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Examining Advantages, Reasons, and Issues of Ordering Online Food through Mobile Application

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Abstract: ***Online Food delivery refers to the process when different restaurants, cafes, and food outlets deliver food or drinks to the customers according to their order placed by any mode to meet the exact demand and provide customer satisfaction and service of the best quality. Most people use their mobile phones to do the process; However, there are many advantages of ordering food through mobile-based apps; what are the reasons behind it, and what possible issues do customers face while ordering food online? This paper will provide information on those factors and discuss the most significant reasons, how those issues can be solved, what advantages customers get which motivate them to go online Food ordering instead of going out, and how Covid-19 impacted the online food ordering Industry.***

In the times of Covid-19, Online food ordering helped in different ways when people were not in a condition to cook food on their own and could not go out of the house to protect everyone.

Keywords: Online food delivery, customer service, satisfaction, reasons, payment gateways, mobile-based app, precautions, demand.

I. INTRODUCTION

Compared to when the idea of online food delivery services was first introduced to the market, people now tend to use them more frequently. Online meal ordering is a practice that both small and large eateries have adopted to deliver food from their kitchen to customers' homes or places of business, allowing customers to enjoy their favorite foods wherever they are. Customers can choose the restaurant, cuisine style, delivery or pick-up method, and preferred payment option. Payments can be made with cash or a card (debit or credit), and a portion of the proceeds goes back to the online restaurant.

Due to people's increasingly busy schedules, online meal delivery apps allow users to place online food orders through their mobile phones quickly and track the meal whenever they want, and contact the delivery person or the restaurant directly through the phone number or e-mail provided by them. People all around the world are now able to open their businesses, small or big scale, thanks to the internet. Due to this, their network area became wider, and companies could reach more people in less time with just one click on the phone screens.

When the pandemic struck in 2020, and there was a lockdown, the restaurants were forced to stop serving dine-in customers. An online food delivery service prevented their business from closing and going out of business. As the demand for food ordering increased, people who lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 breakout could find work delivering food to customers and earning a basic salary. When the COVID-19 outbreak hit India, 67 percent of the population used online delivery services to order food. Most people were drawn to the ability to order food online without leaving the house and endangering their health. As restaurants implemented a policy of accepting only online payments and no cash, even delivery became contactless. Delivery people were asked to leave the food on the door and ring the bell to alert the customer or call them to inform them about the package on the door and go. Sure, there were areas where online food delivery was not allowed due to high covid risk. Still, in most places, online food delivery facility was saving lots of people from going out of the house and getting infected in any way. Before knowing this, people became more comfortable with ordering food online.

II. PROVIDING FOOD ONLINE

Compared to people who can easily prepare meals at home, people who work or live outside their hometown are likelier to order food online—people who missed breakfast orders in on their way to work. Additionally, the popularity of reputable "Kirana" companies has undoubtedly declined due to how simple it is to order groceries through a mobile application. When people arrive home after a long day or do not have groceries, nobody anticipated ordering food online would be helpful. People can get the nutrition they crave all day with just one click.

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Some fast-food chains also offer a 24-hour service for those with late-night cravings. No doubt, many outlets provide food and snacks late at night, but most people like to be in their comfort and get the food delivered rather than going out for just one or two items to buy, which they can get quickly.

A. Customers And The Advantages Of Ordering Food Online Through Mobile Application

Ordering food online through mobile applications provides various advantages for customers. Such as:

1) *Convenience:* A mobile application to place an online food order is very convenient. Customers can order, browse menus, and pay from the comfort of their homes or any location with an internet connection. It takes the place of traveling and waiting in long queues.
2) *Numerous Options:* A vast variety of restaurants and cuisines are accessible through mobile apps for food delivery. Customers have various choices, including regional specialties, well-known chains, and specialized restaurants. Customers can sample different foods and enjoy new dining experiences thanks to the variety.



FIG 1: Cycle of food ordering online

3) *Simple Menu Customization:* Customers can easily personalize their orders with the help of customization features offered by mobile apps. Customers can easily specify cooking preferences, choose portion sizes, add or remove ingredients, and accommodate dietary restrictions or allergies. Thanks to this flexibility, customers can enjoy their meals according to their preferences.
4) *Real-Time Order Tracking:* Features are available in many mobile apps, enabling users to track their orders' progress. Customers can estimate the arrival time and learn when the food is being prepared and when it is ready for delivery. This openness reduces uncertainty and helps control expectations.
5) *Special Offers and Discounts:* Online food delivery services frequently provide customers who place orders through their mobile apps with access to special offers, discounts, and promotions. Examples are free delivery, buy-one-get-one deals, and discounts on menu items or eateries. Customers can get discounts and benefit from upgrades that might not be available when placing an in-person order.
6) *Reviews & Ratings:* Applications for mobile devices typically offer reviews and ratings for dishes and restaurants. Customers can read reviews left by other users, which can help them decide where to order from and what to pick. Choosing reputable restaurants with positive reviews improves the overall dining experience.
7) *Seamless Payments:* Customers can pay for their orders online with mobile apps' secure payment options. They can store payment details for upcoming orders to avoid repeatedly entering payment information. This convenience makes checking out more accessible and guarantees a seamless, trouble-free transaction.
8) *Customer Support:* Many mobile apps offer customer support options that let users contact the developer for help or to solve any problems they may be having. Customers can contact support through the app and get prompt assistance with any issue, including a missing item, order delay, or another problem.

B. Most significant Issues of Ordering food online through Mobile Applications

Online food ordering through mobile apps has become extremely popular recently because it offers users accessibility and convenience. However, using these platforms can lead to several problems. The following are some of the most significant difficulties with online and mobile food ordering:

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1) *Technical Issues:* Bugs, slow loading times, and crashes are technical problems that occasionally affect mobile applications. These errors can cause delays and customer annoyance during the ordering process.
2) *Menus and inaccurate listings:* Online food platforms rely on restaurants and vendors to update their menus and item availability. It is possible, though, for the menu or listing not to be updated in real-time, resulting in orders placed for things that are no longer on the menu or whose prices have changed.
3) *Delivery Delays:* When ordering food online, prompt delivery is essential. However, problems like heavy traffic, bad weather, or high order volumes can delay delivery, making customers unhappy.
4) *Mistake in Order:* Ordering mistakes can happen, such as choosing the wrong item or leaving out some essential ingredients. These mistakes may result from misunderstandings between the user, the restaurant, and the delivery team, making the customer unsatisfied.
5) *Privacy Concern:* Online food ordering necessitates disclosing personal information, such as payment information and delivery addresses. Data breaches or unauthorized access to sensitive information may occur if the mobile application or its related systems do not have strong security measures.
6) *Environmental Impact:* Food delivery services' increased packaging waste increases ecological worries. Improved transportation and excessive use of disposable containers may be detrimental to sustainability.

III. REASONS FOR ORDERING FOOD ONLINE THROUGH MOBILE APPLICATIONS IN INDIA

The rise of mobile applications for online food delivery services in India results from several factors. These are some crucial elements:

1) *Rapid smartphone uptake:* Over the years, the penetration of smartphones in India has significantly increased. A more significant percentage of the population now has access to mobile devices thanks to reasonably priced smartphones and data plans, creating a sizable user base for online food delivery apps.
2) *Internet penetration:* The expansion of 4G networks nationwide and the availability of reasonably priced internet services have boosted online food delivery services. Thanks to readily available and dependable internet connectivity, users can browse, order, and track their food deliveries easily through mobile apps.
3) *Consumer behavior is evolving:* More Indians are embracing the convenience of online services, which has caused a change in consumer behavior. The demand for quick food options has increased due to busy lifestyles, demanding work schedules, and growing urbanization. Customers find ordering food through mobile apps to be an appealing option because it saves time and effort.
4) *Enhanced user experience:* Apps that deliver food have continuously worked to make their user interfaces more logical, straightforward, and aesthetically pleasing. The user experience is further improved by functions like real-time order tracking, tailored recommendations, and client reviews, which encourages more people to use mobile food delivery services.
5) *Safety precautions and contactless delivery:* With the COVID-19 pandemic, contactless delivery and safety measures are now crucial. Online food delivery services have implemented stringent hygiene procedures, contactless payments, and safe packaging techniques to ensure customer safety. As it offers a safer alternative to eating out, this has increased the popularity of ordering food through mobile apps.
6) Cashless transactions have become more common in India due to the government's push for digital payments and the wide adoption of mobile payment platforms like UPI (Unified Payments Interface). Users can quickly and securely make payments with the help of mobile food delivery apps, which offer seamless integration with these payment platforms.

These and other elements, among others, have helped the Indian food industry prosper due to the significant growth of mobile applications for online food delivery services.

IV. IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON ONLINE FOOD ORDERING

The online Food ordering sector has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly by mobile apps. Here are some ways that the pandemic has affected the development and popularity of mobile apps for food delivery:

1) *Safety and hygiene precautions:* To ensure the safety of customers and delivery partners, food delivery platforms put strict safety and hygiene precautions in place. This included checking the temperature, routinely sanitizing the delivery vehicles, and wearing safety equipment. These actions gave customers the assurance they needed to keep placing food orders through mobile apps.

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FIG 2: Safe delivery of food during Covid-19

2) *Restrictions on dine-in services and lockdowns:* To stop the virus's spread, many nations-imposed lockdowns, and restrictions on dine-in services. People, therefore, used online food delivery as a substitute to satiate their appetites. Mobile apps became a practical and secure way to place orders from their preferred restaurants while adhering to social seclusion rules.
3) *Demand for delivery service:* Demand increased due to people spending more time at home and staying away from crowded areas. People relied on online food delivery services to have meals delivered to their doorstep, which resulted in a significant increase in orders. The use of mobile apps made it simple and effective to browse menus, place orders, and follow deliveries.
4) *Support for neighborhood restaurants:* The pandemic posed severe difficulties for the restaurant sector, with many establishments finding it challenging to survive. Online food delivery services helped local eateries by giving them a way to connect with customers directly. Customers could support their favorite restaurants and ensure their survival in hard times by placing orders through mobile apps.
5) *Menu Exploration and Variety:* People were likelier to try new restaurants and explore different cuisines because they were confined to their homes. Users could browse menus, read reviews, and make educated decisions using the variety of options available on online food delivery apps. This prompted more people to use mobile apps to explore various culinary experiences.

The COVID-19 pandemic has generally accelerated the development of mobile applications for online food ordering. It emphasized the comfort, security, and variety provided by these apps, resulting in a greater reliance on mobile platforms for placing food orders during trying times.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, mobile apps allowing online food ordering have become a significant trend in the food industry, providing many benefits to customers and restaurants. The ability to order food through mobile apps has completely changed how people access and enjoy their meals. It also saves time. These apps cater to a wide range of customer preferences with their extensive selection of options, customization tools, and attractive deals.

There are, however, a few other problems that demand attention. Delays in delivery, quality assurance, and customer service are some issues that could be improved. To succeed, online food delivery services using mobile apps must guarantee on-time deliveries, maintain food quality while in transit, and offer first-rate customer service.

Online food ordering has increased due to several factors, such as the quick uptake of smartphones, rising internet usage, and shifting consumer habits. The accessibility of various restaurants and cuisines, promotional offers, and loyalty programs has further fueled the popularity of these services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also greatly impacted the online food delivery market. The safety of customers and delivery personnel have become dependent upon contactless delivery options and stringent safety regulations. Online food delivery services gave people access to meals from their preferred restaurants without leaving their homes due to dine-in restrictions and lockdowns. The pandemic also highlighted the value of patronizing neighborhood eateries and the move toward cashless transactions.

Ultimately, Customers can order food online through mobile applications with convenience, choice, and safety while supporting nearby businesses.

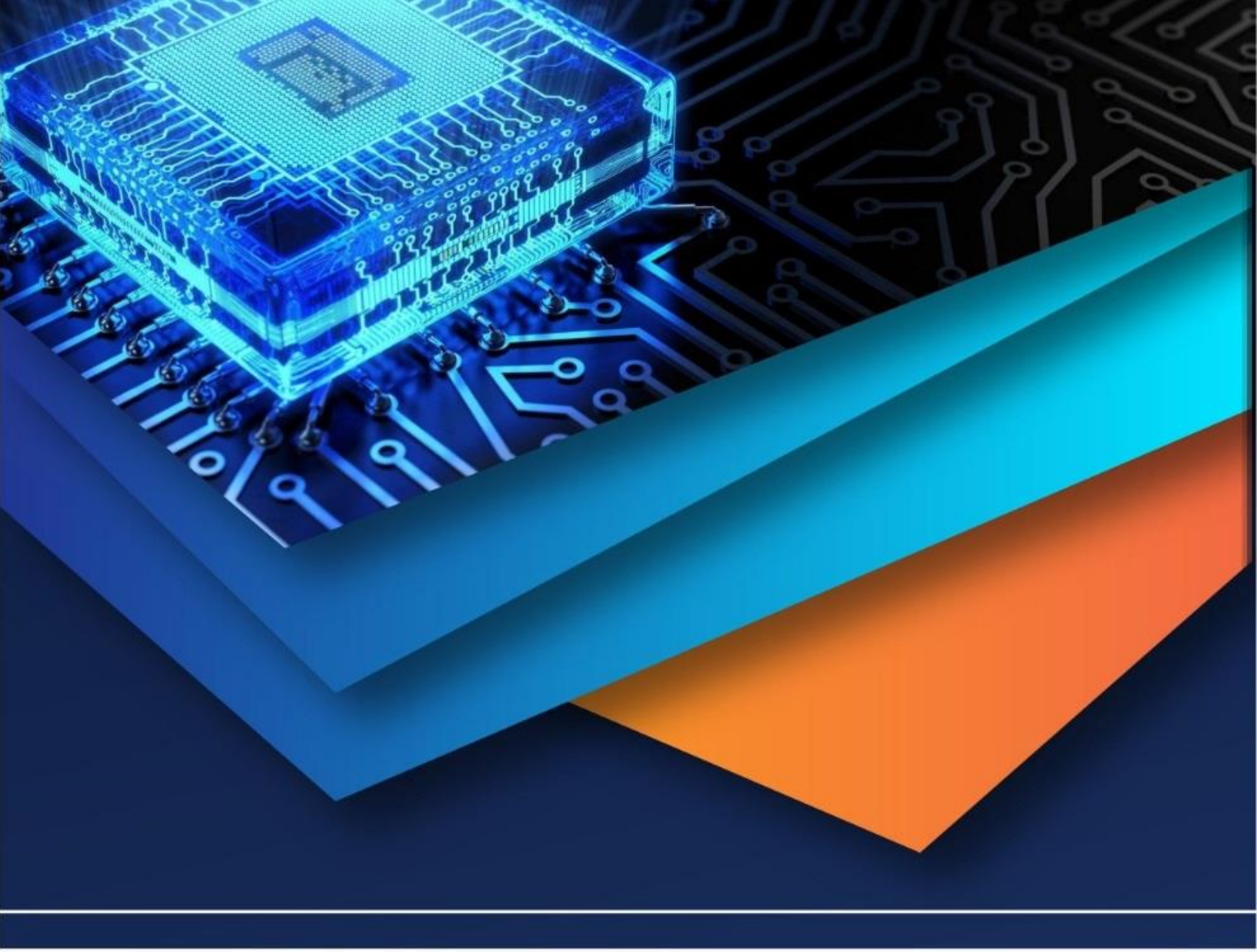
Despite the difficulties and problems faced by the sector, the ongoing advancement of technology and the adoption of better methods will probably improve the overall functionality of online food delivery.

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