

# A Comparative Study of Postal Mail Services and Courier Services with Special Reference to Tirupati

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## Abstract

The Indian Postal Service, operating under the Department of Posts, represents the world's largest postal network and plays a dual role as both a social infrastructure provider and a commercial competitor. Despite its extensive rural reach and affordability, India Post faces challenges from declining traditional mail volumes, rising operational costs, and competition from private courier firms that excel in speed, technology, and urban market penetration. This study undertakes a comparative analysis of postal mail services and private courier services in Tirupati, a region that reflects both urban and rural dynamics. The research highlights differences in service quality, customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and financial sustainability. Findings reveal that while India Post remains indispensable for inclusivity and governance, private couriers dominate in e-commerce and urban logistics. The study contributes to understanding the evolving role of postal and courier services in India's service economy and provides insights into their respective strengths and limitations in meeting diverse customer needs.

**Key words:** India Post, Private Courier, Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Operational Efficiency, Financial Sustainability, Logistics Industry.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF POSTAL MAIL SERVICES AND COURIER SERVICES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TIRUPATI

## Introduction

India Post, established in 1854, is the largest postal network in the world, operating over 1.5 lakh post offices, nearly 90% of which are located in rural and semi-urban areas. It has historically served as the backbone of communication, financial inclusion, and social integration in India. Over time, India Post has diversified its services to include logistics, parcel delivery, savings schemes, insurance, and digital banking through the India Post Payments Bank.

Despite its extensive reach and affordability, India Post faces challenges in the modern era. The decline of traditional mail due to digital communication, rising operational costs, and intense competition from private courier firms have strained its financial sustainability. Private couriers such as Blue Dart, DTDC, and Delhivery, on the other hand, thrive in urban and e-commerce markets by offering speed, advanced tracking, and customer-centric services.

Tirupati, with its blend of urban and rural populations, provides an ideal setting for a comparative study of postal and courier services. This research examines service quality, customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and financial performance to highlight the strengths and limitations of both India Post and private courier firms in meeting diverse customer needs.

## Review of Literature

### Financial Performance of India Post Payments Bank: An Analytical Study

Exploring the Last Mile: Comparing India Post and Private Courier Service Providers' Service Quality, Satisfaction, and Preference Publisher Tezpur University Research Journal 2022

The study compares India Post and private couriers in terms of service quality and customer satisfaction. The study shows that people trust India Post for its affordable services and extensive delivery network while they choose private couriers because of their fast delivery and dependable service and their advanced package tracking systems.

Evaluating Consumer Preferences: **India Post vs Private Courier Services in the Central Region of Uttar Pradesh**, Integral University Journal of Business Studies, 2021

The study investigates how customers choose between post services and courier services. The study found that India Post maintains its popularity for affordable services whereas private couriers serve urban areas better because they provide faster deliveries and advanced delivery systems.

**Comparative Study of Postal Mail Services and Courier Services with Special Reference to Kanyakumari District**, Pioneer Kumaraswamy College Journal of Commerce, 2020

The regional research demonstrates how globalization and e-commerce expanded courier services while postal services maintained their function for rural and low-income service areas.

**Consumer Satisfaction Towards India Post and Private Courier Services**, IOSR Journal of Business and Management, 2019

The research quantifies customer satisfaction levels which demonstrate that customers value India Post because it offers affordable services they can trust while they prefer private couriers because those services deliver faster and more convenient delivery solutions.

**Competitive Benchmarking of Indian Postal Network**, International Journal of Logistics and Public Enterprises, 2022, Nuggenahalli

This study compares India Post with private courier firms, identifying strengths in rural reach and weaknesses in speed and technology. It recommends continuous benchmarking to adopt best practices and maintain competitiveness in urban markets.

**Postal Life Insurance and Rural Postal Life Insurance: A Comparative Study**, Indian Journal of Finance, 2019

The article compares Postal Life Insurance (PLI) and Rural Postal Life Insurance (RPLI), analyzing their financial sustainability and impact on rural households. It finds that RPLI is particularly effective in providing affordable insurance coverage to underserved populations.

**India Post vs Private Couriers: An Operational Efficiency Analysis** The Journal of Business Management Research  
The publication date of this study is 2020. The study demonstrates that India Post has operational efficiency problems because it experiences delays and delivery losses whereas private couriers achieve superior performance through their fast delivery system and advanced technological capabilities.

**Operational Efficiency of India Post Parcel Services**, Journal of Operations and Logistics Research, 2024, Reddy & Thomas

This study focuses on parcel delivery performance, cost structures, and customer satisfaction. It finds inefficiencies in delivery speed and tracking, suggesting automation and AI-driven logistics as solutions to improve competitiveness.

**E-Commerce Logistics in India: Role of Courier Services vs India Post**, International Journal of Marketing & Technology, 2023

The study demonstrates how e-commerce has changed the logistics industry throughout India. The study shows that private courier services have experienced rapid growth because they provide quick deliveries together with advanced tracking systems and their close partnerships with online retailers. India Post has faced difficulties in meeting modern e-commerce logistics needs because it lacks the necessary speed and technology and cannot satisfy customer demands. The paper concludes that while India Post remains important for rural and low-cost services, courier companies are better positioned to meet the demands of modern digital commerce.

## India Post versus Private Courier Companies: A Financial Performance Comparison, Journal of Commerce & Economics, 2022

The research evaluates India Post's financial performance by comparing its revenue and expenditure patterns with those of private courier services. The research demonstrates that India Post experiences increasing financial losses because operating expenses have grown while postal mail volumes have decreased yet private courier companies achieve profitability through their e-commerce operations and effective business processes. The study establishes that India Post requires both modernization efforts and cost-control methods to compete with courier companies which possess better financial resources.

### Need for the Study:

India Post continues to serve as a vital public utility with unmatched rural reach, but faces challenges from declining mail volumes, high costs, and competition from private couriers.

Private courier firms dominate urban and e-commerce markets with speed and technology, making a comparative study in Tirupati essential to highlight differences in service quality, customer satisfaction, and efficiency

### Scope of the Study:

The research operates in Tirupati and its nearby regions to conduct a comparative assessment of India Post and private courier companies which include DTDC, Blue Dart, Professional Couriers, and Delivery. The study assesses their performance by examining six different factors which include delivery speed and service area and operational expenses and technology implementation and customer contentment and ability to maintain financial viability. The time frame emphasizes recent trends over the past 5–7 years, particularly the impact of e-commerce and modernization efforts. The findings deliver important insights about the local area, but the research only covers Tirupati without including national or international comparisons.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the Service quality of Indian post and private courier services.
2. To examine the operational efficiency and technological adoption during the study period.
3. To analyze the customer Satisfaction in the study area.
4. To provide suitable recommendations for the improvements for the study area.

### Limitations of the study

- The study is limited by the use of convenience sampling, which may not fully represent all customer groups.
- The geographical coverage is restricted to selected urban and rural areas, not nationwide.
- The data relies on customer perceptions, which are subjective and may vary by individual experiences.
- The findings reflect current service conditions and may not account for future technological or operational changes.
- The comparison is confined to India Post and private couriers, excluding international logistics providers.

### Research Methodology

Data collection: Primary & secondary

Type of research: comparative and descriptive

Research instrument: Questionnaire

Sample size: The population is infinite so we use basic sample size formula

Where,  $Z = 1.645$  for 90% confidence level,  $P = 0.5$ ,  $e = 5\%$  margin of error.

$$n = (Z^2 * p * (1 - p)) / e^2$$

$$n = (1.64)^2 * 0.5 * (1 - 0.5) / 0.05^2$$

$$n = 2.706 * 0.25 / 0.0025$$

$$n = 270.6 = 271$$

**Sample Size = 271**

Sampling method: Convenience sampling

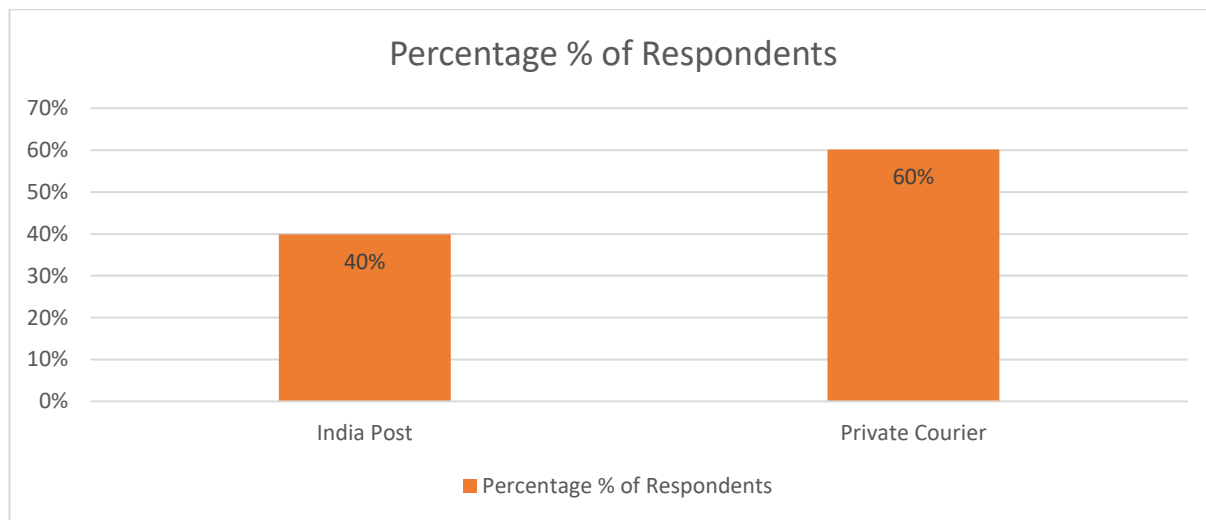
Statistical tool: percentage and graphical analysis

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

**TABLE No. 1: Usage of service**

options	No of Respondents	Percentage %
India Post	108	40%
Private Courier	163	60%
<b>Total</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field study



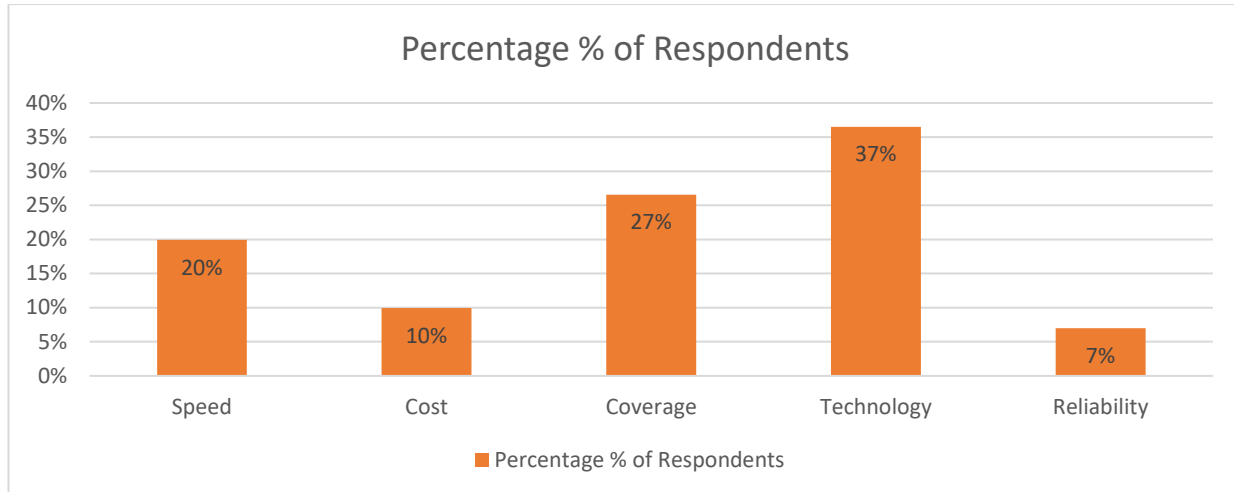
Interpretation:

Indeed, a plurality of respondents use services frequently (37%) or occasionally (30%), whereas very few do so rarely (23%) or very frequently (10%).

**TABLE No. 2: Factors influencing**

options	No of Respondents	Percentage %
Speed	54	20%
Cost	27	10%
Coverage	72	27%
Technology	99	37%
Reliability	19	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field study



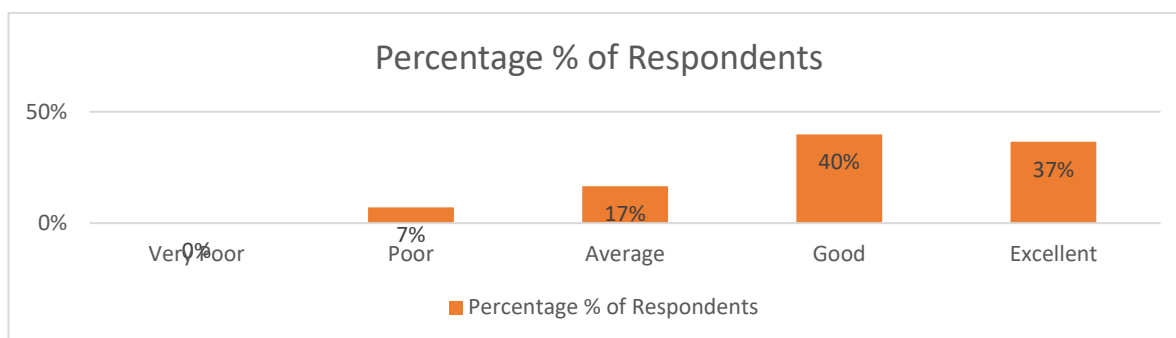
Interpretation:

Respondents prioritize technology (37%) and coverage (27%) most whereas speed (20%) and cost (10%) and reliability (7%) have smaller effects on their service selection process.

**TABLE No. 3: customer Service quality**

options	No of Respondents	Percentage %
Very Poor	0	0%
Poor	19	7%
Average	45	17%
Good	108	40%
Excellent	99	37%
<b>Total</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field study



Interpretation:

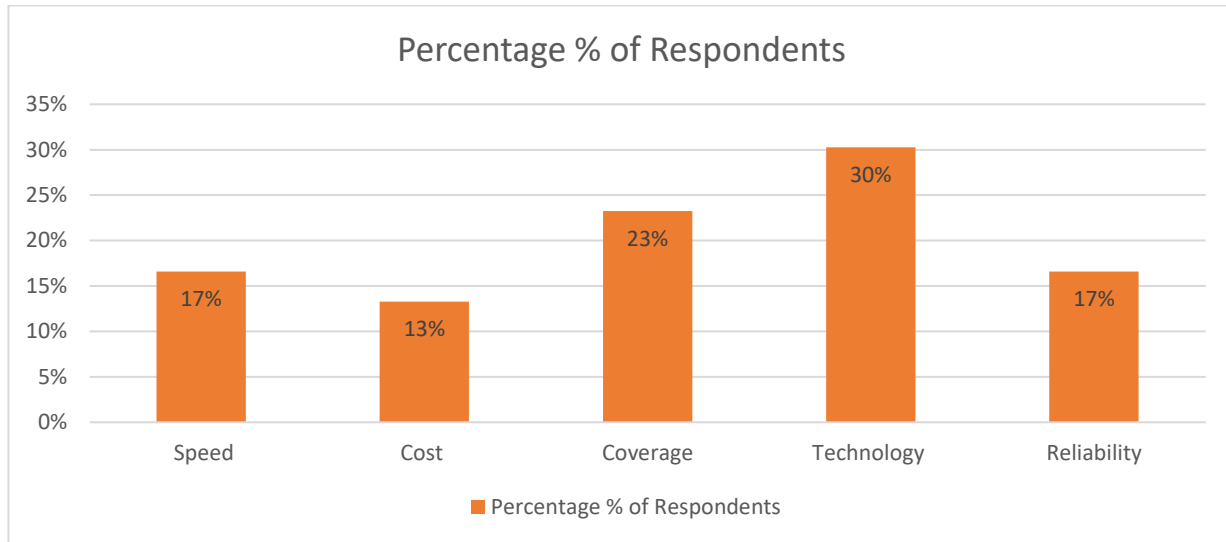
Most of the respondents rated their services as good (40%) or excellent (37%), with a lesser number judged average (17%) and poor (7%). There were no respondents who considered the service level to be very poor (0%).

**TABLE No. 4: Factors for Preferring**

options	No of Respondents	Percentage % of Respondents
Speed	45	17%
Cost	36	13%

Coverage	63	23%
Technology	82	30%
Reliability	45	17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field study



### Interpretation

Respondents prioritize technology by thirty percent (30%) and coverage by twenty-three percent (23%), while speed (17%), reliability (17%), and cost (13%) are less than half as influential.

### Findings:

#### Usage and Adoption Patterns

- Businesses and e-commerce operations depend on postal and courier services, which demonstrate their function as essential components for local business operations and digital retail expansion.
- The majority of respondents are new users (43% less than 1 year), which signals a recent surge in adoption. The data indicates that people now understand products better and can access them more easily, yet their commitment to use them again stays in its initial stages of development.

#### Drivers of Choice

- The decision process shows that digital convenience and service reach more traditional factors because technology and coverage together explain 60 percent of customer decision making.
- The customers show moderate preference for speed and reliability while they consider cost to be the least important factor yet they perceive products as expensive. The customers will accept higher expenses when they have access to advanced technology and extensive service coverage.

#### Service Quality Perception

- **Speed:** The majority of respondents to the delivery service believe that its delivery speed delivers moderate to fast results which meet acceptable standards but fail to reach exceptional performance.
- **Coverage:** The system delivers sufficient coverage yet its actual reach extends only to specific areas which include semi-urban and rural locations.

**SUGESSTIONS:**

- Strengthen technology integration with advanced tracking and digital platforms.
- Expand service coverage to balance rural and urban needs.
- Improve speed and reliability through streamlined logistics.
- Maintain competitive pricing with flexible, affordable options

**Conclusion:**

The rising demand for courier services in Tirupati occurs because businesses and e-commerce companies need these services. Private courier services have a slight advantage over India Post which maintains its competitive position through customer trust and service accessibility. Customers show the highest value for technology and service coverage but they see the services as expensive. The overall customer satisfaction ranges from moderate to good because most users remain neutral while only a few express dissatisfactions.

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