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Comprehensive Struggles of Female Maid for livelihoods

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Abstract:

Due to urbanization, commercialization and ever-increasing wants of life, to the fulfill the economic needs, most of the couples in metro cities are working, obviously they have to be out of house for most of the time in a day. For these long working hours they have to depend on domestic maids. It is not only couples but bachelors, elderly citizens, small-scale businesses, start-up etc need people for domestic jobs like cleaning, care taking purposes. After lockdown and digitization revolution in last half a decade, smart home technology and devices are being introduced. In smart home technology cleaning, dish-washing or domestic work are fully automated with the help of robots, Wi-Fi controlled by mobile or app. This paper seeks to understand the intricacies of female maid due to digitization in Thane city. Primary, secondary sources and some case studies are used to unravel the various factors, created by systematic technology, which is replacing human efforts as well as livelihood.

Keywords: *Urbanization, Commercialization, Domestic maids, Start-up, Lockdown, Digitization.*

Introduction:

In the metropolitan cities' domestic workers or servants or house maids are need of the hour. Often employed, so that housework eases out and lots of time is saved in botched domestic chores specially for the elderly citizens, working women, bachelors, single males, and even homemakers. Housemaid and their employer both need each other. It eases life of employer, and one person gets atleast some job and earning through it. But most of the times the housemaid needs the work, as it is the question for their survival. By working at 5-6 houses, resolve their issue to basic dal-Roti. These tradition of appointing a maid has percolated in Indian society and culture since last half a decade. Though there are some quarrels and disagreement and hotch-potches these working relation is continued from both parties. Especially if house has some unwell elderly person living alone deployment of a maid becomes essential. However, with the changing world demographics sector has some evolution's and changes. Like few decade back's invention of washing machines, vacuum

cleaners or recently dish washers all have emerged some help to the families and a threat to the house maid sector. In the new era of AI even hose “robots” are available for floor cleaning! The digital automation devices have on one side helpful and reduced dependency of the maid, but on other side house keeps have faced reduction in their requirement. Hence posing a vital question whether to hire maid or not? Like in Western world, maids are not common as India. Primarily for two reasons. Firstly- they are expensive, their per day or per hour charges are very high. These high charges are affordable to only well-to-do or richer classes. Secondly- digital gadgets, machines like washing machines, dish washers are part and parcel of their day-to-day activities for decades now. This article attempts to illuminate the struggles of female house maids in Thane City.

Objective:

To understand the apprehensive struggles of maid in Thane City.

Research Methodology:

The study was conducted among 30 female house maids to know their struggles in upliftment of their economic struggles and huddles due to digital appliances in city of Thane. To collect data qualitative as well as quantitative method was used. with both primary and secondary resources. Focus was on case study to understand their working and struggle conditions.

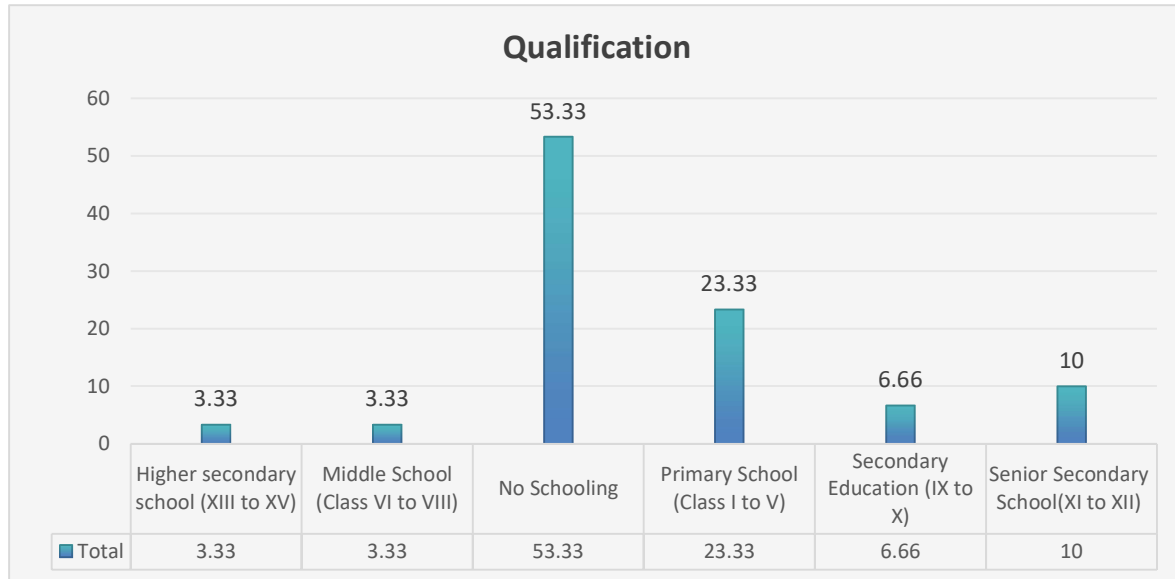
Findings and Analysis:

Table No: 1 Distribution of the Respondent: Age

Age	Sum of Respondent	Sum of Percentage
21-30	7	23.33
31-40	5	16.66
41-50	8	26.66
51-60	6	20
60 above	4	13.33

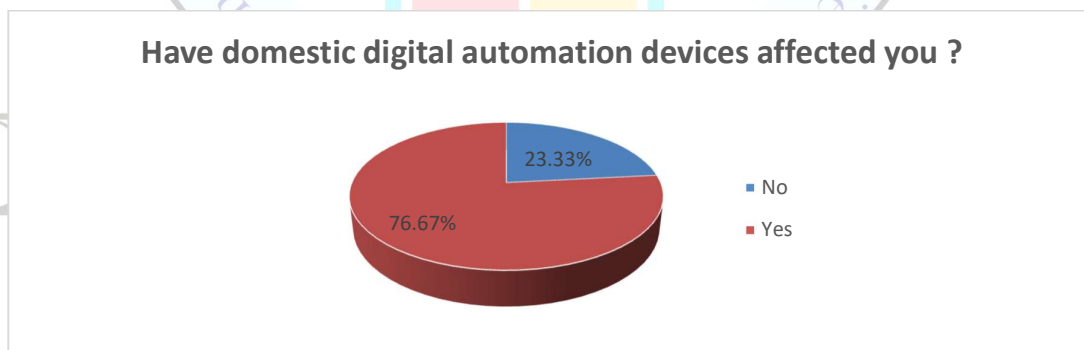
The total population of study survey 23.33% respondents are between age group of young age group of 21-30 years, 16.66% are from the middle age group of 31-40 years, while 26.66% respondents are from the age group of 41-50 years, working for almost 10-15 years as maids while more than 33% respondents are between age group of 51-60 and 60 and above years who can be considered as ‘experienced’ and have laid their most of working life as Maids.

Chart No: 1 Distribution of the Respondent: Qualification



From chart 1 majority of respondents, 53.33% perceived that taking education was not possible because of abominable financial condition been a task. Due to poverty many respondents admitted that many times they did not have money for 2 meals, education was far of dream with the reality they were undergoing. While 23.33% respondents reported primary schooling was possible in municipal schools as education is free for girls in all government schools. While 3.33% of respondents admitted that secondary education was possible because there was support from their parents’ employees, however due to some family and social calamities, further education could not be continued. 6.66% of respondents explained that their parents wanted them to study and manage very hard to educate them. While 3.33% respondents explained that they received higher secondary schooling though hardship. They almost reached graduation but unfortunately ended up in this profession.

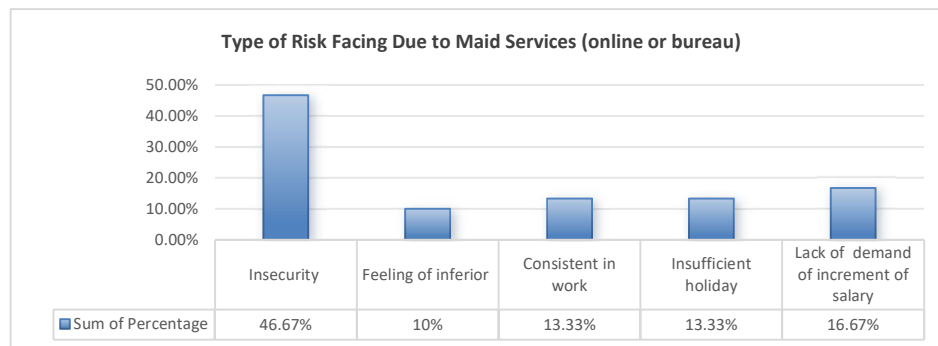
Chart No: 2 Effects of Domestic Digital Automation Devices



Robot vacuum cleaners, washing machines and dishwashers with dryers etc are some of the domestic digital automation devices which are easily available on the market, which are time saving and easy to handle. Chart 2, respondents (73.33%) ascertained after lockdown digital automation devices surpassing the expansion of traditional domestic work to high technology. They reported experiencing some stress to some extent of fear of losing job. While 23.33% of respondents did not

fear this digital evolution. They shared the experience that the employees are very old and they cannot use digital devices, also they need house help, not only for domestic work but also for company, as they are not staying alone away from other family members and relatives.

Chart No: 3 Maid Services



There are various online and maid bureau platforms for hiring maids like urban company, “kaamwalibais”, “Helper4U”, “snabbit” etc providing maids for cooking, nannies, nursing, part-time, full-time, babysitter, with various offers, guarantee of their character, skilled trained maids, all types of maid requirements are fulfilled with fixed amount. In chart 3, domestic maids (46.67%) responded that there was feeling of insecurity due to maid services of pink ladies replacing us. Also admitted that they are not educated and skilled like this online maid, but we do their job with utmost sincerity and honesty. 10% of respondents experienced feeling inferior, as now employers can manage to access online services easily. 26.67% responded regretfully explained that domestic maid needed to maintain consistency in work and admitted insufficiency in holidays as they had to turn for job seven days a week. While 16.67% responded lack of demand of increment of salary, as there is fear of maid services (online or at bureau).

Case Studies:

Shemla tai: I have almost completed 45 years working as domestic maid. I have been working in this home for more than 35 years. This family treats me like their family members. I have seen 3 generations growing. They have not shouted at me once nor misbehaved. Financially out of the way they have helped my family many times proactively. I do not understand digital technology. This family has a washing machine with drier, I use it, but I fold the clothes and arrange it in proper manner etc. I am happy with my employer, this noble family.

Ranibai: I am 25 years old, I am working in 7 houses daily, also I take extra charges for extra work. I know digital services are in demand, but I too have commitment. Now a days we are too ready to leave jobs if we get good opportunities, I am not afraid of digital appliances. I know how to operate washing machine, dryer etc. I like to learn and use digital devices. My employer also has given free hand to learn and operate these machines. Though they have purchased machines they have shown faith in me and have not cut off my job. I am thankful to them.

Sarika: I am 34 years old and am doing cooking job daily in 4 houses. I like to cook various recipes. I got help from YouTube to make new recipes. Where I work people like the taste of my food. Many time families where I am working have complemented and sometimes have complained too. I often get late, but they are generous and accept. I respect my employer and will continue. But in case of any quarrels, I may try to get another house.

All three respondents were unskilled labor's. They were sincere, hardworking and involved in their professional commitments. They are fully aware that they are not having any strong union, as being in unorganized sector hence they have to tackle their issue's on their own. On the other hand increasing digital interference is a challenge for them. However in this smart world, They are trying to learn the technique of digital world, they are aware of the fact that if they do not acquire the basic knowledge they will have to consequences. But though they are maids or servants they are self-esteemed human beings and need to be treated with dignity.

Conclusion:

From Covid-19, people were managing their housework though machines like vacuum cleaners, washing and vessel machines, Robot's etc which gave consistence's, followed only instruction and no arguments, no mismanagement perfectionist concepts. But this had heavy effect on survival of maids. Digital world providing connectivity and availability of services is remarkable but too much depending on the digitization has big loss to human touch and humanity. No doubt many times maids have their tantrums, ego's, misbehavior, irregularity, over-expensive service, loss of privacy issues, and insecurity too as with digital technology, bureau, maid's app's help is available without any disputes. But this has big setback on lower sector employment and livelihood of maids and their support to their families. On humanity grounds they should be allowed to survive; they should be given chance to improve. After-all Indian tradition and cultures are based on emotions and human interference not everything can be handled by machines and digital world.

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