



# A STUDY ON THE PROSPECTS AND PROBLEMS OF ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY EXECUTIVES IN KERALA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CALICUT DISTRICT

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## **Abstract**

Kerala is a small state in the southern part of India that has 14 revenue districts. The state has a very dense population and its economy depends primarily on agriculture, tourism, industries and foreign remittances. In the recent years, Kerala has seen a tremendous growth in E-commerce. As a result, multiple job opportunities were created in the state. Content developers, web designers, craftsmen and delivery boys became a part of the growing E-commerce business in Kerala. Creation of employment opportunities in the state has also led to socio-economic development, skill redefinition and up skilling of employees and technological advancement. As the selection process to become an online food delivery executive is comparatively easier, more people with less education are being able to make a living with this opportunity. They get a chance to earn higher disposable income delivering food to people of India. According to past studies, there are advantages and disadvantages in choosing the profession of an online food delivery agent. If the conditions of the employees improve, customer satisfaction will improve and as a result, the industry can reach unimaginable heights in the near future. Happier the employees, better the business. So this research is an attempt to explore the employment conditions of such employees in Kerala. This study tries to assess the Prospects and Problems of Online Food Delivery Executives in Kerala.

## **Keywords –**

Food Aggregators, Online Food Delivery Executives, B2C Model of E-Commerce, Work Life of Food Delivery Executives, Welfare and Social Security.

## Introduction

Internet has revolutionized the lifestyle of people by providing people from different parts of the world, access to limitless information about anything they searched for. From our basic needs to what we buy for pleasure, the internet has a huge impact on our lives. Today, we carry our banks, shopping, food, music stores, newspapers, watch and alarm clock, PlayStations, political campaigns and even health advises in our phones. We do not have to travel and be physically present at places to get things done. Everything is just a click away.

The idea of E-commerce started gaining popularity at the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century. E-commerce refers to the sales and purchases of goods and services using the internet. We transfer money and data to online websites and we get the goods and services delivered at our doorstep. No more hassle of going to different retail stores looking for the item we intend to buy.

It is not just the businessmen who benefit from E-commerce. There are different E-commerce models.

- a) Business to Consumer (B2C) is the most popular model where the retail stores sell their products to consumers online.
- b) Business to Business (B2B) is a platform where Big businesses sell their products to small business owners.
- c) Consumer to Consumer (C2C) is the model that helps consumers to sell their products to other consumers who are in need of them. Websites like eBay and OLX are very effective in helping people sell their individual products.
- d) Consumer to Business (C2B) gives consumers an opportunity to sell their services or goods to businesses. If we are passionate about cooking, we can sell the recipe to cookery websites or even television channels.

E-commerce lets you sell products without incurring the cost of a retail space or the manpower needed to sell product at the stores. When online stores affected the jobs of people working at retail stores, it also opened employment opportunities for many other people. Courier service is an important factor in E-commerce. Millions of people are employed in different countries to deliver the products businesses and consumers order through online sites to their doorstep.

The online food delivery market in India is mainly driven by India's youth, and it is providing employment to a good percentage of women population in the country. Aggressive marketing strategies are being adopted by food start-ups to become the key player in the business in India. The online food delivery market in Kerala is thriving and a good percentage of consumers depend on online delivery of food in Kerala. With the change of culture in the state, more women are working today and do not get time to cook food at home. So they depend on online food deliveries.

Online food delivery is the process of ordering food from a food chain or restaurant using an application or website. Customers create an account to order frequently and pay using different methods like cash on

delivery, debit/credit card and net banking. The food aggregators give customers the option to compare menus, prices and reviews and choose from the best. In the present scenario, where the risk of corona virus contagion is keeping people inside their houses, the demand for online deliveries has risen to a huge extent.

Online food delivery apps like Swiggy, Zomato and Potafo let people work for them during their spare time. Food is something we order anytime of the day. The online food delivery apps are in requirement for delivery agents round-the-clock.

### **Problem Statement**

The online food delivery market has expanded in many cities in India. There are more than 80 million orders for food processed through different online outlets in a month. At a time, when corona virus infection has taken the world into a lockdown situation, people are sitting at home, trying to avoid the risk of contagion. This is a time when the entire world is trying to order essentials online and the demand for online food delivery has increased. Kerala is a fast growing state for online food delivery.

There are thousands of employees working for delivery outlets like Swiggy, Zomato, Potafo, etc, in Kerala.

Customers complain when they don't get their food delivered at home on time. So the business takes extra care for fast delivery. But have we ever thought of the plight of the delivery executives who rush to deliver food to us? Are they being treated well by the employers? This research is an attempt to explore the situation of such employees in Kerala. The study tries to assess the prospects and problems of online food delivery executives in Kerala with special reference to Calicut District.

### **Research Questions**

The research intends to raise the following questions about the prospects and problems of online food delivery executives in Kerala with special reference to Calicut District.

- a) What factors affect the wages and incentives of online delivery executives?
- b) Do they get motivated or rewarded adequately for their services.?
- c) Do they enjoy any employee welfare measures insurance at their present work?
- d) Do they get better at using technology as the work requires them to use technology ?
- e) Do the delivery executives go through job stress and does the stress affect their performance?
- f) Do the delivery executives have space for personal growth in the company.?

## **Objectives of Study**

- a) To identify the factors that motivates delivery executives to join online food delivery platforms.
- b) To identify the extent of technology literacy they achieved through their job.
- c) To know whether the employee welfare measures are being implemented and to understand if the company is taking measures to retain the employees and maintain their services.
- d) To identify the problems faced by the delivery executives.
- e) To know the level of satisfaction of the employees with regards to their job and working environment.

## **Significance of the Study**

Business through the *Internet* has become the primary objective for many businesses and consumers worldwide. This additional channel for big and small businesses helps them earn more profit. The online market in India is one of the fastest growing markets in the world. This gives the buyers the convenience of choosing from a wide variety of products, comparing the products of different retailers and checking their prices; all from the comfort of their home.

The online food delivery market in India is mainly driven by India's youth, and it is providing employment to a good percentage of women population in the country. Aggressive marketing strategies are being adopted by food start-ups to become the key player in the business in India. The online food delivery market in Kerala is thriving and a good percentage of consumers depend on online delivery of food in Kerala. With the change of culture in the state, more women are working today and do not get time to cook food at home. So they depend on online food deliveries. The food aggregators give customers the option to compare menus, prices and reviews and choose from the best. In the present scenario, where the risk of corona virus contagion is keeping people inside their houses, the demand for online deliveries has risen to a huge extent.

A recent study shows that staff retention and recruitment are the biggest challenges faced by the food aggregators in Kerala. This is mainly because the delivery executives are not getting paid well; they do not get valued or respected and they do not enjoy the employee welfare benefits from the company. As a result, many delivery executives are forced to quit their jobs. A detailed study about the welfare of online delivery executives could help businesses realize the issue and take measures to correct them and retain the employees. Employee satisfaction can bring about remarkable changes in the development of online delivery market in Kerala.

## Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the online food delivery executives in Kerala. The prospects and problems of delivery executives working with food aggregators like Zomato, Swiggy, Potafo, are being studied for the project. This study also covers the job satisfaction of the employees and the steps the aggregators take for the progression of delivery executives. The proposed analysis will use interviews, Q&A of delivery executives, and direct observation methods to study the issue. This study will be limited to the online food delivery executives in Kerala.

## Review of Literature

**Dholakia and Zhao (2010)** found that the time of delivery plays a key role in customer satisfaction. Delayed delivery has had negative feedback from customers and the companies tend to lose customers even if road and weather conditions were the cause of delay in delivery.

**Khalid A. (2012)** in the research “Role of Supportive Leadership as a Moderator between Job Stress and Job Performance” suggested that companies should concentrate on supporting the employees in their needs as there is a direct relationship between stress of the employees and their performance at work. Unfavourable situations for employees can never yield a good performance from them.

**KrishniMiglani (2014)** identified that Ecommerce has brought about urbanization, growth of working women, and higher disposable incomes for people. Online delivery websites and mobile apps are a growing trend in India. Consumers are moving away from the traditional dine-in restaurants. Doorstep deliveries are in high demand in the country. Social media serves as a platform for people to learn about food, apart from just connecting with friends. Food blogs are very popular in India.

**Zulkarnain Kedah (2015)** states that several researchers have studied about customer satisfaction with regards to online food delivery apps. Website privacy, efficient payment system, good website design, food quality, fast delivery and customer services have a significant impact on the success of an online food business.

**NehaParashar and SakinaGhadiyali (2016)** A research was conducted on different apps that are available either by aggregators or by restaurants themselves for various purposes like delivery, pointing system, in house app ordering, etc. Researchers found out that consumer behaviour has changed considerably in the past few years with the advent of technology and that customers give proper feedback to the delivery apps for improvement.

**Zamarrud Ansari and Surabhi Jain (2016)** states that the three main challenges faced by online food delivery apps are 1) Timely delivery and optimizing the resources 2) Integrating all the main restaurants in the city 3) The online food portals should evaluate the skills and satisfaction of its employees. They need to create an atmosphere for the employees to excel in their job and enhance the business.

**According to Dr. Neha Parashar and Ms. Sakina Ghadiyali (2017)**, the online food market size in India has reached around Rs. 42 lakh crore. Many new aggregators are joining the new online industry with innovative ideas like food for health conscious people, home cooked meals etc. Food aggregators have invested \$130.3 million for the new business. 17 new deals were introduced in 2015, as against the five deals in 2014. There is an increase of 93% in new deals compared to 2014. GloriaFood, an online ordering system, conducted an analysis and found that *Convenience* is the main reason why online food delivery app industry is thriving in India.

**Kanteti (2018)** stated that Online Delivery apps are ruling the Indian economy since a few years. These companies were started by tech savvy young individuals. They saw the possibility of technology in business advancement and innovative ideas like online food delivery apps were born.

**Jyotishman Das (2018)**, in the research, “Consumer perception towards online food ordering and delivery services: an empirical study” found that consumers have moved to mobile phone apps for online delivery of food because the companies offer Doorstep Delivery, it is convenient for the consumers, they also get Rewards & Cashbacks for their purchases. The study also analysed that more customers prefer Zomato in India than other service providers because they have a better delivery time and they offer better discounts.

**N. Thamaraiselvan (2019)** states that India, with population of over 1.3 billion, is a big consumer market across the globe. In India, the Youth includes more fast food items in their diet (Kharas, 2017). Indian youth employed in high-earning fields like IT/ITES and banking have a higher income and spends more money to order food from restaurants. A recent study conducted by the World Bank says that the increase in per capita income in India has brought about a change in social setting and helped fast food outlets thrive in India.

**G. R. Jayadevan, K. S. Chandrasekar, N. Thamaraiselvan (2019)** studied that companies keep updating their marketing strategies to keep pace with the customer’s changing needs and lifestyles. We have a huge population that is Smartphone literate and the Internet has become cheaper over the past few years. This has led to more people depending on the internet for business. Domino’s Pizza delivers over 50,000 pizzas in a day and 15,000 of those orders are placed through the digital mode. Zomato, one of the leading food aggregators in India, has also started offering varied products like Zomato Base, Zomato Book, and Zomato White label to increase their online revenue.

**VaradKitey (2020)** studied that with the corona virus contagion affecting people are on the rise, the global economy is impacted and no industry has remained immune to it. When many companies are asking their

employees to work from home, the online food delivery executives do not get that option. Instead, companies like Zomato and Swiggy announced various safety measures they take to ensure that the disease does not spread through their food or their employees. They introduced the idea of contact-less delivery. They leave the food at the customer's doorstep and watch it picked up by the customers from a safe distance.

**Surbhi Gupta (2020)** wrote that after a pizza delivery executive tested positive for Corona Virus in Delhi, delivery companies are forced to consider the welfare of their delivery executives. As a result, Zomato announced that the Delivery Partner Insurance Plan for their employees, which earlier covered only hospitalization, will now be extended to cover lost earnings, if the executives get infected by COVID-19. Swiggy announced the Swiggy Hunger Savior Covid Relief Fund to ensure the safety and welfare of their delivery executives and their families.

### **Research Gap**

Many studies have analysed and researched online food delivery systems in India with regards to customer needs and satisfaction. No detailed study has been conducted about the welfare of the delivery executives. When customer gives the company a bad review for delayed food delivery, the cause for the delay by the delivery executive is not taken into consideration. The fact that employee satisfaction can lead to customer satisfaction is not given due importance. This study is an attempt to know the lives of online delivery executives who are the pillars of the E-commerce business in India. This research focuses on the online food delivery executives in Kerala and identifies their issues to learn more about the welfare measures the food aggregators take for the progress of the lives of the online delivery executives.

### **Research Methodology**

The present study is designed as an empirical and exploratory nature based on survey method. The researcher visited and interacted with employees engaged in online food delivery in the state of Kerala particularly in Calicut District. The Study is based both on primary and secondary data. The primary data for the study is collected with the help of structured questionnaires and interview schedules. For the purpose of study 100 samples were selected from the online delivery executives of the major online food aggregators like Zomato, Swiggy and Potafo working in the Calicut District.

**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION****1. SOCIAL PROFILE OF DELIVERY EXECUTIVES**

ON THE BASIS OF AGE GROUP		
AGE GROUP	NO.OF.RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Below 30	74	74%
30-40	22	22%
Above 40	4	4 %
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION		
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION	Respondents	Percentage
High school	10	10%
Higher secondary	42	42%
Graduation and above	48	48%
JOB BEFORE JOINING ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY PLATFORM		
Previous Occupation	Respondents	Percentage
No job	55	55%
Self-employment	15	15%
Unorganized sector	30	30%
ON THE BASIS OF RELIGION		
Religion	Respondents	Percentage
Muslim	47	47%
Hindu	38	38%
Christian and others	15	15%

Table 1

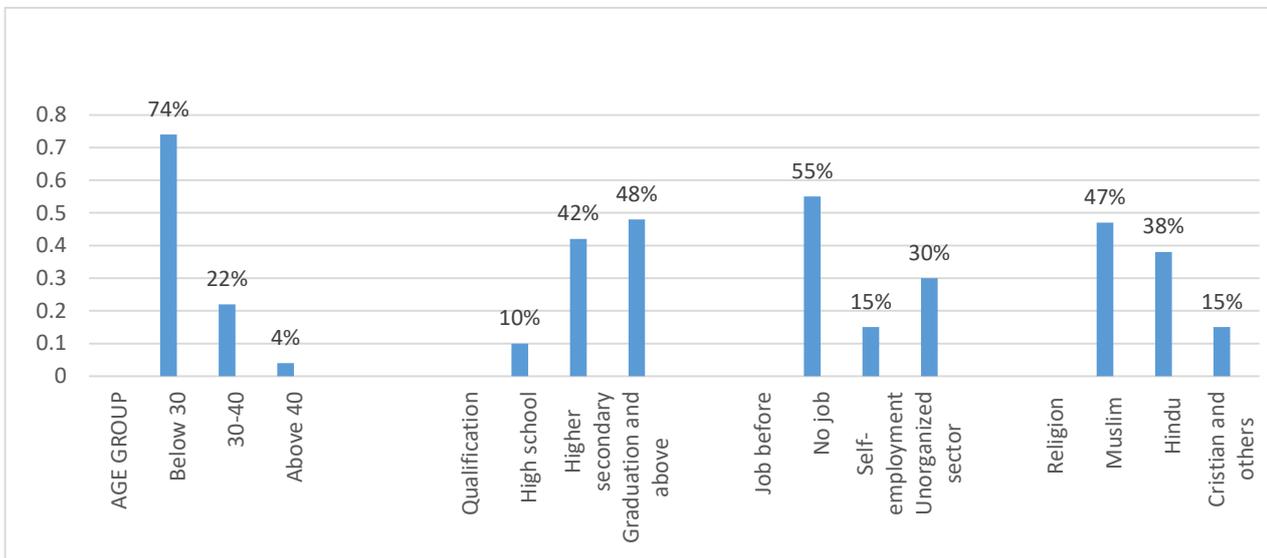


Chart 1

**INTERPRETATION**

This section throws light on the social profile of the respondents on the basis of four important categories - their educational qualification, age group, religion and previous occupation

- Figure 1 depicts that 74 % of delivery executives belongs to the age group of below 30, 22 % belongs to the age group of 30-40 and only 4 % belongs to the age group of above 40.
- Nearly half of the respondents (47%) were Muslims, 38% were Hindus and only 15% were Christians.
- Major chunk of the respondents (48%) were having the educational qualification of graduation and above .42% possessed Higher Secondary qualification and only 10 % of the respondents possessed High School qualification.
- Before getting into the food delivery platforms more than half of the respondents (55%) were jobless, nearly one third (30 %) were employed in unorganized sector and the remaining 15 % were self-employed.

**2. REASON FOR JOINING ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY PLATFORM**

Reasons	Respondents	Percentage
Earnings	36	36%
Easy entry and exit	28	28%
Flexible working time	22	22%
Independence	14	14%
Total	100	100%

Table 2

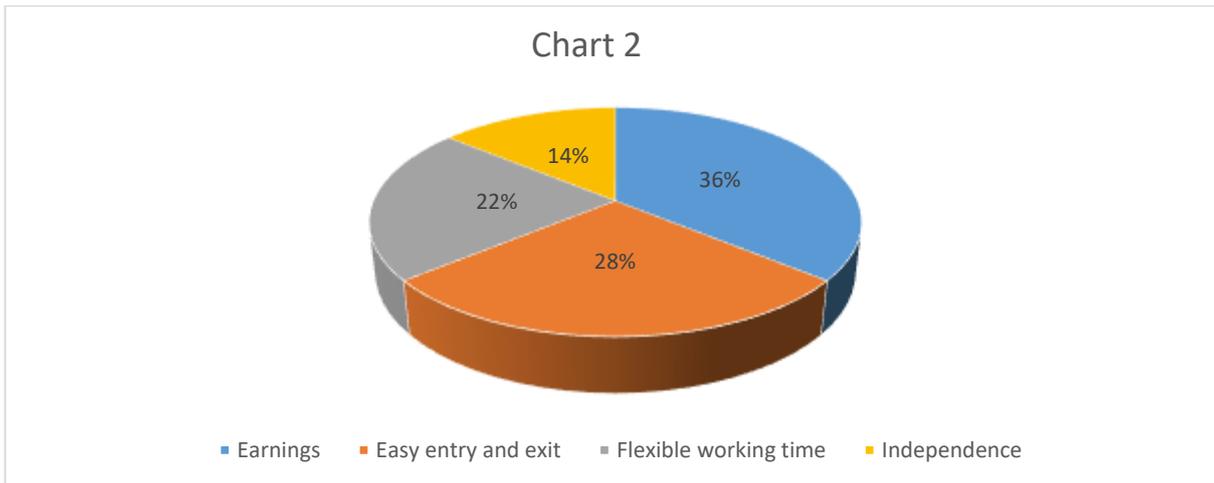
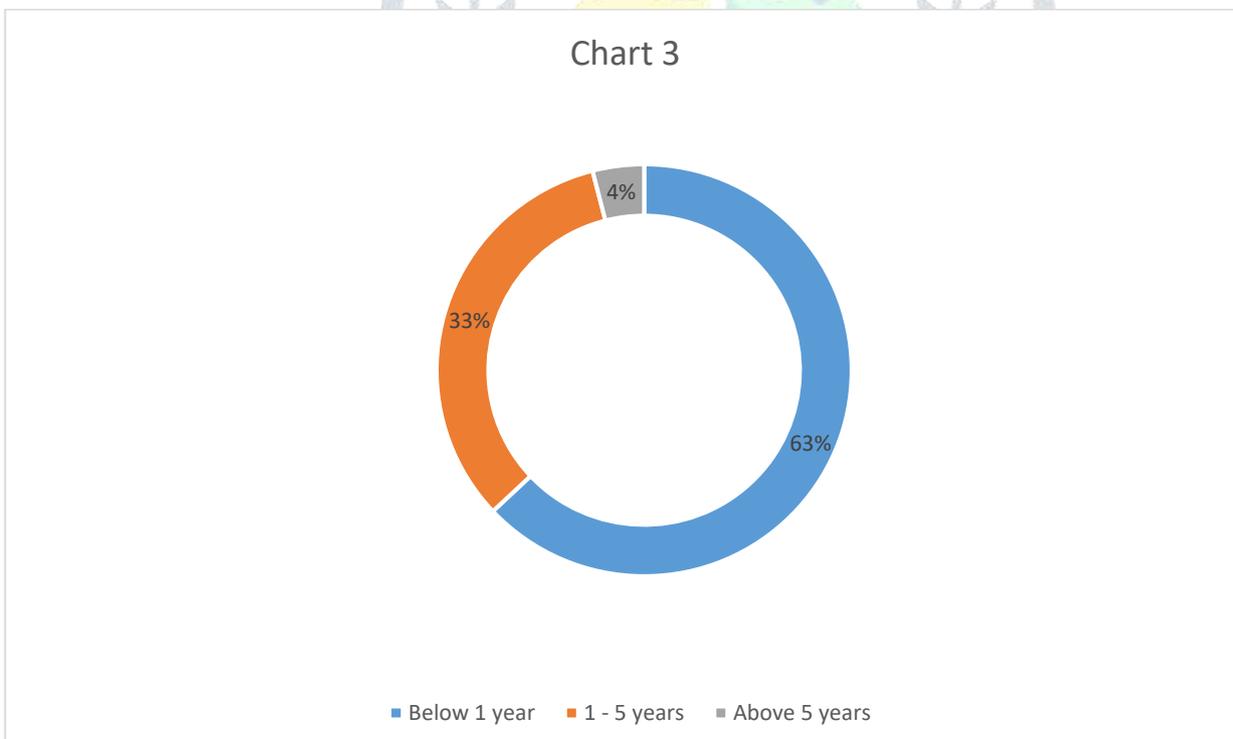
**INTERPRETATION:**

Figure 2 shows responses of online food delivery executives regarding their reason for joining online food delivery platforms. More than one third of the respondents (36%) got attracted to online delivery platforms because of the earning potential of the job, 28% of them joined food delivery platforms because of easy entry and exit possibility of the industry, while 22% of them joined because of the flexibility in the working hours and the rest 14 % joined because of the independence offered by job profile.

**3. NUMBER OF YEARS WORKING AS ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY EXECUTIVE**

**INTERPRETATION:**

This figure shows that 63% them joined food delivery platforms before one year, 33% of them work as delivery executives for a period between 1-5 years and the remaining 4% have been working with food delivery platforms for more than 5 years.

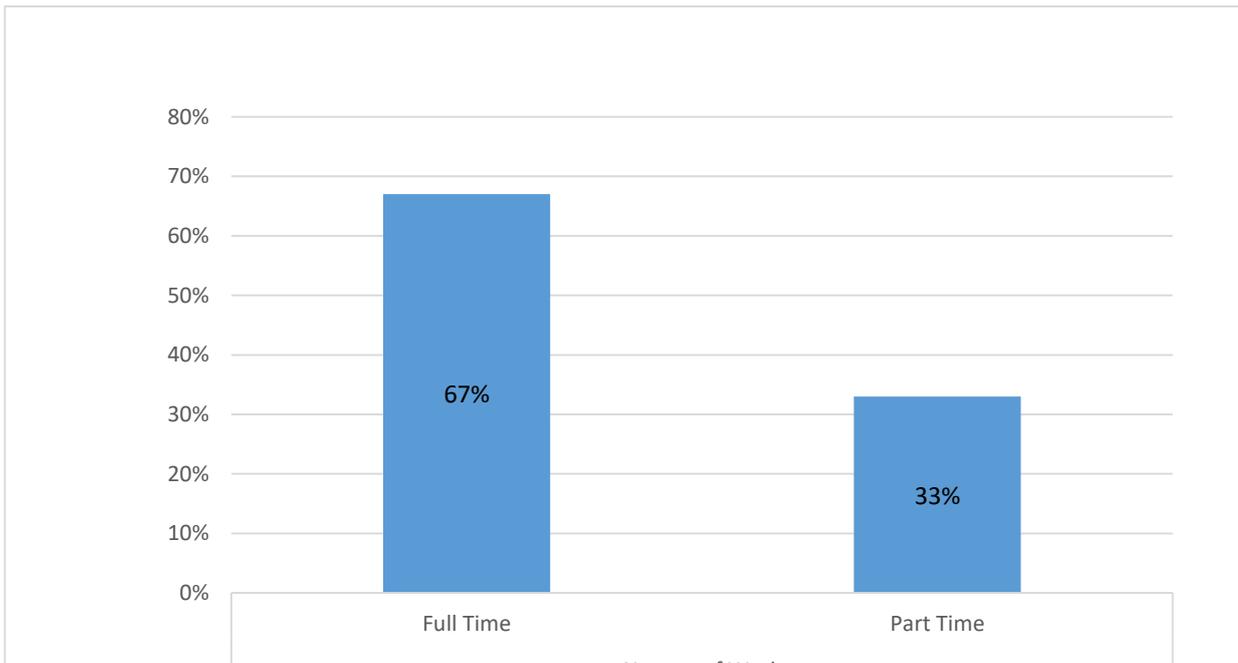
**4. NATURE OF WORK**

Chart 4

**INTERPRETATION**

This figure shows the nature of work of employees. Two third of the employees were enrolled as full time workers and only one third of the employees are working as part time employees. The part time employees are equally able to devote their time efficiently in pursuing their other goals and house hold chores.

## 5. POSSESSION OF ASSETS

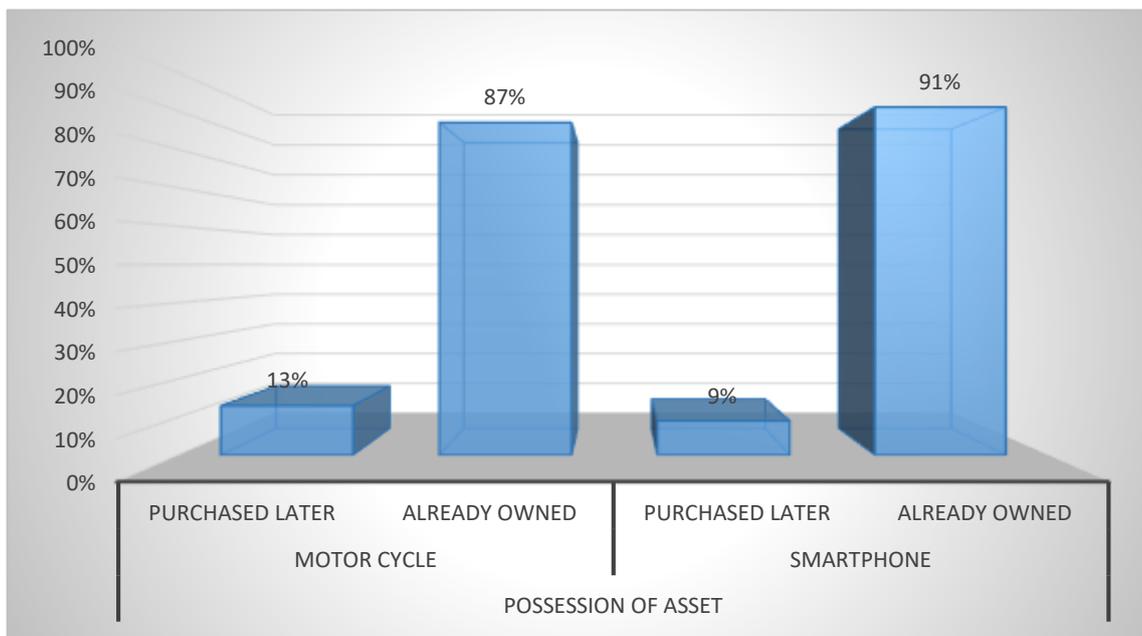


Chart 5

### INTERPRETATION

This section covers the assets required for a person to take up the work of a delivery executive. The only requirement is to possess a motorcycle and a Smart phone and it is found that almost 90% of the delivery executives had already possessed these assets before joining this platform and very few of them had to acquire it on joining.

## 6. MONTHLY EARNINGS OF ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY EXECUTIVES

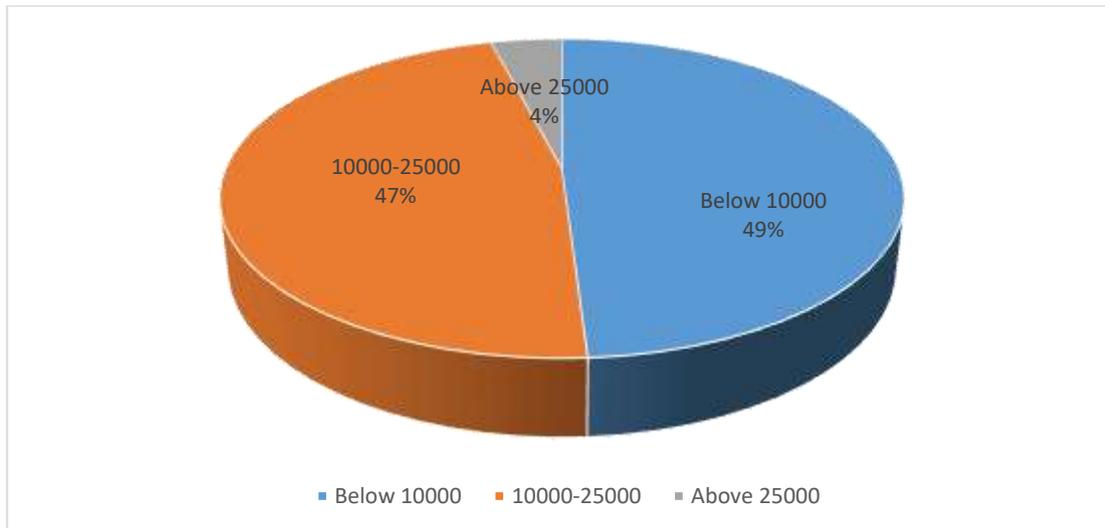


Chart 6

### INTERPRETATION:

This figure shows the monthly earnings of online food delivery executives. Nearly half of them (49%) earn a monthly income below 10000. 47% of them earn a monthly income between 10000-25000 and only 4% of them could earn a monthly income above 25000.

## 7. RATING OF INCENTIVES

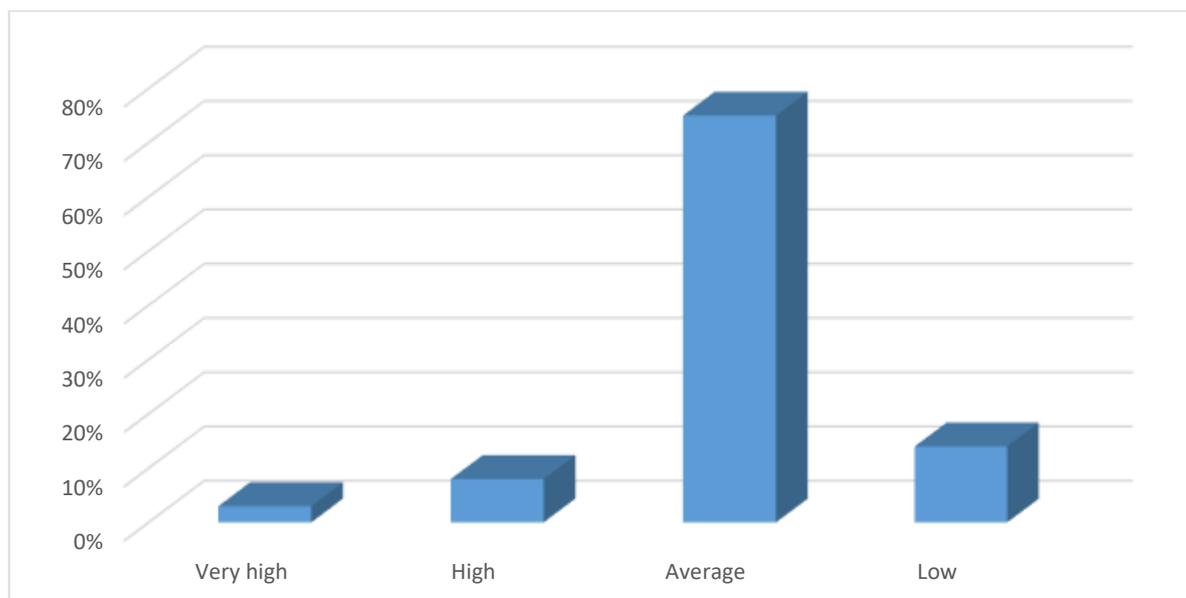


Chart 7

### INTERPRETATIPON:

The above table shows ratings of online food delivery executives on the incentives that they receive. Only 3% of the delivery executives rated it as very high. Majority (75%) of them rated it as average, 14% rated it as low, and the remaining 8% rated it as high.

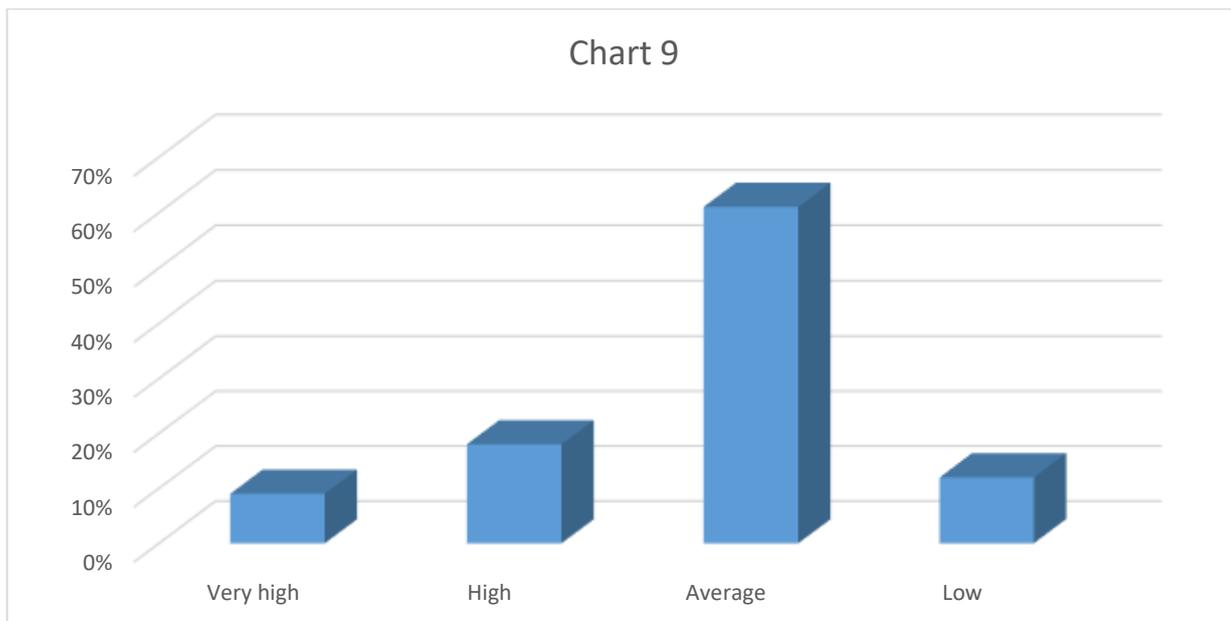
## 8. PROBLEMS FACED DURING WORKING HOURS



### INTERPRETATION:

The above figure shows problems encountered by online food delivery executives during working hours. The major problems that they had to face during their working hours were distant delivery points and low benefits (30% each) While 25% of them considered long delivery hours and the rest 15% were considering rude behavior of customers as the major problem that they had to face.

## 9. STRESS DURING WORKING HOURS



### INTERPRETATION:

This figure depicts the extend of stress that the delivery executives had gone through and their ratings about the stress level during working hours. 9% of them felt very high amount of stress during working hours, 28% of them rated it as high, 51% of them felt it as average and the rest 12% felt only very little stress .

## ANALYSIS OF LIKERT SCALE QUESTIONNAIRE

MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION

No		S.A	A	N	DA	TOTAL	MEAN	S.D
1	Level Of Satisfaction Regarding Monthly Earnings	2	33	41	24	100	2.13	1.74356
2	Ability Of Monthly Earnings To Meet Needs.	3	24	53	20	100	2.1	1.691153
3	Opinion About Working Environment	0	12	20	68	100	1.44	1.058301
4	Opinion About Fleet Managers' Support	4	16	30	50	100	1.74	1.428286
5	Attitude Of Customers Towards Food Delivery Executives	21	61	10	8	100	2.95	2.525866
6	Attainment Of Technology Literacy Through Job.	4	55	33	8	100	2.55	2.107131
7	Extent Of Training Provided For Adopting New Technologies	2	23	65	10	100	2.17	1.708801
8	Level Of Satisfaction On Welfare Measures	0	12	20	68	100	1.44	1.058301
9	Extent Of Insurance Coverage On Road Accidents During Working Hours	4	16	30	50	100	1.74	1.428286
10	Company's Concern About Problems Of Online Food Delivery Executives	4	10	36	50	100	1.68	1.341641
11	Extent Of Space For Sharing Ideas And Suggestions	4	16	30	50	100	1.74	1.428286

The Likert scale is considered as an interval scale. The mean is very significant. From 1 to 1.75 means Disagree. From 1.85 to 2.5 means neutral; from 2.6 to 3.25 means agree; from 3.35 to 4 means strongly agree.

In the First statement, the mean is 2.13 which indicate that the majority of participants are neutral about the level of satisfaction regarding monthly earnings. The mean of second statement is 2.1 which points out that they can just manage their needs with their monthly earnings though they do not have any surplus or savings. The mean value of Third statement is 1.44 which indicates that they are not satisfied with their working conditions and they expect betterment in their working conditions. The next statement "Opinion about Fleet managers support having a mean value of 1.74 indicates that the delivery executives are not satisfied towards the attitude of their superiors and the support that they get from them. The mean value for "Attitude of customers towards food delivery executives" is 2.95 which tells that majority of respondents are satisfied about the attitude of customers.

The statement 6 and 7 having a mean value in between 1.8 - 2.6 and it indicates that respondents have a neutral opinion about the attainment of technology literacy through job and extent of training provided for adopting new technologies. The statement 8 and 9 having a mean value in between 1 - 1.75. and points out that respondents are dissatisfied about the welfare measures and extent of insurance coverage provided by company.

The statement 10 and 11 showing the mean value 1 - 1.75 which indicates that the delivery executives are worried about the poor concern of the company about problems of online food delivery executives and extent of space for sharing ideas and suggestions.

### **Chi-Square Test**

#### **Null Hypothesis (H0):**

H0 - There is no significant differences between Nature of job and Welfare measures provided by the company

#### **Alternative hypothesis (H1)**

H1 - There is a significant difference between Nature of job and Welfare measures provided by the company

Dependence of Nature of job and Welfare measures provided by the company

Attributes	Full time	Part time	Total
Strongly agree	8	5	13
Agree	12	6	18
Neutral	20	9	29
Disagree	27	13	40
Total	67	33	100

Source: Primary data

Degree of Freedom = 3

Level of significance= 0.05(5%)

Calculated value = .2398

Table value = 7.815

With the help of chi-square test we can reach a conclusion that there is no significant difference in Nature of job and Satisfaction level towards Welfare measures provided by the company.

### **Key findings**

- Majority of the online food delivery executives belong to young population segment of age group of below 30 years.
- Most of them are working as online food delivery executive for one year.
- Salary scale of online executives mostly falls under the bracket between 10000-25000.
- Online food delivery executives are facing nearly toxic working conditions which include long working hours, odd shifts and need to travel long distances to deliver food.
- Sometimes they also had to deal with rogue customers and service apartments without lifts and operate in mediocre working conditions.
- The delivery executives are compartmentalized right from their time of recruitment.
- They do not get any labour welfare programs and insurance as part of their employment
- They do not get sick or, paid leaves and other benefits.

- They attain technology literacy from their job which also helps in betterment of their working environment.
- Opportunities and space for career and personal development is almost nil.
- They do not get ample support from their fleet managers and supervisors.
- The stress during working hours is moderate.
- They are not highly satisfied with the salary they earn.
- They do not get adequate training for adopting and upgrading with latest technologies.
- Also there is very little space for sharing their ideas and suggestions.

### **Recommendations**

- ❖ Sufficient concern and consideration must be given to the problems of online food delivery executives by their fleet managers.
- ❖ Welfare measures for online food delivery executives need to be strengthened and there must be proper insurance policies for their protection.
- ❖ Proper training need to be provided for adoption and upgrading them with latest technologies.
- ❖ Working hours of online food delivery executives need to be properly planned and divided to avoid irregular working hours.
- ❖ Implementation of various programs for improving career development opportunities among online food delivery executives must be done.
- ❖ Improvement in salary policies in order to make them satisfied and to be able to meet their needs using monthly salary and Salary Increments must be introduced.
- ❖ More space must be provided to the delivery executives for sharing their suggestions and ideas.

### **CONCLUSION**

Technology has made our life much easy than before. Online food delivery system is one of the best technological innovations in recent era. The present study made is an attempt to know problems and prospects of online food delivery executives. The study reveals that online food delivery executives have to face many problems during their working hours. They are not much satisfied with welfare benefits, increments, and working environment. As there is a mass population of part time job seekers including students opt for this job profile there is a great extent of work is required to improve the quality of this job segment.

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