

Detailed Report: Google Maps Scam (Task-Based Fraud)

1. Introduction

This report outlines a fraudulent scheme involving fake Google Maps review tasks, where victims are lured into performing small tasks for payment before being tricked into sending money under the guise of "merchant tasks." The scam operates through WhatsApp and Telegram, targeting individuals with promises of easy earnings.

2. How the Scam Operates

Step 1: Initial Contact

- The victim receives a message on **WhatsApp** from an unknown number.
- The scammer offers payment in exchange for **writing Google Maps reviews**.
- A small amount (e.g., ₹200) is sent to gain the victim's trust.

Step 2: Transition to Telegram

- The scammer asks the victim to move the conversation to **Telegram** (a platform with less scrutiny).
- A new fraudster (posing as a "task manager") assigns small tasks, such as:
 - Liking YouTube videos.
 - Subscribing to channels.
 - Writing fake Google reviews.
- For each task, the victim receives a small payment (e.g., ₹40 per task).

Step 3: Introduction of the "Merchant Task" (Fraudulent Phase)

- After completing 5-6 tasks, the victim is told they must complete a **"merchant task"** to receive their full salary.
- The scammer presents multiple **payment plans** (e.g., ₹1010, ₹2500, ₹5000, etc.), claiming it is an "investment" for higher returns.
- Once the victim pays, they are given more "tasks" requiring larger payments, with excuses like:
 - "You selected the wrong option, pay again."
 - "Complete one more task to unlock withdrawals."
- Ultimately, the scammer **blocks the victim** without paying any "salary."

3. Modus Operandi of Scammers

- **Fake Profiles:** Use stolen or AI-generated profile pictures.
- **Fake Payment Proofs:** Share edited screenshots of "payments" to other victims.
- **Psychological Trapping:** Small initial payments build trust before the big scam.
- **No Real Company:** They impersonate reputed firms (e.g., Google, Amazon, Swiggy) but have no official links.

4. Why People Fall for This Scam?

- ✓ **Easy Money Trap** – Victims believe they can earn without effort.
- ✓ **Initial Payments** – Small rewards make the scam seem legitimate.
- ✓ **Pressure Tactics** – Scammers create urgency ("Complete now or lose salary").
- ✓ **Lack of Awareness** – Many are unaware of such digital frauds.

5. Legal & Preventive Measures

If You Are a Victim:

- **File a Cyber Complaint** at <https://cybercrime.gov.in>.
- **Report to Your Bank** – If payment was via UPI/Bank, request a chargeback.
- **Block & Report** the numbers on WhatsApp/Telegram.

How to Avoid Such Scams?

- ⚠ Never pay money to receive "earnings."
- ⚠ Do not trust unsolicited WhatsApp job offers.
- ⚠ Verify company legitimacy before engaging.
- ⚠ Use Google's official channels for gig work (Google doesn't pay via Telegram).

6. Conclusion

This scam exploits trust and greed, using small payments to manipulate victims into larger frauds. Awareness and skepticism are key to avoiding such traps. Always verify before engaging in online "task-based" earning schemes.

