



Women and the transformation of domestic spaces for income generation in Dhaka bustees

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A widespread phenomenon of Third World cities is using homes not only for shelter, but also for income generation through informal-sector activities. Today, many women from low-income settlements have the potential to self-create jobs and have shown significant results in creating working spaces in their homes, despite every limitation. Although there exists a vast literature about gender issues and home-based jobs as a survival strategy, the types of jobs and the way women create and transform domestic spaces for various economic activities have yet to be explored. One objective for today's global market is the targeting of women as cheap labor, achieved by using their domestic spaces within the sub-contracting system, especially in the low-income settlements of Third World cities. In Dhaka's bustees, similar features can be observed as a number of NGOs have introduced training programs and micro credit, especially for women to use their domestic spaces for income generation. This study explores the potential of the women and the domestic spaces in the bustees; and how the women are involved in such economic activities in Dhaka. Three bustee settlements, based on different housing policies, have been investigated to explore home based jobs and the physical spaces. Two factors (tenure security and location) are important in categorizing the home based jobs and the extent of transformation in these settlements.

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Introduction

The income of women is crucial for the basic survival of low-income families in many Third World cities. Women from low-income families who do not have access to the formal job market¹ often use their domestic spaces for income generation and get involved in a variety of economic activities. Chant (1997) pointed out that the home-based job is a critical source of income for women, especially where rapid economic transition and relaxed cultural restrictions have encouraged female migration to urban slums and squatter settlements. As the home is within the domain of women, it is they who perhaps play the

major role in organizing the spaces for income generation as well as the daily life of family members.

A number of studies have emphasized the key role of women, especially in low-income dwellings, as the provider of economic activities and have claimed that the provision of such work actually becomes the fundamental sustenance without which the household would perish (Gulati, 1990; Huq-Hussain, 1996; Sinai, 1998; Raj and Mitra, 1990). The home thereby becomes not merely a container of human life but an essential shelter for those life-sustaining activities. Many would not have a dwelling at all without their home-based enterprises, and many enterprises would not be in existence without the opportunity to use the domestic spaces.

What Gulati terms 'backyard employment' (Gulati, 1990) has received enormous attention in accounting for much of the growth of the urban informal sector. Although the overall area of the domestic spaces in low-income settlements differs widely, it can be assumed that in most countries the informal housing

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¹Inaccessibility of formal job and activities, the women of low-income engaged in informal sector activities, for balancing and combining gender roles and work. These jobs include various forms of work done for merchants, employers, markets, neighbors and relatives, and they can be characterized by very low returns with high levels of exploitation: cited by Bose (1999).

sector is providing small spaces with minimum basic requirements (Drakakis-Smith, 1997). Squatter women, besides their involvement in the production process, use their most critical and crowded domestic spaces. Yet, the most important feature of the spaces is that they are apparently invisible, insofar as the same space is both used for production while also being used for other daily activities at different times of the day. Pacione (2001) points out that the use of the home as a work place saves time and money that are often indispensable for the entrepreneur's survival. There are many advantages for entrepreneurs in the informal sectors, as there are no tax claims, nor insurance, and in addition, while women engage in income generating activities they can also do necessary home work simultaneously, such as looking after children (Sinai, 1998).

Kellett and Tipple (2000) have pointed out that home transformation and self-initiated extensions in the low-income settlements are common phenomena in all Third World cities and in such transformation, women play a major role, although the greatest difficulty in the study of such home-based work is the absence of reliable statistics at the national and international level, because they are occurring in private spaces. Ameen (1999) has pointed out that despite governments' negative attitude, the maximum utilization of spaces by housing extension has attracted many housing experts, especially in government or public low-income housing. The overview affirms that low-income groups, even with agonizing limitations, can use their potential to make vital improvements to their own homes at no direct cost to government. According to Tipple (1996), transformation appears to contribute more than it costs—moreover, extensions in government-built housing have demonstrated that there is considerable advantage arising from extension activity for the sustainability of cities in developing countries.

The focus of existing studies of home-based enterprises has been largely on the economic implications rather than the physical quality of spaces and how jobs and work are integrated or accommodated. In areas where infrastructure and social conditions permit integration of production processes into individual homes, dwellings may undergo various types of modification, which differ depending on the type of production, its spatial requirements, and the number and gender of persons involved in the activity. However, the accessibility of market centers, access to urban services, relative spatial control (privacy), and home tenure are key conditions that make some home-workers more successful than others.

Women, economic activities and domestic spaces

Women who migrate from rural areas and try to adapt within the new urban environment (especially in Third World cities) have many features in common,

despite their cultural and ethnic differences. A poor woman who is a recent migrant tries to involve herself in economic activities, first because she wants to survive and second because she wants to improve her economic condition and to contribute to her family, on a par with her male counterparts. Senyapili (1983) addressed *gecekondur*² women as a new commodity in the economic sector of a city, insofar as they usually bear two different identities, one as a domestic worker and another as an earning member of the family. White (1996) pointed out that although there exists a variety of economic activities in the marginal service sector, a majority of women prefer to work at home and to use their domestic spaces for income generation.

A major issue of this paper is to understand how the women use their domestic spaces for income generation and how they accommodate such activities, insofar as space is very limited in the low-income settlements. It has been argued by many scholars (Rahman, 1999; Mahmud, 2001) that if tenure security is achieved, then low-income female households will transform their domestic spaces for economic activities more than their male counterparts, and more than any other factors. For the last two decades, a boom in the garment industries has been experienced by many Third World cities, and a major portion of the women from low-income localities have found jobs in such manufacturing activities. Moreover, the sub-contractors of these garment industries also found women from the low-income localities valuable as they constitute cheap labor and are ready to use their domestic spaces (Eraydin and Erendil, 1999). Likewise, Jellinek (1997) pointed out that women are found in low-waged occupations such as food preparation, petty commodity production, street trading or as vendors, working in subcontracting enterprises in such localities. Currently, a number of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) have found women a potential input for this sector. Kusow (1993) has divided such household manufacturing into subsistence manufacturing, artisans working in the home, artisans with workshops, and industrial home-work paid by the piece under a contract system. Since women from low-income groups usually engage in wage-work at or near home, the home environment and its physical space is thus important in understanding both their living standards and the quality of physical spaces. Huq-Hussain (1996) points out that the households who are using their domestic spaces for income generations are better off than those who are not.

Before the industrial revolution, work for most people was centered in their homes in the form of

²Gecekondus are low-income settlements of Turkey which means "constructed overnight". The general features of gecekondus are different than bustees as the housing unit is much bigger, as the land is either squatted by the occupants in the outskirts of the city or on the hillsides *Ankara'da 158 gecekondur*, Ankara: Ankara Universitesi Siyasal Bilgiler fakultesi, 1957 cited by Tekeli (1996).

domestic industry. Later, the growth of capitalism and the concentration of population in urban centers occurred, and the separation of industrial and residential districts, along with a faster transportation system, played an important role in shaping many cities (Gugler, 1997; Davies and Herbert, 1993). Although the separation of workplace and residence has been realized in Western cities, self-created enterprises at home as a source of income for women have again integrated the work and living spaces in many low-income settlements of Asian, African and South American cities (Ahrentzen, 1989). This idea of combining the work and family space encourages women-headed households to take part in income generation, alongside their male counterparts, and they typically place a larger part of their earnings towards their household expenses (Weiss, 1996).

Both Bose (1999) and Bhatt (1998) investigated the types of home-based jobs and their working spaces for women in a bustee in India. These jobs include basket weaving, agarbathi (incense stick) making, packaging and making household goods, embroidery, and food preparation, stringing flowers, casting construction elements in moulds and garments manufacturing or tailoring. In the case of food supply, a lot of women are also using their domestic spaces, however, for distributing them in different commercial and administrative places they need help from their male family members. Sinai (1998) pointed out that the most suitable place for such activities are either their courtyards or open verandas and in lack of such spaces, semi-private spaces such as paths or space in front of the dwellings are extensively used. Erman (1995) found similarities among the women households who were involve in home based enterprises in the low-income settlements and she points out that the working spaces can be overlapped with their most necessary daily activities such as sleeping, cooking and eating. Similarly Miraftab (1996) studied Maquila³ workers and concluded that the use of working spaces is dictated by the time and thus a space can be used more economically.

Women and their home based enterprises in Dhaka

Women in the bustee settlements of Dhaka have very limited access to residential space, however, a substantial number of such women accommodate themselves with various housing alternatives despite extremely bad conditions; a lack of basic requirements; and almost no empty spaces (Huq-Hussain,

1996). The rapid growth of bustees in Dhaka⁴ has proved that there is a serious deficiency for housing for the poor and today they house a major portion of the poor people including married and single women who are often involved in marginal sectors. As women often get jobs in the garment industries, the bustee owner have provided cheap rental units for them since the late 1980s. Today, a number of NGOs⁵ like 'Grameen Bank' and 'Proshika' targeted bustee women and explored their labor and potential in different economic sectors. Unlike the garment industries, these NGOs bring jobs for bustee women onto their doorsteps and also have a micro credit scheme by which they attract married women who otherwise have no option for income. As the bustee landlords permit the women to work and use their domestic spaces, women of low-income often prefer such accommodations more than other localities. Mahmud (2001) points out that despite the fact that the monthly rent of the bustees in the city core is much higher than any middle income settlement (if calculated according to the floor space) the bustee women prefers to stay in those settlements. One basic reason is the proximity, insofar as the bustee women can save on transport costs; there are higher transaction possibilities in the city core; and of course the opportunities of using their domestic spaces for different income generation, which is not possible in middle income localities.

Home based jobs in Dhaka that are run by the bustee women have different characteristics with respect to space organization and the nature of work. It has also been noticed that there are some home based jobs where all the family members, including the wife and the children, are involved, such as restaurants, making household goods, grocery or workshops. In the survey by Sinai (1998) in Ghana's low-income areas it was found that home based jobs can be classified into three groups: the production and consumption in the same space; the production is in the home but consumption occurs in other places and vice-versa, which is also true for Dhaka. Especially for the garment trade or embroidery work, home space can be suitable because heavy machinery is not required. Therefore, some organizations also provide home based work for bustee women. Small grocery or cigarette stalls usually are run by the housewives when their husbands are away from home. One inter-

³Maquilas in Mexico can involve home based work, in which all the family members are involved in income generation one way or another and use their domestic spaces for production purposes.

⁴In recent years, Dhaka city has experienced an increase in the number of bustee settlements, that have concentrated especially in the inner district and on the peripheries. However, bustees can be of various types and vary mostly by their physical characteristics and land ownership pattern, A comprehensive mapping of the physical lay out of bustee was conducted by CUS for ICDDR,B, 1990.

⁵Grammen Bank and Proshika are two big NGOs in Bangladesh who have short term training programs and provide theoretical and practical knowledge especially to the housewife who wants to use the home for income generation. These NGOs also have micro credit or short term loan programs exclusively for women households.

esting feature of these bustee women is, that they strictly believe the Islamic values of Purdah⁶ on their arrival in the cities. But due to the physical layout and environment in the bustees, these values slowly started to diminish. The other reason perhaps is the economic factor, as the women have to mix with the opposite sex in work and in other places. However, it can be claimed that bustee women achieve more freedom as they become an important component in the marginal sector activities (Chowdhury, 1998).

An experiment in Dhaka's low-income settlements

As the main intention of this study is to explore the types of home based jobs and the way bustee women use and transform their domestic spaces for income generating activities in the physical sense, low-income settlements in Dhaka have been studied. Islam's (1996) classification⁷ shows an elaborate housing system for all income groups in Dhaka. His survey aimed to find the locations, the predominant types, income levels, and structural typology of the dwelling units, land ownership pattern, density etc (Table 1). According to his chart, almost 50% of the city's population accommodate themselves in such bustees and a major portion of this population is female. In his classifications, six different housing provisions for low-income have been discussed although for simplicity, only three such settlements are chosen, based on three different housing policies. These settlements are namely, Babupara (an illegal bustee) located in the city center; Badal Mia (a private bustee) located in the intermediate zone and Ershad Nagar (Bastohara refugee camp) in the city periphery. Although they are all low-income settlements, there are hardly any similarities in the physical spaces except that bustee women occupy them all.

In this study, households in all three settlements were randomly chosen and the type of home based jobs run by the bustee women were documented by a questionnaire. The number of bustee women interviewed in order to find data on home based jobs and the transformation of physical spaces were 50 in Badal Mia, 45 in Babupara and 56 in Ershad Nagar respectively. Since the experiment took place in the private spaces and as the samples were all bustee

women, it was difficult to approach initially but once the questions were asked they were helpful and willingly participated. Beside the questionnaire, in depth interviews with the bustee women (who use their domestic spaces for income generation) were documented and observed by the author.

Comparison on home based jobs and spaces in three low-income settlements

The characteristics of the home based jobs and the domestic spaces in all three settlements are different. While in Babupara, the households have 4 square meter rental units (the path is the only empty space), the housing units in Ershad Nagar is much wider with an open courtyard, and covers 8 square meters. Although in Badal Mia bustee the basic facilities such as water and sanitation are little better than in Babupara, the landlord of the Badal Mia bustee puts more restriction on home based jobs for bustee women, since they are the real owner of the land (Figure 1). Therefore, the type of home based jobs differs according to the space availability and on the tenure security in all three settlements. For example, while in the Babupara (illegal) bustee women use their bedrooms for preparing food to sell outside, women in Ershad Nagar may open a restaurant, grocery or other workshops by dividing their interior spaces as they hold more space and have more tenure security than other two bustees. For Babupara, as the landlords are basically 'Land Mafias' occupying public land illegally, they are unable to provide tenure security, however, it tries to provide protection for the bustee inhabitants. For Badal Mia bustee women, the threat is actually from the landlord himself as he intends to make an agreement with developers for a multi-storied commercial center for more economic benefit (told by a bustee woman who resides there). One important feature is that while the bustee women of Badal Mia or Babupara are wage earners or are working on contract basis, the women of Ershad Nagar can be an entrepreneur, running a business (Figure 2). A more general observation of the Ershad Nagar camp is that households which have better access to the main road have transformed domestic spaces more than other households and have transformed for economic reasons where the involvement is from the female more than their male counterparts.

Table 2 categorizes the home based jobs into seven different categories and the percentages of the women who are using extensively their domestic spaces. As far as the types of home based jobs are concerned, food delivery (with 20%) and garment manufacture (16%) are the most typical jobs. For Babupara, food delivery⁸ alone has an 11% share. This is due to the

⁶Purdah is the gender segregation of domestic spaces in the Islamic countries, according to Islamic values, they maintain a strict and separate domain for male and female, in Bangladeshi villages purdah is a general practice for women, Cited in Samizay and Kazimee (1993).

⁷Islam's (1996) six types of low-income settlements can be grouped under three main categories such as slum, squatter and government assisted housing as the most dominant forms. As conventional tenement slums in the old part of Dhaka were not built for low-income people and as the bulk of employee housing is basically government assisted housing, Islam's (1996) chart can be reviewed and can be grouped under three major low-income housing types for the case of Dhaka.

⁸Rice business is one type of food delivery by the bustee women who often prepare the food in their domestic spaces and distribute among the regular customer near by. In this business the female households also take help from male family members especially for carrying and distributing.

Table 1 The percentage of low income housing of the residential land in Dhaka

Housing system	Location where the type is predominant	Income group	Predominant structural/house type	Type of tenure of land	Approx. proportion of city population (%)	Approx. coverage of city's residential land (%)
Illegal Bustee: 1. Squatters (including pavement dwellers and vagrants)	Inner, intermediate and fringe zones (all along the rail line between Gandaria & Mohakhali, Univ. area, Kamalapur)	Extreme poor	Most rudimentary shacks and shanties	Illegal de facto (mostly public land)	(2.5)	(0.5)
Bastohara Camp: 2. Refugee rehabilitation colonies/squatters resettlement camps (Govt. assisted housing)	Intermediate and fringe zones, (Mohammadpur, Vasantek (Mirpur) DattaPara (Tongi), Chanpara (Demra)	Extreme poor, poor, some lower	Temporary shacks, thatched houses, semi-permanent, single storey	Public land/ leasehold under consideration/ disputed story	(6)	(2)
Private Bustee: 3. (a) Private rental type (rental units and rental mess units)	Extensively located in inner, intermediate and fringe zones. Mostly inner city zones	Extreme poor, poor	Temporary thatch, semi permanent single storey	Freehold/public land/disputed Freehold	(35)	(11)
3. (b) Private owner occupied houses	Extensively located in inner, intermediate and fringe zones	Poor, lower middle	Temporary thatch semi permanent, permanent	Freehold	(5)	

Source: Islam, 1996, pp. 97-99.

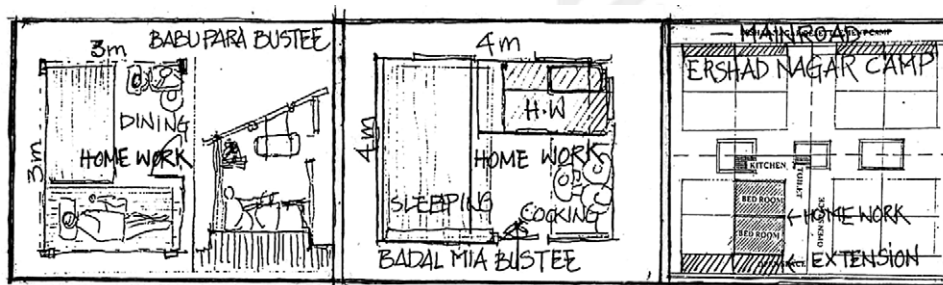


Figure 1 Physical layout and the domestic space of the bustees and Ershad Nagar Camp (Source: Mahmud, 2001:132)



Figure 2 Home work from different factories at doorsteps, (Source: Author, June, 2002)

central location and there is a demand for food delivery business especially for low-income people who are working in the administrative and various commercial enterprises at the city core. For the case of garments, Badal Mia shows the highest percentage (12%) because there are garments industries all around the place, and different garment contractors bring home work for the bustee women (the majority being housewives) and their only useable space is the common path or the bedroom for such activities (see **Figure 1**).

In Ershad Nagar the majority converted the front

portion of their units for grocery, tea stalls or other workshops. During the day the housewives look after the shops as their male partner is out at another job (**Figure 2**). The survey shows that Ershad Nagar has the highest percentage of home based jobs. As the land belongs to the government, the control is loose, unlike other two bustees. A more general practice of this settlement is almost all the households have illegally occupied the public land from the road (**Figures 3 and 4**).

Domestic spaces used and transformed by bustee women for income generation

Home is basically a place for women, as mentioned by one of the dwellers; they are the master-planners for creating such spaces for income earning. In **Table 3**, three settlements have been evaluated to exemplify the spaces of particular home based activities. In Badal Mia bustee, 73% of households do not bring a job to their homes; the rest (21%) are involved with four types of jobs. Garments have the highest share with 12% and most women perform such work in their bedrooms. The common spaces such as paths and courtyards are popular places for this kind of jobs but lack of such spaces also forces the women to use their bedrooms, especially in the bustees.

For Badal Mia bustee residents, the bedrooms and the path are the most useful spaces for all sorts of

Table 2 The percentage of home based jobs in low-income settlements

Types of home based jobs	Badal Mia bustee (%)	Babupara bustee (%)	Ershad Nagar Camp (%)	Total (%)
1. Garment jobs (embroidery, making handmade blankets, making caps)	12.0	2.2	4.4	16.6
2. Different workshops (tailoring, carpenter, hairdresser, cobbler, handloom silk, repairing rickshaw, making flour, laundry)	2.2	4.4	5.1	11.7
3. Households goods (sweet boxes, match boxes, weaving baskets, packaging goods, bamboo and coconut shell handicrafts)	3.0	2.2	2.8	8.0
4. Food (delivery foods, restaurants, tea stall, bakery etc.)	4.0	11.1	5.4	20.5
5. Grocery shops, clothing shops, fruit and vegetable shops, firewood shops)	0.0	1.8	12.6	13.4
6. Sorting old goods and papers	0.0	2.2	3.6	5.8
7. Poultry firm (producing egg, chickens, cow milk)	0.0	0.0	2.8	2.8
Percentage of home-based jobs in the settlements (Total)	21.2	23.9	36.7	

Source: Mahmud, 2001: 153.



Figure 3 Modified spaces



Figure 4 Converting home space for a grocery shop in Ershad Nagar camp (Source: Author, June, 2002)

activities and there is no common outdoor space within the settlement as such. For food delivery, the kitchen is important; however, in our sample 4% of women also cook in their bedrooms. In Badal Mia, although there is a common kitchen in one corner, most dwellers prefer to cook in the path, which they transform by themselves in front of their rented rooms. Although the path is not a private space, a major transformation of the spaces are often done by the bustee women for cooking and food preparation purposes and done with mutual consent.

The home-based work in Babupara bustee is nearly 24%, slightly higher than Badal Mia and the types of home-based work are also more. Food delivery or a catering business is the most popular self-created job here for women. Although they are involved in such activities, the males also help them carry the food or sell them on the street. 4% of the women do this kind of job either in their congested bedrooms or on the path if the weather is suitable. Unlike Badal Mia bustee, two bustee women have opened grocery shops by altering certain portion of their dwelling units, as they are the owners. These indicate that the flexibility of changing space depends on the tenure status of the households.

Ershad Nagar seems to be the haven for home based jobs as over 36% of the women households in our sample reported that they perform such activities at home. It was quite obvious from observation that most dwellers opened their own shops at home and were also involved in other money generating activities within the neighborhood. Grocery shops score the highest with 12% and a number of different spaces such as bedrooms; verandas, courtyards and pathways have been altered or sometimes converted to accommodate such shops. Although these people do not have any right to change their own dwellings, the loose control of government and the security of tenure give the confidence to invest and spend for such income generating activities. There are more than 3400 families living in the camp; demand for different commercial activities accelerated the transformation of houses into shops. Again, availability of spaces also encouraged these people to use domestic spaces for money generating activities. Unlike other bustees, a number of NGOs have their own workshops in the camp where the women work and get short term training, such as weaving baskets, embroidery, making saris, handicrafts etc. Therefore, a good number of women work in such organizations rather than using their own housing spaces.

Conclusion

Due to the lack of formal job opportunities, using domestic spaces for income generation has become tremendously popular among bustee women in Dhaka. However, the most destitute bustee women have proved their invisible power of income generation and thus become an important earning member and contributor, which at times is essential for the survival of many families. NGOs also have activated and played the catalyst role in favor of bustee women for providing self created jobs and enterprises at home and therefore the women have become a component in the urban economy of Dhaka.

What are the alternatives for bustee women if the domestic spaces are not enough for performing home work? It has been widely observed that it is usually the bustee women who often create their own alternative invisible spaces even though they are not pro-

Table 3 Spaces for home based enterprises and the percentage of Butee women involved

Type of home based jobs and % of bustee women involved	Bedroom	Kitchen/dining	Veranda	Courtyard/backyardPath	Space between buildings	New addition	Altered or changed space	Total (%)
Badal Mia Bustee								
1. Garments	●●●	●	●	●●	●●			12.0
2. Workshops	●●		●	●●	●●			2.2
3. Household goods	●●			●●	●●			3.0
4. Food Delivery	●	●●		●●				4.0
% of bustee women involved								21.2
Babupara Bustee								
1. Garments	●●●			●●	●			2.2
2. Workshops	●●		●●	●●	●●			4.4
3. Household goods	●●			●●	●●			2.2
4. Food Delivery	●●			●●		●	●	11.1
5. Grocery Shops	●●			●●				1.8
6. Sorting waste paper				●●				2.2
% of bustee women involved								23.9
Ershad Nagar Camp								
1. Garments	●●●	●	●●	●●		●	●●●	4.4
2. Workshops	●●		●●		●●		●●	5.1
3. Household goods	●●					●●●	●●	2.8
4. Food Delivery						●●	●●	5.4
5. Grocery Shops						●●	●●	12.6
6. Sorting waste paper			●				●●	3.6
7. Poultry firm							●●	2.8
% of bustee women involved								36.7

Extensively used ●●●. Moderate used ●●. Seldom used ●.

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vided in the settlements. However, the study of these three bustee settlements allows us to conclude that the degree of changing domestic spaces or alteration indicates freedom of living and the security of tenure.

The result shows a major difference in all three settlements especially in the physical characteristics⁹ and also in the quality of spaces. In addition, the survey demonstrates that the women from Ershad Nagar (government-assisted housing) are no doubt in a more advantageous position than the residents of the other two bustees as these inhabitants do not pay any rent, and do not need permission while extending their dwelling units for any economic activities. The types of home based jobs and their working spaces in each individual family have different features. As the spaces are very congested, especially in the bustee settlements, the women have to find or create their own working space, within this limitation. Therefore, it is important for the bustee women to find the types of jobs, which are suitable in the dwelling units. Thus, flexibility of space is vital for the families who are involved in home based production, because the lack of space forces certain home-based work to choose spaces that are not suitable for such activities. However, it has been concluded that home based jobs in Dhaka's bustee can be classified into three categories; spaces are for production purposes; spaces are for both production and consumption purposes; and spaces are for rental purposes.

Unlike Ershad Nagar, transformations of the domestic spaces in the bustees are relatively low because of the strict control of the landlords or land mafias. Although some writers (Tinker, 2000; Kümbetoğlu, 1992) point out that women who use their domestic spaces for income generation sacrifice the potential of improving housing quality, for Dhaka's bustees this may not be true. As home based jobs increase the income of women, women households of Ershad Nagar and to some extent Babupara have experienced investment for improvements of the physical space. The overview affirms that the bustee women, even under the agonies of multiple limitations, could use their potential and make vital improvements to their own house at no direct cost to the government. Thus transformations done by the bustee women appear to contribute more than they take away. By showing their potential by using and transforming domestic spaces, and through this survival strategy, they perhaps achieve an identity in the urban setting. Thus bustee women need security of tenure, if not ownership.

The main concern of the paper is to show the bustee women as important actors despite their lack of skill

⁹The physical characteristics of bustee is unique because the low-income settlements across different continents may vary with respect to physical layout and size. For example, Turkish gecekondu are even bigger than the residence of middle income people in Ankara, whereas Dhaka's bustees are congested but the rent is high.

and literacy. It is perhaps the public authority which has to take the prime role to consolidate them or to generate policy planning so those bustee women are not exploited by urban dwellers. While the government agency is unable to provide proper and legal housing for low-income and in particular bustee women, the policy for women migrants has to be reconsidered. If government organizations can be activated, it may encourage and provide training for village women to engage in various income-generating activities by using domestic spaces in the villages. Thus, both poverty alleviation and female migration to the over populated urban areas can be controlled.

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