

Zepto: Growing Basket Size Without Losing Frequency

Zepto gets ordered from more often than any competitor in India, and earns less on every order. This assignment is about closing that gap honestly.

CURRENT

₹388

average order value

TARGET

₹480

in six months

CONSTRAINT

Frequency

must not fall

PREPARED BY

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My task: grow the basket, protect the habit

As the PM responsible for basket size at Zepto, my goal is to raise **Average Order Value from ₹388 to ₹480** in six months, without reducing order frequency.

WHAT I SEE IN USER BEHAVIOUR



Small, urgency-driven orders

Open, grab one thing, check out



Stop at the free-delivery threshold

The threshold becomes the finish line



Reorder familiar items

No exploration of new categories

₹388

AOV, flat for 3 years:
lowest of the big
players

10–20%

of a ₹388 basket goes
on delivery (₹40–80)

₹78.75

EBITDA loss per order
in FY26

RULES I FOLLOWED

- Order frequency must not fall
- No higher minimum order value; small orders stay welcome
- No reliance on discounts or delivery thresholds
- No dark patterns, timers or hard-to-remove items

01 Research & Segmentation

02 Blockers & Core Problem

03 Solutions to Increase AOV

04 Prioritization with RICE

Users fill small baskets fast, then stop

Primary survey • 10 Zepto users • directional sample

90%

of baskets fall in the ₹200–499 band

60%

of orders contain only 1–3 items

70%

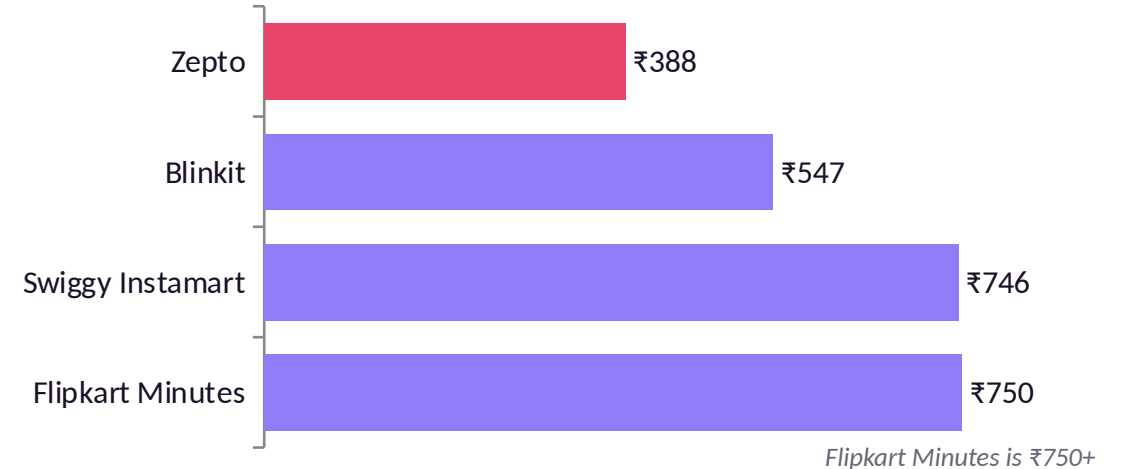
stop adding once free delivery is reached

0%

actively explore new categories

50% would add an item if the suggestion fits their cart. They respond to relevance, not discounts.

Average order value, mid 2026 (₹)



MARKET DATA MATCHES MY SURVEY

Quick commerce is built for top-up, not stock-up

→ 60% order just 1–3 items

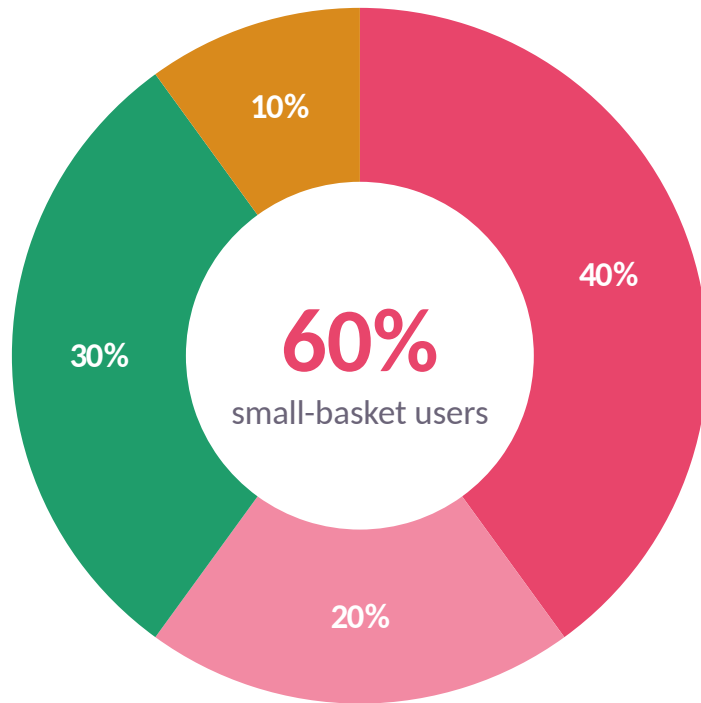
~58% of shoppers add items only to cross delivery thresholds

→ 70% stop at free delivery

Instamart lifted AOV by dropping low spenders

→ Closed to Zepto: hurts frequency

Four ways people shop, and 60% cap the basket



Urgency Grabbers

LOW AOV

40%

Ran out, search, checkout in minutes. No browsing; reorder familiar items.



Impulse Snackers

LOW AOV

20%

Late-night cravings. Small baskets, but react to relevant prompts.



Planned Top-Uppers

HEALTHY

30%

Routine restock across categories, 4–7 items. The behaviour to grow.



Deal-Driven

MINOR

10%

Open the app for offers. Smallest group, low discount dependence.

WHERE THE OPENING IS

They don't browse, so discovery never happens, and free delivery works as a ceiling. But Planned Top-Uppers prove bigger baskets already happen in the same app, and these users respond to useful nudges, not discounts.

Basket building stops at three points



01

PSYCHOLOGICAL

Free delivery is a finish line

The goal becomes "unlock free delivery," not "complete my shop."
70% stop there.



02

STRUCTURAL

Cross-sell isn't contextual

Cart pushes site-wide bestsellers,
not what pairs with this cart.



03

EXPERIENTIAL

Literal search, no bundles

"Tortilla chips" never surfaces salsa
or dip; the context is lost.



04

BEHAVIOURAL

Single-mission urgency

60% buy 1-3 items. One item in cart
= mission complete.

Don't want more

Need just 1-2 items. Keep checkout fast; never make them feel penalised.

Want more, but don't add it

Would buy the matching item if shown at the right moment. This is the AOV opportunity.

Two problems, one question

PS1 • THE COMPLETED-MISSION CEILING

Blockers 1 + 4

USERS CURRENTLY

treat Zepto as a single-item tool and stop when the need, or free delivery, is met

BECAUSE

the experience rewards fast search-and-checkout over discovery

WHICH RESULTS IN

baskets capped just above the threshold

PS2 • THE MISSING PAIRING ENGINE

Blockers 2 + 3

USERS CURRENTLY

add only the item they came for, with no relevant companions shown

BECAUSE

search and cart suggest by popularity, not by what pairs with this cart

WHICH RESULTS IN

missed pairings that would lift items and AOV

REFINED PROBLEM STATEMENT

Zepto has the strongest order frequency and the weakest basket. AOV has sat near ₹388 for three years while rivals sit at ₹547–750+. **The barrier isn't price or intent: the app is built to finish a mission fast, and never shows what naturally goes with the cart.**

₹388 → ₹480

in 6 months, with order frequency flat or rising

Can a customer who already trusts Zepto several times a week be helped to buy more in one visit, without being pushed into it?

Zepto's greatest strength is its biggest revenue blocker



A • THE FINANCIAL CEILING

- W1** Stop after crossing the threshold: avoiding a fee, not shopping
- W2** Cart is gamified around a number to reach
- W3** Cross-sell ranks by popularity, not cart intent
- W4** Catalogue data built for dark stores, not behaviour

B • THE BEHAVIOURAL CEILING

- W1** Buy 1–3 items and leave once the target is in cart
- W2** Search and landing pages are dead ends
- W3** Search is a literal index; detours seen as drop-off risk
- W4** Success measured on speed; basket size never a target

SHARED ROOT The product is engineered, in its data and metrics, for fast retrieval, not basket building.

THE FREQUENCY TRADE-OFF

- ✗ Higher minimums or thresholds
- ✗ Discouraging small orders
- ✗ Timers and pre-ticked add-ons
- ✓ Relevance to this cart
- ✓ Discovery at the right moment
- ✓ Brand-funded value

Three fixes at the three moments baskets stall



1 • SEARCH & BROWSE

AI Shopkeeper

Shop by goal: "pizza night for 4" builds an editable cart in one tap. Catches missed pairings at checkout, and uses past orders helpfully ("your usual bread?")

AOV LIFT

8–12 item contextual basket

MANIPULATION LINE

Only cart-relevant picks, sponsored items labelled, quiet after 2 skips

Solves PS2 • blockers 2 + 3

2 • BEFORE PAYMENT (₹200+)

Smart Deal Shelf

A short shelf of cart-matched deals just above "Pay," always skippable. Deep cuts are brand-funded samples; only light markdowns on Zepto staples

AOV LIFT

+₹40–100 per order

MANIPULATION LINE

No countdown timer: removed from v1 to avoid false urgency

Solves PS1 • blocker 1

3 • AFTER THE THRESHOLD

Zepto Surprise Box

One-tap ₹49 / ₹99 curated box worth more than its price, never the same twice. Brands pay for sampling, so it is margin-neutral for Zepto

AOV LIFT

+₹49–99 per order

MANIPULATION LINE

Price and value shown upfront, never pre-added, one-tap remove

Solves PS1 • discovery gap

Ship the quick win first, then build the bet

Solution	Reach	Impact	Confidence	Effort	RICE
Zepto Surprise Box	9	5	7	3	105
Smart Deal Shelf	8	6	8	5	77
AI Shopkeeper	9	9	5	9	45

$RICE = (Reach \times Impact \times Confidence) \div Effort$, each scored 1–10

WHY THE SURPRISE BOX WINS NOW

- Lowest effort: no new infrastructure
- Margin-safe: brand-funded
- Proves the thesis in weeks
- Shopkeeper last: needs a pairing catalogue first



NOW • MONTHS 0–2

Zepto Surprise Box

Prove post-threshold discovery



NEXT • MONTHS 2–4

Smart Deal Shelf

Add cart-matched deals before pay



LATER • MONTHS 4–6

AI Shopkeeper

Build pairing catalogue, then ship

NORTH STAR AOV ₹388 → ₹480 in 6 months with orders per active customer flat or rising

Grow the basket, with guardrails on the habit



GROWTH KPIs

- Attach rate per feature
- Items per order
- New categories per customer
- Share of customers with a bigger basket
- Incremental margin per order



GUARDRAILS

- Orders per active customer
- Time to checkout under 2 min
- Session-to-order drop-off
- Remove rate and cancellations
- Churn among low spenders



ROLLOUT

Launch each feature to a 5% cohort in one city. Scale only if AOV rises and every guardrail holds. If frequency dips, pause and roll back.

Help customers finish the shop they came for, not push them into more.