

Draft National Policy for the Homebased Workers

Introduction:

Bangladesh is a country of rural agriculture and homebased production. Institutional and non-institutional economics, comprising individual and collective production, are marching along at our National Economy, with their fingers interlocked. The National Economy is named the Developing Economy, rather than under-developed or impoverished. Our population is over 14 crores, and 80% of this populace dwelling, is below the poverty line. World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Asian Development Bank, MNC, WTO all these are getting comprehensive at the non-institutional economy and getting subdued at the institutional economy respectively, than ever before. These are resulted from, the illogical and unequal contest and stress of globalization, and result in, the critical criteria for our National Economy. Hence, the lion's share of our populace involves the workers and manual laborers specifying the general laborers, agricultural-laborers, non-institutional laborers, homebaesd laborers, self-employed laborers, micro investors and so forth.

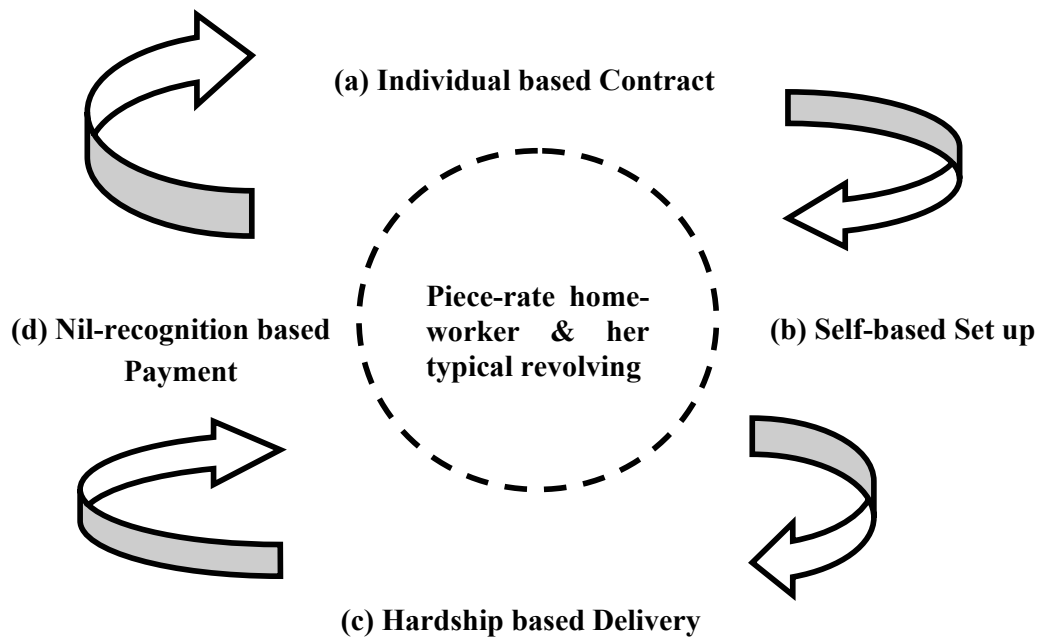
A sample survey conducted by BHWA shows that the number of homebased workers is approximately 3 crores. These homebaesd workers are remarkably contributing to the National Economy and employment with a view to alleviating poverty. But there is hardly any recognition of this fact. Furthermore, they are also contributing to the National production considerably, in line with the mass need; along with earning foreign currencies via producing miscellaneous exported merchandise. Even this contribution is out of recognition. These homebased workers are undoubtedly oppressed, deprived, ignored and deceived at times. Moreover, they are deprived of the prevailing facilities of our country. Governmental favors, security, health—neither of the rights are in touch with them!

There are no alternatives to poverty alleviation and employment in terms of allowing the National Economy to be self-reliant as well as well developed; likewise there are no alternatives to allowing the recognition and stat of the homebased workers along with providing them with the governmental and social favors. Collective steps from all corners are highly needed for a well-founded economy, poverty alleviation, and creating productive and mass-oriented employments; in a nutshell, for the overall development

of our country. Besides, the requirements of the natural resources, reasonable raw materials, deserved employment of the workforce for better production and utilization, following a national code of conduct – are not to be neglected either.

In particular, national progress is solely dependent on poverty alleviation. And in this criterion, a balanced development will never ever come true, if the Herculean populace of homebased workers directly involves in the national productivity and developing affairs are not recognized in terms of their contribution, along with the establishment of their deserved rights. Being deprived of almost all the rights, these grassroots artists are solely trying to safeguard our shattered economy and employment structure by framing flowers from a sheet of paper, handkerchiefs from a piece of clothe, bags from a piece of leather and by creating new utilities than ever before. Nonetheless, they are yet to be recognized, yet to be placed in any sort of national stat!

Here goes the typical life cycle of a piece-rate home-worker:



Life cycle: Piece rate home-worker of Bangladesh

With a view to marching the nation along with due dignity, setting up a National Economy based upon the increasing employment rates, and not upon impoverished levels—the “formation and actualization” of a National code of conduct, i.e. a well

furnished policy, as to the homebased workers, is a must, and a historic yearning, a periodic demand.

We, on behalf of BHWA and Homenet, are representing this draft policy via proper channel, for a generous consideration of the govt. of Bangladesh.

Aims & Objectives: (Long-term)

Recognition of the homebased workers, enlistment of the homebased workers in National Statistics, categorization of the homebased workers, placing them within the reach of the Intl. labor standard and labor regarded prevailing laws in our country. Consequently, ratification of ILO Convention 177, and thus ensuring the govt. and the proprietor provided amenities for the homebased workers through the formation and implementation of apt legislations enacted on the basis of the aforesaid convention.

Aims & Objectives: (Short-term)

1. Receiving the declaration from the govt. of the recognition of the homebased workers who are surely classed as laborers according to the prevailing labor law of our country, along with the declaration of their workplaces to be the homebased industry. Also receiving their deserved rights and law based amenities as laborers according to our customary labor law.
2. Determining and accepting apt rights and facilities of the homebased workers those who are self-employed to homebased affairs.
3. Those who have played their roles as micro investors for the homebased workers and in line with their own works, they have also employed more than 5 homebased workers, marking them as employment creators and managing all the possible facilities for their better working conductibility. Besides, assuring their demands and law-oriented amenities.

It is required to place the aforesaid classification as to the homebased workers, along with their creative contribution to forming the nation, in the National Policy. In short, ensuring the guaranty of their governmental and social securities for their better life styles, life chances and life standards.

Definition of the homebased workers :

Naming the micro productive procedure, usually considered the increment or determinant of individual or collective income and with homebased accomplishments, as the homebased works along with their defined entrance to industry. And, on the basis of this

definition, forming a National Policy for the homebased workers after considering the concerning affairs elaborately.

(1) Categorization of the HBWs and of the labor-force that is pin-connected to the affairs of the HBWs:

(a) Laborers or HBWs:

Laborers or HBWs are those who are involved in the production at there convenient places and periods, in exchange of wages; and thus contribute to the homebased industry.

(b) Self-employed workers:

The people, who are engaged with the homebased production, at their convenient time and places and thus manage their self-employment and earnings, are called the self-employed workers.

(c) Micro Entrepreneurs:

Micro Entrepreneurs are those who manage employments including or excluding theirs, at their convenient schedule, and thus contribute to the homebased micro productive process.

(d) Sub-contractors/Contractors:

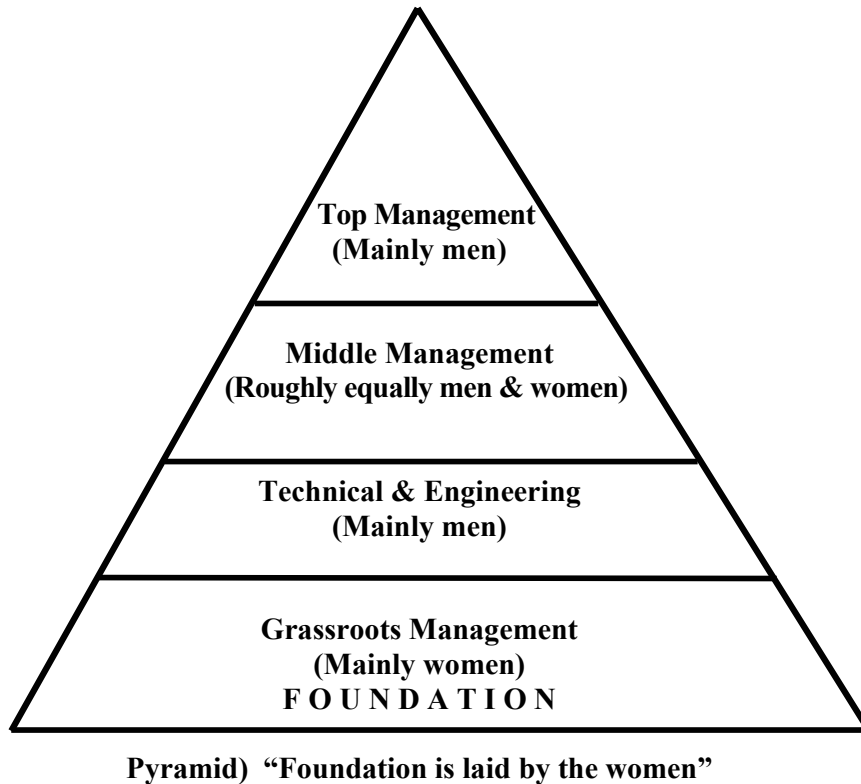
The people, who employ the HBLs at the micro productive criterion and thus gain profit by providing them with wages or piece-rates, are considered Sub-contractors/Contractors.

Their role & contribution:

The contribution of homebased work and workers to our National Economy is acutely vital. For this reason, it is necessary to place the HBWs within the reach of our customary law and also to a form balanced National Policy for framing and actualizing the Intl. Labor Standard and the concerning amenities. Due to the deindustrialization and profuse decentralization, the institutional economy or the working disciplines are getting subdued, and in line with this, the employment possibilities are getting limited. Job losses and unemployment have reached the levels of intolerance. Acute pressure has created at the non-institutional criteria, our national financial basement is getting shattered, uncertainty has grasped our productive and developing flows—under these circumstances, HBWs,

being useful security fences, have encircled our National Economy from the grassroots, with their homebased skills. Furthermore, they are creating new employments than ever before. Thus the unemployment problems are getting uprooted. Besides, they are placing the jobless mass on the creative bosom of the homebased works.

Here goes a pragmatic pyramid as regards the foundation role of the women in the country's economy:



The HBWs are remarkably contributing to poverty alleviation that is the linchpin of National Progress, and also to employment that is linchpin of poverty alleviation. Also they are playing their vital roles for earning foreign currencies. Alongside, as they are indulge in environmentally favored production process, they are successfully dealing with environmental disasters occurred from national and global perspectives. Furthermore, women laborers, engaged with the homebased production, are superbly playing their roles of social dignity and discipline that result in, the remarkable decreasing rates of happenings like marriage separations among their families.

There is no place for child labor at homebased industry due to its earning precautions and disciplinary tactics. For the sake of our national ground, a national policy is acutely

required, that will accelerate the national, social and other vital contributions of the HBWs. On the contrary, since the lion's share (i.e. 80%) of the HBWs is women, their roles as to national progress and poverty alleviation are unique and highly remarkable, in terms of women empowerment.

Potentials:

The non-institutional aspects are the principal stamina and phases allowing employments in order to alleviate poverty. The probable aspect of this criterion involves activating the HBWs by using the least capital, labor and skills, and by receiving creative and vital roles for the sake of national progress. Nevertheless, the HBWs are playing their especial roles for eradicating poverty, without governmental supports and lawful protection.

Research & Development:

To frame the National Policy for the HBWs, acute research is required. Research regarding the HBWs will suffice the publicity of their contribution to our National Economy.

Lawful protection:

The ample possibilities of this sector will be enhanced if the HBWs are provided with their least requirements and governmental amenities. Thus the HBWs will play their historic roles for establishing a developed economy, through gaining capabilities and skills.

Intl. Labor Standard:

Intl. Labor Standard is determined by considering the problems and potentials of the HBWs dwelling across the globe, irrespective to rich and poor, along with keeping an eye over the capacities of the calculated countries. The ILO convention- C 177 is also formed by the participations of the representatives of the member states. In terms of the acceptance of this convention, Bangladesh is a signature-provider country. Yet, BD has not provided any ratification at this regard, and this attitude is illogical from every aspect. Alongside it is a governmental responsibility to declare the universal human rights of the HBWs, announced by the United Nation; and provide them with the lawful protection both in their personal and professional lives.

Inclusion to the National Labor Laws:

It is necessary to bring the HBWs within the reach of our customary labor law and other rights recognized by our constitution. Accordingly, Bangladesh govt. is committed to

ensuring food, cladding, residence, medication and education for all the citizens. In this perspective, it is the responsibility of the govt. to provide them with the lawful protection, professional amenities and securities, irrespective to cast, creed, class and gender.

In our prevailing labor law, there is already an admittance of one portion of the rights of the HBWs, with semi-recognition of another part. Rather, for the rest, there lies no recognition. There lies no management of applying, for those who are mentioned as laborers in the labor law. For this reason, via determining the national policy for the HBWs, there will come forth the assuring of the lawful protection, professional securities, govt. amenities and favors for the HBWs.

1. Introducing lawful protection, amenities of the labor law and beneficial actions or inserting the HBWs within the reach of the stated pleasantries.
 - (a) HBWs are also eligible to enjoy the facilities of the state like other citizens
 - (b) To ratify the ILO convention 177 considered in 1996
 - (c) To ensure the application of the Bangladesh Labor Law 2006 in terms of the HBWs

Welfare of the Labors & Protection

(a) To be organized & collective bargaining

- Managing the aggregate actualization of Intl. Labor Standard, ILO Convention 87 & 97. Establishing the rights of forming Trade Unions according to the HBWs' requirements. Placing the HBWs within the reach of collective bargaining.

(b) Uprooting Discrimination

- Uprooting the existing discriminations. Managing equal pay scales for the workers irrespective to male and female.

(c) Certainty of employment

- Managing the provision of employment letters and identity cards for works.

(d) Working Conditions

- Determining the working conditions. Fixing the balanced linchpins along with the least wages, scale structure, working hours and resting periods.

Wages: The concerning people will provide the HBWs their deserved wages at the fixed time according to the Labor Law, and the wages will be determined by the minimum wage board.

Working hour: According to the ILO convention the HBWs will work for 8 hours per day, and for overtime, they must be overpaid.

Holidays: HBWs will enjoy the weekly holidays, yearly holidays, maternal holidays, ailment holidays and so forth.

Resting hour: HBWs will enjoy a rest period between their working time everyday.

Minimum age: Kids (i.e. age below 14) are not permitted to be employed and teenagers below 18 years are not permitted either to be engaged with any risky job.

- (e) Ensuring the occupational health, safety and favorable working environment.
- (f) Providing the deserving HBWs with the old age and destitute allowance along with adult education.
- (g) Assuring the maternity benefits (i.e. maternity leave & allowance) of the HBWs.
- (h) Adopting advantageous necessary steps for the handicapped HBWs.
- (i) Looking after the children of all the working HBWs and setting up especial day care centers for their education. Inclusion of pregnancy health care facilities for all at these institutions.
- (j) Arranging overall training and education for the HBWs according to the professional and lawful perspectives.
- (k) Ensuring the customary lawful amenities for those who are self-employed among the HBWs. Adopting various measurements for developing and lasting their professions.
- (l) Playing vital roles to alleviating poverty of the self-employed HBWs and managing simple conditioned and of less-interest credits for them in order to invigorate their status.
- (m) Authorizing simple marketing systems for the goods produced by the self-employed HBWs and the certainty for their apt payments.
- (n) Organizing the clear-cut exportation of the goods produced by the self-employed HBWs and diminishing the taxation rates or proscribing them accordingly.

- (o) Discourage the importation of the goods that compete with the products framed by the HBWs.

Micro Entrepreneurs:

Measurements adopted for those self-employed HBWs who manage employments for a number of laborers in exchange of wages, along with contributing to the productive process:

- (a) Firstly, providing the recognition of the HBME as homebased micro entrepreneurs for solving their problems.
- (b) Managing simple conditioned and of less-interest bank credits for the investments of the HBME to the productive process, and for their running capital.
- (c) Arranging the marketing systems and simple provision of the goods produced by the HBME to the local and global markets.
- (d) Assuring the regular reception of their apt payment.
- (e) Ensuring the reception of raw materials used in the production of the HBME.
- (f) Organizing the clear-cut exportation of the goods produced by the HBME and diminishing the taxation rates or proscribing them accordingly.

BHWA and Homenet BD will adopt and actualize the following strategy for implementing the aforesaid national policy (i.e. draft) prepared for the HBWs of Bangladesh:

Strategy:

- (1) Informing all the concerned stakeholders of this draft national policy of the HBWs.
- (2) Managing apt lobby and advocacy at the Ministry of Labor, Labor Section, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Women and Children, Ministry of Social Welfare, Finance, Planning and other concerned authorities for the acceptance and implementation of this national policy.

Social Measurements

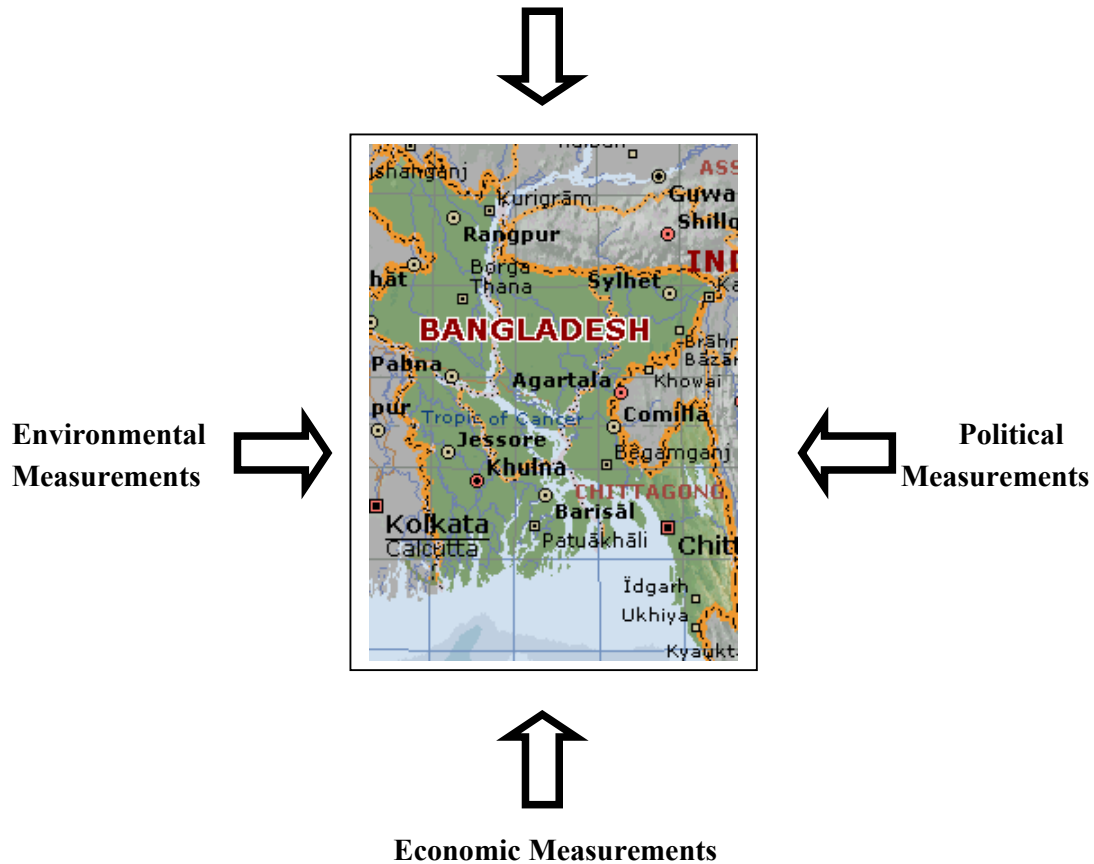


Fig) Salient Strategy of BHWA & Homenet BD whilst invigorating the Draft National Policy

- (3) Organizing positive role-plays by making ILO and other concerned institutions pin-connected to the affairs of the HBWs, aware of the policy via providing them its copies.
- (4) Forming a social movement aiming to actualize this policy, via awareness and sharing of opinions of the National Federation of BD Labor Movement and other concerned NGOs and organizations.
- (5) Allowing effective roles to accept and actualize this policy by sharing opinions of the policy-maker national political organizations and leaders.

- (6) Managing pertinent lobby and advocacy by providing copies of this draft policy to the PM, Legislators and Ministers.
- (7) Managing significant lobby and advocacy by providing copies of this draft policy to the Speaker of the National Parliament, parliamentary committee of Labor, Commerce, Women & Social Affairs and so forth.
- (8) Providing the draft copy of the policy to the respected President of our country and presenting the pangs of the HBWs to the High Power Delegation from the parts of BHWA and Homenet and thus managing an assertive position.
- (9) Arranging wide telecast of this draft policy as to the HBWs on the Print and Electronic Media.
