

EVOLUTION OF HOME BASED WORK

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ABSTRACT

The paper analyses the chronology of the home based work abbreviated as, HBW, from its very beginning to the present situation. In the early phase of civilization, lack of job provision created the demand for income generating business ideas which could be well managed by remaining at home, referred to 'Home Based Work'. It went through numerous changes with the change of context, time and more importantly, human development by reason of some notable factors such as, changes in the system of production, new technologies pertaining to education and science, industrial revolution, two world wars. HBW plays as a significant component in the lives of many lower income households in the urban societies. In the contemporary world, lots of jobs can very efficiently be done at home, although, there are many occupations which essentially create the need to be away from home. Presently, different innovative technologies have opened up a wide scope for running HBW. Depending upon the attitude of the government and aspiration of common people, HBW can be converted to an effective solution from just a possibility.

KEYWORDS: Civilization, Contemporary, HBW, Production, Work Home

INTRODUCTION

History of HBW dates back since the dawn of human civilization. In the contemporary age, men need to do two major types of works. These were:

- Works for self and family, including maintenance, cleaning, repairing of house, assuring daily supplies etc.
- Job or work for generating income by producing items or rendering services to others.

At the dawn of civilization, there was no scope for income generating job and work. So, men themselves to produce the essential items needed. With the advancement civilization, men discovered that they could generate income in the following ways:

- They could grow surplus items (mostly agro-produce and animals) which they could sell to others (Humphrey, 1985).
- They could make new things with some materials by changing shape, size, consistency, color, appearance etc. (cottage industry) and make income by selling (Nordhaus, W. D., et al., 1998).
- They could make income by renting out their premises (renting) (Eaqub, et al., 2015), or
- Some of them achieved some skills with which they could earn money by service (treatment of patients),

entertainment (magic, song etc.), repairing items (service) etc. They have achieved such skill by utilizing they could earn money from others (service) (Dezalay, et al., 1995).

- They could earn profit by purchasing items at low price during harvesting season, and by selling those when the price was high (business) (Dlabay, L. R. et al., 2012).
- They could earn profit by purchasing items from the place where the price was low, then carrying and selling those where the price was high (trading) (Penfold, 2010)

Out of the above, jobs like, agro-production and animal raising around the residence, cottage industry, service and repairing jobs and business could be easily done by staying at home. Naturally these initiated the base for "Home Based Work" abbreviated as HBW.

The concept that "House is for living and working-place is for working" is a development of much later age. The concept of independent work place was developed when men found that many of the works previously done in the house could no more be continued there because of genuine reasons. The principal fields in which they revealed in the problem were:

- **Business, Trading and Storage:** Men found that collection of items from various houses at distances was problematic. On the other hand, jobs like collection, exchange, trading, storage of items could easily be done if these could be done in a central place. That gave birth to growth center.
- **Industry and Manufacture:** Industrial production, manufacture, agro-processing etc. involved heavy machinery, bulk movement of materials, accumulation of buyers etc. and growth center or independent locations were more suitable for them.
- **Urban Areas:** Men realized that close habitation with the neighbors ensured pleasant, comfortable and easy living and that it was not possible when the houses remained scattered in large agro-fields. This privilege led to urbanization where the living place was compact. Such compact space did not allow many HBW's.
- **Hazard-prone Production Enterprises:** Some of the industries and animal raising activities involved hazards like (a) Noise (viz. making metal tools by heating hot metal), (b) Odor (viz. processing of leather), (c) Hazard (viz. burning of pottery in fire), (d) Rodents and insects (found in agro-fields) etc. sound, dust, smoke, gas, pollution etc. and these were to be grown far away from the residential houses.

CHRONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGES IN HBW

HBW evolved long ago in the primitive society suffered from numerous changes with the change of time, context and milestones of human development. However, since there was no system of keeping their records in the past, it is not possible to know chronological accounts of these changes. However, it is possible to know how various factors and contexts brought about the changes. Some of the notable factors and contexts that brought about significant changes are:

- Changes in the System of Production,
- New technologies pertaining to Education and Science,
- Industrial Revolution,

- Two World Wars.

CHANGES IN HBW DUE TO THE CHANGE OF PRODUCTION SYSTEM

The prominent system production in human society were (a) Gathering as substitute of Production, (b) Primary production, (c) Secondary Production and Tertiary Production. A brief account of how HBW was affected and men's place of living and working were both integrated and disintegrated due to the changes in the systems of production (Staley, 2011) have been presented below.

- **Gathering as Substitute of Production:** Quite often mines used for extraction of minerals were found in lonely or distant places. After mining initiated, it was necessary to accommodate huge number of workers very near to the mine. Most of these workers were male. The female members of these families got wide scope to do some works in their homes during leisure hours. Some mines and industries even introduced policies to utilize this idle labor for doing some of their supplementary or complementary jobs.
- **Primary Production:** Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, Animal husbandry etc. are regarded as primary production. Men engaged in such works were in need of living in their own land or near specified forests or water bodies. Since their houses were isolated, there was no dearth of space for work inside and men got enough of leisure time, it was advantageous for many of them to have their HBW.
- **Secondary Production:** Manufacturing are the secondary production process, in which the industries were placed at locations suitable for such jobs. In this case the workers shed was established at close proximity. Fixed salary of the laborers and leisure hours of the female members created scope for HBW.
- **Tertiary Production:** After Primary and Secondary production achieved maturity, there evolved another new type, known as 'tertiary production'. This type in fact was having income generating in nature with practically no production. The jobs included transportation of goods, work of commission agent, insurance, advertisement etc. Due to the conducive nature of these jobs, it was possible to continue some of these as HBW.

CHANGES IN HBW DUE TO INVENTION, EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

The development of Education and Science created numerous scopes of works including teaching, small scale production, small scale service centers etc. which could be done as HBW.

- **Education and Writing:** After the system of education and writing was introduced, creative writing, teaching, art and painting, designing etc. appeared as excellent income-generating works and many of these could be done as HBW.
- **Improved System of Communication:** After the introduction of modern scientific communication like, telegram, telephone and internet, transportation system with modern vehicles etc. it was possible to procure jobs through these medias, do those at home and then send the finished jobs by these medias. All these profusely increased the scope of HBW.
- **Outsourcing:** While the above system was feasible within the boundary of independent countries, the development of wireless communication and internet extended that scope beyond the border. It came to be known as outsourcing. By comparing between a number of countries it was found that the cost personnel were less in some

countries, energy was cheaper in some other and so on. At the same time there were some jobs of such nature that these could be conveyed through wired or wireless medias. This scope created wide scope of HBW.

CHANGES IN HBW DUE TO INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The First Industrial Revolution (1760 To 1830) directly affected and enriched the European countries. Some of these countries had colonies all over the world and the colonies also suffered from the consequences. At this time Britain achieved monopoly in small to medium machineries used in agro and industrial production. The British established monopoly in marketing these machineries and equipments in their colonies. Some of these machines used in small firms, processing of agro products, small-scale food processing, oil extraction etc. immensely helped in expanding HBW in the colonies. After Britain, Industrial Revolution entered in Belgium in 1807, France and Germany in 1870. The following countries were USA, Japan and Soviet Union, and finally China and India.

At the initial stage of Industrial revolution (Kisch, 1989) the equipments were small and men used those in their domestic arena. Later however, those turned bigger and the rich owners started using many such equipments in the same premise. That led to the growth of large and medium industries and resulted in disintegration of working and living places. At this time the rich owners paid the workers profusely and no one thought of HBW. Also, the products thus produced were of good quality and it was no more possible for the HBW to compete with them.

During the Second Industrial Revolution (19th And 20th Centuries) there happened the development of natural and synthetic resources, lighter metals, new alloys etc. (Stearns, 1998) and new energy like electricity. The industries were equipped with developed machines, assembly line, computers etc., all of which accelerated production. This less to the creation of many automatic factories where only they needed only a few skilled workers (Atkeson and Patrick, 2007). The surplus worker endeavored to initiate HBW in their localities and their dependent family members also looked for jobs.

CHANGES IN HBW DUE TO THE TWO WORLD WARS

The two world wars created unpredictable situations in all phases of national and human life (Commager, 2004). These affected the situation of HBW also in many ways, notable among which were (i) Job situation, (ii) War supplies and (iii) General poverty urging self-reliance.

- **Job Situation:** The world wars created both scopes and crisis for jobs. It created jobs for healthy young persons who were recruited in wars. At the same time, the general decline in business created job crisis. The situation made all to think seriously of HBW. Even though the dependents of soldiers found good source of income, everyone thought of the uncertainty.
- **Supplies to War Authorities:** The war created scopes of HBW because some of the war supplies like dress and accessories for the soldiers were done in the domestic level, even though the bulk order was handled by large suppliers.
- **General Poverty Urging Self-reliance:** The war created situation even for the female members of the family to engage in HBW. 'Home Agriculture' for mere sustenance was "one development due to necessity" at this time. The women endeavored to grow daily necessities of vegetables on small patch of garden adjacent to their kitchen. They used home-made fertilizers. In Bengal (present Bangladesh and West Bengal of India) such kitchen gardens were known as '*Paugar*'. For self-reliance in points of the essentials, the people endeavored to produce whatever

they could do with meagre wealth. It led to the discovery of new items for HBW.

HBW After the World Wars: After the wars, the Government of the affected countries took up rehabilitation programs in which included training, and providing equipments, machines and running capital (Dear and Foot, 2001). Even though it was targeted for the men crippled by to wars, it created wide scope for many to establish their HBW. The politico-social situation greatly changed after the Second World War. At these time men aspired to live independently on their land and HBW worked as inspiration for the same.

HBW IN ENGLAND AND OTHER COUNTRIES

During the mediaeval age, the term 'WorkHome' was used to mean many types of houses. The one used as HBW was a single-storied rectangular building, the rooms were arranged around a central open space (Hawke, 1993). The rooms were used for many domestic activities like cooking, dining, sleeping etc. and non-domestic activities like, spinning, weaving, dressmaking, workshop, dairy, dining room, butchery, tannery and byre etc. Some of the rooms were used for keeping animals at night.

Joy Parr (1999) mentioned in 'Homeworkers in Global Perspective,' that, in Britain refugees and family members' immigrants enter the informal economy because state regulations restrict their claims to public and payroll benefits; they have little capacity to limit the pace or the duration of their work and no-one to bargain over pay. Craft and clerical workers more often see homework as a positive option, allowing them to be more engaged in childcare, to have more flexibility in their working hours. Gender differences here become salient. Only men working from home claimed to have enhanced their productivity; from their different circumstances, women reported a shared and debilitating triage for time, space and attention between care giving and cash-earning activities.

The WorkHome owned by feudal lords or manors were two storied. The owners and their servants lived in such work homes. They arranged large feast, at times for five hundred or more persons in such house. The Feudal Age had few marketplaces and there was no separation between workplace and home. The separation between home and workplace began with the rise of capitalism. The merchants and craft-workers also maintained their HBW under the name WorkHome. These resembled shops or workshops having opening on the roadside. The jobs done inside were silk-weaving, watchmaking and stocking-knitting. The goods were displayed so as to be viewed from the main road. The family members used to live and work here with the employees and apprentices. The employees at times used to sleep amongst the looms. A number of such buildings still exist today. Some of Work Homes used as HBW were used as 'cottage factory'. These building had lucrative and attractive designs in the roof or the window to attract buyers. At one end of the building there was a steam engine. Professionals like, Apothecary, Scribe, Artist, Blacksmith, Fletcher, Carpenter, Candle-maker, Baker, Bottler, Cord-wainer etc. maintained their small-size HBW's, where they maintained their families also.

'WorkHomes' existed as HBW's in all other countries also (Broad berry and Kevin, 2010). The people whose occupation or mode of activities supported the accommodation of living quarter within the same premise used to construct such house. Whenever such a house was constructed in a semi-urbanized area, its front part was used as shop and the rear part, as family quarter. When restaurant or hotel was the business, a large dual kitchen served both the family and the clients. Specialized kitchens were used by the sweetmeat producer, where the front house was used as a sweetmeat selling shop. Quite often professionals like the physicians, dentists, garment makers, repairers of home gadgets, barbers etc. had

similar type of 'home cum shop cum workhouse' type of accommodation. In a later stage, when multistoried brick building was introduced, the lower floor was used as display and selling center and the upper one, both as family quarter and making goods which were mentioned as HBW or HBE.

Chinese culture based HBW: After the second world there happened mass-migration in the war-trodden countries. It compelled men to accept almost any job for survival. The situation was not ripe for taking well though thought decision regarding establishment of HBW's. In this context the Chinese migrants planned for establishing HBW conducive to their culture in the alien countries (MacGowan, 1912). They established HB manufacturing and service business like, restaurants, food hotel, small to medium production centers for domestic items including shoe, garments, decoration items, herbal medicine etc. After a number of such family enterprises were established in any road, they brought a flavor of their traditional by their special type of decoration and lighting. These came to be known as "China Town". China towns have got reputation for their delicious and harmless food, cheap products and client-friendly behavior. Probably the "China Town" is the most successful example of "Culture-supported HBW" in the world. One cause of their "less expensive product" is the utilization of leisure hours of the family members, multiple uses of spaces, hard labor, well planning etc.

Need-based temporary HBW in India: In West Bengal of India the British left huge number of cloth manufacturing industries. After they were gone these were owned by the rich merchants from Mumbai. Leftist communist party rose to power in West Bengal, India in 1977 and continued up to 2011. The owners of these industries were considered as 'people's enemy' in communist ideology. Due to genuine reason the owners left the area and all such industries were closed. In such a situation a group of Bengali officials working at managers in such industries found out a means for survival (Indian Express, 2010). With permission from the owner, they sold the power looms to the people many of whom were their operators. The new owners established four or five such looms and in their rural houses and started production. Fortunately, the yard could be imported from outside. Availability of electricity and efficient road system were of additional help. The said managers arranged to supply yarn and sample of cloth to the owners in their vehicle. After the job was done, they collected the finished products. The owners were paid on the basis of length of cloth woven. This endeavor can be considered as an excellent example of survival policy through HBW. The production system however, got redundant after the Government policy was changed.

HBW IN RECENT TIMES

The icons of the contemporary world are Globalization, Computer, Internet, Information Technology etc. All these have opened up wide scope for running HBW's. Some of such job and the gadgets required have been shown below:

- HB-Typing, i.e. typing for others in the house (Required gadgets- Computer and printer).
- HB-Multimedia jobs, like printing and editing of still and video photographs (Required gadgets- Camera, Computer, Printer, sound recording gadget).
- HB-Design-Drawing jobs, like drafting and drafting works (Required gadgets- Computer and printer).
- HB-Website Design, i.e. designing websites for companies (Required gadgets- Computer, printer, internet).
- HB-APPS Design, i.e. Designing APPS for commercial and scientific uses (Required gadgets- Computer, printer, internet).
- HB-Ticketing (e-Ticketing), i.e. Reservation and tickets of transportation vehicles (Required gadgets- Computer,

printer, internet).

- HB-Selling (e-marketing) i.e. selling products where the clients see and negotiate through internet and the HBW ensures home delivery (Required gadgets- Computer, printer, internet, plus warehouse and delivery boys).
- HB-Foods, i.e. selling foods where the clients see and negotiate through internet and the HBW ensures home delivery (Required gadgets- Computer, printer, internet, plus food preparation and delivery boys).
- HB-Outsourcing Jobs, i.e. doing information technology based or data based works of foreign countries (Required gadgets- Computer, printer, internet)

For comfort men need two different types of places: the living place and the working place. The best policy is to combine the two when men can work peacefully in close association with their dear ones. In some cases, it cannot be done so, because there are some types of works that cannot be done in the residences, either because of practical reasons or possibility of hazards. Accepting this harsh reality, there is no problem if endeavors are made for combining the two, in the way the HBW works. Even though the concept of HBW initiated at the very dawn of civilization, later the two types of places disintegrated and reintegrated many a times. Manmade hazards like world wars, natural hazards and turmoil, revolutions etc. compelled men to live away from their dear ones.

CONCLUSIONS

In the contemporary civilization there are many occupations and jobs which essentially need to be done away from the place of home. While this is true, the other truth is, there are lots of jobs which can very efficiently be done at home. And doing these at home as HBW ensures less cost on energy, transport, labor and even requires less time. In such a context the HBW is no more a possibility, it is an effective solution where its acceptance and expansion depends upon the attitude of the Government and the common people.

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