LOCATING THE HOME-BASED WORKERS OF DELHI

Home-based workers produce goods or services for the market from within or around their own homes. There are many home-based workers throughout Delhi, many of whom are women, who contribute immensely to the city’s economy.

They are an invisible workforce who face many challenges as they use their homes as their workplaces.

Many self-employed home-based workers source work from local wholesale markets and supply it back there.

Work is out-sourced from factories in industrial areas to home-based workers who complete the work from their homes.

Some home-based workers receive work orders that can be traced back to global brands, and some are for domestic brands.

Home-based work in this map of Delhi includes one or more of the following:
- Embroidery/Embellishment
- Thread cutting
- Envelope making
- Stitching
- Kitchen tools making
- Bead work
- Toy packaging
- Bindi making
- Mala making
- Sandal strap cutting
- Tag tying
- Artificial flower making
- Vegetable peeling

OUR HOMES ARE ALSO WORKPLACES

Most home-based workers live in low-income housing categories where work and home occupy the same space.
Delhi is a patchwork of diverse neighbourhoods ranging from planned colonies on one hand to self-built informal settlements on the other. These include JJ clusters (Jhuggi-Jhopdi clusters) commonly known as “slums”, resettlement colonies to which JJ clusters are often relocated by the government, unauthorized colonies and urban villages. Home-based workers, like other urban poor citizens, live and work in such neighbourhoods. The aerial view below shows the vibrant economies they sustain.

A small house hampers productivity, as a home-based worker cannot take bulk work orders because she cannot store raw materials and finished goods, and she cannot work continuously as there are competing needs for the same space.

Sometimes work spills over into the adjoining areas such as the platforms in front of their homes.

The dwellings of home-based workers are typically small and crowded, of poor quality, with little natural light or fresh air. The size of the house specially has implications on women’s work burden.

Because their home is their workplace, home-based workers are more affected than other workers by government housing policies and practices to do with slum evictions/upgradation/relocation and tenure security; zoning regulations; as well as the provision of basic infrastructure services like water, sanitation, electricity and transport.