Scheduled Delivery: Why Users Don’t Trust Them (YET)

Understanding what drives - and stops - users from embracing scheduled delivery in India’s fast-commerce ecosystem

A deep-dive into user psychology, trust barriers, and design opportunities for reliable scheduling

Analysis by: Sumer Pandey
Program: Nextleap PM Fellowship, Cohort 37
Duration: May - August, 2025

Market Landscape: Competitors & Scheduled Delivery

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Quick-commerce leaders are experimenting with scheduled deliveries. Slotted models reduce costs and smoothen demand, but adoption varies.

Competitor	Scheduled Delivery	Slots	Positioning
Big Basket	Yes	2-3 hours	Default model
Dunzo Daily	Yes	1-2 hours	Shown at checkout
Blinkit	Limited	Limited	Low visibility
Instamart	Limited	Limited	Incentives in pilots
Amazon Fresh	Yes	1-2 hours	Trust + Prime Reliability

- **Standard E-Grocery:** Scheduled delivery is the established model for traditional e-grocery giants like BigBasket and Amazon Fresh.
- **Quick Commerce Shift:** Blinkit, Instamart, and Zepto started with "instant" but are now adding scheduled slots to gain operational efficiency.
- **Competitor Nudge:** Scheduling is positioned through checkout visibility, often using small price nudges to guide the user choice.

Market Growth: $6-7 billion, driven by 50-60% growth
Average Order Value: Scheduled = 2x Quick Commerce
Delivery Cost: Scheduled delivery gets 50-60% cost reduction

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Zepto: Positioning & Cost Implications

Zepto: 10-minute promise is core to brand – but scheduled delivery unlocks efficiency and sustainability.

- **Zepto USP:** “10-min delivery” drives growth and differentiation.
- **New Feature:** Scheduled delivery (e.g., 7–9 AM next day) for groceries, fruits, dairy, household supplies.
- **Goal:** Shift part of demand to scheduled without hurting instant USP.

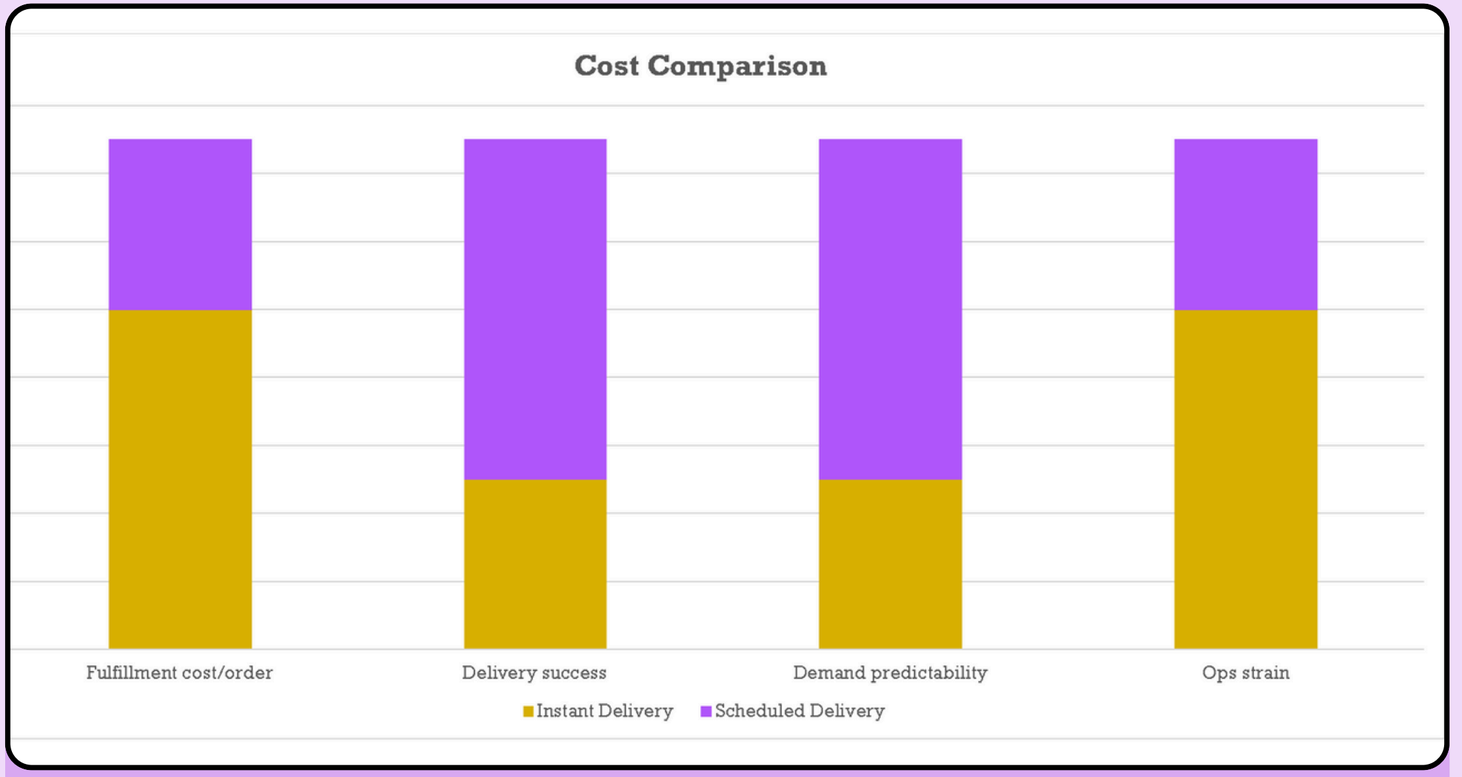
Operational Advantages:

Batching → lower rider cost per order

Inventory planning → fewer stockouts

Predictable demand → better staffing, less surge

Improves margins, reduces need for fees/MOV changes



Our visual clearly shows that:

Cost for Instant Delivery > Cost for Scheduled Delivery

CTA: Unlock sustainable unit economics by leveraging scheduled slots to stabilize demand and reduce fulfillment costs, protecting the core 10-minute brand promise.

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Breakdown: KPI Trees & Business Outcome

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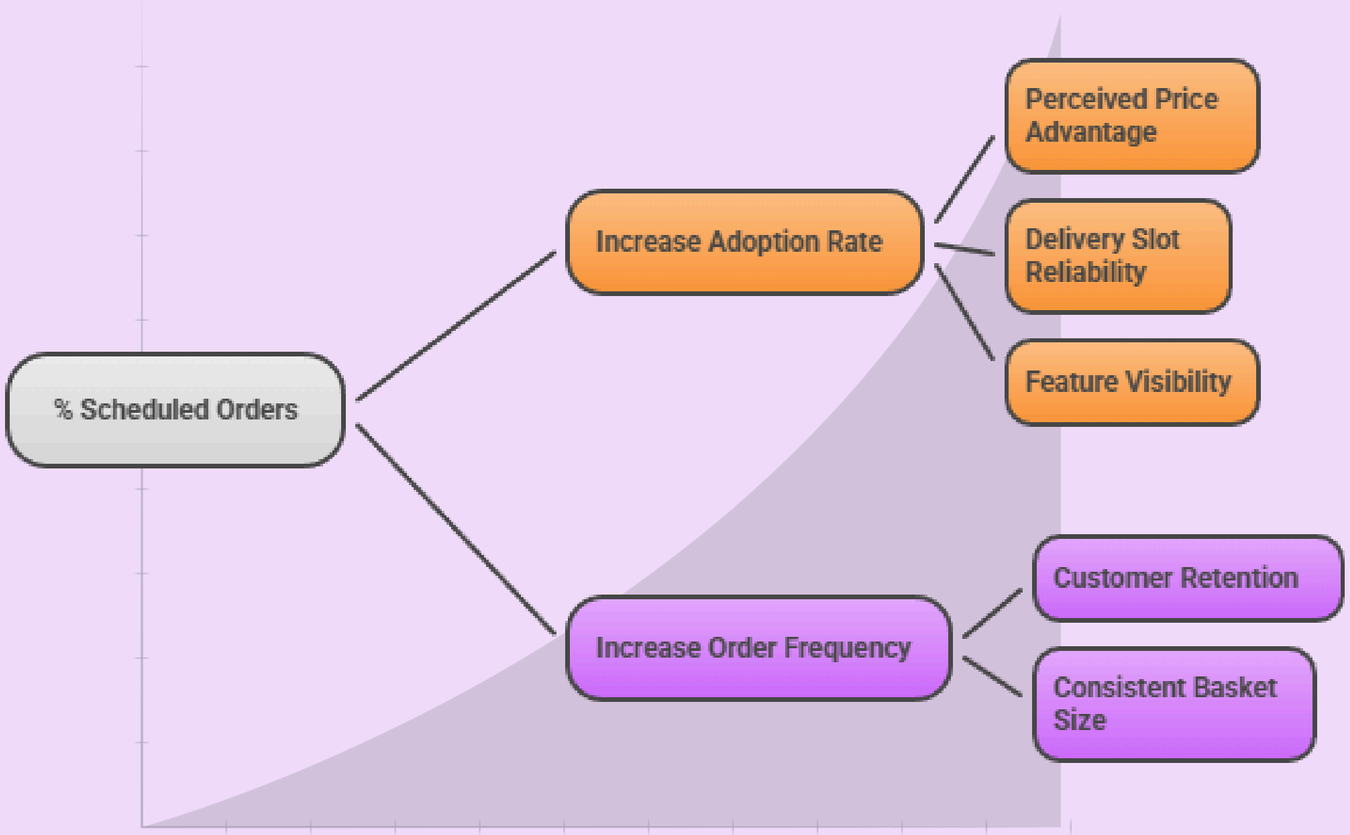
To increase adoption of scheduled delivery, we break down the funnel into deeper, actionable components



CTA: Scheduling is the direct path to sustainable unit economics, operational stability, and long-term customer retention - let's prioritize this strategic shift.

Business Impact:

- Strengthens unit economics in a high-burn category.
- Reduces peak-time ops strain.
- Builds loyalty through reliable, planned experiences.
- Aligns Zepto with long-term sustainability vs competitors.

Product Outcomes:

- Raise scheduled share in groceries, fruits, dairy, household from baseline → 20–30%.
- Reduce fulfillment cost/order by ~30–40% (batching).
- Improve first-time delivery success rate by >10 p.p.
- Drive repeat usage via trust & incentives.

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Chosen Segment: High-Frequency Non-Schedulers

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Target Group: Weekly buyers who order ≥ 4× per month but do NOT use scheduled delivery.

Why we focus here:

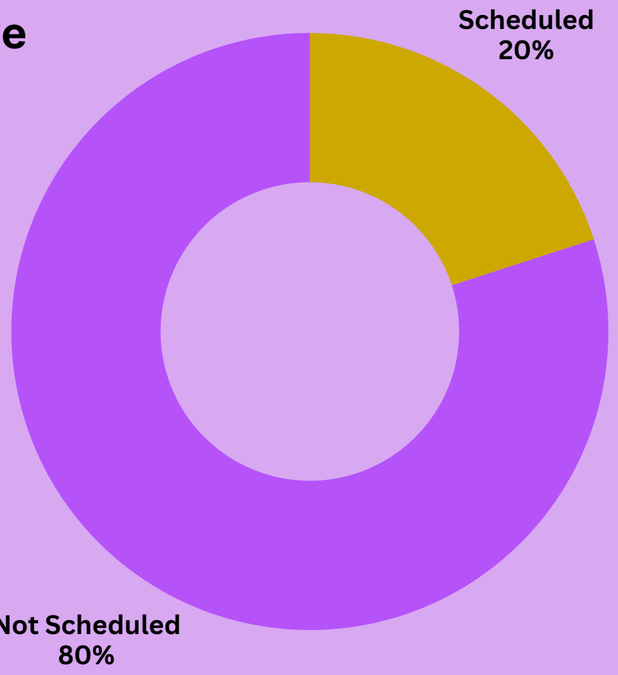
- Habitual buyers = frequent revenue & high LTV potential.
- Largest reachable conversion pool from the survey: quick impact.
- Changes here reduce peak strain while preserving instant experience for others.

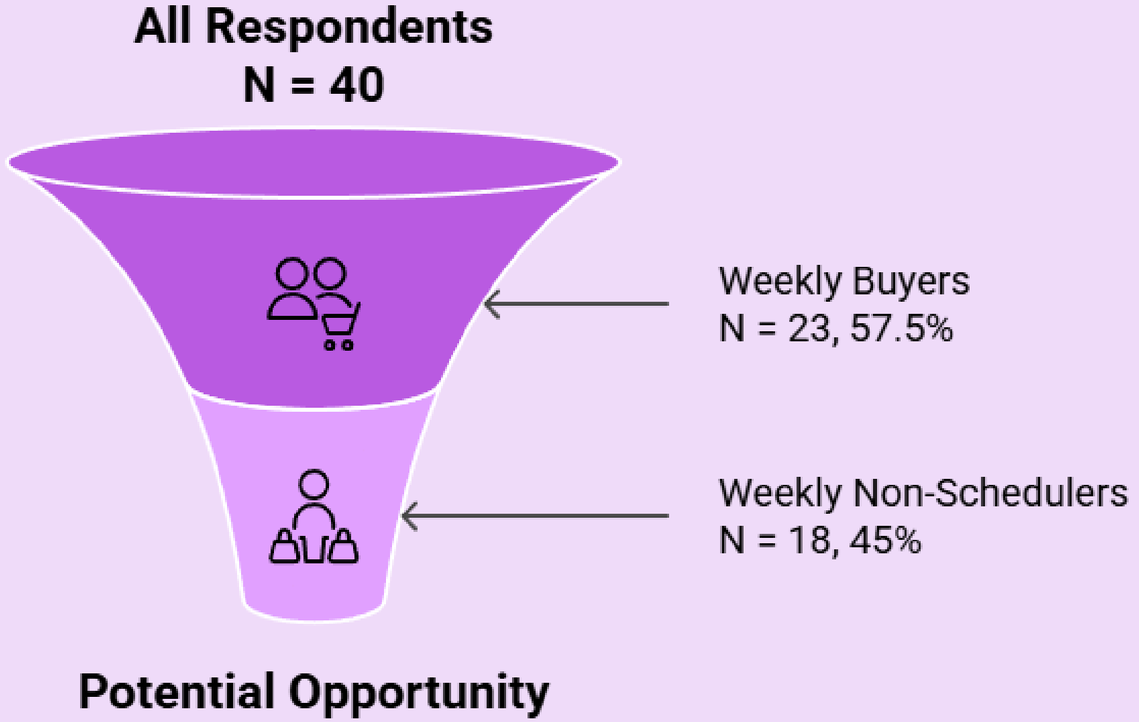
Opportunity Snapshot:

- Focus: Weekly non-schedulers (18/40)
- Represent ~45% of total users - high impact if converted
- Pilot target: 5K–10K users in 2–3 city zones

Scheduled Delivery Feature Usage

Only 20% of respondents currently use scheduled delivery - 80% of users are non-schedulers. This shows us an immediate adoption opportunity!





Sources

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User Insights: Why Users Don’t Schedule

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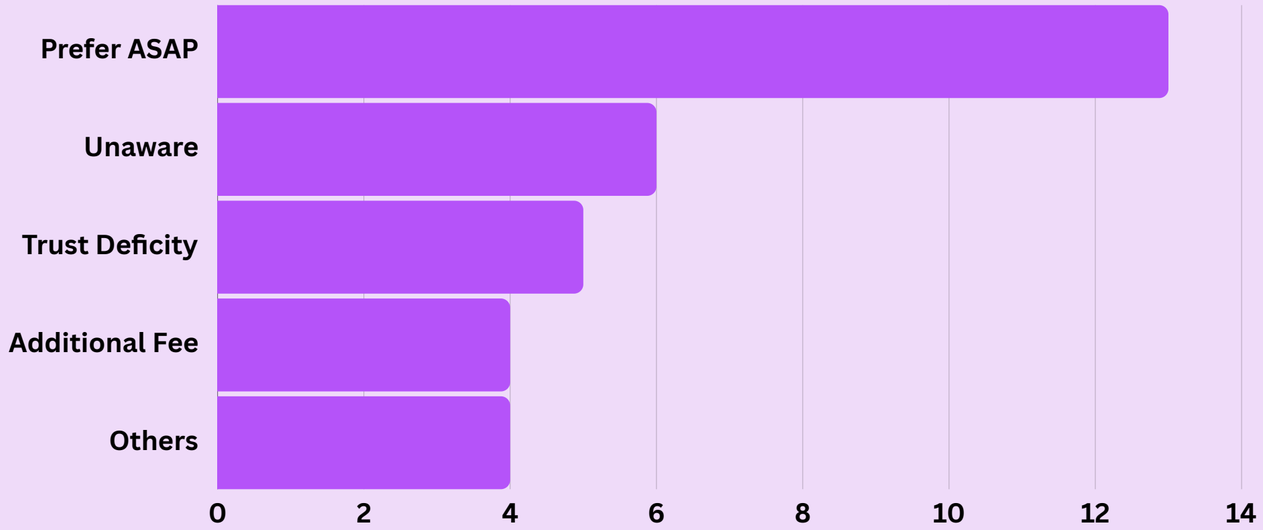
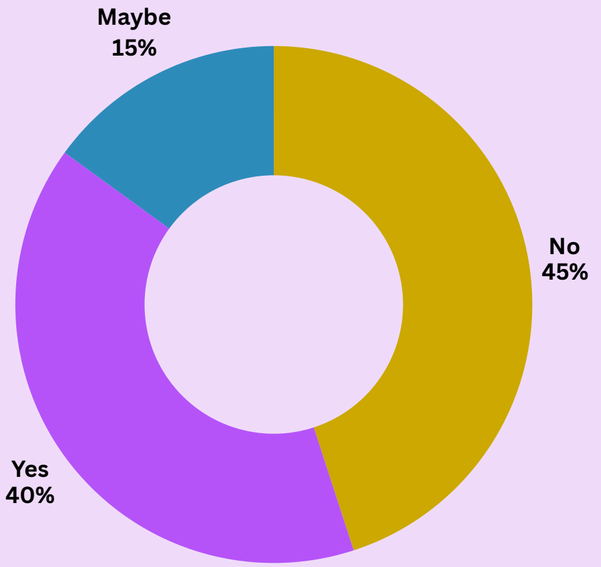
Core Insight: The scheduling gap is a solvable problem of trust and habit - not just speed.

Primary reasons users avoid scheduling



Willingness to Pay

Trust at 2.9/5 is holding back the 3.2/5 likelihood to use scheduled delivery - we must fix reliability to unlock adoption.



JTBD (What users hire scheduled delivery for):

- “When I need someone at home for bulky/installed items → I want a guaranteed time window → so I can be present (furniture/electronics).” [Supported by I01, I03]
- “When I want to avoid presence constraints → I want evening/weekend slots → so family can receive deliveries.” [Supported by I07]

Persona snapshot - “Weekly non-scheduler”:

- Frequency: orders ≥4×/month.
- Needs: reliability, evening slots, clear visibility.
- Barriers: prefer ASAP habit, distrust of promised times, limited slot availability.
- Opportunity: 40% willing to pay small fee; median ₹30.

Problem Framing: Hypothesis & Prioritized Experiments

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Execution: We'll target trust, visibility, and economics with three rapid pilot experiments.

Problem Framing Canvas:

USER: Weekly buyers (≥4×/month) who currently do NOT use scheduled delivery	**NEED:** Receive planned orders at predictable times with low friction	**PAIN:** Habit for ASAP, low awareness, low trust in time, slot visibility poor, reschedule friction
INSIGHT: Slot visibility and trust are high impact - slot granularity + guaranteed ETA strongly influence adoption	**OPPORTUNITY:** Convert weekly non-schedulers to scheduled by prioritizing evening slots, UX visibility, price nudge, and on-time guarantee	**CONSTRAINTS:** Operational capacity by dark store, rider incentives, risk of cannibalizing profitable instant orders
HYPOTHESIS: If we capitalize on the opportunities, then 20–25% of weekly non-schedulers will adopt scheduled within 8–12 weeks	**SUCCESS METRICS:** Scheduled share segment, Slot selection rate, Scheduled on-time rate, Repeat scheduled rate	**RISKS & MITIGATIONS:** Cannibalization - limit offers to low-AOV or new scheduled users; overcommit - soft reservations & capacity indicators; guarantee abuse - rules & fraud signals

Top 3 Pilot Experiments:

1. **Awareness + Default Suggestion (A/B)**
   a. Add “Suggested Slot” + tooltip on PDP/cart
   b. Metric: slot selection rate, conversion
   c. Goal: +10 pp in slot selection
   d. Priority: High (low effort, fast win)
2. **Price Nudge**
   a. ₹30 off / waived fee for first scheduled order
   b. Metric: scheduled conversion rate
   c. Goal: +10 pp uplift vs control
   d. Priority: High (aligns with median WTP ₹30)
3. **Slot Guarantee**
   a. Slot guarantee + Live ETA + ₹50 credit if missed
   b. Metric: on time rate, trust rating in reviews
   c. Goal: +10–15 pp on-time
   d. Priority: Medium (ops-heavy, high impact)

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Delivering insights with the same precision we expect from scheduled delivery

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All Milestones
LinkedIn
GitHub