



Growth and impact of quick commerce (Q-commerce) in Indian E-retail

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Abstract

Quick commerce—often called Q-commerce—is revolutionizing how Indians shop online by delivering products within minutes. This fast-paced retail innovation has completely changed customer expectations and the e-commerce landscape in India. By examining data from market research reports and consumer surveys, this paper explores how Q-commerce is booming—tracking its rapid market growth, how shoppers are embracing it, what big players are doing to stay ahead, and how it's reshaping traditional retail and supply chains. Despite an impressive annual growth rate of over 45% and projections of crossing USD 100 billion by 2033, Q-commerce faces challenges like managing logistics, unclear regulations, and scaling effectively. This study brings together what we know so far to offer actionable insights for businesses and policymakers. Key takeaways include the need to simplify regulations, upgrade delivery infrastructure, and reach beyond big cities. These insights aim to guide all those involved in India's surging and exciting Q-commerce scene.

Keywords: Quick commerce, Q-commerce, Indian e-retail, consumer behavior, supply chain, logistics, market growth

Introduction

India's retail sector is going through a dramatic transformation thanks largely to technology and changing consumer habits. At the heart of this change is quick commerce, or Q-commerce—a model that promises to deliver your orders in less than half an hour. What makes Q-commerce different is how it leverages smartphones, digital payments, and super-local delivery networks to put speed and convenience right at customers' fingertips (Author, Year). Consumers today want instant access—not just to groceries and personal care items—but also to freshly cooked food and medicines, all delivered lightning-fast. The pandemic turbocharged this shift, pushing more people online and making speedy home delivery an everyday expectation (Kumar *et al.*, 2023) ^[5]. This paper digs into how Q-commerce is evolving in India—how big the market is, what kinds of shoppers are adopting it, who the main players are, and what challenges stand in the way.

Literature Review

Around the world, Q-commerce is reshaping retail by combining mobile apps, real-time tracking, and lightning-fast delivery, turning logistics into a science of precision and speed (Smith & Lee, 2023) ^[10]. Research shows consumers love the convenience and businesses see growth by optimizing last-mile delivery (Johnson, 2023). In India, much of the research so far has focused on digital payments and growing e-commerce but less on how Q-commerce affects small local stores, which still form the heart of India's retail (Reddy *et al.*, 2024; Shukla, 2023) ^[8, 9]. Theories like TAM and UTAUT explain why consumers adopt new tech but don't fully capture the challenges in a country as vast and varied as India (Patel & Singh, 2023). This study helps fill those gaps by looking closely at real data, highlighting socio-economic impacts, and focusing on how the logistics ecosystem is changing.

Research Objectives and Questions

Here's what this study aims to find out: What's driving the incredible growth of Q-commerce in India? How are consumers changing the way they shop because of Q-

commerce? What's happening to traditional retail stores and supply chains? What roadblocks do Q-commerce companies face, and where could the biggest opportunities lie? To dig into that, we ask: What combination of social, economic, and tech factors fuel Q-commerce adoption? How is Q-commerce disrupting corner shops and other traditional sellers? Which challenges around logistics, rules, and growth need urgent attention? What new markets beyond big cities hold promise for Q-commerce?

Data Sources and Methodology

This paper uses a careful mix of secondary data—from reputable market reports by IMARC, Bain, Mordor Intelligence, to recent government stats and peer-reviewed articles from 2023 to 2025. We chose sources with fresh, India-specific insights and applied methods like trend analysis and consumer behavior themes to understand the landscape. While secondary data has limits—like combining stats from different studies—we checked multiple sources to make sure our insights are solid.

Market Size and Growth Analysis

India's Q-commerce market hit about USD 3.6 billion in 2024 and is expected to grow at nearly 46% annually, crossing USD 106 billion by 2033 (IMARC, 2023) ^[4]. Initially led by metros like Delhi, Mumbai, and Bangalore, the boom is now spreading fast to smaller cities, thanks to better internet access and smartphone use (Bain, 2025) ^[2]. Technologies like micro-fulfillment warehouses tucked into neighborhoods mean customers get what they need in less than an hour (Mordor Intelligence, 2025) ^[6]. Leading players like Swiggy Instamart have almost half the market share, while Zepto and Blinkit are growing fast with smart pricing and marketing. Huge investments by VCs are fueling expansion, although making profits remains a hard nut to crack.

Consumer Behavior Insights

Who's using Q-commerce? Mostly young people aged 18 to 35 in cities, comfortable with mobile apps (Patel & Rao,

2024) [7]. Speed and product quality top their list when picking a service (Bain, 2025) [2]. The ease of ordering anytime and personalized deals keep them coming back (Reddy *et al.*, 2024) [8]. Beyond metro areas, more educated buyers in smaller towns are jumping on board. However, price and trust issues still slow growth there, so companies need tailored strategies for these markets.

Competitive Landscape and Key Players

The race is fierce. Swiggy Instamart leads with 7,000 micro-warehouses and high-tech delivery algorithms (Mordor Intelligence, 2025) [6]. Zepto's strategy banks on quick expansion and app incentives. Blinkit works hard to keep customers loyal with subscriptions and smooth app design. Global giants Amazon Fresh and Flipkart have joined the fray, blending global expertise with local hustle. All rely on kirana stores for local inventory, building a closely intertwined retail network.

Impact on Traditional Retail and Supply Chain

Q-commerce is shaking up traditional retail—especially kirana shops, which make up around 90% of retail sales in India (Shukla, 2023) [9]. Some stores team up with platforms and thrive; others get squeezed by price battles and shifting consumer preferences towards convenience. The supply chain is reinvented: moving from big warehouses to mini ones closer to customers, coupled with smart AI predicting what sells and when (Author, Year). This slash waits times but adds complexity. Jobs for delivery workers are growing fast, even as labor rules scramble to keep up.

Challenges and Opportunities

There remain significant hurdles, chiefly the high expenses involved in last-mile delivery, stock management complexities, and regulatory uncertainties related to data privacy and foreign investment (Author, Year). Yet the opportunities — especially in smaller cities — are vast. Fintech partnerships promise easier payments and credit, while AI can fine-tune everything from delivery routes to marketing. Going green, with eco-packaging and carbon-cutting deliveries, is starting to matter a lot to consumers and businesses alike.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Q-commerce is set to transform Indian retail—speeding up delivery and shaping new buying habits in a digitally connected world. But for it to reach its full potential, leaders must invest in better tech, clearer regulations, and broaden their focus beyond big cities. Future research must watch how consumers and communities evolve with this retail revolution to build sustainable, fair growth. When done right, India's Q-commerce journey could become a global blueprint.

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