

Schedule it Smart: Rethinking Grocery Delivery for Zepto

A deep dive into why young users skip scheduled delivery — and how product-driven nudges can flip the habit. This case study combines user research, product outcomes, and feature prioritization to unlock both user value and operational efficiency.



Market Landscape

Platform	Scheduled Delivery	Cities Available	Delivery Model	UI-UX Flow
BigBasket	✓ Yes	300+ cities	Fixed 2–3 hr slots	Calendar-style slot picker at checkout with filters
Amazon Fresh	✓ Yes	Metro & Tier-1 cities	Same-day / next-day 2-hr slots	Slot options visible during checkout; location-dependent
Milkbasket	✓ Yes (Subscription)	Delhi NCR, Bengaluru, Hyderabad etc.	Fixed early-morning drop (~5–7 AM)	Delivery time chosen during onboarding; repeats daily
Country Delight	✓ Yes (Subscription)	18 cities	Daily scheduled drop	Countdown timer UI: “Order by 11 PM, get by 7AM” shown clearly
Blinkit	✗ No	200+ cities	Instant delivery (15–45 min)	No time slot selection; only estimated time shown

Customer Feedback – Real Reviews

✓ Positive Feedback:

- **BigBasket (Play Store):**

“Scheduled delivery works well for morning needs. The 7-10AM slot has never failed me.”

- **Milkbasket (Play Store):**

“I love the fixed morning deliveries. No minimum order and zero delivery charge—super convenient!”

- **Country Delight (App Store):**

“Fresh milk at 6:30 AM every day without fail. Highly reliable and hygienic.”

✗ Negative Feedback:

- **Country Delight**

“Sometimes fruits are stale and app UI is buggy during checkout. Support response is slow.”

- **Milkbasket (Reddit user, Hyderabad):**

“Was great until they started charging ₹180/month. Not worth it if you don’t need daily delivery.”

Gaps & Opportunities

- **Scheduled delivery slots should be made more visible** earlier in the user journey—not just at checkout.

- Most platforms do not offer **narrower slots** like 7–9AM consistently—demand is unmet.

- There's scope for adding incentives (**free delivery/discounts**) to encourage slot selection.

- **UI improvements** like real-time slot updates, upfront availability, and proactive reminders could boost trust and adoption.

Zepto's Dual Offering Positioning

Scheduled Delivery	Instant Delivery (10 mins)
<i>Planned grocery baskets, daily essentials</i>	<i>Impulse buys, urgent needs</i>
Lower ops cost, higher delivery success	High speed
Batch-optimized, scalable infrastructure	Real-time ops with high strain on resources

Scheduled delivery being piloted selectively – positioned for cost efficiency & operational leverage

Zepto's instant model drives top-line growth through speed, but long-term margins depend on scaling low-cost, reliable scheduled delivery.

Operational Cost Comparison

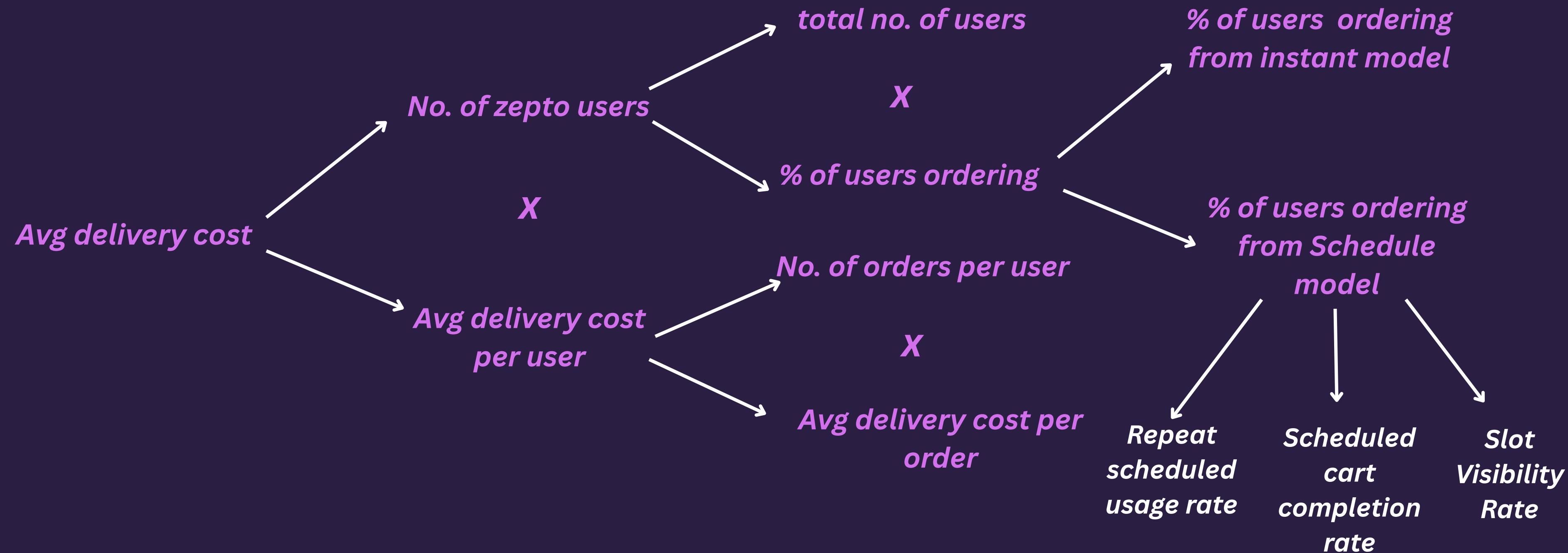
Cost Component	Instant Delivery	Scheduled Delivery
Rider Cost	₹50–65	₹15–20
Last-Mile Delivery	₹15–20	₹5–8
Picking & Packing Cost	₹10–15	₹5–10
Total Operational Cost	₹75–100+	₹25–50

Scheduled delivery offers up to 65–75% cost savings, due to:

- Route batching
- Lower idle time
- Predictable demand patterns

📌 Sources: Bain India, Redseer Reports, Inc42

Adoption of scheduled delivery drives multiple business outcomes for Zepto – one of the most critical being a reduction in average delivery cost through improved operational efficiency.



Increasing the % of scheduled deliveries reduces delivery cost by enabling route batching, improving rider utilization, lowering failure rates, and optimizing workforce planning through predictable demand windows.

Chosen Segment

Young Working Adults (Age 22–35)

Primarily unmarried or newly married users who are digital-first, convenience-driven, and actively use quick commerce platforms like Zepto, Blinkit, and Swiggy Instamart.

Why This Segment?

- **This age group forms the core user base for instant grocery delivery – converting even a fraction of them to scheduled delivery can lead to high-impact results.**
- **Includes both unmarried individuals (often impulsive shoppers) and young married users (who value reliability and time-saving solutions).**
- **Tech-savvy and app-native, they're more likely to notice, understand, and act on new features – making it easier to experiment and optimize for adoption.**

Guesstimate Justification (Why This Segment Matters)

India's population: 1.43 billion

Assume 40% live in metro + tier-2 cities → ~572 million

~35% of that are aged 22–35 → ~200 million

~50% of 22–35s in these cities use online grocery platforms → ~100 million

Assuming Zepto has ~30% market share:

~30 million Zepto users in this 18–35 segment

Currently, if only 10% of them use scheduled delivery →

~3 million users

If we increase adoption to just 30% →

That's an additional 6 million users shifting to scheduled.

Estimated Cost Savings (₹40 saved per scheduled order):

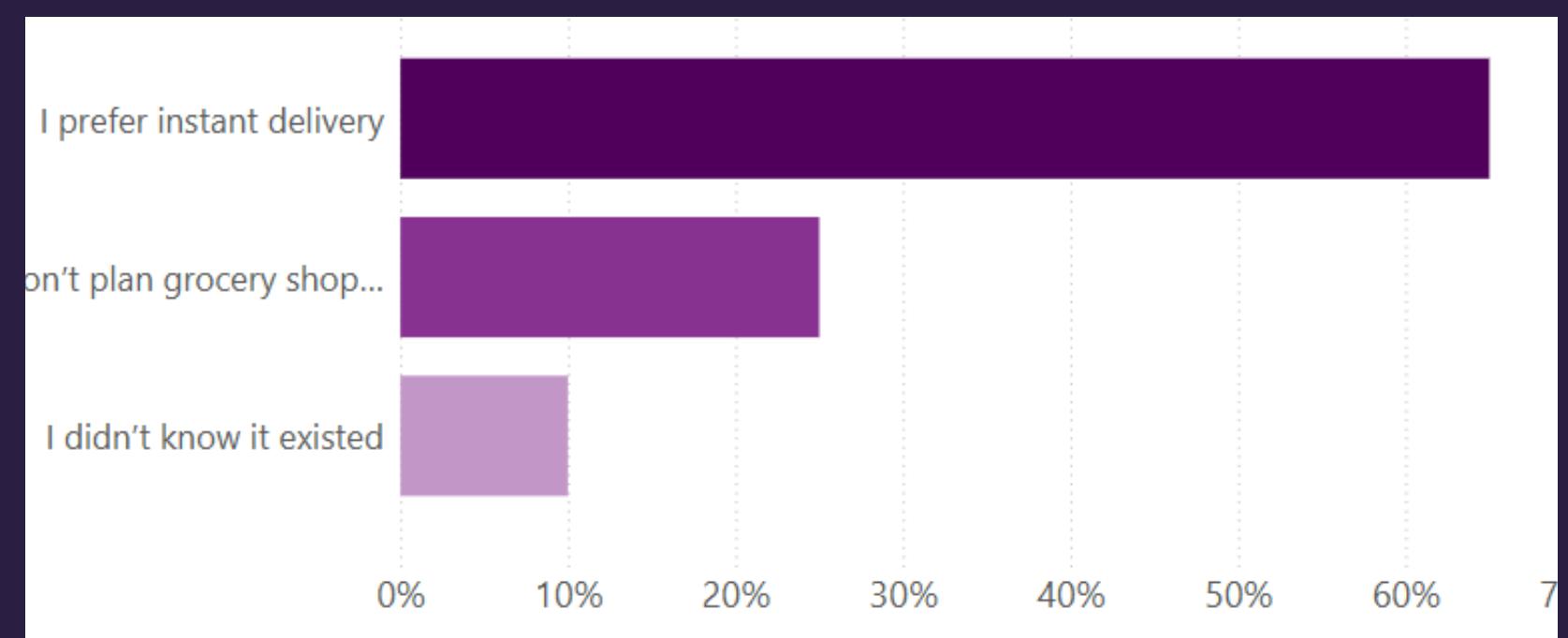
₹240+ crore in potential delivery cost reduction.

Hypotheses

- **Not Habitual Planners:** Unmarried users in this age group tend to shop based on immediate needs, not planned routines – making scheduled delivery less appealing.
- **Driven by Offers/Discounts:** They are more likely to try scheduled delivery if there's a visible benefit, such as discounts, waived delivery fees, or bundle deals.
- **Slot-Availability Mismatch:** Their fast-paced work schedules mean they prefer specific, flexible delivery windows – fixed or inconvenient slots can lead to drop-offs.

User Interview Insights

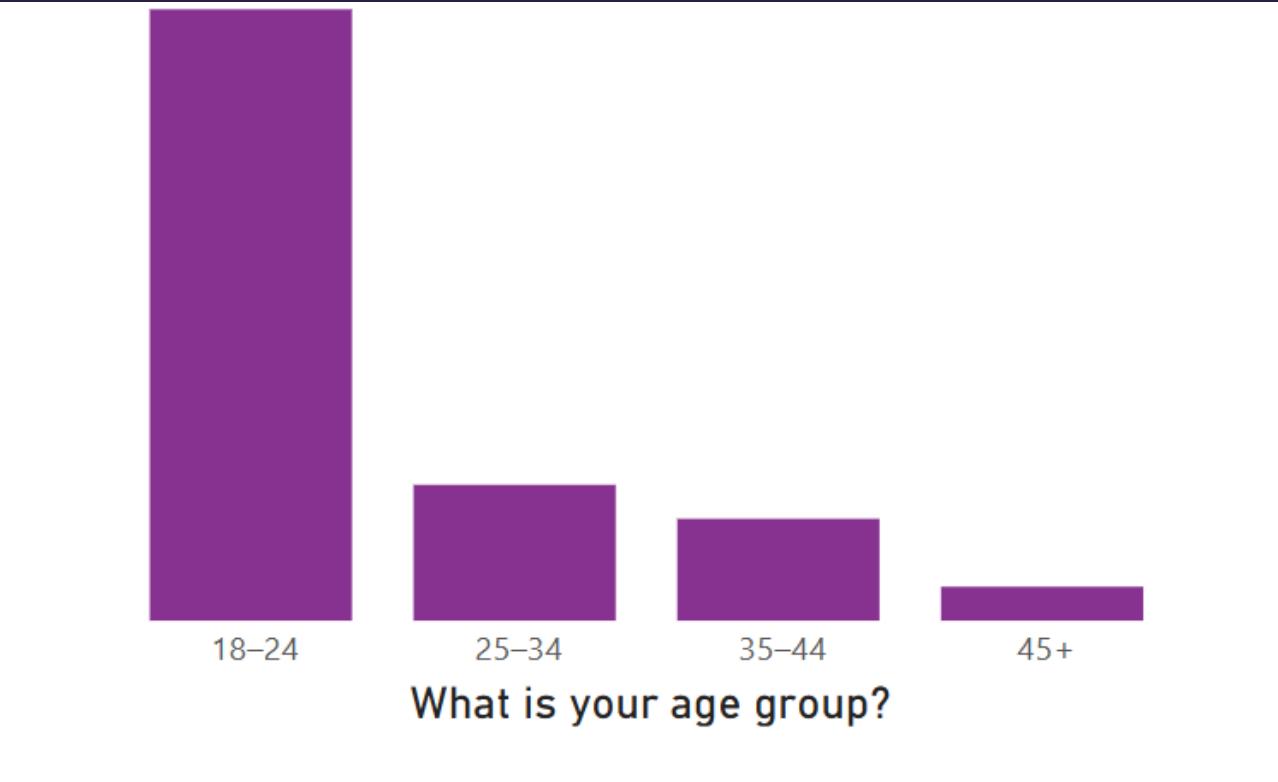
While many users found scheduled delivery convenient and functional, concerns around limited time slots, product quality, and perceived lack of value continue to hinder wider adoption – especially for those who already rely on instant delivery.



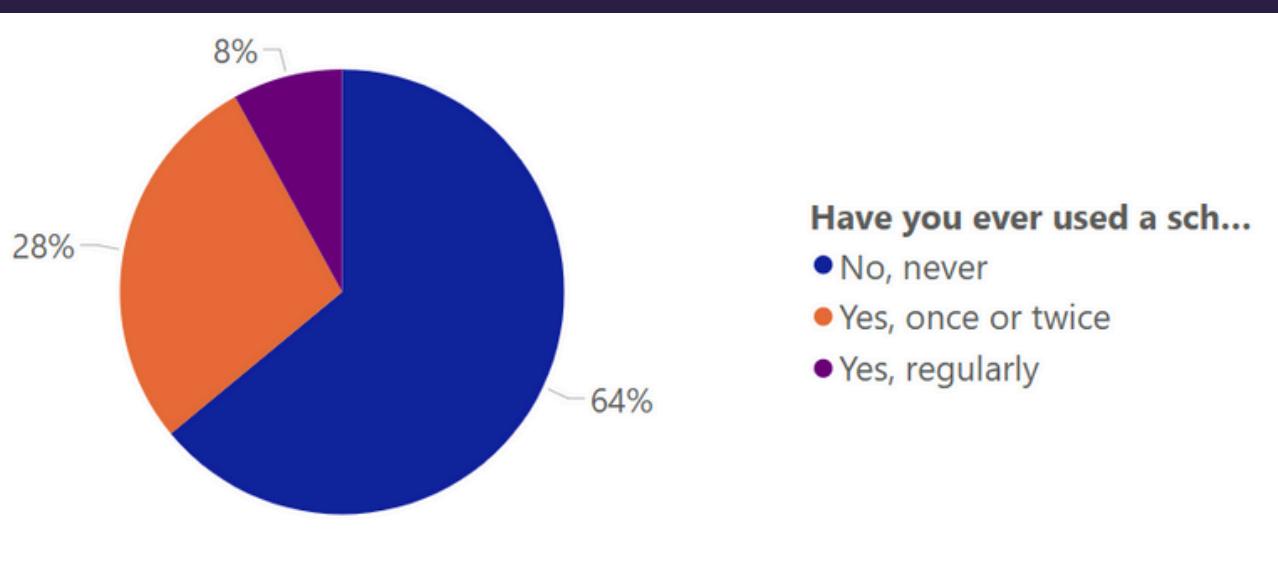
A significant 68% prefer instant delivery, while 24% admit they don't plan groceries ahead, – revealing that behavioral habits and convenience outweigh feature awareness.



The top motivator is the option to auto-schedule groceries on fixed days (32%), followed by discounts/offers (25%) and guaranteed time slots (16%) – indicating users need convenience with tangible benefits to shift from instant.



Over 75% of respondents fall in the 22-35 age group, confirming this tech-savvy segment as the primary user base of online grocery



While 64% of users have never tried scheduled delivery, 28% have used it once or twice, and only 8% use it regularly highlighting a major gap in repeat usage and awareness.

Name: Rohan Mehta

Age: 27

Profession: Software Developer, Bengaluru

Marital Status: Single

Tech Comfort: High



Rohan Mehta

Grocery Behavior: Orders 2–3 times/week, prefers late-night instant orders

Pain Points:

Doesn't plan ahead, buys reactively

Often misses offers or alternate delivery modes

Motivators:

Would switch to scheduled if it meant saving money

Prefers less mental load if slots are pre-picked for him

“If the app just showed me a better option with a saving, I’d probably go for it.”

Name: Priya Sharma

Age: 32

Profession: HR Manager, Delhi NCR

Marital Status: Recently married

Tech Comfort: Medium-High



Priya Sharma

Grocery Behavior: Buys groceries 1–2 times/week for home

Pain Points:

Hates reordering essentials manually every time

Morning slots are ideal but hard to track

Motivators:

Wants time-saving routines (auto-schedule)

Will try new features if reliable and convenient

“If I could get my Sunday milk and fruits delivered at 7 AM without setting reminders, that’s a win.”

What is the True Problem?

Many regular Zepto users (especially 18–35 age group) don't adopt scheduled delivery because of a combination of low awareness, slot inflexibility, lack of incentives, and trust in instant delivery. Even those who tried scheduled delivery found the experience inconsistent – with complaints around time slots and delivery quality.

How Do We Know This is a Real Problem?

- 64% of surveyed users have never used scheduled delivery
- Of those who did, only 8% use it regularly
- 68% prefer instant delivery, and 24% don't plan ahead
- However, 60%+ say they would try it if given better slots, offers, or recurring scheduling
- User interviews reveal trust gaps and poor perceived value

Why Should We Solve This Now?

- Zepto is at an inflection point where cost optimization is crucial
- As adoption scales, scheduled delivery can bring huge cost savings
- User trust in the brand is growing – the time is right to introduce nudges and habit-building
- Competitors like BigBasket and MilkBasket already leverage scheduled delivery to reduce ops strain – Zepto needs to catch up strategically

Who Are the Users Facing This Problem?

- Young, tech-savvy working adults (18–35)
- Regular users of quick commerce platforms
- Prefer convenience but don't actively plan grocery purchases
- Value offers, flexibility, and reliability – but aren't nudged enough toward scheduled delivery

What is the Value of Solving This?

For Users:

- Saves time through automated or predictable deliveries
- Fits into planned routines (e.g. working professionals, couples)
- Lower delivery costs / offers make it more appealing
- Builds habit, reduces chaos

For Zepto:

- Improves operational efficiency (batch delivery)
- Reduces average delivery cost
- Increases repeat usage and LTV
- Opens cross-sell & bundle opportunities

Solutions Based on User Insights:

1. Checkout-level Offers for Scheduled Delivery

- Matches user motivator: 25% want discounts/offers
- Low-effort switch during checkout, proven behavior driver

2. Auto-Schedule for Weekly/Recurring Items

- 32% want predictable, recurring delivery
- Great for long-term repeat behavior

3. Guaranteed Slot Messaging

- Builds trust in scheduled delivery ("7–9 AM Guaranteed")
- Supports adoption by reducing perceived risk

Impact (How much it moves your product outcomes)

Score Meaning

5 Directly impacts multiple core outcomes

4 Strongly impacts 1–2 key outcomes

3 Indirectly supports outcomes

2 Weak impact on KPIs

1 Minimal or no measurable impact

Confidence (How sure you are it'll work, based on data)

Score Meaning

5 Strong validation from user research/data

4 Good indicators + competitive examples

3 Some signals, but uncertain market fit

2 Weak evidence, more hypothesis than insight

1 Pure guesswork / no validation

Prioritization Based on Product Outcomes

Product Outcomes were:

- Repeat usage of scheduled delivery
- Scheduled cart completion rate
- Slot visibility & selection

Prioritization Method: (Impact × Confidence) – Effort

Solution	Impact	Confidence	Effort	Score	Product Outcomes Impacted
Scheduled Offers (Chosen)	5	5	2	23	✓ Cart Completion, ✓ Slot Vis.
Auto-Scheduling	4	4	4	12	✓ Repeat Usage
Guaranteed Slot Messaging	3	4	2	10	(Supportive), ✓ Trust Building

Effort (How hard it is to build – tech, design, ops)

Score Meaning

1 Very easy, low lift (minor UI logic)

2 Simple but needs some backend changes

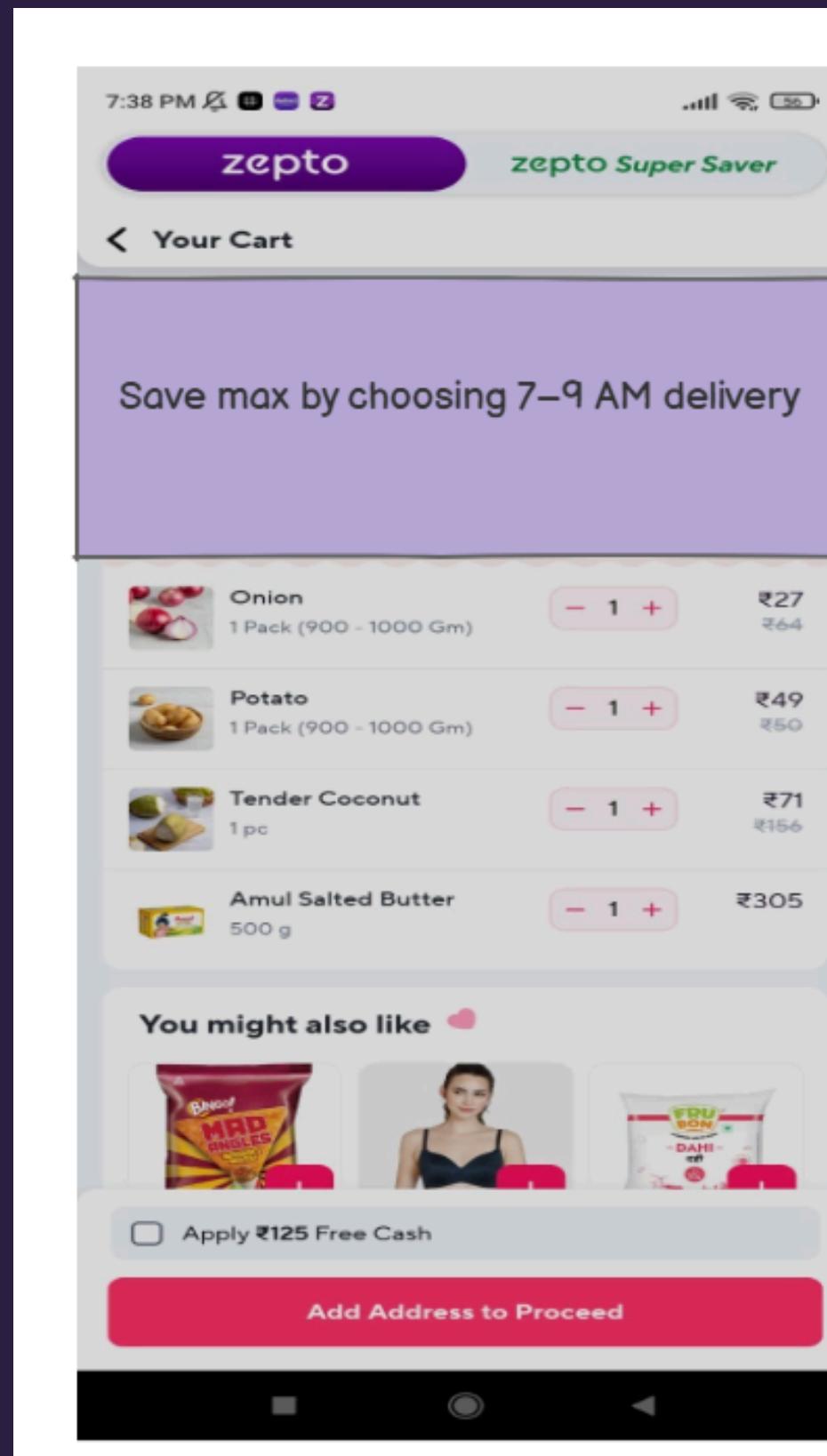
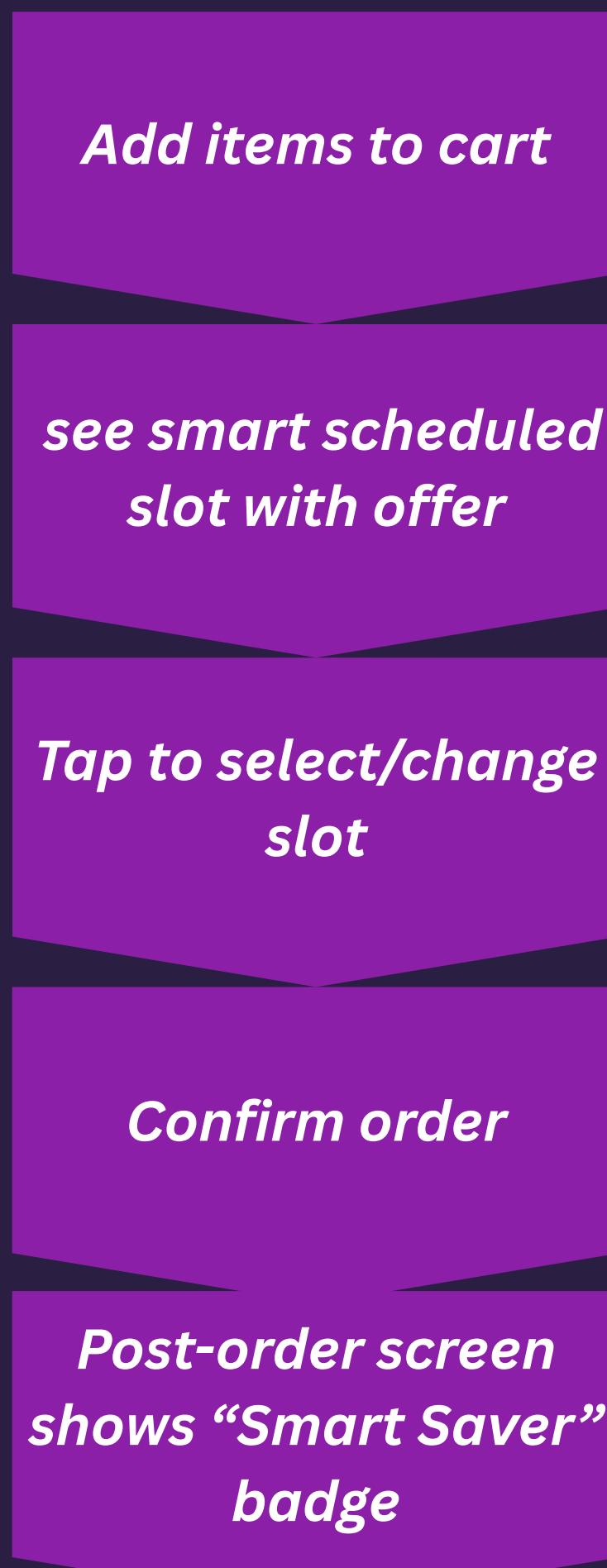
3 Medium complexity (new flows, logic)

4 High effort, multi-team involvement

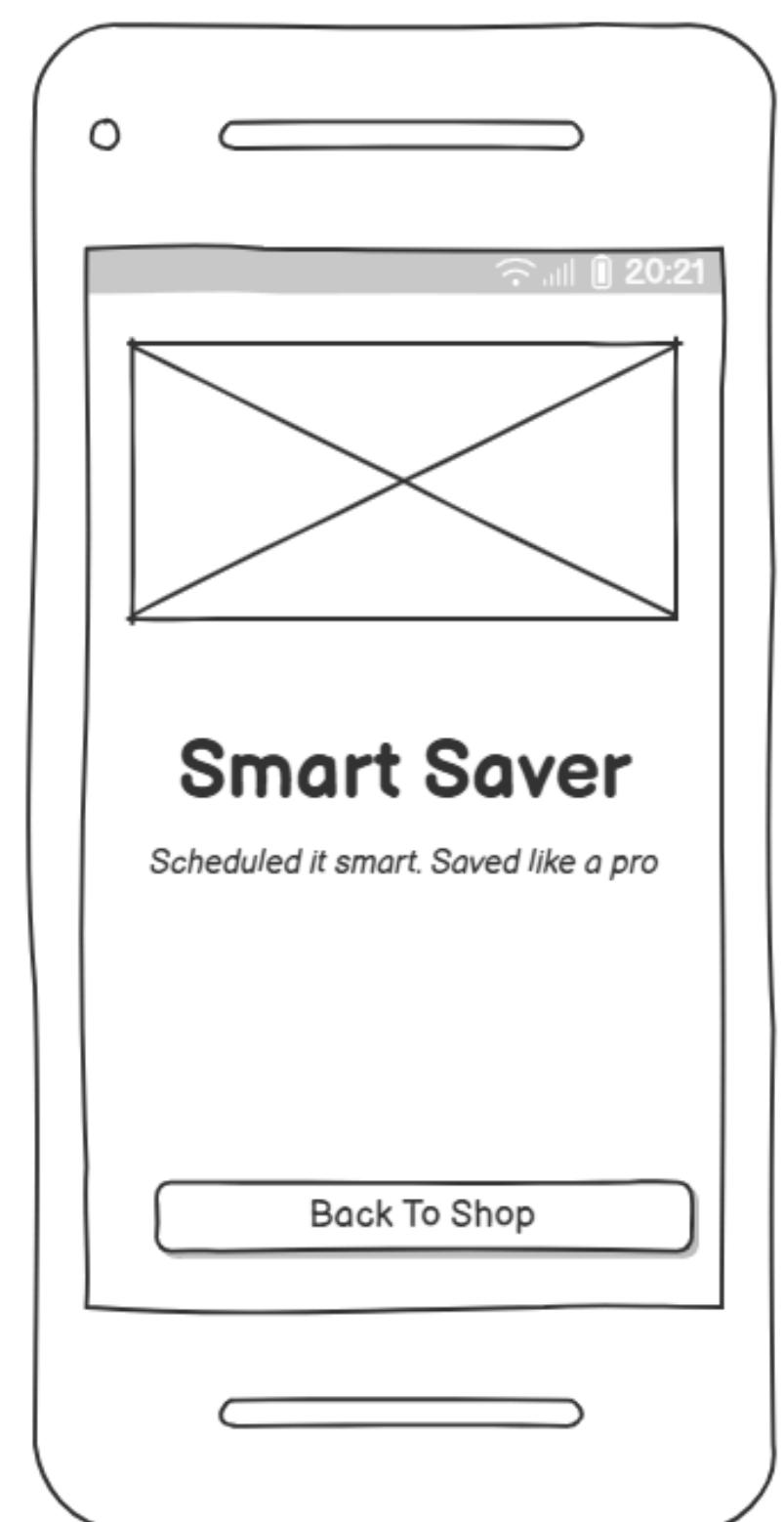
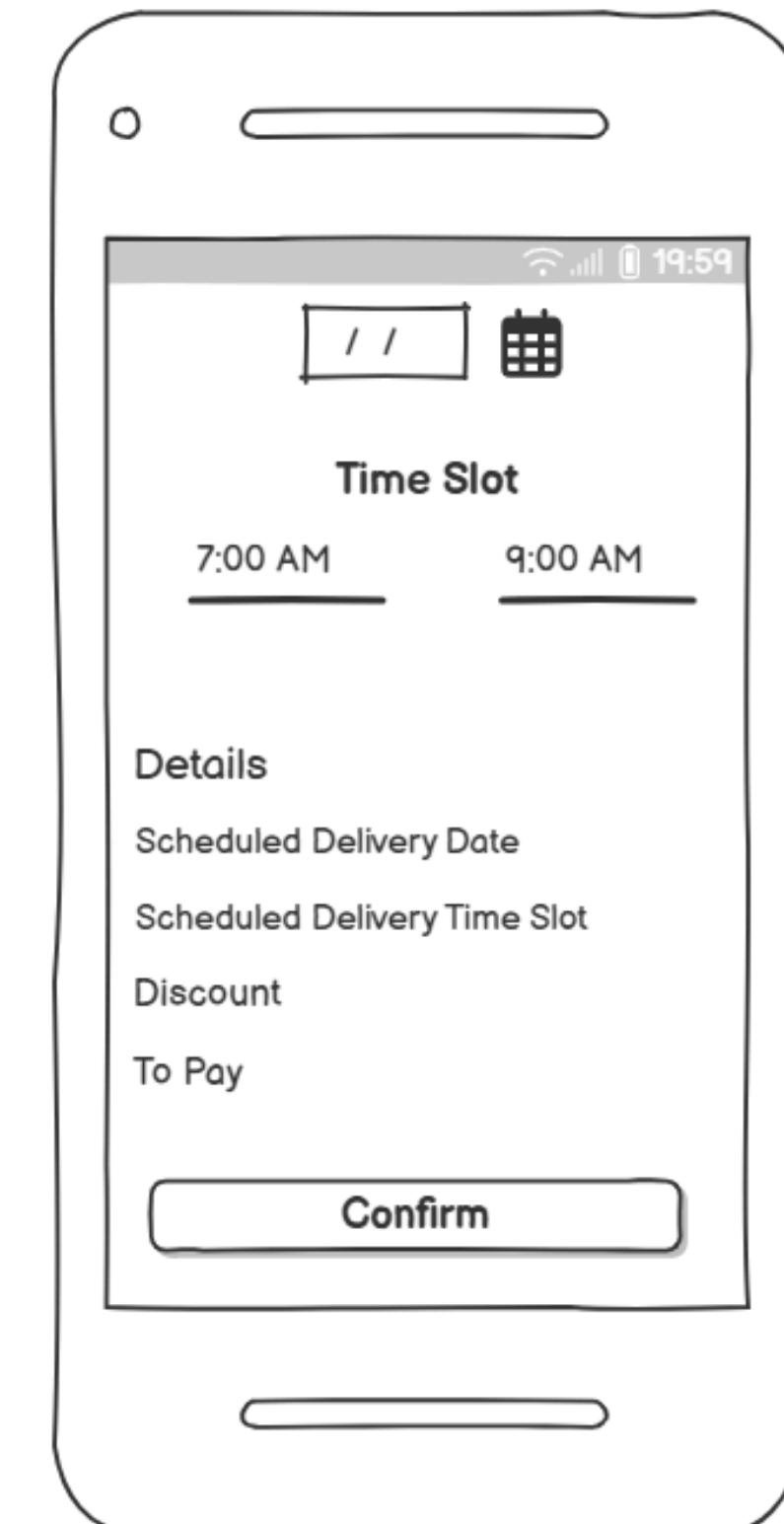
5 Very complex – infra changes, long cycle

User Flow:

*Chosen solution: Scheduled Delivery Offer Nudge
→ High adoption potential, low build effort, immediate metric impact.*



Wireframes:



Future Scope to Deepen Scheduled Adoption

