

Human Resource and Skill Requirements in the **Domestic Help** **Sector** Executive Summary



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Definition:

Domestic work is an important avenue of work for semi-literate or illiterate people, especially women in India since 73 percent of the female workforce is illiterate or educated only up to the primary level. This sector is significant to the economic progress of the country since it absorbs low-skilled or undereducated and acts as an enabler for educated women to enter the workforce or the labour market, as they can outsource household chores to hired domestic help. However, the sector is unorganised and domestic workers are unaware and do not understand their rights, unlike their counterparts in other organised sectors. Domestic helps in India do not enjoy protection from labour laws and suffer from lack of dignity, as society usually perceives them as 'servants' doing inferior work instead of recognising them as paid professionals who manage household chores. This affects the aspirational value for such roles, which decreases the propensity to spend on training.

Rapid urbanisation, dominant and increasing participation of women and migratory population are perhaps the three distinct features that define the domestic help segment in India. The Draft National Policy on Domestic Workers, as recommended by the Taskforce on Domestic Workers, defines a domestic worker as "a person who is employed for remuneration whether in cash or kind, in any household through any agency or directly, either on a temporary or permanent, part time or full time basis to do the household work, but does not include any member of the family of an employer."

The market:

Domestic work is the primary source of employment for women in the unorganised sector. Less than 1 percent of the workforce is formally trained and about 80–85 percent workers are unskilled labour. Tier 1 2 cities in India have the highest demand for domestic help. India's economic growth would drive per capita income, resulting in more families falling under the upper middle/high income category. These families are the chief source for demand of domestic workers in the country. According to Get Domestic Help (GDH), an online job placement agency based in Delhi, at least 2.5 million households are currently searching employees in just eight largest cities of India.

Socio-economic factors:

In many families nowadays, both husband and wife participate in the workforce, thus raising the need for help with regards to taking care of children as well as the elderly. Both functions require different skills and a gap in these skills creates an opportunity for skill development. The Global Age Watch Index 2013 ranks India 73 out of 91 countries in elderly care, hence these is a significant margin for improvement in this area. Elderly care and in-house nursing have emerged as new categories under the domestic work sector. These workers provide services such as taking care of elders and senior citizens and injured or unwell individuals who require specialised care.

Monitoring:

The government might also want to establish monitoring authorities that can act as centers to monitor domestic abuses and restrict the employment of children at home. The absence of a registration and labour monitoring system poses a major challenge, as there is no way of correctly concluding the number of workers across the country.

Domestic help placement services/agencies:

Private players are also making efforts towards organising the sector and have established agencies and companies to train domestic help. Companies established under this sector offer well-trained housekeeping workers, who are efficient in cooking, cleaning and childcare, to the urban middleclass. However, such a trend is in its nascent stage and companies such as The Maid's Company, Hire-a-Help, B-Able Domesteq and Saath Livelihood Services are taking small steps. Several other companies are expected to enter the market since there is huge demand and cheap labour from rural areas of the country is easily available.

Concerns and challenges in the industry regarding skill supply and skill development

| | |
|---|---|
| Abuse | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic workers can face abuse in terms of long working hours, potential physical abuse by the employer, improper sleeping facilities, sexual harassment and no leave or holidays in a month. |
| Low paid jobs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sector offers low paying jobs to the workforce. Low salary levels can be attributed to the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of recognition of their contribution Illiteracy of workers hampers their bargaining power Absence of laws at the state and national levels |
| No financial capacity for training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most domestic workers are from the marginalised sections of society and a large number of them are migrant workers who lack the financial capacity to pay for training. Also, clients are not interested in paying additional money for training. |
| Low dignity of the job | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic work is characterised by difficult and, sometimes ,oppressive conditions coupled with low wages, lack of social security and dignity. Therefore, people usually feel there is no value in pursuing this field. |
| Unregulated sector | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The domestic help sector in India is unregulated and the implementation of laws is weak. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sector is dominated by women workers and children who often fall prey to crimes such as human trafficking. Placement agencies that bring workers from other states to work in metros are completely unregulated There is no formal contract to ensure a healthy employer-employee relationship. There is no legislative protection and no organisation to ensure this. |
| Lack of trainers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organising domestic trainers has been a major challenge since workplaces are inaccessible and many; they are marked by high attrition rate and instability. This restricts the ability to pass on skills to the next set of workers. |
| Low literacy rates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The workforce in the sector is dominated by migrant women from rural areas of states such as Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Assam and Orissa. They are illiterate and economically challenged, which forces them to migrate to metro cities in search of employment opportunities. |
| Non-verified and lack of groomed employees, high attrition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers face significant challenge in finding verified domestic workers due to the lack of a centralised database. There is another challenge of high attrition rate since there is no fixed wages and they often leave for a meagre hike. Also, finding well-groomed employees poses a challenge |

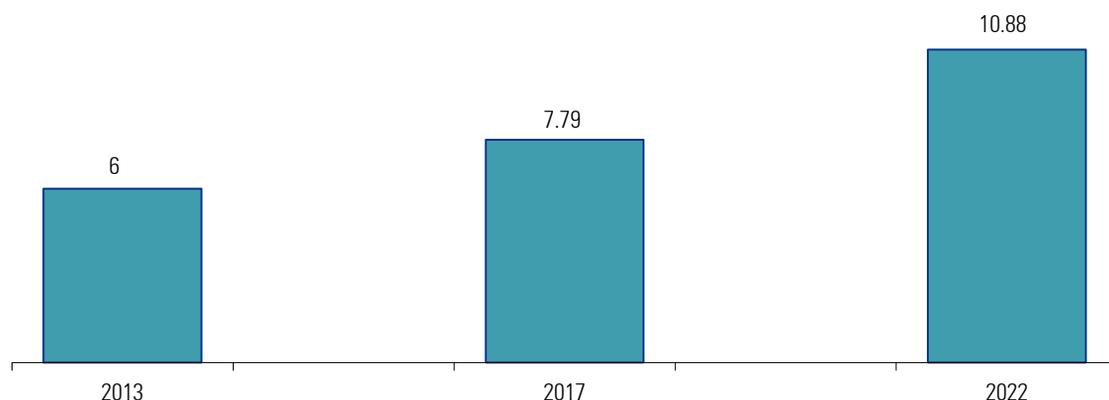
Majority of domestic workers are marginalised whose economic contributions to the society are invisible

Source: Primary interviews; KPMG in India analysis

Incremental Human Resource Requirement (2013-22)

The domestic worker sub-categories include general domestic help, cook, gardener, office assistant and babysitter

Estimated Growth of Domestic Workforce in India (2013-22) in million



| Traditional job roles | Description |
|--------------------------|--|
| Live in — domestic help | They are employed by a single household where food and shelter are provided. Employees are housekeepers and conduct all functions, including cooking, washing, and general caretaking of employers. |
| Live out — domestic help | They are self-employed at multiple households and not offered food and shelter by employers. They tend to live independently. There are often many live-out workers who work for one family full-time but come and go from a family home - often living in slum areas. This is especially true for places like Gurgaon and Mumbai where modern housing lacks staff quarters. |
| Cooks | These are personnel who cook food for employers. They may be skilled to make simple or specialty cuisines. |
| Gardener | A person who works in or tends a garden for hire. Their activities include cutting, planting and watering plants or flowers in an employer's garden. |
| Babysitter | A person, usually woman, who is hired to take care of an infant or a child in a household. Their activities include feeding, bathing, dressing the infant/child. They also clean children's room and their clothes. |
| Upcoming job role | Description |
| Elderly care | Elderly care includes performing duties to fulfill special requirements unique to senior citizens, who need extra care and depend on helpers for their daily activities. |

Source: Secondary and Primary Research, KPMG in India analysis

- Government schemes for skill development in the domestic help sector are scarce with only a few initiatives undertaken on a pilot basis by the Delhi government. This includes the Development Initiative for Domestic Workers/Household Assistants.
- There seems to be limited private sector participation in conducting training programmes and institutes for skill development of domestic workers. A few start up firms, such as Get Domestic Help and Domesteq, offer training services for domestic workers.
- A training course for domestic workers is run under the Modular Employable Scheme (MES) of the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE). Upon successful completion of the course, trainees obtain a National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT) certificate



Skill Development Initiative for Domestic Workers/Household Assistants

- In July 2009, the Delhi government, Ministry of Labour and Employment, and International Labour Organization (ILO) collaborated to start a pilot training programme to skill and re-skill domestic workers/household assistants across the Delhi and Noida region
- The pilot programme was part of a broader programme, namely Skill Development Initiative for Domestic Workers/Household Assistants, which aimed to improve the service of domestic work as well as enhance employability and improve living and working conditions of domestic workers.
- The initiative was part of the National Skill Development Initiative, aimed to provide training to one million people over the next five years and one million people each year after that.
- Training institutes such as Prayas and TMI-Academy were expected to impart the skill development programmes.
- After the training, domestic helps were issued smartcards, providing access to details such as worker's police verification, health certificate, and previous employer's recommendations.

Domesteq

- Founded in 2007, Domesteq is a Delhi- and Gurgaon-based domestic staff training and placement agency.
- It has collaborated with B-ABLE, the first partner of the National Skill Development Corporation, to train one million youth in the next 10 years across several sectors.

Get Domestic Help (GDH)

- Founded in April 2011, GDH is an internet-based platform offering comprehensive domestic help solutions to households, corporate and expatriates.
- Its services include training, placement, and verification of domestic help.

Delhi Skill Development Mission

- In April 2011, the Delhi government announced plans to put together a course to train domestic workers under the Delhi Skill Development Mission

Source: Press search

Select recommendations & implications

| Recommendation | Implications |
|--|---|
| <p>Spread awareness and create an ecosystem to motivate domestic helps to take up training and encourage employers to participate in skilling</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Awareness need to be created among the domestic workers. Be it regarding existing schemes like the MES scheme or roles at the entry level or specialised roles. Employees should also be encouraged to invest in skilling them. ▪ Training will give them literacy and numeracy skills which will not only help them do work more efficiently but also help them earn higher wages. So they will also be more willing to invest in training, upgrading skills and increasing sector attractiveness. ▪ The skill and re-skill training programme initiated by ILO, MoLE and the Delhi government should be scaled up and replicated in different states of India in a phased manner.. ▪ Flexible training hours with short-term interventions, such as 1–2 hours/week without leading to missing out on wages could attract them for training |
| <p>The government needs to create a conducive environment to help training centres scale up</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The government needs to step in to create scalable and sustainable business models for training and placement in the sector ▪ They also have to incentivise private players to take up training in this space by giving them tax breaks ▪ Apart from creating skilling modules for domestic workers, the government should also look at creating a model curriculum for trainers in the sector. |
| <p>Effective implementation and periodic review of the legislations</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ While a number of legislations and schemes are in place, their implementation leaves a lot to be desired. Periodic review and modification to the rules and regulations responding to the socio-economic changes in the country is needed to make laws relevant and effective to empower workers with social and legal rights. ▪ Policies should serve to highlight certain minimum conditions for domestic work and they should be followed effectively. ▪ Domestic work should be included in the central list of scheduled employments for fixation and enforcement of minimum wages. |
| <p>Integration of unit level structures to train</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Since it is unorganized, the sector is highly fragmented. Training takes place in isolation and at times, no training is imparted. ▪ There is a need for an integrated approach that involves heads of blocks in villages, districts welfare offices, training and placement agencies , non-governmental organisations and resident welfare associations in cities to train and place people in the sector. ▪ Instead of waiting for the candidate to migrate to the city, it would be prudent to impart some basic training in soft skills, language and hygiene at the village level to reduce the effort of training institutions and also increase candidates' confidence levels to help them prepare for other specialised training later. |
| <p>Establish and support the Domestic Help Sector Skill Council</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Registration of all placement agencies and individuals providing placement, sourcing and recruitment services relating to domestic work with the Domestic Help Sector Skill Council should be made mandatory. ▪ Such a body would also standardise fee and help regulate the arbitrary fee structure imposed by various training providers. ▪ Create a National Occupational Standards framework and map NOS with NVOs. ▪ Create the much-needed bridge between employers and employees to help keep a check on placement agencies and curb the instances of exploitation of women. |



cutting through complexity

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