

# The Contribution of Gig Workers in The Food Delivery System in Prayagraj City

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*Abstract- The gig economy refers to a free-market system where temporary, flexible jobs are common, and organizations hire independent workers for short-term engagements. The word “gig” is a slang term for a job or task that lasts a defined period. Examples of gig workers include freelancers, independent contractors, project-based workers, and those hired on a temporary or part-time basis. These jobs are typically facilitated through digital platforms or mobile apps that connect service providers with customers. Gig workers are generally characterized by short-term contracts, freelance assignments, or on-demand services, performed independently rather than under formal employment. Common examples include ride-sharing drivers (such as those working for Ola Bike), food delivery workers (like those employed by Zomato, Swiggy, Domino’s, or Citymall), as well as freelance writers, designers, programmers, and online tutors. These workers operate in a dynamic labor market that provides flexibility but also comes with challenges such as limited job security, lack of employee benefits, and unpredictable income. In the food delivery ecosystem, gig workers are crucial. They work flexibly, accepting orders and delivering food via apps like Zomato or Swiggy. Their working hours are not fixed, and they earn money based on the number of deliveries completed. In cities like Prayagraj, they play a vital role in ensuring timely and safe food delivery. However, their work is not without difficulties. Long hours, traffic congestion, poor weather conditions, and low earnings often create stressful working conditions. Moreover, they usually lack health insurance and benefits that regular employees receive. To improve their working conditions, food delivery companies should consider providing better safety equipment, health support, and fair compensation. Offering these basic necessities would enhance their well-being and contribute to a more reliable and efficient food*

*delivery system. In Prayagraj, gig workers mainly associate with leading food delivery apps like Zomato and Swiggy. These platforms become especially active during high-demand times, such as the upcoming Maha Kumbh Mela 2025, which is expected to create numerous gig job opportunities. Workers should evaluate which platforms provide better incentives and order volumes in their area to make the most of their efforts. To maximize earnings, gig workers are encouraged to offer excellent service that could result in customer tips—research shows that tips can contribute over 53% of a delivery worker’s income. Additionally, working during peak hours or major events significantly boosts income due to high demand. The Uttar Pradesh government is also stepping in to support gig workers by providing e-labour cards, granting them access to social security benefits. All gig workers are advised to register on the e-Shram portal by April 30, 2025, to be eligible for health insurance and other welfare schemes. Awareness about labor rights is essential, especially in light of these recent government initiatives. Above all, gig workers must prioritize safety, particularly during busy seasons like the Kumbh Mela, and take full advantage of health insurance schemes introduced in the 2025 state budget for their protection and well-being.*

*There is a table summarising key statistics for gig workers in Prayagraj, based on available data:*

Aspects	Details
Total Gig Workers (Prayagraj Division)	Approx. 1.20 lakh, including food delivery workers.
Registered on the e-Shram	22.3 lakh workers in the Prayagraj

Portal	division, including 5.52 lakh in Prayagraj
E-labour Card Campaign	Registration until April 30, 2025 (first phase)
Mahakumbh Opportunities	~1 million gig and temporary jobs, including logistics and food delivery
Major Platforms	Major Platforms Zomato, Swiggy, Mahakumbh)

*Gig workers in Prayagraj's food delivery ecosystem have access to significant opportunities, especially during large-scale events like Mahakumbh 2025. However, they also face challenges such as low base pay, dependence on customer tips, and limited job security.*

*To enhance their income and long-term stability, gig workers can take the following steps:*

- *Register for social security schemes such as the e-Shram portal to access government welfare benefits.*
- *Improve service quality to maximize tips.*
- *Capitalize on peak demand periods—such as during Mahakumbh—to increase earnings.*
- *Stay updated on government initiatives related to gig workers.*
- *Prioritize health and safety, especially when working long hours or in hazardous conditions.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The gig economy refers to a free-market system in which organizations hire independent workers on a short-term and contractual basis. These jobs are usually flexible, temporary, and task-based, where workers are paid per assignment rather than drawing a fixed salary. Prominent examples include platforms like Zomato, Ola, Amazon, Flipkart, CityMall, and Blinkit. A significant appeal of gig work is the freedom it offers—workers can choose their own hours and locations, making it especially attractive to students, freelancers, and those seeking secondary

income sources. The term "gig" itself originated from the music industry, referring to short-term performances by artists. Today, however, it applies broadly to freelance and temporary work across many sectors.

Gig workers include a diverse group of people such as freelancers, independent contractors, project-based workers, and part-time hires. They typically connect with customers through digital platforms such as Upwork, Fiverr, Swiggy, and Zomato. These workers are often responsible for managing their own taxes and do not enjoy traditional job benefits like health insurance or paid leave. Key characteristics of gig work include flexibility, independence, and platform dependency. Common gig jobs range from ride-sharing and food delivery to online tutoring and digital services.

In the food delivery sector, gig workers play a crucial role in ensuring seamless last-mile delivery. Their ability to operate on-demand enables restaurants to reach more customers and provide timely service. By bridging the gap between food vendors and consumers, gig workers support the digital economy and enhance operational efficiency. Platforms like Zomato, Swiggy, and Dunzo rely heavily on these workers to meet fluctuating demands and ensure customer satisfaction, especially during peak hours and large events like Mahakumbh 2025.

The rise of the gig economy marks a global shift in employment patterns, driven by digitalization and evolving worker expectations. Traditional full-time jobs are increasingly being replaced by short-term, flexible engagements. Research shows that by 2020, nearly 40% of the U.S. workforce was engaged in gig or freelance work. A similar trend is visible in India, where the younger workforce prioritizes flexibility and autonomy over job stability. This evolution in employment has influenced various sectors, including IT, finance, education, transportation, and especially food delivery, which has witnessed significant growth in recent years.

Online food delivery platforms in India began gaining traction around 2012–2014, with companies like Zomato, Swiggy, and Dunzo transforming the way food is ordered and delivered. Zomato, founded

in 2008 as Foodiebay and rebranded in 2010, operates in over 556 cities and 24 countries. With a valuation of \$8 billion in 2021, it offers restaurant discovery, reviews, digital menus, and food delivery. Swiggy, launched in 2014, now operates in over 500 cities with a valuation of more than \$10 billion as of 2022. Known for its tagline “Swiggy karo phir jo chahe karo,” it offers real-time delivery tracking and a wide network of partner restaurants. Dunzo, also founded in 2014, functions in eight major Indian cities and is valued at \$775 million. It provides delivery of not just food, but also groceries, medicines, and other essentials, under the tagline “Just Dunzo it.”

Despite the growth of these platforms, several challenges persist. A significant portion of the population remains unaware of food delivery apps, limiting market expansion. Service quality is also a concern—issues like delivery delays, food tampering, and poor customer interactions affect user trust. Moreover, heavy discounting often leads to over-ordering and food wastage, while also putting financial pressure on platforms. Other issues include inconsistent food quality, high customer expectations, and retention difficulties due to fierce competition.

## II. OBJECTIVES

This study aims to analyze the role of gig workers in Prayagraj’s food delivery ecosystem and assess how platforms like Zomato, Swiggy, and Dunzo impact the local economy. The objectives include understanding the economic impact of gig work on delivery personnel in terms of earnings and job security, evaluating customer satisfaction based on service quality and professionalism, and examining the benefits accrued by local restaurants. Additionally, the study seeks to identify the key challenges faced by gig workers—such as low wages, lack of social security, road safety issues, and poor work-life balance—and to explore how these platforms are transforming consumption patterns and employment in Prayagraj.

## III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous Indian scholars have examined the impact of digital food delivery platforms on consumers,

marketing, and gig workers. J. Ooha and C.V. Ranjani (2022), in their study focusing on Osmania University students, emphasized that technological advancements have transformed industries, with food delivery apps serving as a key example. Their findings showed that marketing mix elements significantly influence consumer decisions, and convenience plays a major role in app selection. Similarly, Tandon et al. (2021) explored why people use food delivery apps from a consumer value perspective. They found that user decisions are influenced by advertisements, peer recommendations, and perceived utility.

Kishore Thomas John (2021) discussed the future of food services in India, highlighting the emergence of food aggregators and cloud kitchens. He argued that the COVID-19 pandemic had a transformative effect on consumer behavior and the structure of food services. In the same year, Trivedi and Singh analyzed sentiment on Twitter to understand customer feedback. They concluded that social media helps companies build customer relationships and promote services via emotional engagement and timely replies.

Gera and Jain (2020) explored post-purchase behavior and found that most consumers exhibited positive feedback after using digital food ordering services. Savitri et al. (2020) examined how innovation and marketing mix influence brand image and usage decisions. They concluded that marketing efforts directly impact consumer choices, although innovation alone may not significantly enhance brand perception.

Digital marketing also plays a vital role. Venkatesh and Gunashekar (2020) studied the strategies used by Foodpanda and Zomato, concluding that social media, mobile, and email marketing significantly shape consumer behavior. Similarly, Bhanot (2020) assessed Zomato's market dominance and found that customer loyalty was driven by food quality, app usability, and promotional strategies.

Another noteworthy study by Bonih, Verma, and Vemma (2020) established the strong influence of social media marketing over traditional channels. They emphasized that online reviews and peer

recommendations shape consumer decisions. Kaur et al. (2020), using the theory of consumption value, identified affordability, prestige, and visibility as key motivators for using food delivery apps. The study also noted growing concerns about food safety and health, particularly post-COVID.

Sai (2020) studied buying behavior in Bangalore and highlighted food quality, convenience, and faster delivery as major determinants for using food delivery apps. In contrast, Katrodia (2020) shifted the focus to delivery executives, highlighting job stress due to long hours and recommending measures like grievance committees and training for stress relief. Thamaraiselvan et al. (2019) viewed food delivery apps as a revolution in food product marketing. They noted the appeal of diverse cuisines, low minimum orders, and multiple payment options. Raina et al. (2019), comparing Zomato, Swiggy, and Uber Eats in Ludhiana, emphasized the use of heavy promotional offers and responsive customer care in attracting consumers.

Koin, Mukherjee, and Duta (2019) found that food delivery apps significantly streamlined the traditional ordering process and improved restaurant visibility. Saxena (2019) and Gupta (2019) both identified customer satisfaction, comfort, and digital incentives (e.g., cashback and loyalty points) as crucial for app usage. Mehta, Iyer, and Yadav (2019) underlined the role of social media in relationship marketing, noting Facebook as the most interactive platform for customer engagement.

Parashar and Ghadiyali (2017) highlighted the role of app features and convenience in influencing consumer behavior, pointing out that cash on delivery remained the preferred payment method. Das (2018) reaffirmed that doorstep delivery, cashback, and on-time service were key drivers of app preference, with Zomato leading in customer satisfaction.

In terms of workforce experience, Somasundari (2018) explored the link between job satisfaction and performance, revealing that job stress directly affected food delivery personnel. Another study by Parashar (2018) reiterated the rising popularity of digital food apps in India, emphasizing user-friendly designs and app usability.

- Domain: Contribution of Food Delivery Workers in Prayagraj City

The contribution of food delivery workers in Prayagraj City, as in many Indian urban centres, is both significant and multifaceted. These workers offer immense convenience and accessibility to city residents, especially in the fast-paced urban environment where many individuals may lack time, mobility, or adequate cooking facilities. By bridging the gap between restaurants and customers, they effectively extend the reach of food businesses beyond their physical locations. Economically, food delivery workers play a vital role by creating employment opportunities, particularly for youth and those seeking flexible work schedules. Their work supports the local economy by facilitating continuous transactions and contributing to the sustainability of the restaurant sector.

In times of public need—such as major events like the Maha Kumbh Mela or during adverse weather conditions—delivery workers provide an essential service by ensuring timely access to food. Moreover, they are central to the rise of the digital and gig economy in Prayagraj, as the increasing reliance on online food platforms reflects broader digital transformation trends. However, despite their importance, these workers face numerous challenges. Many endure long working hours, uncertain income, and exposure to harsh weather conditions. Common concerns include inadequate pay, minimal safety provisions, and the absence of employment benefits.

Their employment status as independent contractors often excludes them from formal labour protections, leading to further vulnerability. During large-scale events like the Kumbh Mela, delivery workers face increased pressure and workload as demand surges dramatically.

In conclusion, while food delivery workers are indispensable to Prayagraj's modern food service infrastructure, it is crucial to recognise their challenges and ensure that their working conditions are improved in tandem with the sector's growth.

#### IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is based on primary data collected through a field survey using a direct questionnaire administered to respondents in Prayagraj City during March 2025. Initially, a pilot survey was conducted in a selected small area of the city, where 40 delivery workers were interviewed to gather preliminary information about their roles as gig workers in the food delivery system. Following this, the data collected from each delivery worker was carefully analysed according to the study's objectives. The sampling technique employed was convenience sampling, with the sample divided into two groups: female delivery workers and male delivery workers actively participating in the food delivery system in Prayagraj City.

#### V. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was limited by a relatively small sample size and coverage of restricted geographic areas. Additionally, some respondents showed hesitation in providing answers, which may have affected data quality. This research did not undertake a state-wise comparative analysis of gig workers across India, focusing solely on Prayagraj City's food delivery sector. Therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to the broader population. The study specifically investigates the challenges and opportunities faced by food delivery workers within their unique socio-cultural and economic context in Prayagraj.

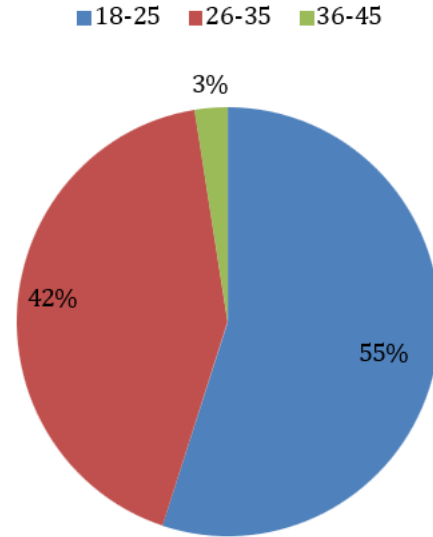
- Data Analysis and Interpretation:

The contribution of Gig workers in the food delivery system in prayagraj city.

##### 1.Age

- Below 18
- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- Above 45

#### Age of people

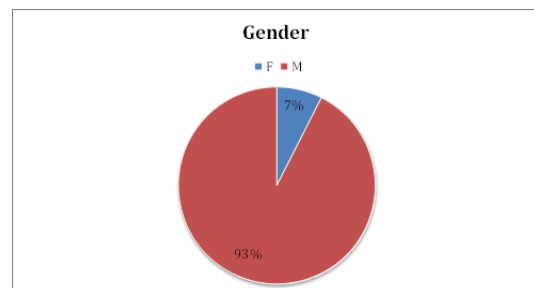


Here's the pie chart showing the age distribution of Gig workers:

- (a)55%: Age 18–25
- (b)42%: Age 26–35
- (c) 3%: Age 36–45
- (d)0%: Age 45 Above
- (e)0%: Age 18 below

##### 2. Gender

- Male
- Female



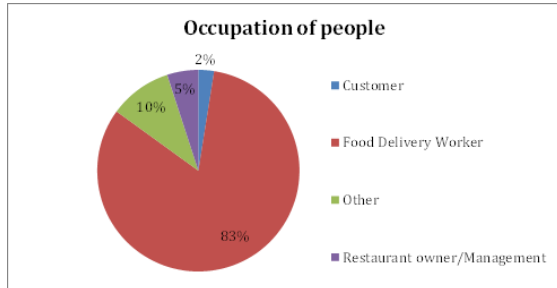
Here's the pie chart showing the gender distribution of Gig workers:

- (a)93% (Male)
- (b)7% (Female)
- (C)0% (others)

- 93% Male: The large blue portion of the chart shows that the vast majority are male.

- 7% Female: The smaller red segment represents the female portion.

### 3.Occupation:



#### Occupation distribution of Gig workers

- 82.1% of food delivery workers
- 5.1% Restaurant owners/managers
- 2.6% Customers
- 10.3% others

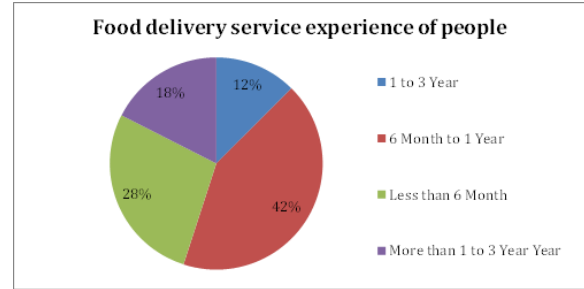
The pie chart visually represents the distribution of different occupations related to the Gig workers. Here's what it shows:

- Food Delivery Workers (82.1%)** – This is the largest group by far, shown in blue. It means most people surveyed or involved in this data are working as delivery workers.
- Restaurant Owners/Managers (5.1%)** – Represented in orange, this is a small portion, indicating that only a few people manage or own restaurants.
- Customers (2.6%)** – Shown in yellow, this is the smallest group. Very few individuals are just customers in the context of this data.
- Others (10.3%)** – This group includes people with roles not specifically mentioned, possibly including kitchen staff, tech support, etc.

The chart gives a quick visual breakdown, making it easy to see that food delivery workers dominate the scene in this dataset.

#### 4.How long have you been working in food delivery services?

- Less than 6 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- 1 year to 3 years
- More than 3 years



#### Pie Chart Explanation: Experience of Food Delivery Workers

##### 1. 6 months – 1 year (42%)

This is the largest group among food delivery workers. It indicates that many workers have been in the job long enough to gain some experience, but are still relatively new. This could mean high job entry but also potential for turnover.

##### 2. Less than 6 months (28%)

This is the second-largest category. A significant portion of workers are very new to the field, which may suggest that food delivery jobs attract many fresh entrants, possibly on a short-term or trial basis.

##### 3. More than 3 years (18%)

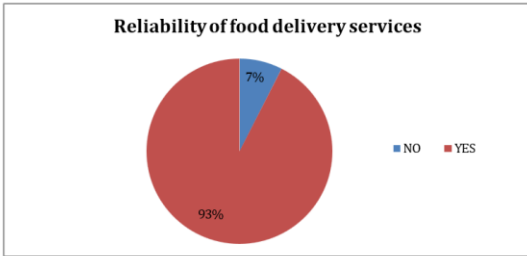
This group includes experienced workers who have been in the industry for a long time. Their continued presence suggests job stability for some or a long-term career path in delivery services.

##### 4. 1–3 years (12%)

This is the smallest segment. It could indicate that some workers either move on to different jobs after a year or two or that fewer people sustain this job for the medium term.

#### 5. How many restaurant owners rely on food delivery platforms for a significant portion of their business?

- Yes
- No



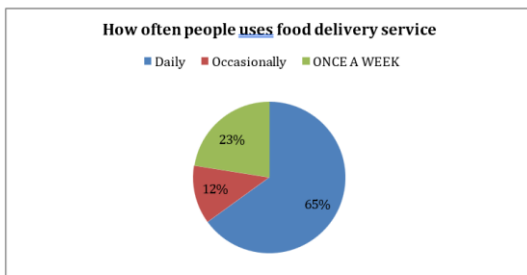
This pie chart visualises how restaurant owners rely on food delivery platforms for their business:

- Yes (93%): A vast majority of restaurant owners depend significantly on food delivery platforms like Swiggy, Zomato, or Uber Eats. This indicates that online orders are a key revenue stream.
- No (7%): A small fraction does not rely heavily on these platforms, possibly because they focus on dine-in customers, have a strong local presence, or use their delivery services.

The dominance of the "Yes" segment highlights the importance of digital delivery services in the modern restaurant business.

#### 6. How many customers use food delivery services?

- Daily
- 2-3 times a week
- Once a week
- Occasionally
- Rarely/Never



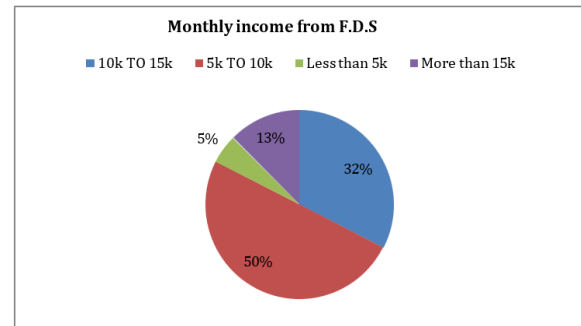
Here's the pie chart illustrating how often customers use food delivery services:

The most common response was "occasionally" (12%), indicating that many people use food delivery services now and then. The frequency of 2-3 times a week (1%) also reflects a notable regular habit among a smaller portion of respondents. A significant 65% reported using these services daily,

demonstrating a high frequency of usage by nearly two-thirds of the sample. Smaller groups were observed for "once a week" (12%) and "never" (1%), showing that fewer people either use the service sparingly or avoid it altogether. Overall, the data reveals a strong trend toward at least occasional use, with a substantial number of frequent users.

#### 7. Average monthly income from food delivery work?

- Less than Rs. 5000
- 5000-10000
- 10000-15000
- More than 15000



Here's the pie chart representing average monthly income from food delivery work:

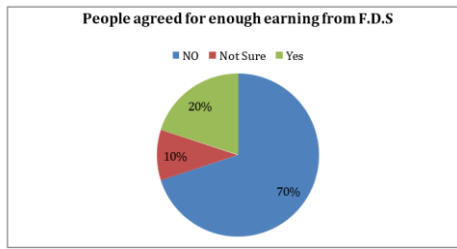
- The largest segment (50%) earns between Rs 5000 and Rs 10000, indicating it's the most common income range.
- 32% earn between Rs 10000 and Rs 15000, showing a significant portion earns a moderate income.
- 13% earn more than Rs 15000, reflecting higher earnings for some.
- A small group (5%) earn less than Rs 5000, as shown by the exploded slice for emphasis.

This visualisation helps quickly grasp income distribution in this sector. Want it customised further?

#### 8. Do you think food delivery jobs provide enough earnings to sustain a decent livelihood?

- Yes

- No
- Not sure



Here's the pie chart showing opinions on whether food delivery jobs provide enough income for a decent livelihood:

A majority (70%) responded "No", indicating that most people believe the income is not sufficient.

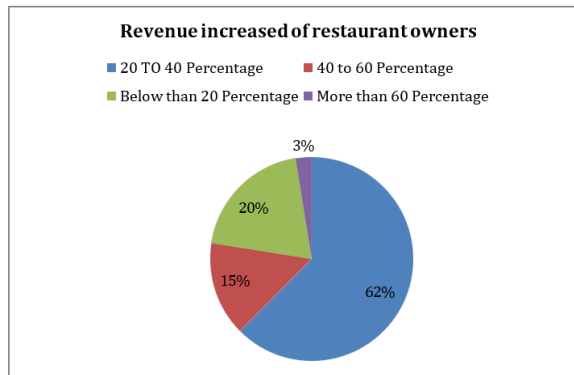
20% said "Yes", suggesting a smaller group feels it can sustain a decent life. 10% are "Not sure", reflecting uncertainty or mixed experiences

The exploded "No" slice emphasises the widespread concern about low earnings in this line of work.

10. For restaurant owners: How much has food delivery increased your revenue?

9. How much has food delivery increased the revenue of restaurant owners?

- Below 20%
- 20-40%
- 40-60%
- More than 60%



Here's the updated pie chart based on your data:

20-40% (62%): The majority of restaurant owners report a moderate revenue boost from food delivery, showing it's a key growth area.

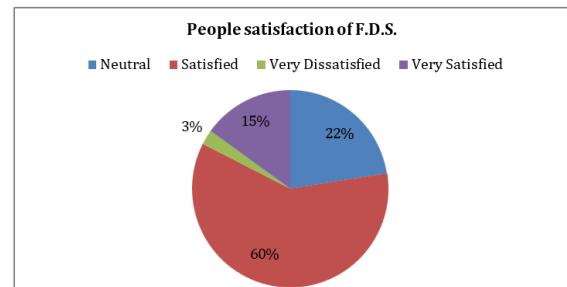
Below 20% (20%): A smaller but notable group sees only a slight increase, possibly due to limited delivery demand or capacity.

40-60% (15%): A decent portion sees substantial revenue gains, highlighting strong delivery integration.

More than 60% (3%): Only a few restaurants see major revenue growth, likely those highly optimised for delivery.

10. How satisfied are you with the service provided by food delivery workers?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied



The pie chart titled "People's satisfaction with F.D.S." (Food Delivery Service) shows how happy people are with the service. Here's a simple explanation:

60% are satisfied – Most people are happy with the food delivery service.

22% feel neutral – These people don't have strong feelings. It's neither good nor bad for them.



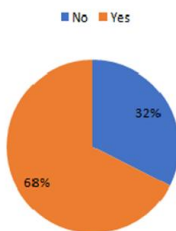
15% are very satisfied – A good number of people are extremely happy with the service.

3% are very dissatisfied – Only a few people had a very bad experience.

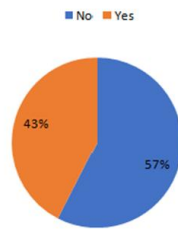
11. What are the most important factors for you when ordering food online?

- Fast delivery
- Good customer interaction
- Food quality
- Low delivery charges
- Discounts and offers

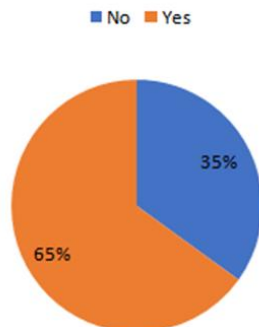
**Fast Delivery**



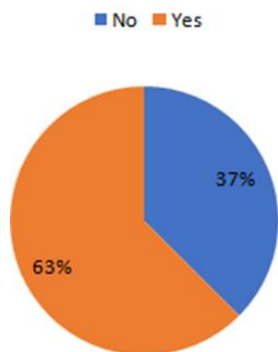
**Good customer interaction**



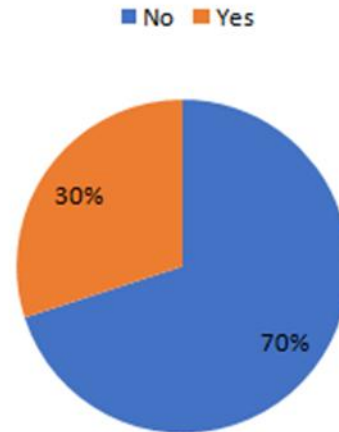
**Low delivery charge**



**Food Quality**



**Discount and offer**



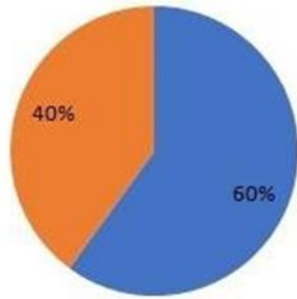
1. Low delivery charges (65%) – Most people care about paying less for delivery. If the delivery fee is high, they might not order.
2. Fast delivery (68%) – Getting the food quickly is very important. No one likes to wait too long, especially when hungry.
3. Food quality (63%) – The food should be tasty, fresh, and well-prepared. Good quality food keeps people coming back.
4. Good customer interaction (43%) – People like it when customer service is helpful and polite, especially if there's a problem with the order.
5. Discount and offer (30%) – While not the top priority, discounts still attract customers who want to save money.

12. Have you faced issues with food delivery services?

- Yes
- No

### Issue faced in F.D.S

■ No ■ Yes



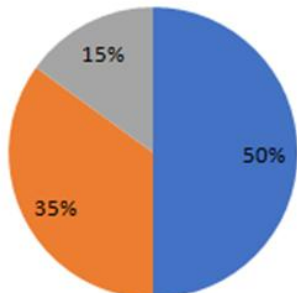
- 60% of workers faced general issues like arguments, time issues, traffic issues, and weather issues. etc
- 40% of workers do not face the issue.

13. Which platform do you partner with?

- Zomato
- Swiggy
- Dunzo
- Other

### Platform used by people for FDS

■ Others ■ Swiggy ■ Zomato

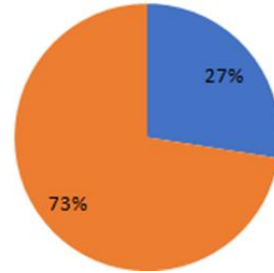


14. Have food delivery services helped in expanding your customer base?

- Yes significantly
- Yes slightly
- No impact

### FDS help expanding customer base

■ Yes Significantly ■ Yes Slightly



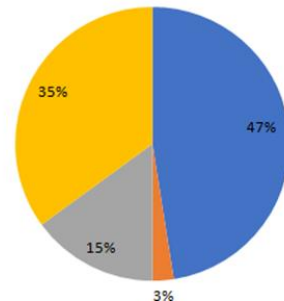
- The food delivery system helped in expanding slightly on the customer base

15. What challenges do you face in dealing with food delivery platforms?

- High commission fees
- Delayed payments
- Poor coordination with delivery workers
- Customer complaints

### Challenges with FDS

■ Customer complaints ■ Delayed payment  
■ High commission fee ■ Poor coordination with delivery worker



The pie chart titled "Challenges with FDS" (Food Delivery Service) shows the main problems people face. Here's a simple explanation:

47% face customer complaints – Almost half of the people say they get a lot of complaints from customers.

35% struggle with poor coordination with delivery workers – Many have problems communicating or working smoothly with delivery staff.

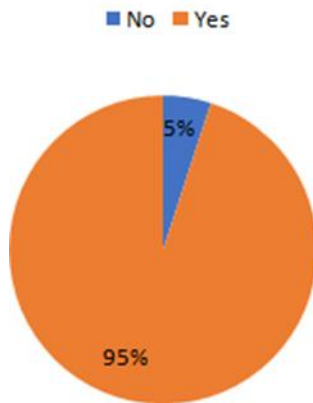
15% say high commission fees – Some think the platform takes too much money as commission.

3% report delayed payments – Only a few people have trouble getting their payments on time.

16. What are the biggest challenges in a food delivery job?

- Low income
- No job security
- Lack of health benefits
- Difficult weather conditions
- Road safety issues
- Long working hours

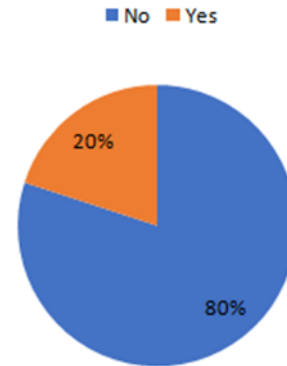
### Job Security



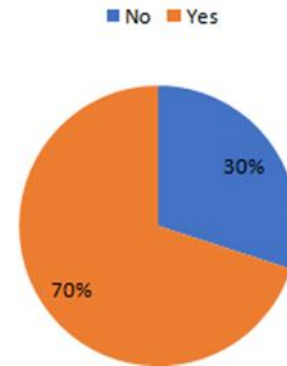
### Low income



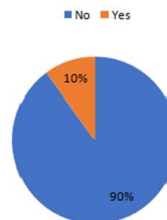
### Road safety issue



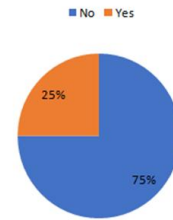
### Long working hour



### Difficult weather condition



### Lack of health benefits



#### 1. Low Income (100%)

Everyone agrees that the pay is too low. After spending on fuel and other costs, there's not much money left.

#### 2. No Job Security (95%)

Most people feel their job is not safe or permanent. They can be removed anytime without warning.

#### 3. Long Working Hours (70%)

Many have to work for a long time to earn enough. There are no fixed hours, and breaks are rare.

4. Lack of Health Benefits (25%)

Some people are worried that they won't get medical help or insurance from the company.

5. Road Safety Issues (20%)

A few people are concerned about accidents and unsafe traffic while delivering food.

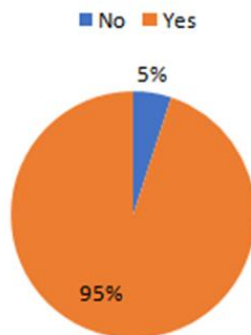
6. Difficult Weather Conditions (10%)

Only a few think bad weather, like rain or heat, is a big problem, but it's still tough when it happens.

17. Do you feel pressure to complete deliveries faster due to customer ratings?

- Yes
- No

### Feel pressured due to customer rating



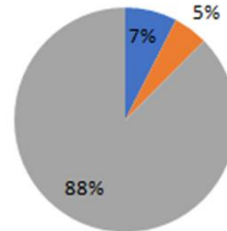
- 95% of workers feel pressure to complete deliveries faster.

18. Do you think there should be better financial and job security for food delivery workers?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

### It should be better job security for FDS workers

■ No ■ Not Sure ■ Yes



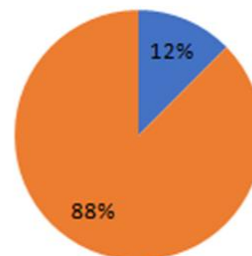
Yes should be better job security for food delivery workers.

19. Do you think food delivery services have improved employment opportunities in Prayagraj?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

### FDS increases job opportunities in prayagraj

■ Not Sure ■ Yes



- 88% of people accepted food delivery system increases job opportunities in prayagraj

20. Do you think the government should introduce policies to support gig workers (e.g. minimum wage, insurance, benefits, etc)

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

## It should be govt. policies for gig workers



- Yes government should make a policy to support gig workers

### VI. RESEARCH FINDINGS

In terms of income, 52% of delivery workers earn between ₹5,000 and ₹10,000 per month, 30% earn between ₹10,000 and ₹15,000, and only 13% earn more than ₹15,000. Despite these earnings, a majority (71%) struggle to sustain their livelihoods, and around 20% manage just to cover their basic expenses.

Food delivery services also significantly benefit restaurant owners in Prayagraj. About 61% of restaurant owners reported that 20-40% of their income now comes from delivery orders, while 3% noted that up to 60% of their earnings are through these platforms.

The usage of online food delivery apps is widespread among Prayagraj residents: 41% use these services occasionally, while 23% are daily users. Popular platforms include Domino's, City Mall, Swiggy, Zomato, Dunzo, and Blanket.

The gig economy plays a vital role in employment generation, especially for youth and students seeking part-time work. However, many workers face exploitation due to high unemployment rates and low wages offered by restaurant owners. Delivery workers endure long hours, pressure to meet short delivery times, adverse weather conditions, traffic challenges, network and location issues, and

occasional conflicts with customers. There is a notable absence of policies protecting their safety, health, and welfare, and they receive no special benefits.

Women's participation in this sector is increasing, contributing positively to women's empowerment and self-reliance in the local context.

Overall, while the food delivery sector in Prayagraj generates significant employment opportunities under the gig economy, workers face numerous challenges, including low wages, lack of job security, and difficult working conditions.

### CONCLUSION

The research on gig workers in Prayagraj's food delivery system presents a complex picture, balancing the sector's importance with the challenges faced by its workforce.

- The gig economy, particularly food delivery, is a major source of employment in Prayagraj, offering opportunities to diverse groups, including youth and women. The increasing participation of women signals progress toward empowerment and self-reliance. However, this growth is shadowed by issues of exploitation and poor working conditions, highlighting the gap between job availability and job quality.
- A significant portion of workers (41%) have relatively short-term experience, indicating workforce fluidity. Income levels remain a pressing concern, with the majority earning insufficient wages to maintain a decent standard of living. The precarious nature of gig work is evident, compounded by challenges such as long hours, delivery pressures, and unsafe conditions, all exacerbated by a lack of protective labor policies.
- Food delivery platforms are indispensable to the restaurant industry in Prayagraj, with most restaurant owners relying heavily on delivery services for revenue. This mutual dependence underscores the critical role of gig workers in expanding business reach.

- Consumer behavior shows growing acceptance of online food delivery, with a large share of residents regularly using apps like Zomato, Swiggy, and Dunzo.

In summary, Prayagraj's food delivery gig economy embodies a dual narrative. It provides essential services, creates jobs, and supports local businesses, but simultaneously raises serious concerns regarding worker welfare, income disparity, and the need for regulatory reforms. The positive trend of women's increased involvement is encouraging, yet it does not overshadow the systemic challenges workers face. Addressing these issues is vital to building a fair, sustainable gig economy that safeguards its workforce while continuing to fuel economic growth

## VII. SUGGESTIONS

To improve the working conditions and overall experience of gig workers in Prayagraj's food delivery system, a comprehensive support mechanism is essential. These suggestions aim to enhance worker well-being, job satisfaction, and service quality:

### 1. Workplace Safety and Equipment

- Provide essential safety gear such as helmets, reflective jackets, and raincoats—especially important during monsoon or harsh weather.
- Ensure vehicles used by delivery workers are regularly maintained or supported through service partnerships.

### 2. Health and Welfare Benefits

- Offer affordable health and accident insurance plans.
- Provide access to emergency medical funds or low-interest microloans.
- Encourage regular health check-ups through tie-ups with local clinics.

### 3. Training and Skill Development

- Conduct periodic training sessions on:
- Customer interaction and soft skills.
- Road safety, basic first aid, and emergency response.

- Financial literacy to help workers manage their earnings better.

### 4. Rest and Recharge Facilities

- Establish small rest stations or shelters at key locations where workers can take breaks, charge their phones, and refresh.

### 5. Fair Compensation and Incentives

- Ensure timely and transparent payments.
- Introduce performance-based incentives for:
- High customer ratings.
- Working during peak hours or difficult weather.
- Efficient and timely deliveries.

### 6. Flexible Yet Secure Work Models

- Allow flexible scheduling, but also consider providing a minimum income guarantee during low-demand hours to ensure income stability.

### 7. Efficient and Transparent Platforms

- Improve app interfaces to:
- Show shorter, safer, and fuel-efficient delivery routes.
- Clearly break down earnings (base pay, bonuses, tips, and deductions).

### 8. Responsive Support System

- Set up a 24/7 helpline or chat support for resolving real-time issues related to deliveries, customers, or payments.
- Make it easy to report grievances safely and without fear of penalty.

### 9. Community Building and Recognition

- Create online or offline communities for gig workers to connect, share experiences, and support one another.
- Celebrate high-performing workers with monthly rewards, certificates, or public appreciation to boost morale and create healthy competition.

By implementing these recommendations, food delivery platforms, restaurant partners, and local authorities in Prayagraj can foster a more respectful, efficient, and humane working environment for gig workers. These changes will not only improve their quality of life but also enhance service delivery,

customer satisfaction, and economic stability in the region.

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