

The Domestic or the Putting-out System

The domestic or the putting out system evolved as a means of sub-contracting work. Under this system, the work was contracted by a central agent to subcontractors who completed the work in their own facility (usually their own home). It was used in the English textile industry, in small farms etc.

Domestic System, also called putting-out system was widespread in 17th century in Western Europe in which merchant-employers "put-out" materials to rural producers who usually worked in their homes but sometimes laboured in workshops.

It included two groups of people:-

- a) Businessman
- b) Workers who worked from homes. { Spinners
weavers

Businessman

- They were known as "clothiers" or "cloth merchant"
- They organized production. So, their job was to -

- bring the raw material to the collage.
- take away the finished cloth to sell at the cloth hall. or market.

Workers who worked from homes.

- Entire family worked in their cottages producing cloth with only simple tools and machines.
 - Work was usually divided between the members of one family
- Women usually did the spinning
- Men did the weaving.

→ Spinners

- Were women and girls
- Were responsible for:
 - cleaning the sheep fleeces.
 - Carding the wool
 - Spinning the wool
 - Their finished product was called 'yarn'.

→ Weavers

- were men
- weaved the woollen thread into cloth.
- Used a handloom.
- The weaving was hard manual work and hence was left to men folk.

Features of Domestic System.

- 1) Workers worked from their homes, and manufactured individual articles from raw materials.
- 2) The articles were assembled and sold in a market located at a central place.
- 3) The domestic system was popular for cloth production in the Europe. It was also used in various other industries like, the manufacture of wrought ironware such as pins, pots and pans.
- 4) Many entrepreneurs took advantage of the domestic system to bypass the guild system, which was thought to be cumbersome and inflexible.

Advantages to Domestic System.

- i) The workers could work at their own speed while at home.
- ii) Since the woman of a family could work at home, she was there to look after her children.

- iii) Children working in this system were better treated than they would have been in the factory system.
- iv) The workers earned higher income.

Reason for decline of Domestic System.

- i) Mechanization of the industry made the system obsolete.
- ii) Huge amount of money invested in industry than this system.
- iii) Increasing population made huge demands.
- iv) The production in this system was very slow.