

Impact of Quick Commerce on Traditional Retail and Kirana Stores

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Abstract: Quick Commerce (Q-Commerce), which offers delivery services within 10–30 minutes, has significantly transformed the Indian retail sector. The rapid growth of platforms such as Blinkit, Zepto, and Swiggy Instamart has changed consumer purchasing behaviour by providing faster delivery, attractive discounts, and greater convenience. This study examines the impact of quick commerce on traditional retail stores and kirana shops in India. The research focuses on how changing customer preferences, increasing digitalization, and rising demand for instant delivery services affect small retailers. The study identifies major challenges faced by kirana stores, including reduced customer footfall, intense price competition, declining profit margins, and difficulty in matching delivery speed and technological capabilities of quick commerce platforms. At the same time, the paper highlights opportunities for traditional retailers through digital payment adoption, online ordering systems, and collaboration with hyperlocal delivery networks. The study also explores the role of hybrid retail models that combine offline customer relationships with online service capabilities. The findings suggest that while quick commerce creates competitive pressure on traditional retailers, kirana stores can sustain their market presence by adopting technology, improving customer engagement, and integrating digital business practices. The study contributes to understanding the evolving retail ecosystem in India and the future coexistence of quick commerce platforms and neighborhood retail stores.

Keywords: *Quick Commerce, Kirana Stores, Traditional Retail, Consumer Behaviour, Hyperlocal Delivery, Digital Transformation, Retail Sustainability, Last-Mile Delivery, E-Commerce, Urban Retail Market.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

India's retail sector has long been dominated by traditional kirana stores, which play a vital role in meeting the daily needs of consumers. These neighborhood stores are known for personalized customer service, flexible credit facilities, strong customer relationships, and easy accessibility. For decades, kirana stores have formed the backbone of the Indian retail economy, especially in urban and semi-urban areas. However, the rapid growth of Quick Commerce (Q-Commerce) has significantly transformed the retail landscape in recent years. Quick commerce refers to ultra-fast delivery services that provide groceries and essential products within 10–30 minutes through digital platforms and mobile applications. Companies such as Blinkit, Zepto, and Swiggy Instamart have expanded

rapidly by offering convenience, speed, discounts, and a wide range of products to consumers.

Quick commerce companies use advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, dark stores, data analytics, and hyperlocal delivery systems to ensure efficient and rapid delivery services. The increasing adoption of smartphones, digital payments, and online shopping habits has further accelerated the growth of quick commerce in India. As a result, many consumers now prefer online grocery shopping over visiting neighborhood kirana stores. This shift in consumer behaviour has created intense competition for traditional retailers, leading to reduced customer footfall, declining sales, and pressure on profit margins. At the same time, quick commerce is reshaping urban retail patterns and influencing

customer expectations toward instant fulfillment and convenience. Despite these challenges, kirana stores continue to maintain certain advantages such as trust-based relationships, personalized services, and local market knowledge. Therefore, understanding the impact of quick commerce on traditional retail and identifying sustainable adaptation strategies has become an important area of research in the evolving Indian retail ecosystem.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyze the impact of quick commerce on traditional retail and kirana stores.
- To examine changes in consumer buying behaviour due to quick commerce services.
- To identify operational challenges faced by kirana stores.
- To study adaptation strategies for traditional retailers.
- To suggest measures for sustainable coexistence between quick commerce and traditional retail.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

➤ *Research Design*

The study adopts a descriptive research design to analyze the impact of quick commerce on traditional retail and kirana stores. Descriptive research helps in understanding current market trends, consumer buying behaviour, and operational challenges faced by small retailers due to the growth of quick commerce platforms. The study focuses on identifying the relationship between quick commerce services and changing retail patterns in India.

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches are used in the study. The research mainly examines customer preferences, digital transformation, competition, and adaptation strategies adopted by kirana stores. Secondary data from journals, articles, industry reports, websites, and newspapers were also referred to for better understanding of the research problem. The descriptive design helps in presenting systematic information regarding the influence of quick commerce on the retail ecosystem.

➤ *Sample and Data Collection*

The study is based on both primary and secondary data collection methods. Primary data were collected from 120 respondents, including consumers and kirana store owners, using a structured questionnaire. The respondents were selected through convenient sampling method from urban and semi-urban areas where quick commerce services are actively used.

The questionnaire included questions related to consumer buying behaviour, preference towards quick commerce, challenges faced by kirana stores, digital adoption, and future sustainability of traditional retail. Responses were collected and analyzed using percentage analysis and tabular presentation.

Secondary data were collected from research journals, Scopus-indexed articles, industry reports, newspapers, company websites, and online databases related to quick commerce and retail transformation. Relevant information from previous studies was also used to support the findings and conclusions of the research.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent studies have highlighted the growing influence of quick commerce on India's retail sector, particularly on traditional kirana stores. Saxena, A. (2025) stated that urban consumers, especially Gen Z customers, increasingly prefer online grocery shopping because of convenience, attractive discounts, and faster delivery services. The study observed that this shift in consumer behaviour has reduced customer visits to neighborhood kirana stores. Similarly, Tyagi, V. K. (2025) explained that quick commerce contributes positively to the economy by creating employment opportunities in logistics, warehousing, and delivery services while also accelerating digital transformation in the retail sector.

A study published by the International Journal of Advanced Research and Review emphasized the importance of balancing traditional retail practices with modern technology. The research suggested that kirana stores can remain competitive by adopting digital payment systems, online ordering facilities, and hybrid retail models. Other studies on the impact of quick commerce on kirana stores revealed that small retailers face intense competition due to heavy discounts, cashback offers, and ultra-fast delivery services provided by online platforms. Reports published by The Economic Times further highlighted that quick commerce companies are rapidly expanding in urban India, changing customer expectations toward instant delivery and convenience. Overall, the literature indicates that while quick commerce creates challenges for traditional retailers, technology adoption and digital integration can help kirana stores sustain their market position in the evolving retail ecosystem.

V. IMPACT OF QUICK COMMERCE ON TRADITIONAL RETAIL

➤ *Decline in Foot Traffic*

The rapid growth of quick commerce platforms has significantly reduced customer visits to traditional kirana stores. Consumers now prefer ordering groceries and essential products online because it saves time and offers doorstep delivery within a few minutes. Busy urban lifestyles and increasing smartphone usage have further encouraged online purchasing habits. As a result, many neighborhood stores are experiencing a decline in daily walk-in customers. This reduction in foot traffic directly affects the sales and revenue of small retailers, especially in urban areas where quick commerce services are highly active.

➤ *Increased Competition*

Quick commerce companies have created intense competition for traditional retailers by offering attractive discounts, cashback offers, free delivery, and promotional schemes. Large platforms have strong financial support and advanced supply chain systems, allowing them to provide products at competitive prices. In contrast, kirana stores usually operate on smaller profit margins and limited resources, making it difficult to compete with these pricing strategies. The convenience of instant delivery also attracts customers away from local stores. This growing competition has increased pressure on small retailers to improve their services and adopt digital business practices.

➤ *Change in Consumer Expectations*

Quick commerce has changed customer expectations regarding shopping convenience and service quality. Consumers now expect faster delivery, easy online ordering, digital payment options, and product availability at all times. Many customers prefer shopping through mobile applications that provide real-time tracking, multiple payment methods, and personalized offers. Traditional kirana stores often struggle to meet these modern expectations because of limited technological infrastructure. Consequently, retailers who fail to adapt to changing consumer demands may lose customers to online platforms.

➤ *Pressure on Profit Margins*

Kirana stores generally operate with low profit margins and limited financial capacity. The expansion of quick commerce has increased pricing pressure, as online platforms frequently provide discounts and promotional offers to attract customers. Small retailers cannot always reduce prices because it may affect their business sustainability. In addition, increasing operational costs such as rent, electricity, transportation, and labor further reduce profitability. To survive in the competitive market, many kirana stores are forced to adopt new business strategies while maintaining affordable pricing for customers.

➤ *Employment and Social Impact*

The growth of quick commerce has created new employment opportunities in areas such as delivery services, warehouse operations, logistics, and technology management. Many young people are employed as delivery partners under the gig economy model. However, the expansion of quick commerce has also created uncertainty for small retailers and shop owners who depend on local customer bases for their income. Reduced sales and customer visits may negatively affect the livelihood of traditional shopkeepers and their employees. Thus, quick commerce has both positive and negative social impacts on the retail ecosystem and employment structure in India.

VI. OPPORTUNITIES FOR KIRANA STORES

Despite the rapid expansion of quick commerce platforms, kirana stores still hold a strong position in India's retail ecosystem due to their local presence, customer trust, and personalized service. With the right strategies and digital adoption, these traditional retailers can transform challenges into growth opportunities.

➤ *Adoption of Digital Payment Systems*

One of the most important opportunities for kirana stores is the adoption of digital payment systems such as UPI, mobile wallets, and QR-based transactions. Digital payments improve transaction speed, reduce cash handling risks, and increase customer convenience. As more consumers prefer cashless shopping, kirana stores that adopt digital payment methods can retain existing customers and attract new tech-savvy buyers.

➤ *Collaboration with Delivery Apps and ONDC Platforms*

Kirana stores can collaborate with delivery aggregators and open digital platforms like ONDC (Open Network for Digital Commerce) to expand their customer base. Through such partnerships, small retailers can offer online ordering and home delivery services without building their own infrastructure. This integration helps kirana stores compete with quick commerce platforms by participating in the digital marketplace and reaching nearby customers efficiently.

➤ *Personalized Customer Relationships*

A major strength of kirana stores is their strong relationship with local customers. Unlike large online platforms, kirana shops provide personalized services, emotional connection, and familiarity with customer preferences. Many shopkeepers also offer flexible services such as product recommendations and home delivery on request. By strengthening these relationships, kirana stores can maintain customer loyalty even in a competitive environment.

➤ *Providing Credit Facilities and Trust-Based Services*

Kirana stores traditionally offer credit or "buy now, pay later" facilities to trusted customers, which is a significant advantage over quick commerce platforms. This trust-based credit system supports customers during financial constraints and strengthens long-term relationships. Such services are difficult for digital platforms to replicate, making it a unique competitive strength for kirana retailers.

➤ *Hybrid Retail Models Combining Offline and Online Operations*

The future of kirana stores lies in adopting hybrid business models that combine physical stores with digital platforms. By maintaining offline shops while also offering online ordering and delivery services, kirana retailers can increase their market reach. Studies suggest that integration into hyperlocal delivery networks can create a mutually beneficial ecosystem where kirana stores act as fulfillment partners for quick commerce

companies. This model helps small retailers increase sales while contributing to faster and more efficient delivery systems.

Overall, these opportunities show that kirana stores can remain competitive by embracing technology, strengthening customer relationships, and integrating with digital commerce platforms rather than competing directly with them.

VII. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1: Impact of Quick Commerce on Sales of Kirana Stores

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Highly Affected	48	40%
Moderately Affected	36	30%
Slightly Affected	20	16.7%
Not Affected	10	8.3%
No Opinion	6	5%
Total	120	100%

➤ Interpretation

The table shows that 40% of the respondents believe that quick commerce has highly affected the sales of kirana stores. About 30% stated that the impact is moderate. This indicates that quick commerce platforms are creating strong competition for traditional retailers and influencing their business performance.

Table 2: Consumer Preference Towards Quick Commerce Services

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Prefer	42	35%
Prefer	38	31.7%
Neutral	18	15%
Do Not Prefer	14	11.7%
Strongly Do Not Prefer	8	6.6%
Total	120	100%

➤ Interpretation

The above table reveals that most consumers prefer quick commerce services because of convenience and fast delivery. Around 35% strongly prefer such services, while 31.7% prefer them. This reflects the growing popularity of online grocery and instant delivery platforms among urban consumers.

Table 3: Challenges Faced by Kirana Stores Due to Quick Commerce

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Price Competition	40	33.3%
Reduced Customer Footfall	34	28.3%
Difficulty in Fast Delivery	22	18.4%

Technology Adaptation Issues	16	13.3%
Other Challenges	8	6.7%
Total	120	100%

➤ Interpretation

The table indicates that price competition is the major challenge faced by kirana stores, as stated by 33.3% of respondents. Reduced customer footfall is another significant issue reported by 28.3% of respondents. The findings show that quick commerce is increasing operational pressure on traditional retailers.

Table 4: Adoption of Digital Technology by Kirana Stores

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Fully Adopted	28	23.3%
Partially Adopted	46	38.3%
Planning to Adopt	24	20%
Not Adopted	16	13.4%
No Interest	6	5%
Total	120	100%

➤ Interpretation

The table shows that 38.3% of kirana stores have partially adopted digital technologies such as UPI payments and online ordering systems. Around 23.3% have fully adopted digital tools. This indicates that traditional retailers are gradually moving towards digital transformation to remain competitive.

Table 5: Opinion on Hybrid Retail Model for Future Sustainability

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	50	41.7%
Agree	34	28.3%
Neutral	16	13.3%
Disagree	12	10%
Strongly Disagree	8	6.7%
Total	120	100%

➤ Interpretation

The table reveals that 41.7% of respondents strongly agree that hybrid retail models combining offline and online services can help kirana stores survive in the competitive market. Another 28.3% agree with the statement. This suggests that integrating digital services with traditional retail practices can ensure long-term sustainability.

VIII. FINDINGS

- The study found that quick commerce has a significant impact on the sales performance of kirana stores. A majority of respondents stated that traditional retailers are highly or moderately affected due to increasing customer preference for online shopping and instant delivery services.
- Consumers strongly prefer quick commerce platforms because of convenience, faster delivery, attractive

discounts, and easy access through mobile applications. This shows a major shift in consumer buying behaviour toward digital retail services.

- Price competition emerged as the major challenge faced by kirana stores. Small retailers find it difficult to compete with the heavy discounts, cashback offers, and promotional strategies provided by quick commerce companies.
- Reduced customer footfall is another important issue identified in the study. Many consumers now prefer ordering groceries online instead of visiting nearby retail stores, especially in urban areas.
- The study reveals that kirana stores are gradually adopting digital technologies such as UPI payments, QR code transactions, and online ordering systems to improve customer convenience and business efficiency.
- A considerable number of retailers are planning to adopt digital tools in the future, indicating growing awareness about the importance of technology in the retail sector.
- Most respondents believe that hybrid retail models combining offline stores with online services can help kirana stores remain competitive and sustainable in the changing retail environment.
- The findings also indicate that personalized customer relationships and trust-based services remain strong advantages of traditional kirana stores compared to quick commerce platforms.
- The research concludes that digital transformation and technological adaptation are essential for the long-term survival and growth of traditional retail businesses in India.

IX. SUGGESTIONS

- Kirana stores should adopt digital payment systems such as UPI and QR code transactions to improve customer convenience.
- Traditional retailers can collaborate with online delivery platforms and hyperlocal delivery services to expand their customer reach.
- Kirana stores should introduce online ordering and home delivery facilities to compete with quick commerce companies.
- Retailers should focus on maintaining strong customer relationships through personalized service and trust-based interactions.
- Government and retail associations can provide digital training and financial support to help small retailers adopt technology.
- Kirana stores should implement hybrid business models by combining offline retail operations with online sales channels.
- Small retailers can improve inventory management and customer communication through simple digital applications and mobile tools.
- Awareness programs should be conducted to educate traditional retailers about the benefits of digital transformation and e-commerce integration.

X. CONCLUSION

Quick commerce has transformed India's retail sector by changing consumer expectations and shopping behaviour. The rapid growth of companies such as Blinkit, Zepto, and Swiggy Instamart has increased demand for fast delivery, convenience, and digital shopping experiences. While this development has created intense competition for traditional kirana stores, these retailers still possess important strengths such as customer trust, personalized services, and local market knowledge.

The study concludes that kirana stores cannot rely only on traditional business methods in the current competitive environment. Adoption of digital technologies, online ordering systems, and hybrid retail models is necessary for long-term sustainability. Collaboration between traditional retailers and digital commerce platforms can create a balanced retail ecosystem where both systems coexist and grow together. Therefore, technology integration and customer-focused strategies will play a major role in shaping the future of India's retail industry.

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