



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



Demand for Maids/Househelps versus Modern Machines for Household Cleaning Chores in India

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Abstract

A study was conducted in the year 2024 to analyze the level of demand for maid servants/househelps in Indian households and their future requirement. The study also investigated into the extent to which modern machines can replace domestic helps in future for household work in India. The study aimed to find out whether there was an association between the income of the household and employment of househelps by households and whether there was an association between the income of the household and number of modern machines used by households. The study also examined whether there was a difference between men and women with respect to satisfaction derived from the work done by househelps. A majority of the respondents said that machines can replace maids/househelps completely in future and this would happen within the next 10 years.

Keywords: Househelps; Robotic Floor Cleaners; Electric Mops; Smart Technologies; Digitalization.

1 Introduction

A study was conducted in the year 2024 to analyze the level of demand for maid servants/ househelps in Indian households and their future requirement. Data on the use of modern machines such as washing machines, dish washers, vacuum cleaners, electric mops and robotic floor cleaners and their efficacy for household cleaning chores was also analyzed to understand the extent to which people are ready to replace househelps with machines.

Objectives of the study

The broad objective of the study was to investigate into the demand for househelps versus machines for household cleaning chores and the extent to which househelps could be replaced by machines in future. The sub-objectives of the study were to analyze the level of employment of househelps for household cleaning chores in India, types of compensation paid to househelps and their satisfaction, duration of employment of househelps, satisfaction of people with work done by househelps, number of machines owned by households for cleaning chores, Percentage of respondents who used different machines, usage of machines by househelps for domestic chores, satisfaction of respondents with respect to cleaning machines, effectiveness of machines versus househelps, and the extent of replacement of househelps with machines in future. The study aimed to find out whether there was an association between the income of the household and employment of househelps by households and whether there was an association between the income of the household and number of modern machines used by households. The study also examined whether there was a difference between men and women with respect to satisfaction derived from the work done by househelps.

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2 Literature Review

The Indian maid servant/Househelp market is largely unorganized, with a small organized segment. Unorganized workers are employed in informal settings and often lack legal protection, social security, and guaranteed wages. The organized segment, while being smaller, operates under a formal framework with defined contracts and benefits.[1]

The Indian unorganized market is a significant part of the economy. While precise figures are difficult to obtain due to its informal nature, estimates suggest it employs millions and contributes substantially to the informal sector. The unorganized sector in India is estimated to include approximately 440 million workers (National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) estimate, 2020).[2]

The size of the Indian organized maid servant market, was around USD 13.57 billion in 2024, with projections reaching USD 24.36 billion by 2033.[3]

The Maid Services Market is thriving as busy lifestyles and increased urbanization drive demand for professional home cleaning and maintenance services.[4]

2.1 Restraining Factors

Despite its growth, the Maid Services Market faces certain limitations. One significant restraint is concerns about privacy and security when allowing strangers into one's home. Building trust and addressing these concerns are essential for service providers.[5]

Technology has had a significant impact on the way household chores are performed and managed in modern households. The use of technology, such as household tools and cleaning robots, has increased productivity and efficiency in managing households. Vacuum cleaners have made cleaning easier, and the development of automated cleaning robots has further reduced the effort required for cleaning and sanitizing.[6]

An aging population seeking assistance with household chores and a desire for environment- friendly cleaning practices contribute to the market's growth. [7]

Scope of the study

The study primarily covered the part-time domestic househelps working in Indian homes. The study aimed to analyze the current level of demand for maid servants/househelps in Indian households and their future requirement. The study also investigated into the extent to which modern machines can replace domestic househelps in future for household work in India.

3 Methodology

Primary data was collected from 215 people in the age group of 18 years and above living in India using google forms through the convenience sampling method. Secondary data was collected from websites and reports.

3.1 Hypotheses:

The following hypotheses were tested using the collected data:

- H₀₁: There is no association between the income of the household and employment of househelps by households.
- H₀₂: There is no difference between males and females with respect to satisfaction from househelps.
- H₀₃: There is no association between the income of the household and number of modern machines used by households.

4 Findings

4.1 Employment of househelps

Overall analysis of the data showed that a majority, that is 56.3% of the respondents employed househelps and 43.7% did not employ househelps. Out of those who do not have a househelp, a majority, that is 58.5% do not plan to employ

a househelp in future either. A majority, that is 93% of respondents wanted househelps to work for 1-3 hours per day. Considering the type of household chore, the need for househelps was maximum for sweeping and mopping (75.7% of respondents), followed by cleaning utensils (74%), dusting (45%), cleaning washrooms (34.3%) and washing clothes (30.2%). A meagre 1.8% of the respondents wanted househelps for cooking.

4.2 Compensation paid to househelps

Per work charges paid by households ranged from Rs.500 to Rs.2000. Non-monetary compensation given to househelps was analyzed and it was found that a majority 76.4% gave food to househelps, followed by 70.3% who gave tea/coffee/other beverages to the househelps. 41.2% gave new clothes and 23% provided medical help. 11.5% provided education to their househelps and 10.9% provided loans to their househelps. It was found that a majority (61.5%) of househelps were satisfied with the compensation given to them.

4.3 Duration of employment

41.7% of househelps worked for less than a year in households and another 41.6% worked for 1-5 years in households.

4.4 Satisfaction with Househelps

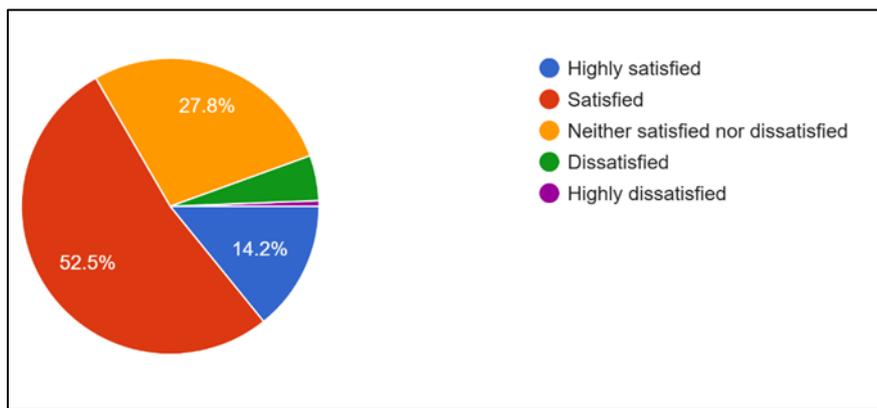


Figure 1 Satisfaction with house helps

14.2% of respondents (*Fig.1*) were highly satisfied by the work done by househelps, 52.5% were just satisfied by the work done by househelps.

4.5 Number of machines owned by households for cleaning chores

With respect to usage of modern machines such as a washing machine, dish washer, robotic floor cleaner, vacuum cleaner and an electric mop, 34% of the respondents had 1 machine, 28.4% had 2 machines, 13.5% had 3 machines, 6.5% had 4 machines, and 3.7% had 5 machines.

4.6 Percentage of respondents who used different machines

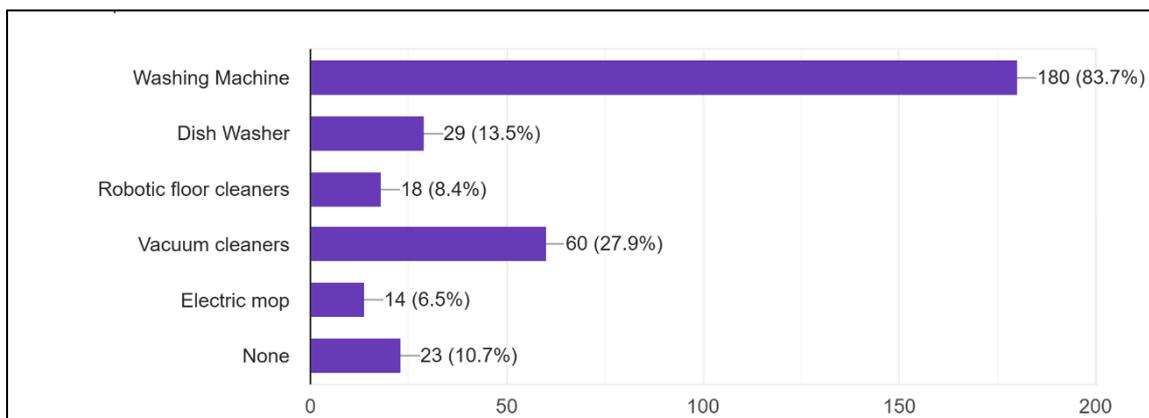


Figure 1 Percentage of respondents who used different machines

For household cleaning chores, a majority 83.7% (Fig.2) used a washing machine for cleaning clothes, followed by 27.9% who used vacuum cleaners, 13.5% dishwashers, 8.4% robotic floor cleaners, and 6.5% used electric mops.

4.7 Usage of machines by househelps for domestic chores:

17.4% of the respondents said that their househelps used the machines. 38.5% of respondents who employed househelps opined that their househelps could use the modern machines well and around 30.4% felt that they couldn't. 35.9% felt that they need to spend considerable time educating the househelp in using the machines whereas 33.1% felt that they do not need to spend time for the same. 53.8% of the househelps liked using modern machines for household cleaning chores.

4.8 Satisfaction of respondents with respect to cleaning machines:

It was found that 52.4% were satisfied using their washing machines, and 95.7% would continue to use washing machines in future. 36.8% seemed to be satisfied with dishwashers and 59.2% said that they would continue to use dishwashers in future. 11.4% were highly satisfied with their robotic floor cleaners, and 44.8% were just satisfied with the floor cleaning robotic machines. 58.7% said that they would continue to use the robotic floor cleaners in future. 15.2% were highly satisfied with vacuum cleaners and 47.2% were just satisfied with their vacuum cleaners. 70.5% said that they would continue to use vacuum cleaners in future. When asked about electric mops, 14% said that they were highly satisfied with the mops, and 36% were just satisfied. Again, a majority that is 56.9% of respondents said that they would use electric mops in future.

4.9 Reasonableness of remuneration demanded by househelps

38.6% of respondents felt that the remuneration/benefits demanded by maid/househelp for household chores were reasonable. Whereas 27.9% felt that the remuneration/benefits demanded by maid/househelps were unreasonable.

4.10 Effectiveness of machines versus househelps:

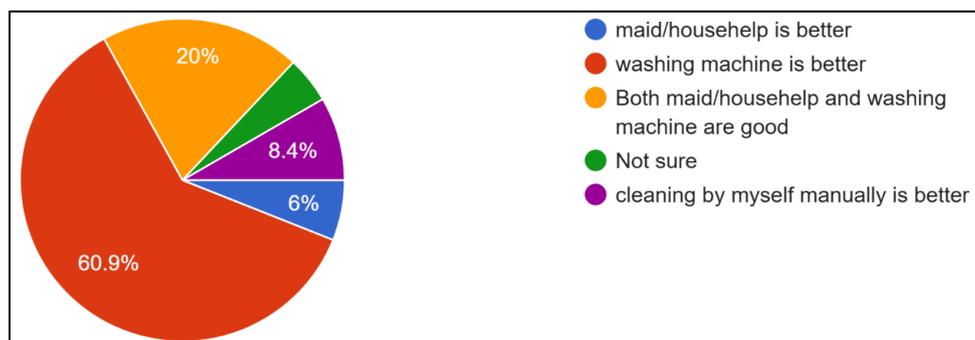


Figure 2 Effectiveness of washing machines versus househelps

60.9% of respondents (Fig.3) felt that a washing machine is better for washing clothes compared to househelps or doing the chore themselves. A majority that is 32.6% of respondents felt that a maid/househelp is better for cleaning utensils instead of using a machine. 28.8% felt that cleaning by self is better. A majority that is 33% of respondents said that a househelp is better for floor cleaning instead of machines, followed by 24.7% who said that cleaning by self, manually, is better. For dusting, a majority of respondents that is 26.5% felt that a househelp/maid is better in doing this chore compared to machines. 24.7% of respondents felt that vacuum cleaners are better than househelps for vacuum cleaning and 23.7% felt that cleaning by self, manually, is better, whereas 17.7% felt that both househelps and vacuum cleaners are good. For mopping of the floor, 33% of respondents said that a househelp is better, followed by 22.3% who said that cleaning by self, manually, is better, and 20.9% felt that both are good.

The primary reasons for choosing a particular method for washing clothes, cleaning utensils, floor cleaning, mopping, and vacuum cleaning were quality cleaning, quick cleaning, time saving, low cost, and ease of use in that order.

4.11 Replacement of househelps by machines in future

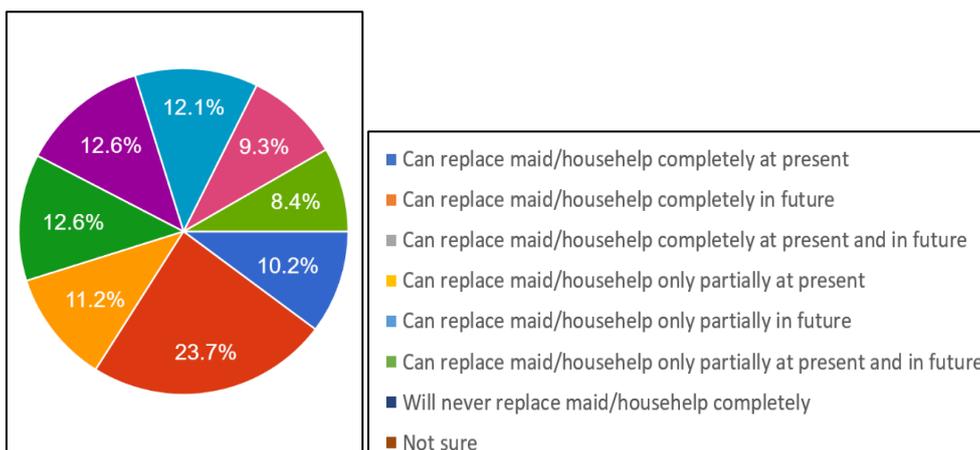


Figure 3 Replacement of househelps by machines in future

A majority (23.7%) (Fig.4) said that machines can replace maids/househelps completely in future, 12.1% said that machines can replace househelps only partially at present and in future.

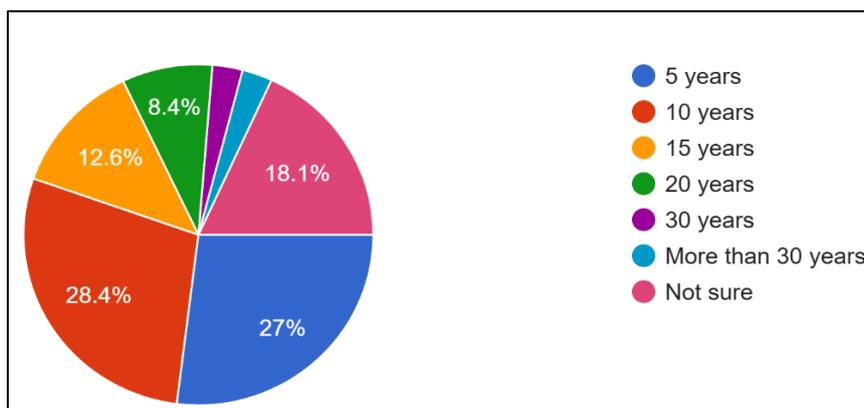


Figure 4 Probable duration of time for replacement of househelps by machines in future

28.4% of respondents (Fig.5) said that machines can replace maids/househelps completely within the next 10 years, whereas 27% said that it would happen within 5 years, 18.1% were not sure whereas 12.6% said that it would take 15 years and only 8.4% said that it would take 20 years to replace househelps with machines.

4.12 Opinions on future of maids/househelps/smart technologies for household cleaning chores in India

Regarding future of maids/househelps/smart technologies for household cleaning chores in India, respondents shared their views through an open-ended question. Respondents opined that people will be using more smart technologies in future for household chores. However, respondents felt that as there is no dearth of manpower in India, reluctance to use modern gadgets in small houses and establishments will continue. "AI is a useful tool, however, manual help is always good", said some of the respondents. "The future of household chores in India will likely feature a collaborative ecosystem where technology enhances efficiency and maids provide the personal touch. This dual approach could redefine how households operate, balancing tradition with innovation. Since India is a country with a large section of unskilled work force, maids will always be available, especially in grade B cities. Machines will only partially replace maids, reasons being Indian mentality, cheap labour, large unskilled workforce and easy availability of the househelps. Machines are expensive these days, a middle class family can't afford machines" said some of the respondents.

Some others opined that in the future, smart technologies like robotic vacuum cleaners and automated mops will help reduce the need for manual cleaning. "These devices will make cleaning faster and more efficient and can reduce costs, especially in urban homes. There is a high probability for machines to dominate in future. Smart technologies at low

cost in household chores is a need and will be in great demand in future. However, maids and househelps will still be needed for tasks that machines can't handle, like deep cleaning or cooking"- said some of the respondents.

Others mentioned that househelps are a must in India, as most of the machines can't do the household chores completely. "No matter how many machines might be used, the quality of cleaning is best when done by ourselves" mentioned some of the respondents.

Respondents also opined that the future of cleaning chores in India lies in balancing tradition with technology. "Smart cleaning devices will complement rather than completely replace househelps, creating a more efficient and hybrid approach. At the same time, the emphasis should remain on improving working conditions for househelps and making smart technologies accessible to all sections of society"- according to some respondents.

Others said- "smart technologies are better than maids/househelps and so, househelps can be replaced in future. But not all households can buy machines as they can be costly and so, some houses will hire maids in future." Some respondents were of the opinion that Indian households are built and decorated in a manner which can never be completely cleaned by an automatic robot or machine.

4.13 Testing of Hypotheses

Chi square tests helped in analyzing the association between household income and whether people want to employ househelps. A chi square test was also done to find out whether there is a significant difference between males and females with respect to satisfaction from househelps. Association between household income and number of modern machines used for household chores was also tested using a chi square test.

H₀1 There is no association between the income of the household and employment of househelps by households.

Table 1 Association between the income of the household and employment of househelps by households

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	28.776 ^a	5	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	31.728	5	0.000
N of Valid Cases	215		

The Pearson chi-square $p(0.000) < \alpha(0.05)$ in Table 1 shows that there is a significant association between the level of income of households and employment of househelps in respondents' homes. Except in the income group of less than 10 Lakhs per annum category, in all other income groups, a majority of households have employed househelps. In the 10 Lakhs to 20 Lakhs Per Annum category, 74.4% of households employed househelps, in the 21 Lakhs to 30 Lakhs Per Annum, category, 81.2 %, in the 31 Lakhs to 40 Lakhs Per Annum category, 88.8%, in the 41 Lakhs to 50 Lakhs Per Annum category, 100 %, and in the 51 Lakhs and above Per Annum category, 77.7 % of households have employed househelps. In the income group of less than 10 Lakhs per annum category, a majority that is 57.4% did not employ househelps. Overall as income increases, more people want to employ househelps rather than do the chores themselves.

H₀2 There is no difference between males and females with respect to satisfaction from househelps:

Table 2 Difference between males and females with respect to satisfaction from househelps

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.136 ^a	5	0.071
Likelihood Ratio	10.915	5	0.053
N of Valid Cases	215		

The Pearson chi-square $p(0.071) > \alpha(0.05)$ in Table 2 shows that there is no significant difference between males and females with respect to satisfaction with from work done by househelps. It was found that 50% of females and 57% of males among the respondents were satisfied with work done by househelps, whereas 12% of females and 17% of males were highly satisfied with work done by househelps.

H03: There is no association between the income of the household and number of modern machines used by households.

Table 3 Association between the income of the household and number of modern machines used by households

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	49.771 ^a	30	0.013
Likelihood Ratio	47.734	30	0.021
N of Valid Cases	215		

The Pearson chi-square $p(0.013) < \alpha(0.05)$ in Table 3 shows that there is a significant association between the level of income and number of modern machines used by households.

A majority that is 22% of respondents in the 51 Lakhs per annum and above income category had 4 machines. A majority that is 33% of respondents in the 31 Lakhs-40 Lakhs per annum income category had 2 machines. A majority that is 26% of respondents in the 21 Lakhs-30 Lakhs per annum income category had 2 machines. A majority that is 35% of respondents in the 10 Lakhs-20 Lakhs per annum income category had 1 machine. A majority that is 37% of respondents belonging to the less than 10 Lakhs per annum income category owned 1 modern machine. Overall it can be seen that when the income levels increased, the number of modern machines owned and used also increased.

5 Discussion

The study found that a majority of the respondents employed househelps and a majority wanted househelps to work for 1-3 hours per day. The need for househelps was maximum for sweeping and mopping followed by cleaning utensils, dusting, cleaning washrooms and washing clothes. A meagre 1.8% of the respondents wanted househelps for cooking.

A majority used a washing machine for cleaning clothes, and people preferred washing machines to maids/househelps for washing clothes, whereas for other chores like cleaning utensils, sweeping, mopping and dusting, they felt a househelp/maid is better.

A majority of the respondents said that machines can replace maid/househelp completely in future and this would happen within the next 10 years.

There is a significant association found between the level of income of households and employment of househelps in the households. Except in the income group of less than 10 Lakhs per annum category wherein a majority did not employ a househelp, in all other income groups, majority of households have employed househelps. As the level of income increased, more people wanted to employ househelps rather than do the chores themselves.

It was found that there is no significant difference between males and females with respect to satisfaction derived from work done by househelps.

There is a significant association between the level of income and number of modern machines used by households. Overall it can be seen that when the income levels increased, the number of modern machines owned and used also increased.

6 Conclusions

A good number of respondents opined that smart technologies will be used in future for efficient and cost-effective cleaning. Respondents also felt that "there is a high probability for machines to dominate in future; smart technologies at low cost for household chores is a need and will be in great demand in future; maids and househelps will still be needed for tasks that machines can't handle, like deep cleaning or cooking; househelps are a must in India, as most of the machines can't do the household chores completely"- these were some of the opinions received from respondents.

The Indian domestic worker market is expected to see continued growth in 2025, fuelled by urbanization, digitalization, and increasing demand for household services. However, addressing challenges related to labour rights and fair wages is crucial for ensuring sustainable and ethical development.[8]

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The author declares that she has no conflict of interest with anyone with reference to the manuscript.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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