely felt as the local moneylenders tend to fleece them.

The home-based workers believe that they contribute greatly to Lahore city because they pay so many taxes on every purchase and every utility bill. They reported that their crafts added to the beauty of the city, and people could enjoy their useful and pretty products. They asserted that they helped other people gain incomes; for example, shopkeepers and factory owners made a profit because of their work. Those who made sanitation products felt that the city was cleaner because of their products.

This research supports the hypothesis that macroeconomic factors constitute a driving force that has an impact upon the work and lives of workers. Persistently high inflation, coupled with prolonged recession in Pakistan, had a tremendous impact on the workers. This macroeconomic factor led to loss of income, reduced consumption, diminished work orders, severe competition for orders, increased cost of production, increased work hours, domestic tension and violence. Inflation was identified as one of the two major negative driving forces in the qualitative research.

The qualitative research upheld the assumption that city level factors (which include federal or provincial government initiatives that affect the city) were significant in terms of their impact upon the work and lives of home-based workers. A major negative factor was the acute shortage of energy, both electricity and gas. This federal government failure had enormous impact in terms of the reduction of orders, the inability to meet orders on time, the switch to manual technologies, alterations in work hours, and diversification of work with an emphasis on finding work that does not require energy inputs. This factor also impacted on the personal lives of the workers in terms of domestic tension and violence. However, some of the initiatives of the provincial/district/city governments were lauded by the workers, especially the delivery of services such as health and education as well as the improvement in infrastructure, transport, and sanitation facilities. The need for all such services and the provision of infrastructure and sanitary facilities was keenly felt and most of the workers sought even better facilities than those currently available.

In terms of the value chain actors, it appears that the workers had little control over the prices of their products, which were determined by intermediaries or by contractors and factory owners. The workers lacked bargaining power due to an oversupply of labour and the willingness of the intermediaries and contractors to give work to others in the community. The workers who marketed their own products had somewhat greater control over pricing as compared to those who were entirely dependent upon intermediaries. The garment sector, which has more workers working on an own account basis, fared a little better than non-garment industrial outworkers, many of whom worked entirely through intermediaries and contractors. Industrial outworkers had no control over their working conditions.

This IEMS research supports the assumption that government, civil society and other societal institutions, such as MBOs, mediate the relations of home-based workers with their environment and the markets. The importance of the role of organizations like HomeNet Pakistan was underlined repeatedly. Most workers believed that HomeNet enhanced their bargaining power, gave them a voice in policy making, and helped them recognize their rights as citizens as well as workers. HomeNet Pakistan, along with other civil society organizations, has succeeded in convincing the provincial government to adopt the Home-based Workers' Policy, which aims to further home-based workers' economic rights and empowerment.

Credit institutions were also seen as vital because local moneylenders charge exorbitantly high interest rates. Credit institutions such as Kashf and Akhuwat were regarded as necessary in order to get loans for the marriage of daughters as well as other important occasions. Such

institutions were sometimes seen as promoting income generation activities. However, there was a need to simplify procedures so that little educated home-based workers could understand and follow them.

The government welfare departments were seen as positive by some home-based workers, but the role of the police was not necessarily seen as invariably positive. Police were sometimes viewed negatively in terms of harassing workers' children and arresting them. The institutions responsible for the provision of water and electricity were seen as seriously flawed. Since the passage of the 18th Constitutional Amendment, the provision of electricity is no longer a federal subject but is now a provincial responsibility, and it remains to be seen the extent to which the problem can be mitigated in the future.

There was a fair amount of agreement between the qualitative and quantitative data. Both types of data highlight that inflation and recession have seriously impacted the livelihoods of home-based workers in that their income was very low and the prices of basic commodities very high. This led to malnutrition, tension and health problems. Both types of data revealed that energy shortages had led to a further fall in incomes due to the fact that the prices of the raw materials increased even as the prices of finished products remained static. Both kinds of data revealed the powerlessness felt by home-based workers because of the inability to bargain with intermediaries and contractors.

However, one area in which there was a contradiction between the qualitative and quantitative findings was that qualitative methods revealed home-based workers believe they pay enormous taxes, creating revenue for the city. On the other hand, the quantitative researchers were told that none of the home-based workers pay any taxes. This discrepancy may be due to the fact that the quantitative research was attempting to estimate the volume of direct taxes that workers pay while the qualitative researchers were given information by focus group participants about indirect taxes. The yearly income of most of the home-based workers falls below the taxable income bracket so few of them may be required to pay direct taxes. However, most taxation in Pakistan is indirect as there are taxes and excise duties on all utility bills and most items bought in the market. Several of the home-based workers in the focus groups mentioned and complained about the high levels of taxation on utility bills and on several items of daily use. Nevertheless, they see their tax payments as a major contribution to the economy of the city and country.

The findings of the home-based workers study in Lahore corroborate the results of the country-wide study of home-based workers conducted by Roots for Equity (2011). That study found that the major reason for women to be engaged in home-based in work was poverty and an inability to make ends meet due to rising inflation resulting from the impact of neoliberal policies. According to the Roots study, the impact of a massive increase in inflation on the one hand and poor economic growth on the other led to the massive influx of home-based women workers into the informal economy. It is argued that neoliberal policies have played a major role in increasing inflation in the country such that the cost of living has increased at least by 21 per cent in the past few years.

The Roots study also noted that as incomes decrease, poverty levels rise among home-based workers and their families. It further highlighted the major role of contractors and their exploitative practices, as well as the lack of knowledge about market and product prices among home-based workers. Severe food inflation was also identified by the Roots study, along with meagre incomes of male relatives, which had to be supplemented with the incomes of the home-based workers. Similarly it noted the reduced mobility of the women workers as well as their low levels of education.

The major difference between the current IEMS research and the one conducted by Roots for Equity is that the latter questions the role of neo-liberal globalization (privatization, liberalization and deregulation) in promoting and encouraging the spread of the informal economy, while the former does not address global economic trends even while it examines the macroeconomic factors affecting home-based work.

A WIEGO study carried out in 2010 found that there is sufficient evidence to show that informal sector employment is the main mitigating strategy of the poor and that Pakistan's security situation combined with inflation, high oil prices, the energy crisis, and the closure of industries has contributed further to exacerbate the condition of the poor in the country. The current IEMS research supports WIEGO's finding that inflation and the energy crisis (which has led to the closure of industries) are the two main forces in the environment that negatively affect the work and lives of home-based workers.



A 2010 WIEGO finding that corresponds with the current study is that the income of the workers' families as well as that of the individual workers is meagre. Poverty, low income, long working hours and lack of education were pointed out in both studies as problems that beset the home-based worker. The government had no safety nets or social protection schemes for the sector. This was corroborated by an interview with an officer of the Punjab Labour Department who said that since the home-based workers were not recognized formally as workers, there were very few schemes, policies or programs for their benefits<sup>3</sup>.

According to the WIEGO study, most home-based workers highlighted poor working conditions and verbal and physical abuse by the contractor as well as the presence of domestic violence. Other non-work related complaints, found in the earlier study, related to electricity load shedding, poor health facilities and badly behaved husbands. The 2010 study found that demands for better jobs and skill training centres were common. All these issues were discernible among the home-based workers who participated in the IEMS.

The 2010 study also revealed that women workers are invisible and not recognized as workers; thus national economic policies and budgets do not refer to them. This IEMS research finds that recognition is important for workers, and that they want visibility for their work and contributions to the city and society. Another similar finding is that home-based workers tend to borrow money from credit institutions in order to meet personal, family and social needs.

The 2010 study found that the manufacturing sector, in an effort to become competitive in the global market and maintain profits, is systematically skirting formal labour employment to minimize costs. This is an aspect that has not been examined in the current study, and it seems that a focus on global economic systems, ideologies and practices would be important to understand the specific case of Pakistan/Lahore as economies are now globally interdependent.

### ***Policy Recommendations***

The main policy recommendations that emerge from the qualitative study are the following.

First, home-based workers and their activities, like formal workers and formal firms, are impacted by macroeconomic trends. The persistent and double-digit inflation rate was having a hugely negative impact on the incomes of workers in the informal economy and their enterprises. Most often, economic policymakers do not consider the impacts of policy choices on informal workers. Our findings reveal how significant these impacts can be on the lives and livelihoods of home-based workers. Policymakers need to consider measures to address the impact of inflation on informal workers, whose incomes are low and very insecure.

While our respondents report some improvements in the infrastructure in Lahore, poor infrastructure remains a significant area that requires a policy response. Most important among these are chronic shortages in the delivery of basic utilities such as electricity. This should be the number one priority area for policymakers. Importantly, for home-based workers whose home is also the workplace, a lack of a reliable source of energy impacts on both their production activities and their household activities such as cooking. The delivery and safety of water is also very poor in some areas and needs to be addressed.

Where infrastructure improvements have been made, such as in the increased availability of public transportation, the home-based workers reported noticeable benefits to their enterprises. Further improvements to safe public transport facilities should be provided by the provincial government to enable secure and inexpensive mobility for home-based workers. Finally, greater availability of provincial social services such as health care would also have a large impact on improving the lives of home-based workers.

Lahore has a progressive policy on home-based work, The Home-Based Workers' Policy, which was developed in consultation with civil society and expert. This policy recognizes the needs of this large but often overlooked workforce, and should be adopted and implemented by the provincial governments.

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<sup>3</sup> Interview of the Deputy Director, Institute of Labour Relations, Punjab. Conducted by HomeNet Pakistan for the IEMS study in 2012.



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The Informal Economy Monitoring Study (IEMS) is a part of the Inclusive Cities project. Inclusive Cities is a collaboration of membership-based organizations (MBOs) of the working poor, international alliances of MBOs and support organizations working together as partners to improve the situation of the working poor. Launched in late 2008, Inclusive Cities aims to strengthen MBOs in the areas of organizing, policy analysis and advocacy in order to ensure that urban informal workers have the tools necessary to make themselves heard within urban planning processes.

The Informal Economy Monitoring Study is being led by Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing – WIEGO (see [www.wiego.org](http://www.wiego.org)) – a global action-research-policy network that seeks to improve the status of the working poor in the informal economy, especially women. WIEGO has convened a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to guide the project.

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