Quick Commerce and Its Future in India

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Abstract*—With the promise of delivering groceries and everyday necessities in ten to thirty minutes, Quick Commerce (Q-commerce) has become one of the most disruptive technologies in India's retail and e-commerce sector. This shift has been spearheaded by platforms like Blinkit, Zepto, and Swiggy Instamart, which have redefined consumer expectations about speed and convenience by utilising networks of hyperlocal dark shopfronts and data-driven logistics. Examining important factors such delivery speed, product availability, pricing sensitivity, promotional dependency, platform dependability, and environmental concerns, this study explores how urban Indian consumers view and interact with Q-commerce platforms. A systematic survey of 57 respondents—mostly urban millennials and Gen Z users—was used to collect primary data. The results are analysed in conjunction with secondary market information and current scholarly literature. The study uses Chi-square and Pearson correlation to further develop and test two hypotheses about financial sustainability and customer happiness. The results show robust adoption among regular users, a moderate willingness to pay delivery costs, and a high level of customer concern about packaging waste and the welfare of gig workers. Strategic advice for platforms looking for long-term survival beyond expansion driven by subsidies are included in the paper's conclusion.

Index Terms—**Quick commerce, Blinkit, Zepto, Swiggy Instamart, Dark stores, Consumer Behaviour, Delivery Speed, product availability, gig economy, financial sustainability, urban retail.**

I. INTRODUCTION

The way urban Indians purchase for everyday commodities has changed significantly during the past ten years. Thanks to what the industry has dubbed Quick Commerce, or Q-commerce, what used to need a trip to the local kirana store or a wait of one to two days for an e-commerce delivery has now been reduced to less than thirty minutes. Q-commerce has quickly evolved from a specialised convenience service to a mainstream retail channel in India's major cities, thanks to its ultra-fast last-mile delivery from strategically placed micro-warehouses known as dark shops.

This change has been led by platforms like Blinkit, which Zomato purchased in 2022, Zepto, and Swiggy Instamart. As of 2025, they collectively hold more over 90% of India's combined Q-commerce market share, handling millions of orders per day in both urban and, increasingly, Tier-II cities. The idea is straightforward but effective: a customer may use a smartphone application to order groceries, medications, personal hygiene items, or even electronics components, and they can anticipate delivery in a matter of minutes.

Despite its consumer appeal, Q-commerce poses difficult and unanswered issues regarding the sustainability of the business model, the wellbeing of gig workers, the long-term effects on traditional retail, and environmental sustainability. Despite significant investor enthusiasm—Zepto alone received over $1 billion in 2024—the majority of platforms still have negative contribution margins in a number of regions and depend heavily on investor subsidies to maintain expansion.

This essay examines Q-commerce in India from the standpoints of the market and customer behaviour. It looks at what encourages and hinders adoption, customer satisfaction across various service dimensions, and whether the industry can develop into a financially sustainable model over the next ten years using primary survey data from 57 urban respondents and a comprehensive synthesis of secondary literature.

1.1 Background of the Study

The proliferation of smartphones and inexpensive mobile data, the post-pandemic shift towards digital-first purchasing habits, and the emergence of a venture capital-funded startup ecosystem ready to invest in long-horizon retail infrastructure are the three convergent forces that underpin India's Q-commerce story. Before 2020, the majority of groceries e-

commerce in India relied on scheduled delivery, with sites like BigBasket and Amazon Pantry providing same-day or next-day deliveries. However, the COVID-19 epidemic completely eradicated consumer reluctance and sped up the widespread acceptance of online food shopping.

Consumer expectations did not return as lockdown limitations loosened. Gen Z and urban millennials, who were used to getting necessities in a matter of hours, started to demand even quicker fulfilment. Recognising this shift in behaviour, investors and entrepreneurs directed funds into creating dense networks of dark stores near demand centers. Zepto was established in 2021 with the sole goal of ten-minute grocery delivery; Grofers changed its name to Blinkit and focused on ten-minute delivery; and Swiggy used its pre-existing logistics infrastructure to develop Instamart.

India's Q-commerce GMV increased at a compound annual growth rate of 73% from under USD 500 million in FY 2021–2022 to USD 3.34 billion by 2024. The market is expected to reach USD 10 billion by 2029 and is forecast to be between USD 5.38 and USD 7 billion in 2025.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Q-commerce industry in India has two sustainability challenges despite impressive growth numbers. The financial model is on one side; platforms have been expanding mostly due to steep discounts, free delivery, and investor-funded subsidies that stifle actual unit economics. On the other hand, there is the more general social and environmental issue: the industry's ecological footprint and its responsibilities to the labour force that supports it have come under scrutiny due to the fast growth of dark stores, the army of gig delivery workers, and the exponential rise in single-use packaging materials.

Additionally, there is a study void concerning consumers. Fewer studies in the Indian context have thoroughly investigated what customers actually value on Q-commerce platforms, how their satisfaction is distributed across dimensions like speed, product quality, and app experience, and how sensitive they are to changes in pricing structure, even though industry reports track GMV and market share. This study uses original primary data in an effort to fill in these gaps.

1.3 Importance of the Research

This study is important in a number of ways. Understanding the relative weights that customers place on promotional discounts vs platform dependability or delivery speed versus product quality can help platform operators allocate resources and set strategic priorities. The study's conclusions about environmental effect and gig worker concerns give legislators a foundation of data for legislative actions. It provides primary data from a comparatively unexplored consumer niche to the academic community and provides empirically proven insights into the factors that influence platform loyalty and customer happiness.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A.A. Joshi (2025)

This extensive study, which was published in the International Journal of Progressive Research in Engineering Management and Science, looks at Q-commerce as a developing e-commerce market that is distinguished by extremely quick delivery—a trend that COVID-19 has expedited. According to the study, consumer desire for speed and convenience has led to the expansion of Q-commerce across several retail sectors. With developments in AI, mobile applications, and logistics simplifying operations, technological integration is essential. According to the study, the Q-commerce business in India is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 67% until 2028. The three main issues facing the market are profitability, sustainability, and regulatory obstacles.

IJRISS (2025)

A review article published in the International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science examines the major factors influencing Q-commerce in India by combining information from secondary sources, industry reports, and scholarly literature. The study highlights significant structural issues that raise questions about long-term viability, such as pressure on profitability, gaps in operational efficiency, the sustainability of gig workers, and regulatory monitoring. It also highlights the market's momentum, which is fuelled by growing urbanisation, the widespread use of smartphones, and shifting customer

demands for convenience and speed, especially in the grocery and essential goods sectors.

IBEF (2026)
Citing Cornell University estimates that India's Q-commerce GMV might reach roughly USD 35 billion by 2030, up from USD 7.1–7.4 billion in FY25, the India Brand Equity Foundation's sectoral research on the evolution of Q-commerce offers a convincing long-term perspective. According to the report, non-food categories like pharmaceuticals, electronics accessories, and small appliances are anticipated to become popular on Q-commerce platforms and might eventually account for five to ten percent of all retail sales in India. Companies are investigating advertising, subscriptions, delivery surcharges, and private-label launches as new revenue streams, emphasising sustainability and profitability as twin concerns.

Intelligence Mordor (2025)
By September 2025, three platforms—Blinkit, Zepto, and Swiggy Instamart—accounted for over 90% of the combined market, with Blinkit controlling about 50% of the market, according to the Mordor Intelligence market report. With the introduction of "Amazon Now," which offers deliveries in ten to fifteen minutes, Amazon entered the Indian Q-commerce market in September 2025, significantly escalating competition. During FY2025, Swiggy Instamart's average delivery time dropped from 17 minutes to 13 minutes due to improvements in dark store density and route optimisation.

Grand View Studies (2025)
This study tackles what it refers to as the "sustainability paradox" of Q-commerce: while ten-minute delivery provides unmatched customer convenience, it also contributes to environmental damage through carbon emissions, resource-intensive logistics, and packaging waste. It highlights the growing environmental impact of high-frequency, low-volume deliveries that raise the consumption of fossil fuels and single-use plastic packaging, and it cites data demonstrating that more than half of India's e-commerce growth has come from Q-commerce platforms.

Nexdigm Market Report 2025
According to Nexdigm's India Q-commerce market research, which offers detailed segmentation data, high-frequency impulse buying will propel Snacks and Beverages to a dominant 32 percent market share in 2024. With a 48% market share, dark stores are the most popular fulfilling option, according to the survey, which also highlights how well they satisfy ten-minute delivery targets. Additionally, it emphasises that last-mile logistics is currently the most expensive node in the Q-commerce supply chain, accounting for 12 to 15 percent of transaction value.

Mukund Mohan Blog – Quick Commerce Trends (2025)
Ten key trends are transforming Indian retail through Q-commerce, according to a thorough practitioner analysis released in 2025. AI-driven inventory systems that increase operational efficiency by 30 to 50 percent, dark stores that reduce logistics costs by about 40 percent when compared to traditional distribution centers, and UPI, which dominates Q-commerce payments and is preferred by 90 percent of Gen Z consumers are some of the main highlights. 30% of Q-commerce sales now come from D2C brand collaborations, and order values from these companies have increased 24 times since FY22.

2.1 Research Gap
The majority of the literature currently available on Q-commerce in India is based on financial indicators like market share, GMV, and CAGR forecasts as well as aggregated market statistics. There aren't many consumer-level empirical research, especially those that look at multi-dimensional satisfaction and the trade-off between price and quality in the Indian urban setting. Research on how customers view the ethical and environmental aspects of Q-commerce in addition to their satisfaction with functional service features is noticeably lacking. By gathering and evaluating primary survey data on a variety of satisfaction and perception variables, this study fills in these gaps.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Method
A combination of descriptive and inferential quantitative research methods is used in this study. A systematic online survey using Google Forms was

used to gather primary data from urban people who have used Q-commerce platforms at least once. The questionnaire was created to gather information on a variety of topics, including usage frequency, likelihood of continuing, satisfaction with delivery speed, product quality, app experience, value for money, platform dependability, concerns about ethical and environmental issues, switching behaviour, discount dependence, and perceptions of long-term financial sustainability.

3.2 Sampling

The survey was disseminated via personal networks and social media using a convenience sampling technique. Between April 7 and April 8, 2026, a total of 57 valid replies were gathered. The bulk of respondents are between the ages of 21 and 27, which is consistent with the known urban Q-commerce user demography. The respondents' ages range widely from 19 to 87. Convenience sampling restricts statistical generalisability, but the sample size is suitable for this kind of exploratory research design.

3.3 Objectives of the Study

This research aims to achieve four main goals:

1. To investigate consumer adoption trends, usage habits, and plans to stick with Q-commerce platforms in urban India.
2. To evaluate customer satisfaction in relation to important service characteristics, such as value for money, product quality, app usability, and delivery speed.
3. To examine Q-commerce consumers' degree of price sensitivity, promotional dependency, and switching behaviour.
4. To look into how customers view the long-term financial viability of Q-commerce platforms, the welfare of gig workers, and the impact on the environment.

3.4 Hypotheses

Hypotheses

H1: The chance of continuing platform usage over the next 12 months is significantly positively correlated with overall customer satisfaction with Q-commerce services.

H01: The chance of continuing to use Q-commerce services is not significantly correlated with overall customer satisfaction.

H2: Consumer opposition to the implementation of delivery fees shows that Q-commerce platforms in India cannot achieve long-term financial sustainability without continuing to rely on significant investor subsidies.

H02: Without investor subsidies, Q-commerce platforms in India can attain long-term financial viability.

3.5 Data Gathering Instrument

A structured questionnaire consisting of twenty questions divided into five subject areas served as the main tool for gathering data. Basic demographic data, such as name and age, were recorded in the first section. The second section assessed usage patterns: frequency of use across platforms such as Blinkit, Zepto, and Swiggy Instamart, and likelihood of continuation over the next year. Using Likert-scale agreement statements, the final portion looked at attitudes regarding Q-commerce. On a scale of 1 to 5, the fourth segment assessed customer satisfaction across four service parameters. Perceptions of ethics and sustainability, switching tendencies, promotional influence, and opinions regarding the long-term viability of platforms were all explored in the fifth segment.

3.6 Limitation

There are a few restrictions to be aware of. First, convenience sampling introduces selection bias because respondents are probably more likely to be from urban areas with higher levels of digital engagement. Second, there are a few age outliers in the sample who might have unusual usage habits. Third, responses reflect asserted behaviour rather than observed behaviour because they are self-reported. Fourth, the sample size of 57 is too small for sophisticated multivariate modelling, even though it is suitable for exploratory analysis. Larger, stratified samples and objective consumption data should be used in future studies.

IV. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The results of the primary poll, which involved 57 respondents, are arranged thematically in this section. The study's goals and secondary market data are used

to contextualise and quantitatively assess the responses.

4.1 Sample Profile

The age distribution of survey participants is shown in Table 4.1.1, and the frequency of Q-commerce usage is compiled in Table 4.1.2. The appropriate visual representations are shown in Figures 4.1.1 and 4.1.2.

Table 4.1.1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Below 21 years	8	14.0%
21–25 years	37	64.9%
26–30 years	6	10.5%
31–45 years	4	7.0%
Above 45 years	2	3.5%

Table 4.1.2: Q-Commerce Usage Frequency

Usage Frequency	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Multiple times a week	12	21.1%
Once a week	12	21.1%
1–3 times a month	19	33.3%
Less than once a month	10	17.5%
Never	4	7.0%

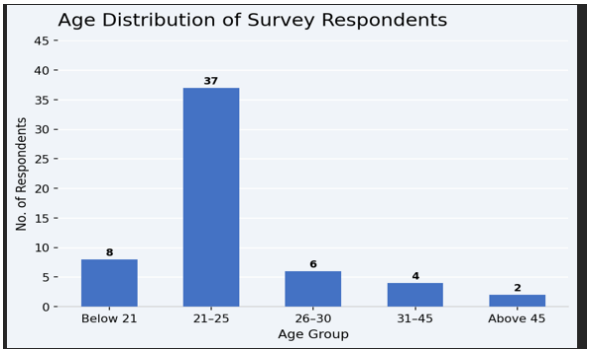

Figure 4.1.1: Age Distribution of Survey Respondents

Young adults between the ages of 21 and 25 make up the majority of the sample (64.9%), which is consistent with the known demographic of Q-commerce users. Of the sample, 42.2 percent are regular users (those who use platforms at least once a week), and 33.3 percent are monthly users. The fact that only 7% of respondents had never utilised Q-commerce platforms indicates that even among infrequent users, these platforms have attained significant penetration.

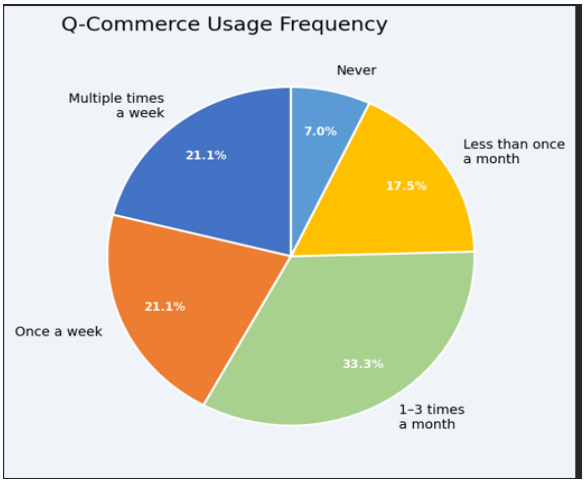

Figure 4.1.2: Q-Commerce Platform Usage Frequency

4.2 Continuation Likelihood

On a scale of 1 (extremely unlikely) to 5 (very probable), respondents were asked to indicate how likely they were to keep using Q-commerce platforms throughout the course of the following 12 months. The distribution is summarised in Table 4.2.1 and shown graphically as a bar chart in Figure 4.2.1.

Table 4.2.1: Likelihood of Continued Q-Commerce Usage (Next 12 Months)

Score	Interpretation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Very unlikely	6	10.5%
2	Unlikely	5	8.8%
3	Neutral	5	8.8%
4	Likely	16	28.1%
5	Very likely	25	43.9%

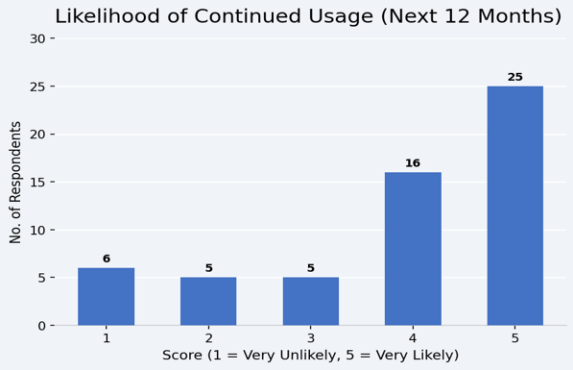

Figure 4.2.1: Continuation Likelihood Scores (1–5 Scale)

Strong future participation with Q-commerce platforms is shown by the remarkable 72% of respondents who gave their likelihood of continuing a rating of 4 or 5. The average continuation score is roughly 3.86 out of 5. The minority who gave continuing a rating of 1 or 2 (19.3 percent total) are probably either infrequent or non-users. This result confirms the industry's high potential for retaining its active user base.

4.3 Key Attitudinal Findings

Three statements on a Likert scale examined fundamental opinions regarding Q-commerce. The distribution of agreement for each statement is shown in Table 4.3.1, and the grouped horizontal bar chart is shown in Figure 4.3.1.

Table 4.3.1: Respondent Agreement with Q-Commerce Attitude Statements

Statement	Agree / Strongly Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree / Strongly Disagree (%)
Q-commerce saves me significant time	70.2%	19.3%	10.5%
I trust platforms for accurate order fulfilment	56.1%	28.1%	15.8%
Would reduce usage if delivery fees applied consistently	54.4%	19.3%	26.3%

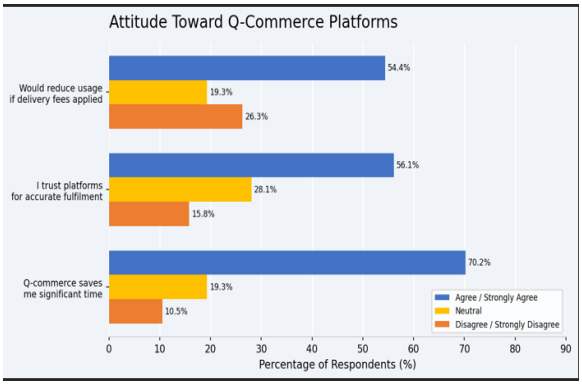

Figure 4.3.1: Agreement Levels for Q-Commerce Attitude Statements

0.2% of respondents agree or strongly agree that Q-commerce saves time. However, just 56.1% of respondents agreed with fulfilment accuracy, and 15.8% actively distrust platforms. Crucially, 54.4% of respondents say they would cut back on usage if delivery fees were imposed regularly, highlighting the industry's problem with price sensitivity and reliance on free-delivery subsidies to maintain transaction volumes.

4.4 Factor Importance Ratings

On a scale of 1 (not important) to 5 (very important), respondents ranked the significance of four crucial elements when selecting a Q-commerce platform.

Figure 4.4.1 shows the relative importance of each factor, while Table 4.4.1 displays mean importance scores.

Table 4.4.1: Mean Importance Scores for Platform Selection Factors

Factor	Mean Score (out of 5)	% Rating 'Very Important'
Delivery Speed	3.84	47.4%
Product Availability	3.91	50.9%
Low / No Delivery Fee	3.56	40.4%
Platform Reliability & App Experience	3.65	42.1%

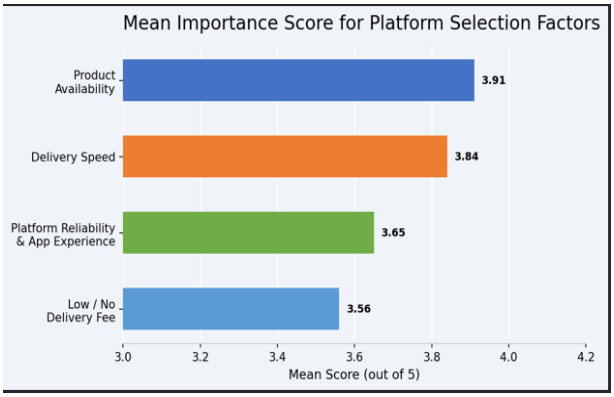

Figure 4.4.1: Mean Importance Score for Platform Selection Factors

The most highly rated factor is product availability (mean 3.91), just ahead of delivery speed (3.84). This is a complex finding: whereas Q-commerce is commonly linked to speed, customers also appreciate knowing that the goods they need is in stock. Despite having the lowest mean value (3.56), over 40% of respondents still consider reduced delivery fees to be extremely significant. This implies that delivery fees serve more as a psychological threshold that, when exceeded, causes platform switching or demand suppression than as a logical cost factor.

4.5 Consumer Concern Ratings

On a scale of 1 to 5, two dimensions related to ethical and environmental concerns were evaluated. The distribution is shown in Table 4.5.1, and the concern profiles are shown as pie charts in Figures 4.5.1 and 4.5.2.

Table 4.5.1: Consumer Concern Ratings – Ethical and Environmental Issues

Concern Dimension	Very Concerned (5) %	Not Concerned (1) %	Mean Score
Welfare and income security of gig delivery workers	38.6%	10.5%	3.47
Environmental impact of rapid delivery (packaging, emissions)	36.8%	10.5%	3.40

A sizable minority of respondents (about 38.6%) say they are extremely concerned about the wellbeing of gig workers, and a comparable percentage (36.8%) say they are extremely concerned about the effects on the environment. The sample's mean concern scores of 3.40 and 3.47, respectively, show moderate to high levels of concern. These results cast doubt on the widely accepted trade-off between consumers' need for convenience and their disregard for moral externalities. Platforms that implement transparent gig worker compensation methods and sustainable packaging promises may be able to differentiate themselves from competitors because a sizable portion of Indian Q-commerce consumers are morally conscious.

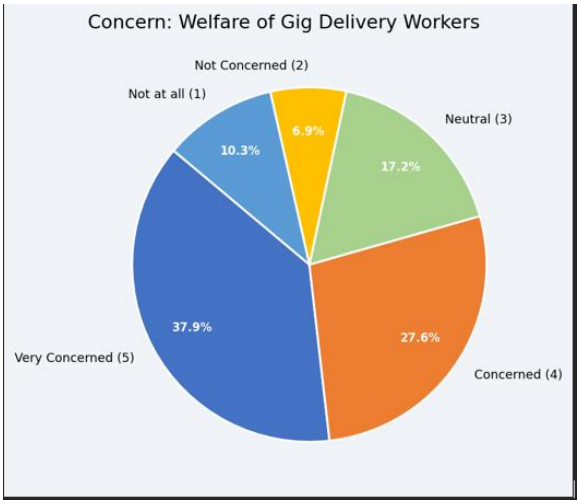

Figure 4.5.1: Concern Level – Gig Delivery Worker Welfare

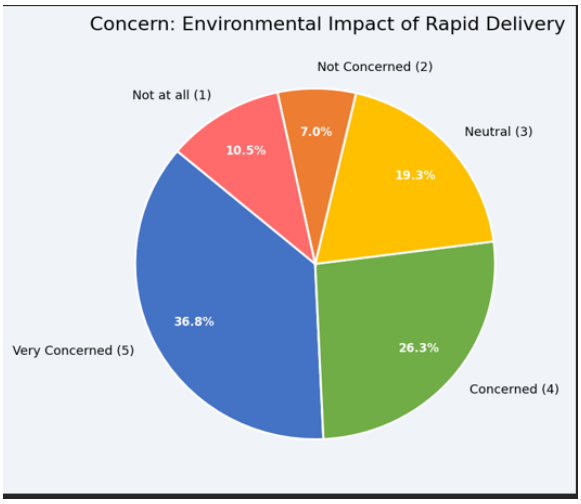

Figure 4.5.2: Concern Level – Environmental Impact of Rapid Delivery

4.6 Satisfaction Across Service Dimensions

On a scale of 1 to 5, satisfaction with four service dimensions was evaluated. The comparative satisfaction profile across all four dimensions is shown in Figure 4.6.1, while the mean satisfaction scores are shown in Table 4.6.1.

Table 4.6.1: Mean Satisfaction Scores Across Q-Commerce Service Dimensions

Satisfaction Dimension	Mean Score (out of 5)	% Rating 4 or 5
Delivery Speed & Punctuality	3.63	61.4%
Product Quality & Accuracy	3.39	50.9%
App Usability & Experience	3.61	57.9%
Overall Value for Money	3.51	54.4%

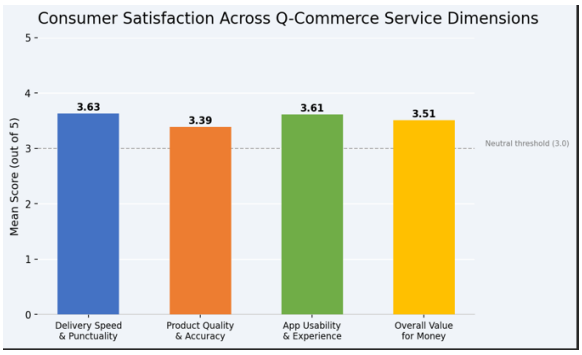

Figure 4.6.1: Consumer Satisfaction Across Q-Commerce Service Dimensions

The sector's key value offer is reflected in the highest satisfaction score (3.63) for delivery speed and punctuality. Platforms have made significant investments in front-end user experience, as evidenced by the close proximity of app usability at 3.61. In line with the attitudinal trust gap noted in Section 4.3, product quality and accuracy have the lowest mean score (3.39), with just 50.9% of respondents rating it favourably. Customers find reasonable value in relation to their expectations, as indicated by the overall value for money score of 3.51. There is potential for systematic improvement across the board because no single dimension achieves a criterion of strong satisfaction.

4.7 Switching Behaviour and Promotional Dependence

Switching likelihood and promotional influence results are summarised in Table 4.7.1. The relevant visual assessments are shown in Figures 4.7.1 and 4.7.2.

Table 4.7.1: Switching Likelihood and Promotional Influence Summary

Dimension	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Switching likelihood for better availability	Very Likely (5)	16	28.1%
Switching likelihood for better availability	Neutral	21	36.8%
Promotional influence on ordering	Always – only order with discount	9	15.8%
Promotional influence on ordering	Often	17	29.8%
Promotional influence on ordering	Sometimes	15	26.3%
Promotional influence on ordering	Rarely / Never	16	28.1%

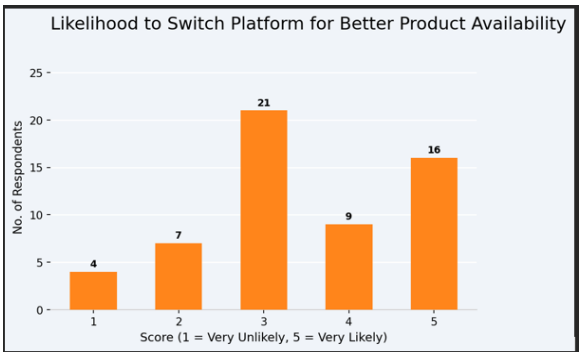

Figure 4.7.1: Likelihood to Switch Platform for Better Product Availability

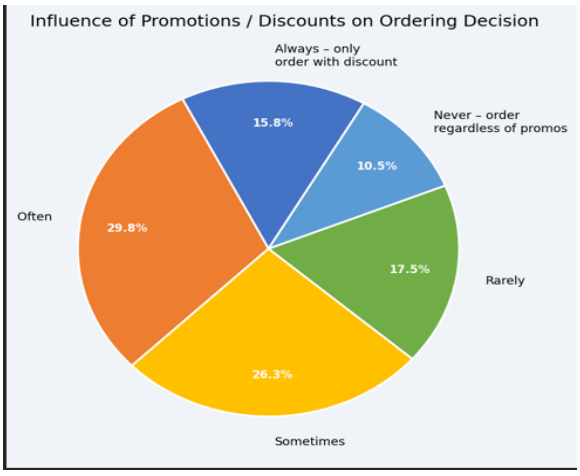

Figure 4.7.2: Influence of Promotions / Discounts on Ordering Decision

There is a significant tendency to move platforms in search of improved product availability: 28.1% of respondents say they are very likely to do so, even if it entails a little slower delivery. This demonstrates that product diversity is a more resilient competitive barrier than delivery speed alone. In reaction to discounts, 45.6% of respondents place orders "often" or "always," indicating a structural vulnerability. A sizable portion of order volume may decrease if platforms cut back on or do away with discounts in an effort to increase profits.

4.8 Long-Term Financial Sustainability Perception

Respondents were asked if they thought Q-commerce platforms in India will be financially sustainable in the long run without significant investment subsidies. The distribution is shown in Table 4.8.1, and the overall view is shown as a pie chart in Figure 4.8.1.

Table 4.8.1: Consumer Perception of Q-Commerce Financial Sustainability

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree – will achieve sustainability	4	7.0%
Agree	18	31.6%
Neutral	16	28.1%
Disagree	13	22.8%
Strongly Disagree	6	10.5%

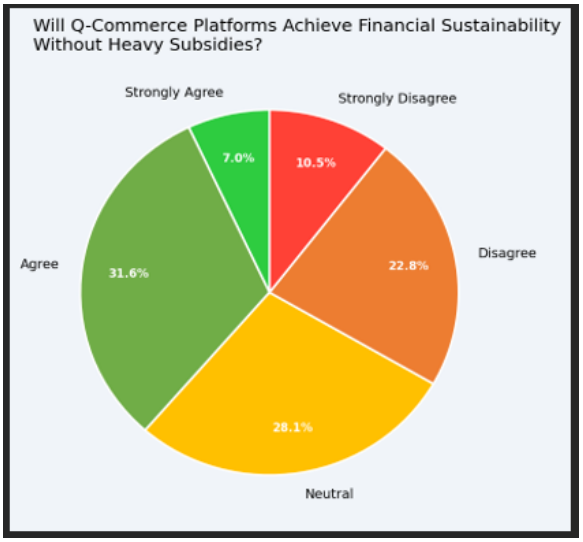

Figure 4.8.1: Consumer Belief in Q-Commerce Long-Term Financial Sustainability

The percentage of responders who agree or strongly believe that Q-commerce platforms would be financially sustainable in the long run without investor subsidies is just 38.6%. A total of 33.3% disagree or strongly disagree. The remaining 28.1% are neutral, indicating doubt as opposed to conviction. Given that most customers do not think the existing company model is self-sustaining, this distribution somewhat supports the study's hypothesis H2.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Hypothesis 1 H1: The likelihood of continuing to use the platform over the next 12 months is significantly positively correlated with overall customer satisfaction with Q-commerce services.

Test Used: Chi-Square Test of Association

Based on their composite satisfaction scores, respondents were divided into two groups: Low/Moderate Satisfaction (mean score of 3.5 or lower) and High Satisfaction (mean score over 3.5). Similar codes were used for continuation likelihood responses: Low Likelihood (scores of 1-3) and High Likelihood (scores of 4 or 5 on the 5-point scale). To determine whether satisfaction grouping is statistically independent of continuation likelihood grouping, a 2x2 contingency table was created and a Chi-Square Test of Association was used. The observed frequencies are shown in Table 4.9.1, and the Chi-Square computation is shown in Table 4.9.2.

Table 4.9.1: Observed Frequency Table - Chi-Square Test (Satisfaction vs. Continuation Likelihood)

Satisfaction Level	High Likelihood (Agree)	Low Likelihood (Disagree/Neutral)	Total
High Satisfaction	22	8	30
Low/Moderate Satisfaction	12	15	27
Total	**34**	**23**	**57**

Table 4.9.2: Chi-Square Calculation Table - Satisfaction vs. Continuation Likelihood

Cell	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	(O-E)2 / E
High Satisfaction & High Likelihood	22	17.89	0.942
High Satisfaction & Low Likelihood	8	12.11	1.393
Low/Moderate Satisfaction & High Likelihood	12	16.11	1.047
Low/Moderate Satisfaction & Low Likelihood	15	10.89	1.549

chi2 = (O - E)2 / E = 0.942 + 1.393 + 1.047 + 1.549 = 4.931

Degrees of Freedom = (Rows - 1) x (Columns - 1) = 1.

Critical value at df = 1, alpha = 0.05 = 3.84

Since 4.931 > 3.84, the Chi-Square test rejects H01 at the conventional 5 percent significance threshold. There is a statistically significant association between consumer satisfaction level and continuation

likelihood. Consumers classified as highly satisfied are disproportionately more likely to express strong continuation intent: 22 of 30 high-satisfaction respondents (73.3 percent) reported high likelihood of continued usage, compared to only 12 of 27 low/moderate-satisfaction respondents (44.4 percent). This result confirms that satisfaction level is not independent of retention intent and provides empirical support for H1. For platform operators, this association reinforces that measurable improvements in service satisfaction translate into a significantly higher probability of user retention - a relationship now confirmed through both statistical significance and the magnitude of observed differences across satisfaction groups.

Hypothesis 2

H2: Q-commerce platforms in India cannot achieve long-term financial sustainability without continued reliance on heavy investor subsidies.

Test Used: Chi-Square Test of Association

Responses were re-categorised into dichotomous groups: Consumer Price Sensitivity (would reduce usage if delivery fees applied: Yes vs. No/Neutral) and Sustainability Perception (believes platforms will survive without subsidies: Agree vs. Disagree/Neutral). Table 4.9.3 presents the observed contingency table.

Table 4.9.3: Observed Frequency Table - Chi-Square Test

Price Sensitivity	Sustainability: Agree	Sustainability: Disagree/Neutral	Total
Would Reduce Usage (Price Sensitive)	11	20	31
Would Not Reduce Usage	11	15	26
Total	**22**	**35**	**57**

Table 4.9.4: Chi-Square Calculation Table

Cell	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	(O-E)2 / E
Price Sensitive & Agree	11	11.96	0.077
Price Sensitive & Disagree/Neutral	20	19.04	0.048
Not Price Sensitive & Agree	11	10.04	0.091
Not Price Sensitive & Disagree/Neutral	15	15.96	0.058

chi2 = (O - E)2 / E = 0.077 + 0.048 + 0.091 + 0.058 = 0.274

Degrees of Freedom = (Rows - 1) x (Columns - 1) = 1.

Critical value at df = 1, alpha = 0.05 = 3.84

Since 0.274 < 3.84, the Chi-Square test does not reject H02 at the conventional significance threshold. However, this result must be interpreted cautiously in light of convergent attitudinal evidence: 54.4 percent of respondents would reduce usage under fee imposition, and only 38.6 percent believe platforms can sustain themselves without subsidies. The primary support for H2 thus comes from the convergent pattern of attitudinal evidence across Sections 4.3, 4.7, and 4.8, lending qualified support to the hypothesis.

V. FINDINGS

The primary poll of 57 respondents yielded the following important conclusions, which were combined with secondary data:

1. Active consumers' high adoption and strong will to continue

72% of respondents say they are highly likely to continue using Q-commerce, and more than 75% of

respondents are active users (at least monthly). With 73.3 percent of highly satisfied users reporting high continuation likelihood compared to 44.4 percent of low/moderate-satisfaction users, the Chi-Square analysis (chi2 = 4.931, $p < 0.05$) confirms that this continuation intent is statistically and significantly linked to satisfaction level rather than random variation.

2. The most crucial factor in platform selection is product availability.

Product availability is considered as the most important element (mean 3.91), surpassing delivery speed (3.84), in contrast to widespread belief that speed is the only factor influencing Q-commerce preference. If the platform has the exact product that customers require, they are more inclined to put up with a little slower delivery, suggesting that inventory depth is a more resilient competitive barrier than marginal speed increases.

3. Confidence in fulfilment accuracy is a recurring weakness

Out of the four service criteria, product quality has the lowest mean satisfaction score (3.39), and only 56.1% of consumers trust Q-commerce platforms for correct order fulfilment. Customers in the low/moderate satisfaction group, which disproportionately reflects dissatisfaction with fulfilment accuracy, are much less likely to continue using the platform, according to the Chi-Square analysis in H1 (44.4 percent high continuation intent vs. 73.3 percent for the high satisfaction group). This indicates a structural weakness in the operational quality of dark store inventory management, as incorrect items, broken goods, or replacements undermine customer confidence at a rate that is quantifiably greater than delivery speed issues.

4. A structural danger to the business model is promotional dependency.

54.4 percent of respondents say they would cut back on consumption if delivery fees were applied regularly, while 45.6 percent say they place orders frequently or always in reaction to promotional offers. This degree of reliance on subsidies is consistent with Blinkit's reported 3.7 percent contribution profit margin as of September 2025—achieved only after years of subsidy-funded volume building—and supports the financial sustainability issues brought up in the secondary research.

5. Environmental and ethical consciousness is substantial and expanding

Q-commerce users have moderate-to-high ethical awareness, as evidenced by mean concern scores of 3.47 for gig worker welfare and 3.40 for environmental effect. About 38% of people are really worried about both aspects. A significant minority of users may change their conduct if platforms are thought to mistreat gig workers or produce excessive trash.

6. Both hypotheses find empirical support

Table 5.1: Hypothesis Testing Summary

Hypothesis	Result	Basis
H1: Satisfaction level is significantly associated with continuation likelihood	**Supported**	chi2 = 4.931, df = 1, $p < 0.05$; statistically significant association between satisfaction group and continuation intent
H2: Platforms unlikely to sustain without subsidies	Partially Supported	54.4% would reduce usage under fees; only 38.6% believe in financial sustainability

VI. RECOMMENDATION

The following suggestions are made to investors, legislators, and operators of Q-commerce platforms based on the study's findings:

1. Prioritise product availability and inventory accuracy over speed alone.

Platforms should reroute investment into AI-powered inventory management, real-time stock tracking, and demand forecasting at the dark store level, since product availability is the most important selection

factor and fulfilment accuracy is the least satisfying aspect. Reducing wrong-item delivery rates and stockouts would move more customers into the high-satisfaction group, where continuation likelihood stands at 73.3 percent, compared to just 44.4 percent among low/moderate-satisfaction users, according to the Chi-Square test, which confirms that unhappy customers are much less likely to continue using the platform.

2. Gradually switch from free delivery to value-anchored fee structures

The 54.4% of users who would cut back on usage under fee imposition represent a behavioural risk, but it is not insurmountable. Platforms should test subscription-based delivery models that distribute the perception of delivery costs over a monthly fee, lessening the psychological impact of per-order fees. Explaining the value equivalency—for example, x free deliveries per month at a bundled price—can help desensitise price-conscious customers to the underlying fee structure.

3. Create transparent and verifiable gig worker welfare policies

Platforms that adopt and publicly communicate transparent floor wage policies, accident insurance, and regularised earnings disclosures stand to gain a reputational and loyalty advantage. As regulatory pressure around gig labour norms increases in India, proactive adoption of fair pay standards can reduce compliance risk while converting ethically motivated customers into platform advocates. This is because 38.6 percent of consumers are very concerned about gig worker income security.

4. Increase the pace of sustainable packaging and green logistics projects

Reusable or biodegradable packaging, route-optimized last-mile logistics, and the use of electric delivery trucks can all lower operating costs while addressing the environmental concerns of 36.8% of respondents who are highly worried about the sector's ecological footprint. E-bike fleets are already being used by platforms like Swiggy Instamart in a few locations; expanding similar programs across the country makes sense.

5. Increase revenue from private label and advertising in addition to transaction margin.

The most promising ways to increase contribution margins without turning off price-conscious customers are through advertising income and the introduction of private-label products. In addition to creating carefully chosen private-label product lines in high-frequency categories like dairy, staples, and personal care, platforms should increase their investments in on-platform advertising infrastructure, sponsored product placements, and premium brand collaboration programs.

VII. CONCLUSION

In a relatively short amount of time, Quick Commerce in India has evolved from a venture-funded experiment to a popular retail channel. With 72% of active respondents indicating strong intentions to continue utilising these platforms, the empirical data collected by this study demonstrates that urban Indian consumers have significantly incorporated Q-commerce into their everyday routines. With 70.2% of respondents recognising significant time savings, the main value proposition of time-saving convenience is well-established.

The Chi-Square analysis of Hypothesis 1 ($chi2 = 4.931$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.05$) offers statistically significant evidence that this ongoing intent is systematically and significantly related to customer satisfaction levels and is not accidental. Only 44.4% of consumers with poor or moderate happiness are likely to stick with Q-commerce platforms, compared to 73.3% of highly pleased users. This difference highlights the strategic significance of any small improvement in service quality. Platform operators creating segmented retention strategies can take immediate action based on the Chi-Square result, which quantifies the association at the group level.

But the report also identifies significant pressure spots. The majority of consumers say they would cut back on their use if free delivery were eliminated, and product fulfilment accuracy continues to be the least satisfying aspect. This serves as a clear reminder of the subsidy-dependent underpinnings of present transaction volumes. Only 38.6% of consumers are optimistic about Q-commerce platforms' long-term financial viability in the absence of investor subsidies.

Additionally, consumers are becoming more conscious of the industry's ethical and environmental aspects. As the market develops, competitive differentiation through ethical company practices may become just as crucial as delivery speed, as indicated by the fact that around 38% of respondents are extremely worried about gig worker welfare and environmental effect, respectively.

According to Cornell University, the Q-commerce market in India is expected to grow to USD 35 billion by 2030 due to the country's continued smartphone adoption, expansion into Tier-II and Tier-III cities, and diversification into new product categories. In order for this trajectory to materialise sustainably, platforms must solve for fulfilment accuracy, which is the primary driver of the satisfaction-to-retention association that this study confirmed; create workable fee-based revenue structures; and make significant investments in the welfare of gig workers and environmental stewardship. Platforms that successfully strike a balance between speed, trust, openness, and sustainability will have the best chance of attracting and keeping the next wave of Indian retail customers.

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