

**Socio-Economic Status, Health Condition and Working Profile among Online (E-Commerce) Delivery Associates / Workers/ Partners / Executives with special emphasis on Malda district of West Bengal, India: A Case Study**

**Dr. Md Areful Hoque\***

\*\* Assistant Professor, Department of Geography, St. Xavier's College, Mahuadanr, Latehar district, Affiliated College under Nilamber Pitamber University (NPU), Medininagar, Jharkhand, India.

**Abstract:** E commerce make revolutionary now days in the digital era. Online delivery system is one of the best technological innovations in the contemporary world. The online E-commerce industry in India is mainly driven by India's Youth. The main objectives of this research paper is to examine the socio-economic condition and working profiles among delivery associates, to highlight the major problems and challenges faced by online delivery associates, to give valuable suggestion for better improvement of working profile and standard of living among the online delivery workers in Malda district of West Bengal. The entire study is based on secondary sources of data. Malda district of West Bengal has been selected as the study area. The results of the study shows that 28.08 per cent of the respondents are join this profession due to flexible working time and only 14.04 per cent of the respondents are joined this profession due to good earning with incentives, 39.20 per cent of the respondents are cough and cold related health problems and only 12.00 percent are fatigue, 36.00 per cent of the respondents are income monthly INR 10001-15000 which is highest percentage and only 17.60 per cent of the respondents are income INR 1-5000 which is lowest percentage. Their study also reveals that majority of the delivery workers are belongs to economically downtrodden families in the study area. The researchers suggested that should be Provident Fund (PF), pensions, various social security's welfare schemes for Online (E- Commerce) delivery associates workers.

**Key Words:** Digital, E-Commerce, Order. Pick-up, Incentives, Feedback, Health, Stress,

**Introduction:**

In the era of 21<sup>st</sup> century E-commerce is a platform to selling and buying of products such as clothes, domestic products, electronics items, watches, apparels, perfumes, beauty products etc and provides ample employment opportunities. Courier service is an important factor in E-Commerce. Online market in India is one of the fastest growing markets in the world. Since the last decades India has seen a tremendous growth in E-Commerce. Internet makes a revolutionary to promote the E-Commerce. Now a day we carry our bank, shopping, food, music stores, newspapers, watch and alarm clock, play stations, political campaigns and even health advises in our mobile phones. The online E-commerce industry in India is mainly driven by India's Youth.

India gig workforce was estimated at 7.7 million in 2020 and it is expected to expand to 23.5 million by 2029. Gig work contributes over one billion dollars annually to the Indian economy. Now a day's online (E-Commerce) in India are a vital part of the country ever-expanding digital economy. They play diverse roles, from delivering packages to creating content and providing customers service. However, they face various challenges, including job security, income stability and exploitation. The E-Commerce has the potential to create new opportunities for employment and economic growth in India. However, it is important to ensure that gig workers are protected and have the same opportunities as traditional employees. By addressing the challenges faced by E-Commerce workers, the government can help to ensure that the E-Commerce become a facilitator in making India as 5 trillion economy. This sectors hold out huge promise especially in the context of government push towards digital economy through digital India.

**Review of Literature:** The review highlights the distinction areas covered by the many researchers and academicians which may be helpful to understand the issues relating to the present study and it also helps to find out the research gap. The basic sources of literature review of my study areas are- published research papers, articles in the journal of national and international repute, books, Government reports, Research agencies reports etc.

**Ajim Shaikh (2021)** examined that online delivery has given wide choices for customers and opened huge market for the outlets. Their study reveals that online food delivery is undoubtedly is the unique and one of the convenient mode for the customers to order food online. The results of the study shows that this online food delivery system play a negative impact on customer relationship, impact on revenue of restaurants, marketing trap etc. **Asiya Nasrin and Shantanu K.P. (2018)** observed that with the rise of E-Commerce business and demand for doorstep delivery of products purchased online, the delivery associates have backbone of E-commerce industry and play an important role in the last mile delivery. The results of the study shows that the nature of job is force them to work in extra hours, cause a lot of stress and they become fatigue. Their study reveals that mostly young and middle aged men work as delivery associates and hired by third party. **Akshay, Rakesh and Bhanu (2017)** insisted that today in 21<sup>st</sup> century E-commerce open the global market to the customers and technology play a important role such as electronic funds transfer, supply chain management, Internet marketing, online transaction etc. Their study reveals that delivery associates are faced various problems such as many of customers don't pick up phone at delivery time, customers given wrong address, late delivery due to traffic jams and weather conditions, rude behaviour from customer etc.

### Statement of Problems:

Online business or e-commerce is growing as there has been a demand of home delivery of products and delivery workers or associates who deliver goods at doorsteps of customers. (E-Commerce) Online delivery associates are the pillars of E-Commerce business in India, who deliver goods at doorsteps of customers. Majority of online delivery executives

have to face many problems during the working hours such as assaulted by public by parking issue, road accidents, discrimination over religious, caste issues, lower wages, no rights, neglected attitude by peoples, They are not much satisfied with welfare benefits, increments and working environment. Their socio-economic status and health condition is also not satisfactory. These combined basic problems and challenges faced by online delivery workers provoked the researcher to undertake this study in particularly. The outcomes or findings from this study will be very helpful for administrators, policymakers, economists, sociologists, Researchers, Academicians, Journalists, NGO workers, and the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Law and Justice, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of West Bengal as well as the Central Government of India for their various policies making.

**Objectives of the Research:** Keeping in the view of the socio- economic status, health condition and working profile among the Online (E- Commerce) delivery workers in Malda district of West Bengal in particular, the following objectives have been taken into consideration:

1. To examine the socio-economic condition and working profile among the online delivery associates in Malda district of West Bengal.
2. To highlighted the major problems and challenges faced by online delivery workers in the study area.
3. To give valuable suggestion for better improvement of working profile and standard of living among the online delivery workers in Malda district of West Bengal.

#### **A Geographical Outline of the Study Area:**

Malda district of West Bengal has been selected as research study area. Malda district is entirely located in North Bengal, it is also known as “**Gateway of North Bengal**”. It lies in North Bengal on lower Indo-Gangetic plain. The latitudinal range of Malda lies between 24°40'20" North and 25°32'08" North, and the longitudinal range is 87°45'50" East and 88°28'10" East. For administrative purpose the district has been divided into 15 Community Development Block and two sub-division namely Malda Sadar and Chanchal Sadar. The district is very much famous for Mango Production, Litchi production, Jute Production and Sericulture activity (Raw Silk production), school educational sectors. This district is also known as “**Valley of Mango**”. Majority of the male population of this district are migrants labour, agricultural labour and Hawkers due none availability of any large scale, medium scale industries, majority of female population in rural are engaged in bidi making household industries. According to 2011 Census of India still 86.14 per cent population are belong to rural area.

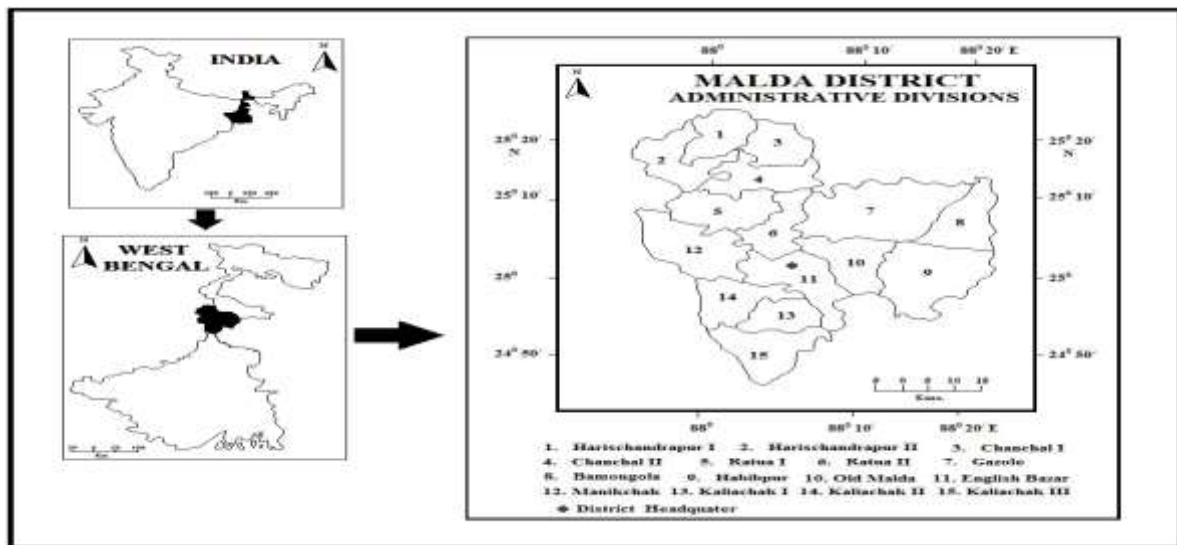


Figure 1: Location map of the Study Area

### Database and Research Methodology:

The current research work is analytical, descriptive and empirical type of research work. The present study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data were collected through interview schedule based on well structured questionnaire with regards to objective in mind. For the collection of primary data a near about 125 online delivery Associates workers (respondents) from Malda district has been selected based on simple random and convenience sampling method. The survey was conducted during the month of October 2022 to December 2022.

The secondary data has been collected from Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistic Government of West Bengal, District Statistical Handbook, Malda Collectorate, Books, Research Paper, Journals, Newspaper, Researchagate, Google Scholar etc. After the collection of data for showing the result Simple Percentage Method, SWOT analysis and Computer Cartography has been used.

### Result and Discussion:

Table 1. 1 Age-Group among Online Delivery Workers in Malda district, West Bengal

Sl. No.	Age Group	Total Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	18-30 Years	73	58.40
2.	31-40 Years	36	28.08
3.	41-54 Years	11	8.08
4.	Above 55 Years	5	4.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>125</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Based on Field Survey, October to December Month, 2022

Table 1.1 shows that 58.40 per cent of the respondents are belongs to 18-30 years of age group is highest percentage and 28.08 percent of the respondents are belong to 31-40 years of age group which is lowest percentage.

**Table 1. 2 Gender Wise Respondents of Online Delivery Workers in Malda district, West Bengal**

Sl. No.	Gender	Total Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Male	95	76.00
2.	Female	30	24.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>125</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Source:** Based on Field Survey, October to December Month, 2022

Table 1. 2 show that 76.00 per cent of the respondents are Male and 24.00 per cent are females delivery workers in the study area has been selected.

**Table 1. 3 Income Level (Monthly) among Online Delivery Workers in Malda district, West Bengal**

Sl. No.	Income Level (INR Monthly)	Total Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	INR 1-5000	22	17.60
2.	INR 5001-10000	35	28.00
3.	INR 10001-15000	45	36.00
4.	Above INR 15001	23	18.4
<b>Total</b>		<b>125</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Source:** Based on Field Survey, October to December Month, 2022

Table 1. 3 show that 36.00 per cent of the respondents are income monthly INR 10001-15000 Which is highest percentage and only 17.60 per cent of the respondents are income INR 1-5000 which is lowest percentage.

**Table 1. 4 Educational Level among Online Delivery Workers in Malda district, West Bengal**

Sl. No.	Educational Level	Total Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Primary to 8 <sup>th</sup> Level	12	9.06
2.	10 <sup>th</sup> Level	44	35.2
3.	12 <sup>th</sup> Level	21	16.8
4.	Gradation and Above	30	24.00
5.	Diploma	18	14.4
<b>Total</b>		<b>125</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Source:** Based on Field Survey, October to December Month, 2022

Table 1. 4 shows that 24.00 per cent of the respondents are completed graduation and above education level in this profession and only 9.06 per cent of the respondents are primary to 8<sup>th</sup> level education.

**Table 1. 5 Major Problems faced by Online Delivery Workers in Malda district, West Bengal**

Sl. No.	Major Problems	Total Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Hard and Fast Delivery create Stress	14	11.2
2.	Disrespect or Rude Misbehaves by customer	17	13.6
3.	Continuous Long Hours of Driving	11	8.8
4.	Finding Customer Addresses	12	9.6
5.	Carrying Heavy Packages	14	11.2
6.	Refuelling at Own Cost	8	6.4
7.	Long working Hours	21	16.8
8.	Road Accidents	7	5.6
9.	Skipping Lunch and Breakfast	12	9.6
10.	Outdoor Work throughout the year ( Intense Heat, Chilling Winter and Rain)	9	7.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>125</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Source:** Based on Field Survey, October to December Month, 2022

Table 1. 5 show that 16.08 per cent of the respondents are facing the problems of long working hour’s engagement and only 5.6 per cent of the respondents are facing a road accident which is lowest percentage among the respondents during the field survey.

**Table 1. 6 Major Company Works Performs by Online Delivery Workers in Malda district, West Bengal**

Sl. No.	Associates With Major E-Commerce Company	Total Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Amazon Company	22	17.6
2.	Flip kart Company	35	28.00
3.	Meesho Company	14	11.2
4.	Myntra Company	8	6.4
5.	Snapdeal Company	11	8.8
6.	First Cry Company	7	5.6
7.	Purplle Company	12	9.6
8.	Ali Baba Company	16	12.8
<b>Total</b>		<b>125</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Source:** Based on Field Survey, October to December Month, 2022

Table 1. 6 depicts that 28.00 per cent of the respondents are associates with Filp-Kart company which is highest percentage and only 5.6 percent of the respondents are engaged with first cry company which is lowest percentage.

**Table 1. 7 Form of Employment by Online Delivery Workers in Malda district, West Bengal**

Sl. No.	Form of Employment	Total Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Full-Time	72	57.60
2.	Part Time	53	42.40
<b>Total</b>		<b>125</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Source:** Based on Field Survey, October to December Month, 2022

Table 1. 7 shows that 57.00 percent of the respondents are Full-Time employment and only 42.40 percent of the respondents are working as Part-time profession.

**Table 1. 8 Common Health Problems faced by Online Delivery Workers in Malda district, West Bengal**

Sl. No.	Common Health Problems	Total Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Severe Shoulder and back Pain	23	18.40
2.	Cough and Cold	49	39.20
3.	Fatigue	15	12.00
4.	Headache	21	16.80
5.	Loss of Appetite	18	14.40
<b>Total</b>		<b>125</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Source:** Based on Field Survey, October to December Month, 2022

Table 1. 8 shows that it is evident from the field survey that 39.20 per cent of the respondents are cough and cold related health problems and only 12.00 percent are fatigue.

**Table 1. 9: Reason for Joining Online Delivery Platform among Workers in Malda district of West Bengal**

Sl. No.	Reason for Joining	Total Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Good Earnings and Incentives	18	14.04
2.	Easy Entry and Exit	27	21.06
3.	Flexible Working Time	36	28.08
4.	Independency Work	21	16.08
5.	Employability	23	18.40
<b>Total</b>		<b>125</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Source:** Based on Field Survey, October to December Month, 2022

Table 1. 9 shows that 28.08 per cent of the respondents are join this profession due to flexible working time and only 14.04 per cent of the respondents are joined this profession due to good earning with incentives.

**Table 1. 10 Numbers of Years Working / Engaged as Online Delivery Services in Malda district, West Bengal**

Sl. No.	Numbers of Years Working	Total Number of Respondents	Percentage
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1.	Below 1 Years	11	8.08
2.	1 – 5 Years	77	61.06
3.	Above 5 Years	37	29.06
<b>Total</b>		<b>125</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Source:** Based on Field Survey, October to December Month, 2022

Table 1.10 shows that 61.06 per cent of the respondents are working this profession since 1-5 years which is highest percentage and only 8.08 per cent of the respondents are working below 1 year which is lowest percentage.

Table 1. 11: SWOT Analysis among Sampled Online Delivery Workers

<b>SWOT Analysis</b>	
<b>Strengths</b>	Full-Time and Part-Time Employment Status, Flexible Working Hours, Incentives and bonus, promotion, Easy Entry and Exit, Self-management, Creativity, Trust and Confidence, Equity and fairness.
<b>Weakness</b>	Lower wages, Hard and Fast Delivery create Stress, Continuous Long Hours of Driving, Carrying Heavy Packages on backside, Refuelling at Own Cost, Long working Hours, Road Accidents, No Proper training, High Competition with another workers, Investment in Technology and Two-Wheelers, Dependent on third party
<b>Opportunities</b>	Teamwork's, Promotion in Profession, Digital, Wide Network, Better customer Service, Technological advancements, Technical familiarity, Written and Spoken Communication, Professionalism, Leadership,
<b>Threats</b>	Road Accidents, Disrespect or Rude Misbehaves by customer, delivery challenges during extreme cold and hot season, Safe driving, Customer Satisfaction / Rating / Feedback, Technological challenges

**Major Findings of the study:**

1. Majority of online delivery associates belong to young population segment of age group of 18-30 years.
2. They did not get any labour welfare programmes and insurance as part of their employment.
3. Majority of them are not satisfied with welfare benefits, increments and working environment, job insecurity, lack of benefits, exploitation.
4. Majority of them are not get adequate training for adopting and upgrading with latest technologies.
5. Majority of delivery associates are not get ample support from their fleet managers and supervisors.
6. It is evident from the field survey data that all the delivery workers ate belongs to economically downtrodden families in the study area.



**Suggestion and Policy Implications:**

1. Proper training need to be provided for adoption and upgrading them with latest technologies.
2. There should be Provident Fund (PF), pensions, various social security's welfare schemes for Online (E- Commerce) delivery associates workers.

**Conclusion:**

In the era of 21<sup>st</sup> century technology has made our life much easy than before. Today E-Commerce platforms create ample employment for freshers, semi-skilled and unskilled workforce. Online delivery system is one of the best technological innovations in recent era. Delivery workers are the active participant in the capitalist growth or the new market based E- Commerce growth. Despite there are various delivery related challenges and not so favourable working conditions, they continue to provide good experience at customers at customer door and are behind the success of e commerce growth. Despite these challenges, E Commerce workers have made a substantial impact on the Indian economy by contributing to economic growth, fostering entrepreneurship and encouraging the adoption of technology. Last but not the least by fostering a supportive and fair environment for Online (E Commerce) Workers, India can harness their potential for Online (E Commerce) Workers to drive economic progress and social development in the years to come.

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