**Online Food Purchasing Habit among the Hostel Students in Anand City, Gujarat, India**

# **ABSTRACT**

This research explores the online food delivery consumption patterns among college students in Anand City, focusing on the influence of area of residence (rural vs. urban) on purchasing behavior. Data collected from 100 respondents through a structured questionnaire reveals significant differences in frequency and preferences between rural and urban users. While awareness of online food delivery services is high (94%), urban respondents demonstrate a higher tendency for frequent purchases compared to rural counterparts, with weekly and monthly orders being more common in urban areas. Platforms like Swiggy and Zomato dominate the market, preferred for their reliability and variety, whereas other services see minimal usage. Fast delivery, discounts, and reasonable pricing emerge as key factors influencing purchase decisions. Despite growing acceptance, a significant portion of respondents still prefer cooking at home or dining out, primarily due to concerns about food quality, hygiene, and delivery costs. Payment preferences reveal a strong inclination toward digital payments, especially UPI, with cash on delivery remaining popular. Customer satisfaction is highest for Swiggy and Zomato, while other platforms lag behind. Respondents emphasize the need for improvements in delivery charges, food quality, and service speed to enhance the overall experience. The study highlights the evolving food consumption landscape in Anand, emphasizing the growing importance of online food delivery while underscoring challenges related to affordability, trust, and service quality.

**Keywords:** Online Food Purchasing, Frequency of Purchase, Area of Residence, Rural vs. Urban Consumers, Consumer Behavior, Chi-Squared Test

# **INTRODUCTION**

The online food delivery industry in India has undergone rapid growth over the past decade, driven by factors such as increased smartphone penetration, widespread internet access, and changing consumer lifestyles. Platforms like Zomato, Swiggy, Domino's, and others have reshaped how people order and consume food. With urbanization and busy work schedules, consumers increasingly prefer the convenience and variety offered by these services. Nonetheless, even when they are popular, operational expenses, quality, trust of customers, and logistics efficiency are still challenges. This section discusses significant literature that examines different facets of the Indian online food delivery market, consumer attitudes, and what drives its adoption and sustainability in India

The Indian online food ordering industry has picked up strongly, propelled mainly by apps such as Zomato and Swiggy. These apps have ridden the wave of technology, changing lifestyles, and the increasing need for convenience. A study of the attitudes and behavioral plans of consumers confirms that these apps are popularly used due to the simplicity of use, choice of options, and affordable prices. Nevertheless, research emphasizes that the intention of the consumers is not driven by convenience alone but rather by aspects such as delivery speed, quality of food, price, and the overall customer experience. The capacity of the platforms to directly respond to these variables significantly influences user retention and loyalty, which are key to maintaining growth in a competitive market.

Consumer satisfaction at peak times, like the COVID-19 lockdown, also highlighted the significance of food delivery platforms online. Studies indicate that throughout the pandemic, university students and other consumers greatly depended on such platforms owing to restrictions on going out to eat. The study emphasizes that satisfaction and loyalty were facilitated by the likes of safety protocols, contactless delivery, and the capacity to meet pressing needs. By dealing with these issues, sites such as Zomato and Swiggy were able to retain customers and earn trust during times of uncertainty.

The customer satisfaction dynamics in the business of online food delivery also highlight the need for personalized marketing and customer-focused strategies. Indian market studies indicate that platforms have succeeded in delivering convenience, but high delivery charges, variable service quality, and absence of pricing transparency end up causing dissatisfaction among customers. Meeting these needs through initiatives such as clear pricing, loyalty schemes, and more reliable delivery has been crucial in order to ensure ongoing customer satisfaction.

The success of food ordering apps in India can be accredited to a combination of innovative marketing, innovation, and agility. Leverage of data analytics and AI to tailor user experiences, along with aggressive promotion campaigns, has enabled platforms to capture the market. Withstanding the tough competition, platforms such as Zomato and Swiggy have been able to stay ahead by continuously changing their services to accommodate customers' demands. Yet, issues like cost of operations, regional competition, and retention of customers are still crucial ones necessitating platforms to keep innovating and changing strategy in order to maintain growth.

# **RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

1. To examine the correlation between how often food is bought online and location of residence (rural vs. urban).
2. To contrast rural and urban respondents' purchasing behavior by frequency categories (daily, weekly, monthly, seldom, and never).
3. To ascertain the degree to which urban respondents record higher levels of online food buying frequency than rural respondents.
4. To examine whether the place of residence has an effect on respondents' food ordering behavior online.

# **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The relevant data for the research study was collected by using a primary survey done by a questionnaire. The questionnaire was filled out by respondents using Google Forms. In the present study, there were around 100 number of respondents. Respondents were students and they were randomly selected from colleges in Anand City. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

# **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

## **4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents**

The demographic characteristics of respondents from Colleges of Anand City were surveyed, covering various aspects such as age, gender, educational level, occupation of family, monthly family income, health consciousness and Area of residence.

## **4.1.1 Age distribution**

The age distribution shows a concentration in the younger age groups. The largest age group was 18-22 years, making up 72% of the total respondents. This was followed by those 23-27 years (15%), those aged Below 18 (10%). and those aged Above 27 years (3%).

Table 1 Age Wise Distribution of Respondent **(n=100)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sr No.** | **Age** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| **1** | Below 18 | 10 | 10 |
| **2** | 18-22 | 72 | 72 |
| **3** | 23-27 | 15 | 15 |
| **4** | Above 27 | 3 | 3 |
|  | **Total** | **100** | **100** |

Source: Primary data

## **4.1.2 Gender Distribution**

The gender distribution of the respondents indicates a significantly higher numbers of males compared to females. Males constituted 84% of the total sample, while Females accounted for 16%.

Table 2 Gender Wise Distribution of Respondent **(n=100)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sr No.** | **Gender** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| **1** | Male | 84 | 84 |
| **2** | Female | 16 | 16 |
|  | **Total** | **100** | **100** |

Source: Primary data

**4.1.3** **Educational qualification:**

Respondents' educational qualifications were divided into three categories. The majority of respondents were undergraduates, comprising 74% of the total, while postgraduates accounted for 33% and only Doctorates accounted for 4%.

Table 3 Educational Wise Distribution of Respondent **(n=100)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sr No.** | **Educational** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| 1 | Undergraduate | 74 | 74 |
| 2 | Postgraduate | 22 | 22 |
|  | Doctorate | 4 | 4 |
|  | **Total** | **100** | **100** |

Source: Primary data

## **Area of** **Residence:**

Respondents' area of residence was divided into two categories. Rural 59% & Urban 41%.

Table 4 Area Wise Distribution of Respondent **(n=100)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sr No.** | **Area** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| **1** | Rural | 59 | 59 |
| **2** | Urban | 41 | 41 |
|  | **Total** | **100** | **100** |

Source: Primary data

* + 1. **Monthly family income:**

Monthly family income was categorized into Four brackets. The most common income bracket was 50000 - 10000 INR, representing 38% of the respondents. The second most common income range was 10000 - 50000 INR, comprising 35% of respondents. The income ranges of Above 100000 INR (16%), and Below 10000 INR (11%) followed.

Table 5 Monthly family income Wise Distribution of Respondent **(n=100)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sr No.** | **Family Income (Monthly) (in Rupees)** | **Frequency** | **Percentage (%)** |
| **1** | Below 10000 | 11 | 11 |
| **2** | 10000 - 50000 | 35 | 35 |
| **3** | 50000 - 100000 | 38 | 38 |
| **4** | Above 100000 | 16 | 16 |
|  | **Total** | **100** | **100** |

Source: Primary data

## **Health consciousness:**

Health conscious was categorized into five brackets. The most common health consciousness bracket was Conscious, representing 43% of the respondents. The second most common health consciousness range Moderate, comprising 37% of respondents. The health consciousness ranges of Highly conscious (20%), and other two bracket was zero percent.

Table 6 Health consciousness of respondents **(n=100)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sr No.** | **Health consciousness** | **Frequency** | **Percentage (%)** |
| **1** | Highly conscious | 20 | 20 |
| **2** | Conscious | 43 | 43 |
| **3** | Moderate | 37 | 37 |
| **4** | Not conscious | 0 | 0 |
| **5** | Not at all conscious | 0 | 0 |
|  | **Total** | **100** | **100** |

Source: Primary data

## **Awareness of online food delivery services available in Anand**

The Table indicates that 94% of respondents are aware of online food delivery services available in Anand city. This is a significant proportion, highlighting the widespread recognition of such services in the area. Only 6% of respondents are not aware of online food delivery services in Anand city, demonstrating their limited reach among a small segment of the population.

Table 7 Awareness of online food delivery services of respondents **(n=100)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sr No.** | **Awareness** | **Frequency** | **Percentage (%)** |
| **1** | Yes | 94 | 94 |
| **2** | No | 6 | 6 |
|  | **Total** | **100** | **100** |

Source: Primary data

The awareness of online food delivery services in Anand city is depicted in the Table.

## **4.4** **Frequency of Purchasing Food Online**

Table 8 illustrates the frequency of online food purchases among 100 respondents. The majority of respondents (55.32%) reported that they rarely purchase food online, followed by 19.15% who do so monthly. Only 11.70% purchase food online weekly, while daily purchases are minimal at 4.26%. Additionally, 15.96% of respondents stated they never buy food online. This indicates that online food purchasing is relatively infrequent among the surveyed individuals.

Table 8 Frequency of Purchasing Food Online of respondents **(n=94)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sr no.** | **Time of Purchasing** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| **1** | Daily | 4 | 4.26 |
| **2** | Weekly | 11 | 11.70 |
| **3** | Monthly | 18 | 19.15 |
| **4** | Rarely | 52 | 55.32 |
| **5** | Never | 15 | 15.96 |
|  | **Total** | **94** | **100** |

Source: Primary data

## **4.5** **Awareness vs. Area of Residence**

Table 9 Awareness vs. Area of Residence for Purchasing Food Online of respondents **(n=94)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Area of Residence** | **Aware respondents** | **Frequency** |
| **Rural** | 55 | 58.51 |
| **Urban** | 39 | 41.49 |
| **Total** | **94** | **100** |

Source: Primary data

A survey was conducted to analyze the relationship between awareness and the area of residence (rural or urban). The data revealed that out of 94 aware respondents, 55 were from rural areas and 39 were from urban areas. Similarly, among 6 not aware respondents, 4 were rural, and 2 were urban. A chi-squared test was applied to determine whether awareness is dependent on the area of residence.

The calculated χ2\chi^2χ2 value was **0.155** (df = 1, p > 0.05), which is significantly lower than the critical value of **3.841** at the 5% significance level. Thus, there is no significant relationship between awareness and the area of residence. Awareness appears to be independent of whether respondents reside in rural or urban areas.

4**.6 Analysis of Frequency of Purchasing Food Online by Area of Residence**

Table 10 Analysis Frequency of Purchasing Food Online by Area of Residence **(n=94)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Area of Residence** | **Daily** | **Weekly** | **Monthly** | **Rarely** | **Never** | **Total** |
| **Rural** | 2 | 3 | 7 | 35 | 8 | **2** |
| **Urban** | 2 | 8 | 11 | 15 | 3 | **2** |
| **Total** | **3** | **12** | **18** | **52** | **15** | **100** |

Source: Primary data

The analysis reveals that rural respondents (55 out of 94) are less frequent purchasers of food online, with the majority (63.64%) purchasing rarely. In contrast, urban respondents show a relatively higher tendency toward weekly (20.51%) and monthly (28.21%) purchases. While daily online food purchases are minimal in both groups, rural areas have a higher share of those who never purchase food online (14.55%) compared to urban areas (7.69%). Overall, the data suggests that urban residents are more engaged in regular online food purchasing than their rural counterparts.

A chi-squared test was conducted to determine if purchasing frequency depended on the area of residence. The test yielded χ2=12.394\chi^2 = 12.394χ2=12.394 (df = 4, p < 0.05), indicating a significant relationship. Thus, purchasing frequency is dependent on whether respondents reside in rural or urban areas.

## **4.7 Preference for Online Food Delivery & Dining Out**

The data shows that 40% of respondents do not prefer online food delivery over dining out, while an equal proportion (40%) prefer it only sometimes. Only 20% of respondents consistently prefer online food delivery. This suggests that while there is some interest in online food delivery, traditional dining out remains more favored or equally preferred by most respondents.

Table 11 Study of Preference for Online Food Delivery & Dining Out **(n=100)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sr No.** | **Time of Purchasing** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| **1** | Yes | 20 | 20 |
| **2** | No | 40 | 40 |
| **3** | Sometimes | 40 | 40 |
|  | **Total** | **100** | **100** |

Source: Primary data

## **4.8** **Frequency of Online Food Purchases Across Platforms**

The data shows varying levels of usage across different online food platforms. The data indicates that Swiggy and Zomato are the most frequently used platforms for online food purchases, with Swiggy showing the highest number of weekly (10) and monthly (14) users, followed by Zomato with 23 monthly and 5 weekly users. Other platforms like Zepto, Blinkit, Amul Green, and La Pinoz are rarely or never used by the majority of respondents, as indicated by high “Never” frequencies (e.g., Zepto: 82, Blinkit: 73). This suggests that food delivery aggregators like Swiggy and Zomato have significantly higher market penetration and usage compared to brand-specific or grocery-based platforms among the respondents.

Table 12 Frequency of Online Food Purchases Across Platforms **(n=94)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sr. no. | Online Platforms | Daily | Weekly | Monthly | Rarely | Never |
| 1 | ZEPTO | 3 | 1 | 1 | 13 | 82 |
| 2 | SWIGGY | 2 | 10 | 14 | 48 | 26 |
| 3 | ZOMATO | 3 | 5 | 23 | 56 | 16 |
| 4 | BLINK IT | 3 | 1 | 6 | 56 | 73 |
| 5 | DOMINO'S | 2 | 5 | 7 | 34 | 52 |
| 6 | AMUL GREEN | 3 | 0 | 2 | 14 | 81 |
| 7 | LA PINOZ | 3 | 3 | 8 | 24 | 62 |
| 8 | Other online application | 3 | 1 | 2 | 15 | 69 |

Source: Primary data

**4.9** **Frequency of Different Food Types Ordered Online**

The data reveals diverse preferences for online food orders across different categories. Among various food types ordered online, Pizza and Burgers are the most frequently ordered, with Pizza having the highest share of monthly (16) and weekly (9) orders. Other popular items include Paubhaji and Indian Cuisine, though these are ordered less frequently and are marked by higher "Rarely" and "Never" responses. Food categories such as Mag Pulav, Chinese Dishes, Desserts/Beverages, and Health/Fitness Food show low regular ordering and a high percentage of never ordered responses (over 60%). This suggests that fast food items like pizza and burgers dominate online food preferences, while traditional or niche food items are less frequently ordered.

Table 13 Frequency of Different Food Types Ordered Online **(n=94)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sr. no. |  Type of food | Daily | Weekly | Monthly | Rarely | Never |
| 1 | Pizza | 4 | 9 | 16 | 41 | 30 |
| 2 | Burgers | 2 | 8 | 14 | 44 | 32 |
| 3 | Paubhaji | 4 | 2 | 11 | 31 | 52 |
| 4 | Mag pulau | 2 | 6 | 8 | 21 | 63 |
| 5 | Chainies Dishes | 3 | 4 | 8 | 15 | 70 |
| 6 | Indian Cuisine | 5 | 2 | 13 | 20 | 60 |
| 7 | Desserts/Beverages | 4 | 4 | 7 | 23 | 62 |
| 8 | Health/Fitness Food | 4 | 2 | 8 | 19 | 67 |

Source: Primary data

## **4.10** **Preferred Payment Methods for Online Food Orders**

The data highlights the preferred payment methods for online food orders. The most preferred payment method among respondents is UPI (e.g., GPay, PhonePe), used by 65 out of 94 respondents. This is followed by Cash on Delivery, preferred by 49 respondents. Credit/Debit cards are used by very few (4 respondents), and another 4 respondents reported not using any payment method, possibly indicating non-users of online food services. The data highlights a clear shift toward digital payments, especially UPI, for online food transactions. This suggests that digital payment methods, particularly UPI, have become the dominant mode of transaction, though cash remains a substantial alternative.

Table 14 Preferred Payment Methods for Online Food Orders **(n=94)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Sr. no.** | **Payment Methods** | **Frequency** |
| **1** | Cash on Delivery | 49 |
| **2** | UPI (Gpay, Phone Pay, Other...) | 65 |
| **3** | Credit card/ Debit card | 4 |
| **4** | No | 4 |

Source: Primary data

**4.11** **Average Monthly Spending on Online Food Orders**

The majority of respondents (65%) spend less than ₹500 per month on online food orders, while 23% spend between ₹500 and ₹1,000. Notably, no respondents reported spending between ₹1,001 and ₹2,000, and only 6% spend more than ₹2,000 monthly. This indicates that most users keep their online food expenses relatively low, suggesting either infrequent ordering or preference for budget-friendly options. This suggests that while many people use online food delivery services, most are spending modestly, with high-spending habits being relatively uncommon.

Table 15 Average Monthly Spending on Online Food Orders **(n=94)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sr. no.** | **Spend On Online Food Orders** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| **1** | Less than ₹500 | 70 | 65 |
| **2** | ₹500 - ₹1,000 | 24 | 23 |
| **3** | ₹1,001 - ₹2,000 | 0 | 0 |
| **4** | More than ₹2,000 | 6 | 6 |

Source: Primary data

## **4.12 Preferred Time of Day for Placing Online Food Orders**

Table 16 Preferred Time of Day for Placing Online Food Orders **(n=94)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Sr. no.** | **Time of Day** | **Frequency** |
| **1** | Breakfast | 10 |
| **2** | Lunch | 23 |
| **3** | Dinner | 56 |
| **4** | Late-night snacks | 40 |
| **5** | Evening Snacks | 19 |

Source: Primary data

The majority of respondents prefer to place online food orders during dinner time (56), followed by late-night snacks (40). Lunch is the next most popular time (23), while fewer respondents order during evening snacks (19) and breakfast (10). This suggests that dinner and late-night snacking are the peak times for online food ordering among the surveyed group. This suggests that dinner and late-night snacks are the peak times for online food orders.

 **4.13 Factors Influencing the Decision to Purchase Food Online**

Table 17 Study of Factors Influencing the Decision to Purchase Food Online **(n=94)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Sr. no.** | **Decision to Purchase** | **Frequency** |
| **1** | Convenience | 26 |
| **2** | Reasonable price | 33 |
| **3** | Loyalty / Preference | 20 |
| **4** | Reward | 18 |
| **5** | Discounts/Offers | 42 |
| **6** | Variety of food options | 29 |
| **7** | Fast delivery | 48 |
| **8** | Food Quality and Hygiene | 26 |

Source: Primary data

The data highlights several factors that influence online food purchasing decisions. The most influential factor in deciding to purchase food online is fast delivery (48 respondents), followed by discounts/offers (42) and reasonable price (33). Other notable factors include variety of food options (29), convenience and food quality and hygiene (both 26), as well as loyalty/preferences (20) and rewards (18). This indicates that speed, cost savings, and promotions strongly impact online food buying decisions. This suggests that customers prioritize speed, affordability, and diverse options when choosing to order food online.

**4.14** **Customer Satisfaction with Online Food Delivery Platforms**

Table 18 Customer Satisfaction with Online Food Delivery Platforms **(n=94)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sr. no.** | **Platforms** | **very dissatisfied** | **dissatisfied** | **neutral** | **satisfied** | **Very satisfied** |
| **1** | Zepto | 27 | 13 | 36 | 10 | 8 |
| **2** | Swiggy | 14 | 7 | 27 | 32 | 14 |
| **3** | Zomato | 12 | 12 | 16 | 34 | 20 |
| **4** | Blink It | 26 | 15 | 31 | 17 | 5 |
| **5** | Domino's | 25 | 12 | 32 | 16 | 9 |
| **6** | Amul Green | 23 | 11 | 39 | 13 | 8 |
| **7** | La Pinoz | 22 | 13 | 33 | 14 | 12 |
| **8** | Other online application | 31 | 9 | 39 | 9 | 6 |

Source: Primary data

The data indicates varying levels of customer satisfaction across online food delivery platforms. Among the platforms, Zomato and Swiggy have the highest levels of customer satisfaction, with 54% and 46% of respondents rating them as satisfied or very satisfied respectively. In contrast, platforms like Zepto, Blink It, Domino’s, Amul Green, and Other online applications have a higher proportion of respondents who are very dissatisfied or dissatisfied, indicating lower overall satisfaction. Many respondents remain neutral across most platforms, but Zomato and Swiggy clearly lead in customer approval. This suggests that Swiggy and Zomato lead in customer satisfaction, while other platforms struggle to meet user expectations.

## **4.15** **Desired Improvements in Online Food Delivery Services**

Table 19 Desired Improvements in Online Food Delivery Services **(n=94)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Sr. no.** | **Improvements** | **No.** |
| 1 | Better food quality | 44 |
| 2 | Faster delivery | 42 |
| 3 | Lower delivery charges | 49 |
| 4 | More discounts/offers | 37 |
| 5 | Transparent Pricing | 37 |

Source: Primary data

The data highlights key areas where users would like to see improvements in online food delivery services. Respondents primarily desire lower delivery charges (49), followed closely by requests for better food quality (44) and faster delivery (42). Additionally, more discounts/offers and transparent pricing are also important improvements sought by customers, with 37 respondents each indicating these needs. These highlights cost and service efficiency as key areas for enhancing customer satisfaction in online food delivery, suggesting that most feedback focuses on affordability, speed, and quality. These insights indicate a demand for services that balance cost-effectiveness with reliability and quality.

## **4.16** **Reasons for Not Purchasing Online Food**

Table 20 Reasons for Not Purchasing Online Food **(n=100)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Sr. no. | particular | No. |
| 1 | I prefer cooking or eating homemade food. | 46 |
| 2 | I am concerned about food quality and hygiene. | 42 |
| 3 | I find online food expensive. | 33 |
| 4 | Delivery charges are too high. | 35 |
| 5 | I do not trust online platforms. | 17 |
| 6 | The delivery time is too long. | 19 |
| 7 | I prefer dining out or takeaway. | 26 |
| 8 | I am not familiar with online food ordering platforms. | 9 |
| 9 | I had bad experiences with online food orders in the past. | 13 |
| 10 | Other | 4 |

Source: Primary data

The data reveals that The primary reasons for not purchasing food online are a preference for cooking or eating homemade food (46%) and concerns about food quality and hygiene (42%). Other significant factors include perceiving online food as expensive (33%) and high delivery charges (35%). Trust issues with online platforms (17%), long delivery times (19%), and a preference for dining out or takeaway (26%) also contribute. A smaller number of respondents cited unfamiliarity with online ordering (9%) and past bad experiences (13%) as reasons. This suggests that both cost and quality concerns, along with personal habits, influence reluctance toward online food purchases. These findings suggest that cost, trust, and quality are key barriers for potential users of online food delivery services.

# **SUMMARY OF RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION**

The survey collected data from 100 participants, mostly college students from Anand City, in order to determine their demographic profiles, awareness, preferences, and behavior with regard to online food delivery services. Most of the participants were young (72% between 18-22 years), mostly male (84%), and mostly undergraduates (74%). A majority lived in rural areas (59%), with varying family income levels and moderate to high health awareness.

Online food delivery service awareness was extremely high at 94%, reflecting widespread recognition within the region. Actual usage frequency diverged, however, with 55% buying online occasionally and 16% never buying food online. Urban respondents showed considerably greater frequency of buying food online when compared to rural counterparts.

Swiggy and Zomato were the leading platforms, showing higher market penetration and customer affinity, while Zepto and Blinkit were the least used platforms. Fast foods like burgers and pizzas were the online food items most ordered, particularly in the evening and late-night hours.

UPI was the favourite mode of payment, reflecting a shift towards online transactions, although cash on delivery was also liked. The majority of respondents spent little on food ordered online, with 65% of them spending less than ₹500 per month.

The most important drivers for online food ordering decisions were quick delivery, offers/discounts, fair price, and variety of dishes. Customer satisfaction was highest with Swiggy and Zomato, while the rest of the platforms scored mixed or low ratings. Respondents indicated strong demand for upgrading delivery fees, food quality, and speed of delivery.

Amongst those who did not buy food online, major reasons were preference for home-made food, issues related to food quality and hygiene, and beliefs of high price and delivery fees. Issues related to trust and previous negative experiences also played a part in non-uptake.

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# **CONCLUSION**

The research reveals greater awareness of food delivery services online in Anand City, with 94% being aware of the same. But usage is limited, particularly in rural areas where frequency of purchases is lower than in urban areas. Swiggy and Zomato lead the way with greater customer satisfaction and regular usage. Fast delivery, affordable prices, and offers heavily impact food purchases online. The majority of consumers prefer online payments, specifically UPI, when spending small amounts of money on a monthly basis. Although interest is rising, most respondents continue to prefer homemade food because of quality, hygiene, and price apprehensions. To boost adoption, online food services need to concentrate on better food quality, lower delivery fees, and speedier deliveries. Higher trust and transparency will play a critical role in converting reluctant users. In all, although online food delivery is increasing, focusing on affordability, quality, and reliability of service is still the way to gain more market share in Anand City.

Consent

As per international standards or university standards, respondents’ written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

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