

Taking Care of Granny? Keep at it, You May Land a Job

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Across the country's rapidly growing entrepreneurial landscape, young companies are looking for people who can care for the aged, negotiate deals with temple priests, run household errands and offer intelligent reviews of food and drink, all as part of a day's work.

These jobs once considered offbeat are now gaining a mainstream flavour that is proving attractive for young graduates. "Very few jobs will offer me the opportunity to learn about Indian festivals and the legends behind crores of gods and goddesses," said Sakshi Lihla, 21, a Delhi University graduate, who first interned at Online-Prasad.com, a startup that offers a range of religious services. Lihla is now a full-time content author at the company. The Gurgaon-based startup is looking for sales managers, who will be sent on a 'pilgrimage' around India and will be paid an annual salary of up to Rs 5 lakh. Their job will be to forge tie-ups with local priests, hire local executives around major temples and deliver prasad to online customers.

Another company, Epoch Eldercare, which has a team of 20 specialists caring for the aged, is looking to add on 70 more this year. Their demand is for people who have taken care of their grandparents or have natural geriatric care skills.

"Though we prefer people who are occupational therapists, psychologists, it's not an essential criterion. Many people living in joint families have had a chance to take care of their grandparents, and may be naturally suited," said Tanvi Dalal, head of HR at Epoch Eldercare. These unusual jobs are an offshoot of rising entrepreneurial activity. Experts estimate that every year 600 new ventures are set up in India. **Focus Now on Lifestyle Services**

These startups employ about 50 people on an average in the first two years of their operation. Many of these young companies focus on offering lifestyle services to a growing swathe of middle income people. For instance, geriatric care is expected to become a large industry, with those above the age of 65 in India expected to grow to 270 million by 2050 from about 100 million now.

"Freshers should treat a startup job like a two-year paid MBA," said Waqar Azmi, cofounder of Sutra HR a hiring firm who estimates that there are about 80,000 people employed at various new ventures across the country.

In Bangalore, real estate portal HomeShikari.com is looking to employ those who know the local geography and language well. The company is run by TTK Services, which also runs another venture that offers lifestyle support services such as running household chores.

According to Sundar P, the managing director of TTK Services, the demand is for people who are street smart. Another group venture GetFriday.com offers remote services looks for a mix of formal education and intuitive skills. "For GetFriday.com, we hire graduates who can think on their feet."

Most often these new startup jobs don't require any high qualifications. Startups, such as TTK Group-owned and funded YourManInIndia.com, look for just 'street-smart people' who can get any errand jobs done for high net-worth individuals living abroad.

The online firm takes orders mostly from non-resident Indians living abroad, which can range from procuring a birth or marriage certificate from a local district, or even getting a certificate of bachelorhood, attested from a magistrate.

For the fashion conscious, startups such as Myntra.com are looking to hire—'a lively team of creative writers who love fashion.' Similarly, those who love the great Indian wedding, there are job openings for wedding planners in startups such as ShaadiOnline-.com. For the foodies, too, there are ample options. "I am always looking for interesting people through networking events or referrals. It's very difficult to attract or retain good talent for a startup," said Richik Nandi, 32, founder CEO of Bangalore-based Poshvine, a startup funded by early stage investment firm, MyFirstCheque.

Some young professionals get attracted to startups for fancy designations.