

A PROSPECTIVE STUDY OF QUICK COMMERCE (Q-COMMERCE) IN INDIAN SCENERIO

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ABSTRACT

India's e-commerce landscape is clearly entering a new phase, and quick commerce is at the center of that shift. Companies like Amazon and Flipkart built the foundation of online retail with wide selections and scheduled deliveries, but newer players—Zepto, Blinkit, and Dunzo—are redefining consumer expectations with deliveries in 10–30 minutes. Despite the controversy, the opportunity is undeniable. With India's e-commerce market projected to reach around \$200 billion by 2026, quick commerce's estimated \$5.5 billion share may seem small—but it's growing rapidly and shaping consumer behavior in outsized ways. So while q-commerce is a powerful evolution of digital retail, it's also a disruptive force that raises questions about fair competition, regulation, and long-term viability. The next phase will likely be defined by tighter regulations, consolidation, and a push toward profitability rather than just rapid expansion. In today's fast-paced world, consumers expect more than just online shopping; they want instant delivery of essentials, from groceries to personal care items. This is where Q-commerce (Quick Commerce) comes in. Businesses are rapidly adopting Q-commerce models to meet the rising demand for speed and convenience. From instant grocery delivery to online grocery quick delivery, it is transforming the retail landscape, offering higher customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and new growth opportunities. The Q-commerce industry in India is evolving rapidly, driven by urbanization, Smartphone adoption, and rising consumer expectations for ultra-fast delivery. As consumer expectations evolve, quick commerce is becoming the new benchmark for convenience. With technology, automation, and strategic logistics, Q-commerce companies are delivering more than just speed. They're delivering trust, reliability, and a glimpse into the future of digital retail. This paper tries to study the prospect of quick commerce in India.

Keywords: CAGR, Dark stores, Market Penetration etc.

INTRODUCTION:

Quick Commerce (q-commerce) is the rise of 10-30 minute delivery services (e.g., Zepto, Blinkit), supply chain optimization, and its impact on consumer behavior. At its core, quick commerce (q-commerce) is less about endless choice and more about speed, convenience, and hyperlocal logistics. These companies rely on “dark stores” (small warehouses located within neighborhoods) to fulfill orders almost instantly. This model thrives in dense urban areas where demand for groceries, essentials, and impulse purchases is high. The real tension lies in sustainability. Quick commerce faces structural challenges:

- High operational costs (warehousing + delivery)
- Thin margins on low-value orders
- Dependence on venture capital funding

I can break down whether quick commerce is actually profitable or just hype right now—that's where the story gets even more interesting. Quick commerce (q-commerce)

represents the next evolution of digital retail, emphasizing speed over assortment. Unlike traditional e-commerce platforms such as Amazon and Flipkart, which typically operate on scheduled or next-day deliveries, q-commerce platforms like Zepto, Blinkit, and Dunzo are designed to fulfill orders within minutes.

The rise of q-commerce is driven by:

- Increasing urbanization and time-poor consumers
- Smartphone penetration and digital payments
- A cultural shift toward on-demand consumption and instant gratification

However, while q-commerce enhances convenience, it also introduces challenges such as high operational costs, sustainability concerns, and regulatory scrutiny, particularly in markets like India where traditional retailers are significantly affected. In short, q-commerce is not just faster e-commerce—it represents a fundamental shift in consumer expectations, where immediacy becomes as important as price and variety. Quick commerce, often referred to as q-commerce, is a disruptive business model in the e-commerce landscape that focuses on ultra-fast delivery of goods and services, typically within 10 to 30 minutes. It caters to consumers' demand for instant gratification by delivering essential items such as groceries, medicines, personal care products, and even cooked food at lightning speed. Q-commerce platforms leverage dark stores—local warehouses strategically situated in high-demand zones—to enable rapid order fulfillment. These platforms employ AI-driven analytics to accurately forecast consumer demand, optimize inventory management, and deliver personalized product recommendations. Automated supply chain systems ensure stock levels are maintained efficiently, reducing the risk of stock outs. Unlike traditional retail models with fixed inventories, It dynamically adjusts stock supplies based on real-time consumer trends and purchasing patterns. Delivery executives operating in densely populated areas facilitate instant dispatch, with route algorithms assigning orders based on proximity to maximize efficiency and minimize delivery times.

TRADITIONAL E-COMMERCE VS QUICK COMMERCE (Q-COMMERCE)

The two dominant models which have emerged as Quick Commerce and the Traditional E-Commerce. While both are digital retail solutions, but both of them operate on a very different principle and serve for different customer needs. But understanding these differences is essential for businesses if they are planning to enter or expand in the online space. It can be understand as follows.

Feature	Traditional E-commerce	Quick Commerce (Q-Commerce)
Delivery Time	3–4 days (or longer depending on location)	10–30 minutes (ultra-fast delivery)
Order Type	Bulk, planned, and less frequent purchases	Small, frequent, and impulse-driven purchases
Product Range	Extensive catalog with wide variety	Limited assortment of high-demand essentials
Storage	Large centralized warehouses	Local micro-fulfillment centers (dark stores)
Operational	Logistics-driven, focused on	Hyperlocal, demand-driven, often

Feature	Traditional E-commerce	Quick Commerce (Q-Commerce)
Model	scale and efficiency	powered by AI and real-time data

Dark stores are small, specialized warehouses—typically around 3,000 to 8,000 square feet—used exclusively for fulfilling online orders. Quick commerce companies like Blinkit, Zepto, and Instamart operate these micro-fulfillment centers in dense urban areas to enable ultra-fast deliveries within minutes. Located within a 2-4 km radius of their target customers, dark stores are closed to the public, allowing for optimized layouts and inventory management tailored for rapid picking and packing. This setup helps ensure delivery times of just 10 to 20 minutes, providing a highly efficient and convenient shopping experience in busy city environments

TRADITIONAL RETAIL STORES VS QUICK COMMERCE DARK STORES

Element	Traditional Retail Store	Q-Commerce Dark Store
Customer Access	Open to the public; customers physically visit and browse	Closed to the public; operates exclusively through online platforms
Design Priority	Focus on customer experience—lighting, layout, product displays	Optimized for speed—efficient picking, packing, and dispatch systems
Staff Role	Customer assistance, billing, merchandising, restocking	Order picking, packing, inventory tracking, and dispatch coordination
Location Strategy	High-footfall areas like malls and main markets	High residential density zones to minimize delivery time
Inventory	Wide assortment to encourage browsing and impulse buying	Data-driven, limited SKUs focused on high-demand essentials
Metric of Success	Sales per square foot, footfall, customer satisfaction	Orders per hour, delivery time, fulfillment accuracy

The quick commerce platforms operating across India have jointly agreed to remove the 10-minute delivery deadline for their workers as well as delivery-time commitments from their advertisements, as per ANI. This follows the intervention by Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya in the interest of the safety of the hundreds of thousands of gig-workers, the ultimate last mile delivery partners for these 1-commerce platforms. The minister, as per ANI held discussions with representatives of major platforms like Zepto, Swiggy, Blinkit and Zomato.

Leading quick-commerce players, including Blinkit, Swiggy and Zepto, are dropping the ‘10-minute delivery’ promise from their websites following a meeting between senior industry officials and Union labour and employment minister Mansukh Mandaviya, who urged companies to do away with this timeline from their branding in the interest of the welfare and safety of delivery personnel. The meeting came amidst growing protests by gig workers over the undue pressure created by the 10-minute delivery model across sectors. While the government’s intervention brings them relief, how does it impact consumers? Experts believe the change will not significantly alter ground realities since the 10-minute delivery promise

was largely a branding exercise and orders often took 15-20 minutes anyway. However, the move may encourage platforms to revisit their operating models by redefining logistics and incentives in ways that better balance delivery speed with labour safety and welfare. “The ‘10-minute delivery’ promise was essentially a branding exercise,” says Arvind Singhal, chairman and managing director of management consulting firm The Knowledge Company (formerly Technopak Advisors). “It helped platforms differentiate themselves from next-day delivery players. Since the sector was nascent, it helped capture both consumer mindshare and market share.”

MARKET PENETRATION OF Q-COMMERCE

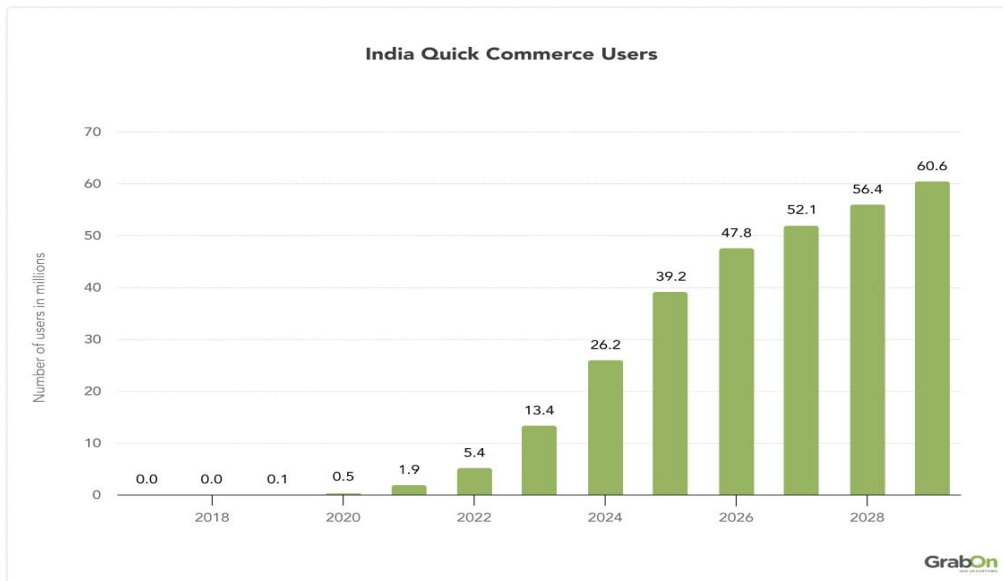
The India quick commerce market was valued at USD 3.05 billion in FY 2024, up from approximately USD 1.6 billion in FY 2023. This rapid expansion is driven by rising smartphone penetration (77%), faster mobile internet, increasing per capita digital spending, and consumers’ eagerness for instant delivery of daily essentials. Quick commerce is currently concentrated in Tier-I metros like Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi-NCR, Chennai, and Hyderabad due to high urban density, robust logistics, and consumer appetite for 10-30 minute delivery. These cities also benefit from efficient infrastructure, large dark-store networks, and higher disposable incomes—ensuring quick commerce becomes embedded in consumers’ daily routines. The India Quick Commerce market is segmented into Grocery, Snacks & Beverages, Fresh Produce, Personal Care & Beauty, and Household Essentials. Snacks & Beverages dominate with 32% market share in 2024 due to high frequency of impulse buying, portability, and low perishability. Young professionals and students increasingly use quick commerce for convenience, with players like Blinkit and Zepto heavily promoting this category through bundles and offers.

The India quick commerce market size stands at USD 3.65 billion in 2026, and it is forecast to reach USD 6.64 billion by 2031 at a 12.74% CAGR. This growth profile reflects a channel that has scaled nationwide and shifted from hyper-expansion toward profitable density in core catchments while testing expansion playbooks in secondary cities. Indian consumers increased spending on instant delivery formats through fiscal 2025, and platforms continued to strengthen category depth beyond grocery to capture larger baskets and improve contribution margins at the store level. The sector’s footprint covers more than 80 cities as of 2025, with density-led operations focused on short delivery radii and optimized assortment to sustain high on time fulfillment rates. The format has gained a visible role within India’s wider e-retail habits, which positions the India quick commerce market as a structural part of the country’s digital shopping landscape.

1. By product category, Grocery & Staples held 61.33% of the India quick commerce market share in 2025, while Electronics & Accessories is projected to expand at a 17.78% CAGR through 2031.
2. By delivery time promise, the ≤ 10 minutes segment captured 62.24% of the India quick commerce market share in 2025, and the 11-30 minutes segment is projected to grow at a 15.39% CAGR through 2031.
3. By city tier, Tier I Metros held 67.33% of the India quick commerce market share in 2025, and Tier II Cities are projected to expand at a 16.37% CAGR through 2031.
4. By geography, West India accounted for 31.27% of the India quick commerce market share in 2025, and East India is projected to grow at a 14.44% CAGR through 2031.

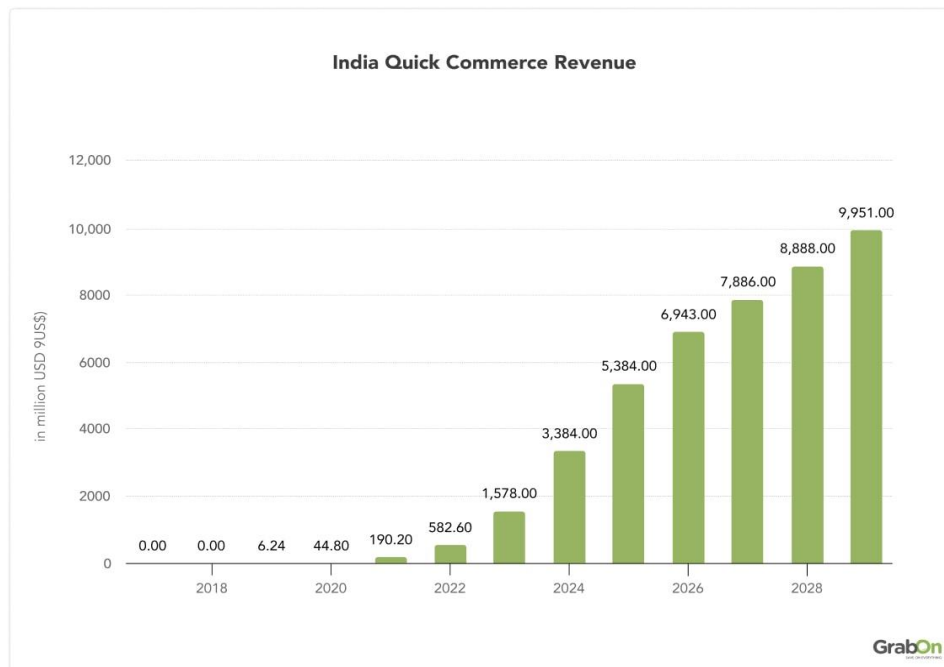
QUICK COMMERCE USER

India has 33 million Quick commerce users as of early 2026. This number is projected to reach 65 million by 2030.



India's quick commerce revenue

India's quick commerce market revenue is expected to reach \$6.94 billion by the end of 2026. The country is experiencing rapid growth due to increasing smartphone penetration and a young, tech- population.



Quick Commerce Thriving

The rapid growth of quick commerce in India is fostered by several factors such as:

Changing Consumer Preferences

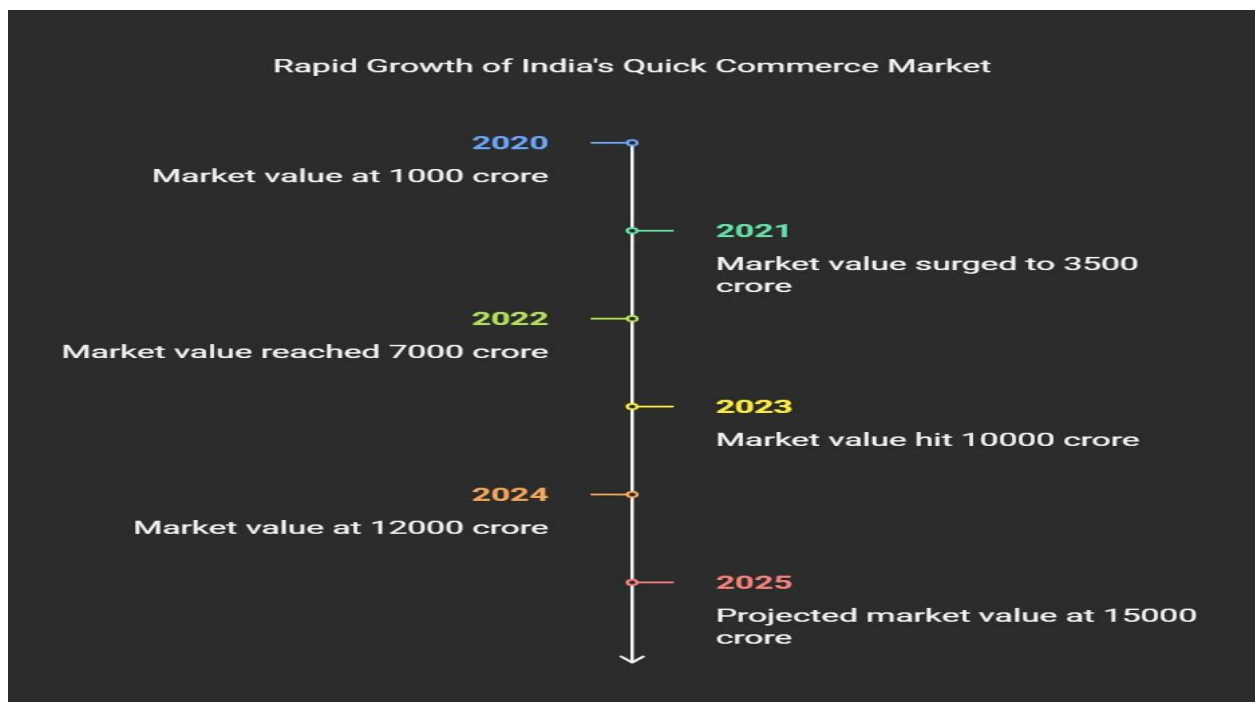
Modern buyers, especially the younger generations, are very much interested in the ease and pace of shopping around. They prefer goods at the tips of their fingers. And that's why the old profit-getting method is becoming less attractive and the new one is the trend.

Urbanization and Smartphone Penetration

The cities are expanding, and smartphone usage goes through the roof, so to say. A growing number of people are opting for in-app shopping. The figure for new users of the fast-moving commerce platform is projected to reach 60.6 million by 2029 from 26.2 million in 2024, which is a very sharp rise and a good sign that quick commerce is on course for a fantastic development journey.

Technological Innovations

The ongoing changes in route optimization and map technology have now allowed riders to use orders to deliver results. As a result, these delivery platforms can deliver about 60% of their orders in less than 40 minutes, thus increasing customer satisfaction manifold.



CONCLUSION

Quick commerce is more than just a temporary craze; it represents a revolutionary modification of the retail sector in India. The future view for the quick commerce market in India includes the potentiality of reaching a gigantic more than **\$40 billion** industry, which will transform the whole landscape of retail and even change the people's expectations across the board. The future of quick commerce is bright, in India and globally. Consumers globally want instant gratification, driving a new startup every 10 minutes to compete with one another in the quest to provide consumers with what they want, under the term "quick commerce." If technology continues to advance, 10-minute delivery may well become the norm, and in urban areas as city centers grow, consumers will not just be able to get their groceries, medicines, and essentials, but their whole shopping experience will be competently and efficiently transformed.

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