

A STUDY OF DELIVERY JOB: IS IT AN EMPLOYMENT OR UNDER EMPLOYMENT

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Abstract

In developing countries like India, with a large population of educated youth, facing unemployment and underemployment issues can hinder national growth. While increasing employment opportunities is crucial, technological advancements, such as the rise of food delivery jobs, have provided accessible job opportunities for both educated and less-educated youth. Although these jobs operate efficiently, there's a risk that educated youth might compromise their career success through this employment. To understand this, a descriptive analysis was conducted in Chennai using a mixed-methods approach. A well-structured questionnaire using scalogram was prepared, and 140 food delivery workers were interviewed directly. Their responses were analysed across various categories, including part-time and full-time workers, those with a school education, college graduates, and part-time college students, to research and analyse the pros and cons of these job opportunities.

Key Words: *Gig Economy, Unemployment, Underemployment, Employment, Opportunity.*

1.Introduction

Globally, India ranks third in e-commerce market growth, following China and the USA. Delivery jobs play a significant role in the success of India's e-commerce initiatives. This e-commerce market was valued at \$38 billion in the year of 2022 and aims to reach \$200 billion by 2026. Delivery jobs are informal jobs, and India's informal economic growth through such jobs has always been recognized. In this context, food delivery, an informal job born from the country's growing economy and technological advancements, plays a significant role in the national economy. It creates a large number of employment opportunities (Chaithanya, 2022).

Food delivery jobs provide significant employment opportunities in India, and the gig economy plays a vital role in the country. During the "Role of the Platform Economy" conference, the Transport and Highway Minister stated that the delivery job market has provided 77 lakh delivery jobs, with efforts aiming to reach 2.5 crore by 2030. It is said that these employment opportunities will be a great solution and a best opportunity for youth unemployment in the country ("Food Delivery Economy Crucial as It Generates Large Scale- Employment: Nitin Gadhakari," 2024).

For people who wish to live a meaningful life, the delivery job market is an excellent opportunity. Individuals can join this job anytime, provided they have a driving license, a reliable vehicle, a smartphone, and an Aadhar card. This food delivery job is seen as an easy, independent, and economically beneficial job market (Team Zypp Electric, 2025).

Reasons for Choosing Food Delivery Job

Food delivery jobs offer an independent and unrestricted work environment. Unlike traditional jobs, where employees often face workplace restrictions, fixed monthly salaries, and challenges with emergency leave, food delivery workers enjoy immediate payments, flexible working hours, the freedom to take leave as needed, and autonomy from employer and workplace control. The economic benefits are also reportedly significant (Wang et al., 2021). This helps the Gig economy to grow and subsequently it

supports the economic need of an individual, this also supports to control the youth un-employment issues in India. Overall, the Gig economy boosts the Country's economic growth.

Statement of the Problem

It is observed that educated young people often take up food delivery jobs, likely because these roles require a good understanding of smartphones and e-commerce. This raises questions about why these youth are not pursuing jobs aligned with their studies. There's concern that focusing on the immediate economic benefits of food delivery might cause them to miss future career development opportunities, potentially hindering national growth and wasting the efforts invested in their education. This dilemma prompted the initiation of this research.

While there are many studies on employment, research focusing on their sustainable development is less commonly known (Lord et al., 2022).

The research has been initiated based on the following objectives.

1. To understand the reasons for taking up food delivery jobs.
2. To analyse the impact of food delivery on the employment of graduates.

Methodology

The field research for this study employed a descriptive analysis and a mixed-methods approach, with Swiggy delivery personnel working near hotels and grocery hubs located in Pallikaranai, a newly and rapidly developing area in Chennai, a Tier-1 city in Tamil Nadu, one of India's southern states. First, a questionnaire relevant to the research question was prepared. Then, using a convenience sampling technique, these questions were asked to the delivery personnel through interviews, and their responses were collected. Based on this, data from 140 individuals who were directly interviewed were analysed, and this research paper was written based on those findings.

Demographic Aspects of Research Respondents

The research participants were primarily men aged 18 to 33. Based on their education, the research divided them into three groups:

1. School-level education: Those who completed 12th standard.
2. Graduates: Those who completed a Diploma, BSc, BCom, or BCA.
3. Students: Those currently pursuing college.

According to the interviews, it was found that the participants mainly came from other cities with relatively underdeveloped economies, as well as from economically disadvantaged populations within Chennai. Their responses also indicated that their weekly income ranged from Rupees 4,000 to a maximum of Rupees 15,000. Additionally, their status is being analysed by categorizing them into three groups, the details of which are as follows.

School Level Educated Respondents

Among the participants in the research who completed school education but did not pursue college, there are a total of 55 individuals. Many of them stated that they were unable to continue their education after school because their father, who was the family's primary earner, passed away, after the situation them to take on financial responsibility and start working. Their age ranges from 21 to 33 years, and majority unmarried. Before joining this delivery job, they had previous work experience. Two individuals

mentioned they used to run a mechanic. They have stated their intention to restart a mechanic shop and run their own business after working in this delivery job for a few years.

Two of the respondents stated they switched to delivery jobs from their previous work because the income was insufficient to support their families. They are satisfied with the earnings from the delivery job and also mentioned appreciating the freedom it offers. Two of the respondents stated that they were farming in their village. Due to insufficient income from agriculture, they left it and started delivery jobs in Chennai based on friends' recommendations. They mentioned that the income from this job is satisfactory, and they plan to return to farming after a few years. Two of the respondents previously worked as auto-rickshaw drivers. They stated they switched to this job due to a change in income opportunities and financial difficulties at home. They find the current income satisfactory and plan to work in this profession for a few years before buying their own auto-rickshaw and returning to that line of work. All of them mentioned working 10 to 16 hours a day, with their weekly income ranging from 7,000 to 12,000 rupees. Table 1 provides details of school-educated delivery job workers.

Table1: School Educated Delivery Job Workers Analysis

Total No of Respondents	55
Gender	Male
Marital Status	Married 20
	Unmarried 35
Age	21 to 33
Nature of Job	Part Time Job 12
	Full Time Job 43
Income(per week)	7K to 12k
Working Hours (per day)	10 hrs to 16 hrs
Previous Work Experience	Yes
Reason quit previous Job	Loss in Business (Mechanic shop)
	Under Employment less salary
	Auto driver due to loss
	Agriculture income not enough
	Loss in Business (Mechanic shop)
	Personal reason
Reason For Choosing Delivery Job	Economic Need
Future Goal	Start Business
	Waiting for the best time
	Continue
	Farming and cattle
Job rating (maximum5)	4 to 5
Job Satisfaction	Yes

College Level Educated Respondents

The respondents in the research were men who had completed their college education and taken up delivery jobs. Their qualifications included Diploma in EEE, Diploma in Civil, and B. Com, and they were aged between 20 and 33. 40 people responded. Out of the 40 respondents in the research, 15 are married and 25 are unmarried. They are engaged in delivery job work, both part-time and full-time. Six

of them have previous job experience. The other two, who completed a Diploma in Civil, directly joined delivery work. These two stated that they are doing this delivery work part-time while searching for jobs matching their qualifications. They also mentioned that this income helps them manage the current economic situation. Among the six who reported previous work experience, they stated that they left their jobs, which matched their qualifications, due to low salary and heavy workload, which led them to join this delivery work. They cite reasons such as freedom, convenience, and economic need for choosing delivery jobs. When asked about their career plans, they stated that they are doing this delivery job temporarily and are satisfied with the income it provides. They also mentioned that they plan to start their own business after a few years. They work 6 to 15 hours per day, and their income ranges from Rs. 7,000 to Rs. 15,000 per week. They have also provided ratings for their job satisfaction level. It is known that out of the 40 respondents who completed college and are working in delivery jobs, 30 are from rural areas who came to Chennai in search of work. Table 2 presents the analysis of data collected from college-educated individuals who have taken up delivery jobs.

Table2: College Educated Delivery Job Workers Analysis

Total No of Respondents	40
Gender	Male
Marital Status	Married 15
	Unmarried 25
Qualification	Diploma EEE
	Diploma Civil
	BCom
Age	23 to 33
Nature of Job	Part time 10
	Full time 30
Native	Migrated from Village 30
	Chennai 10
Income(per week)	6K to 15K
Working Hours (per day)	6 to 15 hrs
Previous Work Experience	Yes 30
	No 10
Reason quit previous Job	Work pressure
	Less salary
Reason For Choosing Delivery Job	Freedom
	Convenient
	Economic Need
Future Goal	Start Business
Job rating (maximum5)	4 to 5
Job Satisfaction	Yes

College Students Are Working Part-Time In Delivery Jobs

55 individuals who work part-time delivery jobs while studying in college were included in the research. When asked about their qualifications, they stated they were third-year B.Com, first-year BCA, BSc Computer Science, and diploma students. Their ages ranged from 18 to 20, and they had no prior work

experience. They stated they took these delivery jobs due to family poverty and a desire to cover their own expenses without burdening their parents. When asked about their career plans, they mentioned viewing this as a temporary arrangement, intending to pursue postgraduate studies, and using the income from these delivery jobs for college fees and family expenses. They rated their job satisfaction from one to four, with a mean average of three. The reasons stated were that they had taken two-wheeler loans or used hired bikes for their delivery jobs, and bearing these expenses was difficult. They also mentioned that medical claims were not easily accessible to them. They stated they work 5 to 7 hours per day and earn a weekly income of 5000 to 8000 rupees. When asked if this income was sufficient to manage basic economic situations, 15 of them said no, and 40 said yes. The information received from them is presented in Table 3 as follows.

Table 3: The Analysis Table For College Students Working Part-Time Delivery Jobs

Total No of Respondents	55
Gender	Male
Marital Status	Unmarried
Qualification	Diploma Student
	BSC Computer Science Student
	BCom Student
	BCA Student
Age	18 to 20
Native	Chennai
Nature of Job	Part time
Income(per week)	4K to 8K
Working Hours (per day)	5 to 7 hrs
Work Continue	Till complete PG degree
Reason For Choosing Delivery Job	Economic Need 8
	Personal Need 2
Future Goal	Career success
Job rating (maximum5)	1 to 4
Job Satisfaction	Yes 40
	No 15

Findings and Conclusion

This research found that individuals into delivery jobs are aged between 18 and 33. This indicates that most people involved in delivery jobs are today's youth. Initially, there was a perception that these delivery jobs, being taken up by educated youth, should be viewed as underemployment. However, at the conclusion of the research, it was found that educated youth engaged in delivery work temporarily because they left jobs related to their studies due to low wages and high work pressure. They also expressed their intention to start a business and are doing this work while focusing on that goal. Majority of them were from rural areas, and they noted that their parents and family members have high expectations regarding their education. Furthermore, young people who have finished school and taken up delivery jobs expressed satisfaction with this work. They also reported that the income from these jobs is satisfactory for their families and that they see these delivery jobs as an opportunity. College students working part-time delivery jobs faced difficulties, particularly concerning the two-wheelers

used for work. They mentioned that two-wheeler purchase and hire for the purpose of job. However, they reported that the income from these delivery jobs helped to cover their college fees and family expenses. This research showed that while balancing studies and work is difficult for these students, their determination to pursue postgraduate studies, despite family poverty that could have hindered their education, appears to be a boon for societal development.

Through this research, the delivery job is seen as an opportunity to balance economic pressure for three categories of individuals: those who have completed school, those who are currently studying in college and working part-time, and educated youth who temporarily take up delivery jobs due to work pressure and low wages in their field of study. So, this is an opportunity for all three categories.

5. Limitations

Since Delivery workers are independent contractors, they receive fewer employment benefits and protections compared to formal employees (Parwez & Ranjan, 2021).

Due to the urgent nature of deliveries, accidents and fatalities are frequently occurring ("Food Delivery Economy Crucial as It Generates Large Scale- Employment: Nitin Gadhakari," 2024).

Furthermore, while it is positively noted in the research findings that educated youth have business aspirations and students take on delivery jobs solely to cover educational expenses, fully understanding their economic situation and career success would only be possible through long-term research. If they fulfil their goals, all these findings can be seen as opportunities. Otherwise, this temporary economic opportunity might actually hinder their career success, which this research aims to caution against.

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