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A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY ON QUICK COMMERCE EVOLUTION WITH REFERENCE TO THE ADANI-BLINKIT PARTNERSHIP IN TERMINAL 2 AIRPORT, MUMBAI

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ABSTRACT

Quick commerce (Q-commerce) has emerged as a significant evolution within India's digital retail landscape, driven by urban lifestyles, smartphone penetration, and rising demand for speed and convenience. While Q-commerce operations have traditionally focused on residential neighbourhoods through hyperlocal dark-store models, recent developments indicate its expansion into non-residential, high-traffic environments. This qualitative case study examines the evolution of quick commerce in Mumbai, with specific reference to the Adani–Blinkit partnership launched at Terminal 2 of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport. The study aims to analyse the growth and adoption of quick commerce, evaluate the partnership as an innovative business model, and identify implications for stakeholders. A case study approach was adopted using secondary data sources, including academic literature, industry reports, media articles, and official company releases. The analysis indicates that the Adani–Blinkit collaboration represents a pioneering extension of Q-commerce into airport retail, enabling passengers to order essential items via a mobile application for rapid in-terminal delivery. This model enhances passenger convenience while demonstrating the adaptability of Q-commerce principles within regulated public infrastructure. The study contributes to emerging literature on quick commerce by highlighting its applicability beyond residential settings and suggests directions for future research and strategic practice.

Quick Commerce, Adani-Blinkit Partnership, Terminal 2 Airport, Mumbai, Case Study

INTRODUCTION

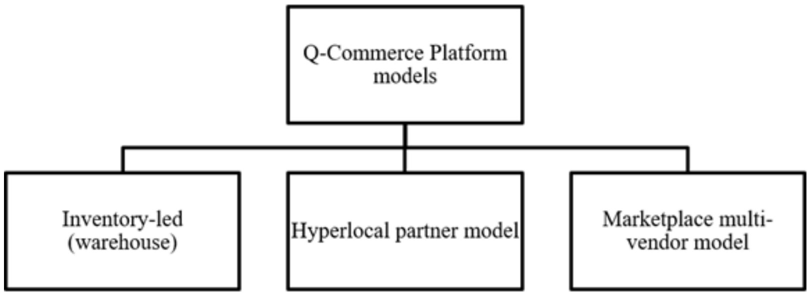
There has been a drastic shift in Indian retail. (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026) Up until recently, urban Indians would shop for their daily goods and groceries with monthly or weekly trips to the market. Cut to today, with a few taps on the smartphone, many households order their medicines, snacks and groceries at their homes within minutes. This change has primarily happened due to the smartphone adoption and enhanced internet availability in India. The COVID-19 pandemic, bringing in lockdowns and social distancing restricted in-store visits, thus paving the way for mass consumers to explore online shopping. In a study conducted by Patil et. Al (2021) found that online grocery sales grew by 80% to $2.66Bn, and consumers' attitudes shifted towards shopping for groceries online as it became the most convenient and safest way to secure the daily essentials. (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026) Simultaneously, quick-commerce (Q-commerce) platforms emerged to address the rising demand for instant delivery, supporting a shift in retail behaviour toward app-based buying of everyday essentials driven by speed and convenience. The gross order value of Q-commerce in India reached about ₹65,645.40 crores (US$7.4 billion) by FY25, a projected 24-fold increase over 2022, according to reports by India Briefing and Cornell SC Johnson.

Business Models:

(India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026) Indian q-commerce businesses operate with varied business models, but all rely on a network of dark stores, which are essentially tiny neighbourhood warehouses dedicated to e-orders and which are located close to customers. These warehouses let firms reserve a curated set of items and pick orders fast for hyperlocal delivery.

Different Q-commerce platforms use different models to source goods and fulfil orders namely;

- Inventory-led (warehouse) model: The firms purchase and store goods in large warehouses or many small warehouses. BigBasket Daily and some Swiggy/Instamart hubs follow this model.
- Hyperlocal partner model: Dunzo used this approach, where local shopkeepers signed up for the site and used their own inventory to fulfil requests.
- Marketplace multi-vendor model: Swiggy Instamart and Amazon Fresh use this model, where the platform runs deliveries while several vendors showcase products on the app.



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Additionally, there are omnichannel or hybrid strategies that combine aspects of these. In another study by Ranjekar and Roy (2023), for fast last-mile delivery, an effective q-commerce operation usually comprises a network of mini-warehouses (dark stores) in addition to a sizable "mother" warehouse.

India's major Quick Commerce Firms:

1. Blinkit

Blinkit has witnessed rapid growth since its 2022 rebranding from Grofers, with revenue more than doubling within a year, driven by its hyperlocal model and strong dominance in major urban markets, where a majority of its business is concentrated (Rathee et al., 2026; Jana & Mandal, 2025; Sanghi et al., 2024). The company continues to expand aggressively through dark stores, innovative service offerings, and flexible commission strategies, reflecting rising consumer preference for instant delivery and strengthening its position in India's quick commerce sector (Ambaliya et al., 2025; Jana & Mandal, 2025).

2. Swiggy Instamart

Swiggy Instamart, launched as Urban Kirana in 2020, has grown into India's second-largest quick commerce player, with GOV rising 58% to ₹8,100 crore and rapid expansion across cities, supported by partnerships and plans for 1,000 dark stores ahead of a $1.4 billion IPO (Karulkar et al., 2025; Umair, 2026). The platform is differentiating itself through a wider product range—especially in electronics—and aggressive geographic expansion, positioning itself as a strong competitor to Blinkit in India's evolving e-commerce landscape (Karulkar et al., 2025).

3. Zepto

Zepto, originally launched as Kirana Kart in 2021, has rapidly scaled across major Indian cities, achieving over 120% revenue growth to ₹4,454 crore in FY2024 while reducing losses and expanding into high-value categories, strategic partnerships, and dark store networks (Karulkar et al., 2025; Rathee et al., 2026). Backed by strong funding and a $5 billion valuation, the company is accelerating expansion, diversifying offerings (including electronics and café services), and preparing for an IPO while enhancing value through initiatives like its Super-Saver program (Karulkar et al., 2025).

4. Big Basket

BigBasket's quick commerce arm BB Now, launched in 2021, reduced losses by 40% and saw modest revenue growth while expanding its presence, product range, and dark store network with support from the Tata Group. Despite improvements in margins, subscription-driven higher order values, and aggressive expansion plans, BB Now continues to trail competitors like Blinkit and Zepto in scaling across tier-2 cities (Anurag & Johnpaul, 2026).

Objectives

- To examine the growth and adoption of quick commerce in Mumbai.
- To analyse the Adani-Blinkit partnership as an innovative q-commerce model.
- To provide suitable suggestions for researchers, practitioners and marketers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Growth and Adoption of Quick Commerce in Mumbai:

According to a Berstein Report (2025), found that quick commerce has appeared as a major and important growth retail model in India, which is particularly driven by a specific demographic of money-rich, time-poor consumers who rely on convenience and speed over cost. In another report by Nexdigm (2025), Mumbai is identified as one of the prime cities for the rapid growth of quick commerce. In another article by JP Morgan

(2024), it was found that, as of late 2024, quick commerce in Mumbai grew at such a rapid pace that 60% of sales in offline grocery stores had plummeted. Convenience and speed are important drivers of quick commerce adoption. The ultrafast delivery strategy, frequently within 10-15 minutes, serves the urban population's need for rapid access to products, notably groceries and basics (Akhtar & Farooqi, 2022; Nair, et. Al 2025). This tendency fits with consumers' propensity for saving time and avoiding the hassles of traditional purchasing, such as travel and queuing. This is particularly important in Mumbai, where access to physical stores is sometimes hampered by traffic jams and lengthy commutes (Singh & Tomar, 2024). These characteristics are essential for satisfying the needs of urban consumers for quick access to groceries.

With more companies joining the market, Q-commerce has become an extension of the e-commerce industry. Prioritising speed and convenience in delivery services, resolving consumer concerns about delivery uncertainty and giving alternatives such as same-day or two-day delivery possibilities (Ganapathy & Gupta, 2024; Singh J., 2023). Cash-on-delivery is still the preferred method of payment, and consumers value reliable and secure solutions. Effective customer service and thorough website content have a big impact on e-commerce trust (Chawla & Kumar, 2022; Chopdar & Balakrishnan, 2020). Loyalty programs and discounts highly influence consumer choice. It is highlighted that cashback programs and seasonal discounts are greatly appreciated, especially by students and consumers who are price-conscious (Singh & Tomar, 2024). In order to retain customers, platforms are increasingly providing loyalty programs and customised discounts, such as Zepto's "Zepto Pass," which offers perks including free deliveries and discounts (Economic Times, 2024). In addition to drawing in new customers, these programs encourage recurring purchases, which strengthen brand loyalty.

A city like Mumbai employs a hyperlocal model for quick deliveries, which aids firms to operate with lower operational costs and at the same time, improve delivery time (Nair et al., 2025). Additionally, quick commerce companies utilise AI and data analytics to optimise inventory, forecast demand, and expedite deliveries to ensure faster service and effective stock management. It also enhances transparency, engagement, and customer satisfaction through real-time order tracking and personalised recommendations. Furthermore, by forming strategic alliances with regional suppliers and distributors, quick commerce fortifies its supply chain. The company ensures its dark stores are stocked with high-quality, fresh products by working closely with them. A brand like Zepto reduces supply chain interruptions and expedites client delivery by prioritising local sourcing and swift inventory turnover. In addition to maintaining low operating costs, this effective supply chain management guarantees steady product availability, which is essential for sustaining the fast delivery speeds that characterise quick commerce.

Research Methodology

The study employs a case study approach using secondary data. The study uses research papers, company official media releases, media research and industry reports, newspaper articles and other such freely and readily available manuscripts.

Case Study

According to the official news release by the Adani company (2026), on 1st April 2026, Adani Airport Holdings Limited, in collaboration with Blinkit, has introduced India's first in-terminal quick commerce service at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport at Terminal 2 on the domestic departures, permitting passengers to conveniently order essentials such as chargers, snacks, and personal items via the app and receive them directly at gates, lounges, or other designated areas within minutes.

The service is managed by trained personnel to ensure smooth and secure delivery while complying with airport regulations, including sourcing permissible liquids from approved in-terminal stores. This initiative enhances passenger convenience, expands digital retail within airports, and reflects AAHL's strategy to create tech-driven, customer-centric travel experiences while enabling Blinkit to tap into a high-demand, high-intent consumer environment.

Scope & Limitations

The study is currently limited to Mumbai and relies only on existing secondary data. The research can later be extended towards gathering insights on passengers cum consumers' views on the application of Blinkit on T2 in Mumbai's airport. Quick commerce operations have been seen usually in residential areas, where dark stores have been set up (Jana & Mandal, 2025). But, with the advent of quick commerce now being applicable in a commercial and non-residential area, this provides further scope for study towards other public areas, such as public libraries, railway stations, apart from food items (Florentyna, 2025), bus stands and cinema halls. Additionally, similar studies can be undertaken across different cities and towns. The partnership between

Adani and Blinkit is at a nascent stage. Future studies can be undertaken when the partnership reaches a more mature stage.

Suggestions

Researchers		
Sr No	Subject	Details
1	Primary research insights	Research can be undertaken on gathering consumer/passenger insights and perception on Blinkit and the service it has newly undertaken to provide in the T2 airport of Mumbai, which can thus measure convenience, trust and customer satisfaction, probably leading to greater impact on using quick commerce.
2	Increase the scope	Upon the success of the new model, researchers can even check the feasibility of this model in other Adani-operated airports in India.

Practitioners & Marketers		
Sr No	Subject	Details
1	Promotion of the new partnership	The Adani-Blinkit partnership, being at a nascent stage, should be aggressively marketed and promoted on the Blinkit App and even have hoardings and banners placed in the departures of Terminal 2 airport.
2	Application of the Model to Other Airports and other travel, commercial and non-commercial areas	Since quick commerce is now expanding towards T2 airport, similar such collaborations can occur not only with Adani-operated airports but also with other entity-operated airports. The model can also be tried on other travel-related and commercial areas, such as railway stations, metro stations, bus stands, cinema halls, libraries and other public places.
3	Entry of other companies	Since Blinkit bagged this opportunity, other q-commerce companies can also try to enter to break the monopoly of Blinkit. Also, other q-commerce companies can try to explore this model in other airports.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the evolution of quick commerce in India and analysed the Adani–Blinkit partnership at Mumbai's Terminal 2 as a novel application of the Q-commerce model in a non-residential setting. The findings indicate that quick commerce is progressively expanding beyond neighbourhood-based delivery systems into high-footfall public spaces, reflecting changing consumer expectations for immediacy and convenience. The Adani–Blinkit collaboration demonstrates how strategic partnerships between infrastructure operators and digital platforms can enhance service accessibility while maintaining operational compliance within a regulated airport environment. From a managerial perspective, the model offers opportunities for service differentiation, improved passenger experience, and new revenue streams. However, its long-term success will depend on operational efficiency, regulatory adherence, and consumer awareness. For researchers, the case provides a foundation for future empirical studies examining passenger perceptions, adoption behaviour, and scalability across other public transit hubs. The study highlights the evolving scope of quick commerce and its potential to reshape retail experiences in diverse consumption contexts.

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