

Home service sector

1. What is home service?

The on-demand home services sector in India has experienced significant growth, fuelled by a shift in lifestyle priorities and the convenience offered by technology. Initially driven by the need for chores during the pandemic, the sector has expanded beyond traditional services like maids and tutors to include various domains. With a surge in startups catering to this market, on-demand services have become an integral part of daily life.

Technology and the internet have played a crucial role in making these services accessible to a wider audience. On-demand home services are not only lifesavers for those who frequently relocate but also contribute to employment opportunities for millions of skilled and semi-skilled service providers in India. The market is projected to reach USD 6396.81 million by 2029, with a forecasted CAGR of 8.0%, according to Data Bridge Market Research.

The popularity of on-demand services stems from their ability to cater to diverse financial segments, providing financial flexibility for users and employment opportunities for service providers. Working professionals, in particular, benefit from the time-saving aspect of these services, contributing to the industry's steady growth.

Startups with a digital influence have become key players in this sector, ensuring availability, reliability, and quality of on-demand services. They conduct thorough verification processes and background checks on service providers, fostering trust and safety among consumers. The industry's potential for growth is substantial, given the widespread use of smartphones, the preferred access point for these services. As technology continues to evolve, startups are expected to scale up, meeting the increasing demand for on-demand services in the coming years.

Examples of the Home Service Sector include:

The home service sector in India is diverse and includes a wide range of services catering to various household needs. Here are some examples of home service industries in India:

1. Home Cleaning Services - Professional cleaning services for homes, including deep cleaning, regular maintenance, and specialized cleaning tasks.
2. Pest Control Services - Companies providing pest control services to eliminate and prevent infestations in homes.
3. Plumbing Services - Service providers offering plumbing solutions for repair, maintenance, and installation of plumbing systems in households.
4. Electrical Services - Electricians offering services for electrical repairs, installations, and maintenance in residential properties.
5. Appliance Repair Services - Repair and maintenance services for home appliances such as refrigerators, washing machines, air conditioners, etc.
6. Home Renovation and Repair - Companies offering renovation and repair services, including carpentry, painting, flooring, and general home improvement.
7. Interior Design Services - Professionals providing interior design and decor services for residential spaces.
8. Home Security Services - Installation and maintenance of home security systems, including alarms, surveillance cameras, and access control.
9. AC and HVAC Services - Services related to air conditioning and heating systems, including installation, repair, and maintenance.
10. Home Tutoring Services - Educational services offering home tutors for various subjects and academic levels.
11. Home Healthcare Services - Healthcare providers offering medical services, nursing, and home care for individuals in need.
12. Cooking and Catering Services - Services providing home cooks, catering, and meal preparation for households.
13. Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Services - On-demand laundry and dry-cleaning services, offering pickup and delivery options for customers.
14. Home Fitness Services - Personal trainers and fitness instructors offering services at clients' homes for personalized fitness routines.

15. Home Automation Services - Companies providing smart home solutions, including the installation of automated systems for lighting, security, and climate control.
16. Waste Management Services - Waste disposal and recycling services for households, ensuring proper waste management practices.
17. Gardening and Landscaping Services - Professionals offering gardening, landscaping, and lawn maintenance services for homes.
18. Home Baking Services - Bakers offering customized cakes, pastries, and baked goods for home delivery.
19. Grocery Shopping and Delivery Services - Platforms providing online grocery shopping services with home delivery options.
20. Fresh Produce Subscription Services - Services delivering fresh fruits, vegetables, and other produce directly to homes on a subscription basis.

2. What are the grounds for complaint?

Complaints in the home service sector of India can arise from various issues, and customers may have grievances related to:

1. Quality of Service:

- Subpar workmanship or service quality.
- Failure to meet agreed-upon standards.
- Incomplete or unsatisfactory service delivery.

2. Reliability and Punctuality:

- Service providers not arriving on time.
- Failure to adhere to scheduled appointments.
- Unreliable or inconsistent service.

3. Billing and Pricing Disputes:

- Overcharging or billing discrepancies.

- Lack of transparency in pricing.
- Hidden charges not disclosed upfront.

4. Customer Service and Communication:

- Poor communication from service providers.
- Inadequate customer support.
- Lack of responsiveness to queries or complaints.

5. Professional Conduct:

- Unprofessional behaviour of service providers.
- Disregard for customer property or privacy.
- Failure to follow ethical and professional standards.

6. Damage or Loss:

- Damage to property during service.
- Loss or theft of belongings during service provision.
- Failure to compensate for damages incurred.

7. Safety and Security Concerns:

- Lack of safety measures during service.
- Non-compliance with safety regulations.
- Concerns related to the security of customers during service visits.

8. Failure to Honor Agreements:

- Non-compliance with service agreements or contracts.
- Failure to meet guarantees or warranties.

- Breach of agreed-upon terms and conditions.

9. Technology and Platform Issues:

- Technical glitches or issues with online platforms.
- Difficulty in using digital interfaces for service bookings or payments.

10. Misrepresentation of Services:

- False advertising or misrepresentation of services.
- Discrepancies between promised and delivered services.
- Fraudulent practices by service providers.

11. Hygiene and Sanitation:

- Lack of cleanliness and hygiene during service provision.
- Failure to adhere to health and safety standards.

Customers facing such issues are encouraged to raise their complaints through appropriate channels, including customer support, online platforms, or regulatory bodies, to seek resolution and ensure the improvement of service standards in the home service sector.

3. When complaints would not be accepted?

While the acceptance of complaints in the home service sector in India depends on the specific policies and practices of each service provider, there are certain situations where complaints may be rejected or not accepted. Here are some common scenarios:

1. Failure to Report Timely - If a customer fails to report a complaint within a reasonable timeframe specified by the service provider, it may not be accepted.

2. Non-Compliance with Terms and Conditions - Complaints that arise due to the customer's non-compliance with the terms and conditions agreed upon during the service booking may not be accepted.

3. Misuse or Abuse of Services - If the complaint arises from the misuse or abuse of the services by the customer, it may be rejected.

4. Lack of Supporting Evidence - Complaints without proper supporting evidence or documentation may be challenging to validate and might not be accepted.

5. Pre-Existing Issues - Complaints related to issues that were pre-existing or not caused by the service provided may be rejected.

6. Unauthorized Modifications - If the customer or a third party makes unauthorized modifications or repairs after the service, and issues arise from these modifications, the complaint may not be accepted.

7. Non-Payment of Service Fees - If the customer has not fulfilled their payment obligations for the services rendered, the service provider may reject any associated complaints.

8. Force Majeure Events - Complaints arising from circumstances beyond the service provider's control, such as natural disasters or other force majeure events, may not be accepted.

9. Unreasonable Expectations - Complaints that arise from unreasonable expectations or demands that go beyond the scope of the agreed-upon services may not be accepted.

10. Failure to Cooperate with Investigation - If the customer fails to cooperate with the investigation process initiated by the service provider to address the complaint, it may impact the acceptance of the complaint.

4. What is the complaint redressal system?

The complaint redressal system related to the home service sector in India typically involves a systematic process for customers to report issues and seek resolutions. While specific procedures may vary among service providers, here is a generalized outline of a complaint redressal system for the home service sector:

- Customer Contact - Customers can initiate the complaint redressal process by contacting the service provider through designated channels such as customer service helplines, email, mobile applications, or online complaint forms.
- Complaint Registration - Customers need to provide detailed information about their complaint, including specifics such as the service availed, date and time, service provider details, and a clear description of the issue.
- Acknowledgment of Complaint - The service provider acknowledges the receipt of the complaint, either through an automated response or direct communication, confirming that the complaint is being investigated.
- Investigation and Resolution - The service provider initiates an investigation into the complaint, examining relevant service records, conducting interviews, or even arranging for on-site inspections if necessary. The goal is to identify the root cause and determine an appropriate resolution.

- Resolution Communication - Once the investigation is complete, the service provider communicates the resolution to the customer. This communication includes details about the actions taken to address the complaint and any compensation or corrective measures implemented.
- Feedback and Follow-Up - Service providers often seek feedback from customers regarding the resolution process to assess customer satisfaction. Follow-up communications ensure that the issue has been fully resolved and that the customer is content with the outcome.
- Escalation Mechanism - In cases where the customer is dissatisfied with the resolution or believes that the complaint has not been adequately addressed, there may be an escalation mechanism. This could involve contacting a higher-level customer service representative or a dedicated complaints department.
- Consumer Forums and Regulatory Authorities - If the complaint remains unresolved or the customer is not satisfied with the resolution provided by the service provider, regulatory authorities and consumer forums may be contacted. These entities may offer additional avenues for dispute resolution and may have established grievance redressal mechanisms.
- Ombudsman Services - Some sectors have established ombudsman services that act as an independent authority to review and resolve complaints if the customer is not satisfied with the resolution provided by the service provider.
- Consumer Protection Agencies - If the issue persists after engaging with the retailer, consumers can file a complaint with local consumer protection agencies or consumer affairs departments. These agencies typically have specific procedures for filing complaints and can offer guidance on consumer rights. They act as intermediaries to address disputes between consumers and retailers.

- Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (CDRC) - Established under the Consumer Protection Act of 1986, the CDRC operates at the District, State, and National levels. Consumers can file complaints related to unfair trade practices, defective goods or services, overcharging, hazardous products, and misleading advertising. The CDRC serves as a quasi-judicial body, allowing consumers to seek redressal for their grievances without the complexities of traditional legal procedures. The complainant has the option to take the service provider to a court or another suitable venue based on jurisdiction.

commissions are as follows-

a) District Commission: The aggrieved consumer can reach out to the District Commission under section 34 of the CPA, 2019, which provides that the district commission shall entertain matters where the value of the goods or services paid as consideration does not exceed more than one crore rupees.

<https://ncdr.nic.in/districtlist.html>

b) State Commission: In cases where the value of the goods or services paid as consideration is more than one crore, but less than 10 crores, the consumer can approach the State Commission. Moreover, in cases of unfair contracts, the State Commission has original jurisdiction and the consumer can be directly approached. An appeal against the order of the District Commission can also be made under section 47 of the CPA, 2019.

<https://ncdr.nic.in/statelist.html>

c) National Commission: The National Commission can entertain matters where the value of goods or services paid as consideration exceeds 10 crores. Section 58 also provides that complaints against unfair contracts can be entertained by NCDRC when the amount of value

paid exceeds 10 crores. The NCDRC also has appellate jurisdiction against the orders of any State Commission and Central Authority.

<https://ncdre.nic.in/>

- Central Consumer Protection Authority - If the commission finds violations of rights of consumers or in notice of trade practices which is unfair it can inquire or cause an inquiry, either on receipt of complaint or Suo moto or as directed by Central Government. If the commission finds, after preliminary inquiry, of an existence of a prima facie case of consumer rights violation or it is in notice of any unfair trade practice or any wrong or inaccurate advertisement which is prejudicial to public interest or to the interests of the consumers, it can order an investigation by the District Collector or by Director General. The consumer can complain to the District Collector of the respective district for investigation and subsequent proceedings by the CCPA. He/she/they can also submit a complaint via email, at com-ccpa@nic.in.

5. What are the regulatory bodies?

In India, several government departments and regulatory bodies oversee aspects related to consumer rights, services, and dispute resolution, including those in the home service sector. Here are some relevant government departments and regulatory bodies:

1. Consumer Affairs Department:

- The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution is responsible for the protection of consumer rights and oversees consumer-related issues.

<https://consumeraffairs.nic.in/>

2. National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC):

- NCDRC is a quasi-judicial body that handles consumer complaints and disputes at the national level.

<https://ncdre.nic.in/>

3. State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions:

- Each state in India has its own State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, which addresses consumer complaints at the state level.

<https://ncdr.nic.in/statelist.html>

4. Consumer Protection Councils:

- These councils, both at the central and state levels, work towards promoting and protecting consumer rights.

<https://ncdr.nic.in/>

<https://ncdr.nic.in/statelist.html>

<https://ncdr.nic.in/districtlist.html>

5. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs:

- This ministry oversees aspects related to urban housing and development, which may include policies affecting the home service sector.

<https://mohua.gov.in/>

6. Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship:

- Responsible for skill development initiatives, this ministry may have relevance in the context of training and certification for service providers in the home service sector.

<https://www.msde.gov.in/>

7. Ministry of Labour and Employment:

- Deals with labor-related issues, and in the context of the home service sector, may oversee aspects related to labor rights and regulations.

<https://labour.gov.in/>

8. Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP):

- Oversees policies related to industrial development, and in some cases, may influence regulations impacting service industries.

<https://dpiit.gov.in/>

9. Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI):

- While not directly related to home services, TRAI regulates the telecommunications sector, which is crucial for online platforms and digital communication in the service sector.

<https://www.trai.gov.in/>

10. *Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI):*

- Relevant for home services related to food, FSSAI sets standards and regulations for food safety.

<https://www.fssai.gov.in/>

11. *Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology:*

- Responsible for policies related to information technology, which can impact online platforms and technology-driven services in the home service sector.

<https://www.meity.gov.in/>

12. *Local Municipal Corporations:*

- Municipal bodies at the local level may have regulations and oversight related to specific services offered in the home service sector, such as waste management.

<https://igod.gov.in/leg/L008/organizations>

13. *Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA):*

- Regulating the real estate sector, including aspects related to property transactions and home services.

14. *Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DEITY):*

- Overseeing policies related to information technology, which can impact online platforms and technology-driven services in the home service sector.

<https://www.meity.gov.in/>

15. *Ministry of Health and Family Welfare:*

- Overseeing health-related regulations, including standards for healthcare services offered at home.

<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/>

16. *Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS):*

- Setting standards for products and services, ensuring quality and safety.

<https://www.bis.gov.in/>

17. Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT):

- Regulating foreign trade policies, which may impact import/export of certain home services or related products.

<https://www.dgft.gov.in/CP/>

18. Directorate of Estates:

- Overseeing matters related to government accommodations, which may include regulations for home services in government-owned properties.

19. Directorate General of Employment & Training (DGE&T):

- Overseeing vocational training initiatives, which may be relevant for skill development in the home service sector.

<https://www.apprenticeshipindia.gov.in/>

6. What are the Acts and Guidelines that govern home service?

There might not be specific acts or guidelines that exclusively address the entire home service sector in India. Instead, different services within the home service sector may be governed by a combination of general consumer protection laws, labor laws, and industry-specific regulations. Here are some relevant acts and guidelines that could be applicable to various aspects of the home service sector:

1. Consumer Protection Act, 2019:

- Addresses consumer rights and protection, including the right to be protected against unfair trade practices and defective services.

- Key Features: Establishes Consumer Protection Councils, Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions, and provides mechanisms for filing complaints.

2. Labor Laws:

- Pertinent for services involving labor, including domestic workers, technicians, and other service providers.

- Key Laws: Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, Minimum Wages Act, Payment of Wages Act, etc.

3. Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021:

- Applicable to online platforms and digital services, which might include certain home service providers.

- Key Features: Defines guidelines for social media platforms, OTT platforms, and digital news media.

4. Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006:

- Applicable to services related to food preparation and delivery at home.

- Key Features: Regulates food safety standards and practices.

5. Occupational Safety, Health, and Working Conditions Code, 2020:

- Pertinent for ensuring occupational safety and health standards for workers in the service sector.

- Key Features: Consolidates and amends laws related to the working conditions of labor.

6. Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 (RERA):

- Applicable to the real estate and home construction sector.

- Key Features: Regulates the real estate market, including builders and developers.

7. Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007:

- Applicable to payment systems and financial transactions, which may be relevant for online payment platforms used in the home service sector.

- Key Features: Regulates payment and settlement systems in India.

8. Environmental Laws (various):

- Applicable to services that may have environmental implications, such as waste management.

- Key Laws: The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, etc.

7. What are the international guidelines that govern home service?

1. International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions:

- Various ILO conventions address labor rights, including those relevant to workers in the home service sector. Some examples include:

-ILO Convention No. 189 - Domestic Workers Convention, 2011: Recognizes domestic work as a form of employment, providing domestic workers with labor rights and protections.

-ILO Convention No. 122 - Employment Policy Convention, 1964: Addresses employment policy, which can have implications for workers' rights and conditions.

2. United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):

- The UDHR outlines fundamental human rights principles that are applicable to all individuals, regardless of their employment sector. It includes provisions related to fair and just working conditions.

3. International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR):

- This covenant recognizes the right to work, fair wages, and just working conditions, which can be relevant to workers in the home service sector.

4. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW):

- CEDAW addresses gender-based discrimination and may have implications for female workers in the home service sector.

5. International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families:

- This convention specifically focuses on the rights of migrant workers and their families, which may be relevant to migrant workers in the home service sector.

Packers and Movers FAQs

1. What is the meaning of packers and movers?

Packers and movers are companies, who offer road, rail, air and ocean shipping services for relocation. They provide door-to-door relocation services and move goods and products for individuals and businesses from one part of the world to another.

2. What items cannot be moved by Packers and Movers?

- Hazardous and corrosive Material.
- Combustible/Flammable Items. Propane tanks.
- Pets.
- Plants.
- Explosives.
- Perishable Food.
- Valuables.

3. What is the insurance provided?

Moving insurance is offered by relocation companies to cover the risk of damages on a house moving process. There are general two types of moving insurance - Goods transit insurance and All-inclusive insurance.

4. How can I check the genuineness, credibility and authenticity of packers and movers?

If a consumer wishes to move with a legitimate and reliable company of movers and packers, then the company must be verified thoroughly. There are certain things you can do in order to check the genuineness, credibility and authenticity of packers and movers. It is suggested to first visit their offices personally, it will let you know that they have physical office and what infrastructure they have at their offices. Also to check if office place has a signboard with registered company name or not.

5. If the Packers and Movers company is not responding and seems to be fraud, then where consumer should approach?

If company offices and officials are not traceable then consumer may approach the Police and lodge an FIR.

6. What are the general insurable items on house moving?

If a consumer opts for insurance from a company of reliable packers and movers then they would give you a list of items that will be covered under the insurance. General insurable items are furniture (sofa, bed, dining table, study table, chests, etc.), large home appliances (refrigerator, air conditioner, air coolers, washing machine, etc.), small kitchen appliances, electrical equipment and garden equipment.

7. What precautions must be taken while insuring the items?

Consumers must keep procure list of insured items and policy papers of items insured. Consumers should also check authenticity of Insurance companies especially if it is third party insurance.

8. Are any guidelines or regulator available for Packers and Movers companies?

No, guidelines are not available for the operation of Packers and Movers. Also, at present, there is no regulator for this sector, where consumers can approach for the resolution of their grievances.

9. What is the grievance redressal mechanism for Packers and Movers companies?

1. Consumers can approach company by contacting the customer care of the company. If no satisfactory response is received, he must send a written complaint to the head office of the company.

2. If Consumer has not received any response or satisfactory response from company, consumer may approach directly to Consumer Commission following the procedure prescribed by them. For more information he may visit <http://www.ncdrc.nic.in/districtlist.html>

