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Subscription-Based Grocery Kit

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Indian meal kit subscription industry is on the cusp of emerging as a strong segment, influenced by rising urbanization, hectic lifestyles, and an upsurge in the demand for easy yet healthy meals. Urbanites, particularly students, working professionals, and small families, are finding it challenging to cope with meal planning, grocery shopping, and cooking at home due to a lack of time. This study investigates the potential of a subscription meal kit service that sends fresh, pre-measured ingredients with simple recipes, allowing users to cook healthy home-cooked meals with little effort.

This research utilizes a mixed-methods approach to research with the use of both qualitative and quantitative data-gathering strategies. Primary data collection was carried out using surveys, interviews, and focus groups, while secondary data collection used market trends, competitor analysis, and consumer trend observation. The research points to high demand for meal kit services, especially among busy consumers who balance convenience and health considerations. Nonetheless, affordability is still a major concern, with price ranking high among deciding factors.

Other key drivers are ingredient quality, meal diversity, and convenience of preparation. Customers like meal kits that provide customizable meals like vegetarian, vegan, high-protein, and low-carb meals. Competition from well-established food delivery companies like Zomato and Swiggy is a challenge. Meal kit providers need to concentrate on affordable pricing, better ingredient quality, flexible subscription plans, and digital innovation to succeed.

This research deduces that meal kit subscription business can be a success in India by responding to consumer issues associated with pricing, quality, and convenience while leveraging strategic marketing and technology-enabled strategies to stand apart from other available food delivery sites.

II. INTRODUCTION

Introduction: The Nature Of The Indian Market For Meal Kit Subscription Services Today

A. Increasing Demand For Convenience In India

With the busy lives of urban dwellers, especially students, working professionals, and small families, there is a growing need for convenience in daily activities. Meal planning and shopping for groceries are time-consuming tasks that are difficult for most people to integrate into their hectic lives. For this reason, ready-to-consume or takeaway food has been a popular answer, but one that is less nutritious and expensive in the long term.

B. Health And Wellness Trends

Along with the growing demand for convenience, there has been a noticeable shift towards health-conscious eating in India, especially among younger generations. Lifestyle diseases like obesity, diabetes, and heart disease are on the rise, prompting people to make healthier food choices. Despite this, busy professionals and students find it difficult to cook healthy meals due to time constraints, often opting for fast food or pre-packaged meals.

C. Opportunity For Meal Kit Services

A meal kit service that offers subscription-based delivery of fresh, pre-measured ingredients and simple recipes can fill this void. These services provide convenience by eliminating meal planning, grocery store trips, and food waste. The Indian opportunity is there for these services to provide a range of meal options, such as vegetarian, vegan, and health-conscious meals, while encouraging home-cooked, healthy meals.



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D. Challenges In The Indian Market

Although there is potential for meal kit services, there are challenges. High-quality produce and other ingredients may be expensive, and it is important to maintain an affordable pricing structure to please price-sensitive customers, including students and professionals. Furthermore, there is competition from established food delivery platforms like zomato and swiggy, and the cultural preference for home-cooked food may be a barrier.

E. Research Focus

The study seeks to examine the viability of introducing a subscription meal kit service in the Indian market. By analyzing consumer choice, market demand, and the operational issues, the study will determine if the service can respond to India's changing food culture and assist busy people in following healthy diets.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

1) Qualitative study on factors influencing aging population's online grocery shopping and mode choice when grocery shopping in person by bezirgani, a., & lachapelle, u.

ABSTRACT- Older adults with car cessation risk food insecurity, and internet shopping might solve the problem. In a Montreal study, 61 retired people were interviewed regarding their grocery shopping, modes of travel, and habits. The majority had never done online grocery shopping. Car drivers and internet shoppers were similar—they were methodical, bought in bulk, and maintained regular routines. Conversely, active mode and public transit users were opportunistic shoppers who appreciated in-store shopping for its social and physical experience. They preferred home delivery following in-store shopping to simplify transportation difficulties. Car drivers were more willing to shop online compared to transit or active mode users. Incorporating online grocery shopping into the daily lives of older adults involves taking into account both shopping and travel behavior to make it accessible and convenient.

CONCLUSION- This research focused on the connection between grocery shopping modes, attitude, and potential online shopping amongst the elderly. Research indicates that car drivers have higher potential for using online shopping, whereas users of public transit (PT) and active mode prioritize in-shop purchase due to the social aspect and physical contact. Post-shop purchases at home can be seen as a viable option compared to online shopping entirely. Barriers against online shopping include unfamiliarity, anonymity, and fear about the quality of the product. Adoption can be supported by education campaigns and better branding. Shopping

decisions are affected by cost, risk of injury, and accessibility. Larger samples, environmental effects, and solutions for mobility or digital literacy-impaired seniors should be investigated in future studies.

2) Children, income, and the impact of home delivery on household shopping trips by spurlock, c. A., todd-blick, a., wong-parodi, g., & walker, v

ABSTRACT- E-commerce and delivery operations provide consumers with flexibility and convenience but affect vehicle miles traveled (VMT), energy consumption, air quality, and congestion. Delivery can substitute for or complement personal shopping trips and affect total travel patterns. In this research, the study assessed how e-commerce is advantageous to consumers and affects shopping trips in terms of item type, child status in household, and income. Time-saving was most important to high-income households and families with children. On average, deliveries substituted 12% of shopping trips but complemented personal trips for 9% of purchase deliveries. Two broad household categories were found: 55–70% utilized deliveries as a substitute for trips, and 20–35% utilized them as a complement. Child-inclusive and high-income households were more likely to utilize delivery but not necessarily as a complete substitute for trips. Rather, meal preparation deliveries tended to add to travel, with 15% of child households and 12% of high-income households increasing visits instead of decreasing them.

CONCLUSION- The effect of online shopping and delivery on household shopping trips is multifaceted. Although deliveries typically replaced vehicle trips (55–70%), they also added to trips (20–35%) for certain households. High-income and child-containing households appreciated time savings, but this did not necessarily result in trip substitution. These households were more likely to employ delivery, particularly for household goods and apparel. Prepared meal delivery frequently substituted for home preparation over shopping or eating out. More affluent households were 12% more likely, and child-laden households 15% more likely, to complement trips with meal delivery. Subsequent studies need to investigate time constraints and online shopping's place in substituting for activities other than shopping trips.



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3) Optimal strategies of the online-to-offline instant delivery service of grocery retailers by qin, w., yuhan, p., cuiting, y., yu, h., & danping, l.

ABSTRACT- O2O instant delivery services enable grocery retailers to increase sales by increasing consumer channels. This research investigates how retailers can maximize profits by optimizing pricing and delivery strategies—such as order fees, range, and starting price. Based on the Stackelberg game model in the Hotelling linear city framework, the study analyzes cost differences between online and offline services. Results indicate that raising product prices with zero delivery fees is more profitable than charging delivery fees with fixed prices. The research provides three main insights: cost differences between offline and online services influence pricing and profitability, establishing a base delivery price can increase profitability when online costs are marginally higher, and establishing a reasonable delivery range minimizes costs and maximizes efficiency. Three plans for O2O delivery are suggested, highlighting cost management and delivery optimization. The research presents useful information to retailers seeking to balance logistics and pricing in a changing digital retail environment.

CONCLUSION- This research investigates how offline retailers maximize profits through the O2O instant delivery model. Traditional vs. O2O models comparison indicates that O2O always generates more profits. Retailers gain by reducing or removing delivery charges to draw customers in, leading to total sales growth. In compensation for the delivery charge, implementing a minimum price works efficiently when differences in online and offline costs are reasonable, as is the case with Deliveroo and DoorDash. Also, having a delivery range in addition to a starting price yields higher profits compared to fixing the starting price. The research indicates how immediate delivery platforms, such as Meituan and UberEats, maximize retailer profitability through optimizing fee, price, and delivery scope.

4) Formulating and solving the integrated online order batching and delivery planning with specific due dates for orders by shavaki fh, jolai f.

ABSTRACT- The pandemic of COVID-19 has accelerated online shopping, which has placed pressure on retailers to deliver orders effectively. This research deals with the integrated order batching and delivery planning of an online retailer operating a warehouse with heterogeneous products. A mixed-integer nonlinear programming model is introduced to optimize order batching, scheduling, truck assignment, and routing. Two heuristic algorithms are presented: one that solves order batching and delivery individually, and another that combines both. Numerical simulations demonstrate that the integrated method decreases costs per order delivered by at least 14%. Sensitivity analysis analyzes major parameters, providing managerial implications to enhance decision-making in e-commerce logistics.

CONCLUSION- Online shopping, particularly due to COVID-19, has boosted demand and operational complexity for retailers. In this research, a decision system is formulated to maximize order picking and delivery planning. An offline planning mixed-integer nonlinear programming model is proposed, and two rule-based heuristic algorithms are applied to handle the dynamic nature of online orders. Algorithm A2, which combines order batching and delivery, lowers costs per delivered order by 26% and 14% over Algorithm A1 in scenarios with three and five cross-docks, respectively. Incorporating a dedicated truck lowers costs by 26%, while incorporating small trucks lowers costs by at least 10%. The research recommends future studies on multiple pickers, other routing techniques, and handling perishable items.

5) The value of genetic data in predicting preferences: a study of food taste by daviet, r., & nave, g.

ABSTRACT - The swift expansion of consumer genetic testing has led to large genomic data sets controlled by governments and companies. This research investigates the possibility of genetic information to boost consumer welfare through better personalization and targeting, especially in taste preference—a principal force behind food and drink consumption. Employing a large U.K. sample, researchers have identified that genetic information greatly enhance taste preference predictions, performing better than conventional metrics such as demographics and history of behavior. This influence extends particularly to less frequent tastes, i.e., spicy and sour, that are inadequately measured behaviorally. The results indicate that genetic information may be extremely useful when additional predictive information are scarce or unhelpful. Such knowledge has significant relevance for business and public health and can potentially support the creation of personalized nutrition schemes and dietary treatment programs. This work emphasizes the potential of genomic information for applications geared toward customers and business decisions.

CONCLUSION- This research identifies the vast potential of genetic information in forecasting consumer taste, especially when standard measures such as demographics and history fail. The results imply that using genetic information can support better targeting and personalization, especially for unconventional tastes that are inadequately expressed behaviorally. As more genetic



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information becomes available, companies and public health programs may use them to establish personalized nutrition strategies and dietary advice. Although the research highlights the worth of genetic information in consumer contexts, additional research must investigate ethical dilemmas, privacy issues, and long-term effects of applying genetic information to marketing practices.

6) Changing food habits of urban middle-class youth in india: 'ordering in' by patgiri, r.

ABSTRACT- The liberalization of the Indian economy since the 1990s has had a dramatic impact on food culture among urban middle-class Indians. Although earlier studies have explored the culture of eating prior to liberalization and the effects of eating out, the emergent culture of 'ordering in' needs to be explored in detail. This research investigates the role of online food delivery services in restructuring food culture among urban middle-class youth in India. The synergistic impacts of demonetisation and digitalisation propelled the expansion of these services to increase the popularity of food delivery as a part of urban youth culture, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results identify recent changes in India's socio-economic and psychological landscape affecting both the consumers and service providers.

CONCLUSION- The emergence of new workplaces in Indian cities has changed food consumption patterns, especially of the urban middle class. Whereas eating out has been well-researched, ordering in has not. The present study bridges this research gap by focusing on urban middle-class youth as primary consumers of online food delivery. The 2016 demonetisation and push for digital payments greatly consolidated the market, turning ordering into an easy option, particularly for young professionals and students. The COVID-19 pandemic further redefined these trends. Consumers were initially sceptical of external food, but they adjusted to safety protocols such as contactless delivery and temperature monitoring. Eating in became a more secure option compared to employing house cooks, as infection could be minimized. It was also convenient and brought relief from repetitive home cooking. Apart from altering food practices, this research points to greater socio-economic transitions in India. Ordering now functions as an individual relaxation and a means to socialize with meals. Subsequent studies of these changing patterns of consumption would be worthwhile.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To assess the viability of a subscription-based meal kit service in India, the study will adopt a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative research techniques. This methodology will provide a comprehensive understanding of consumer preferences, market demand, and operational challenges, helping to determine whether such a service can be successfully implemented in India's evolving food culture.

A. Research Design

The study will use a descriptive research design, which is well-suited for analyzing consumer behavior, preferences, and industry trends. This approach will help in identifying the demand for meal kits, pricing expectations, health concerns, and convenience factors influencing customer choices. Additionally, the research will explore existing food consumption patterns, evaluating the potential of meal kits as an alternative to both traditional home-cooked meals and food delivery services.

B. Data Collection Methods

To obtain a holistic view of the market, the study will rely on both primary and secondary data sources.

1) Primary Data Collection

• Primary data will be collected through structured surveys, questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions with relevant stakeholders.

Surveys & Questionnaires

Target Audience: Urban dwellers, particularly students, working professionals, and small families, who often experience time constraints in meal preparation. Individuals interested in healthy eating but facing challenges due to busy schedules, lack of cooking skills, or limited access to fresh ingredients.

Objective:

- To understand consumer interest, awareness, and willingness to pay for meal kit services.
- To assess dietary preferences (e.g., vegetarian, vegan, high-protein, low-carb, gluten-free options).
- To identify barriers to adoption, such as concerns about cost, food freshness, and convenience.



Methodology:

Online surveys through platforms like Google Forms, SurveyMonkey, and social media groups.

Offline surveys conducted at corporate offices, universities, and residential complexes in major cities. Respondents will be selected using stratified random sampling to ensure a diverse mix of demographics.

Interviews & Focus Groups

- Expert Interviews: Discussions with industry experts, nutritionists, and foodservice professionals to evaluate the feasibility of meal kits in India. Insights into operational challenges, supply chain requirements, and customer expectations.
- Consumer Focus Groups: Small group discussions with students, professionals, and families to compare meal kits with traditional home-cooked meals and food delivery services. Understanding perceptions of pricing, packaging, freshness, and ease of use.

2) Secondary Data Collection

Secondary research will complement primary data by analyzing existing reports, industry trends, and competitor strategies.

- Market Reports & Industry Trends: Analysis of reports from Nielsen, Euromonitor, and other market research firms on the Indian food delivery and meal kit industry. Examination of growth trends, consumer spending habits, and demand projections for healthy, ready-to-cook food options.
- Competitor Analysis: Study of existing food delivery services like Zomato, Swiggy, FreshMenu, and niche meal prep services to identify gaps in the market. Evaluating pricing models, marketing strategies, and consumer feedback from competitors to understand challenges and opportunities.
- Government & Health Reports: Data from the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and health organizations on dietary trends, food safety regulations, and nutritional guidelines. Reviewing government policies that influence food packaging, labeling, and quality assurance for meal kit services.
- C. Sampling Strategy
- Sampling Technique: Stratified random sampling will be used to ensure diverse representation across different age groups, income levels, dietary habits, and cities. Respondents will be categorized into students, working professionals, and families, ensuring that the study captures the varied needs of different consumer segments.
- Sample Size: The study will collect data from at least 150 respondents across major metropolitan cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Pune. These cities have a high concentration of working professionals and students, making them ideal for understanding meal kit adoption trends.

D. Data Analysis Methods

The collected data will be analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide actionable insights. Quantitative Analysis

- Descriptive Statistics: Calculation of mean, median, and standard deviation to summarize survey responses.
- Cross-tabulation Analysis: Identifying relationships between demographic factors (age, income, occupation) and meal kit adoption preferences.
- Regression Analysis: Predicting market demand based on price sensitivity, health awareness, and convenience factors.

Qualitative Analysis

- Thematic Analysis: Identifying common themes from interviews and focus groups, such as concerns over food freshness, pricing expectations, and cultural acceptance.
- Sentiment Analysis: Assessing consumer attitudes based on feedback from discussions and online reviews of similar services.

E. Ethical Considerations

- Informed Consent: All participants will be informed about the purpose, scope, and voluntary nature of their participation in the study.
- Data Confidentiality & Anonymity: Personal data will be securely stored and anonymized to protect participant privacy.
- Compliance with Ethical Guidelines: The research will follow ethical guidelines for consumer research, ensuring transparency and integrity in data collection and analysis.



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F. Limitations Of The Study

Despite its comprehensive approach, the study has certain limitations

- Urban Focus: The research primarily focuses on urban consumers, which may not fully capture rural food consumption behaviors.
- Self-Reported Bias: Survey responses are self-reported, meaning that some participants may overstate or understate their willingness to pay or adopt meal kit services.
- Competition from Existing Services: The study may face challenges in predicting consumer loyalty to meal kits in a market dominated by established food delivery platforms like Zomato and Swiggy.
- Conclusion: This research methodology ensures a detailed and data-driven analysis of the Indian meal kit service market. By combining consumer insights, market trends, and expert opinions, the study aims to determine whether a subscription-based meal kit service can succeed in India. The findings will provide strategic recommendations on how to position, price, and market the service effectively to meet the needs of time-constrained yet health-conscious urban consumers.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

According to the research focus, the below analysis interprets the survey results in the context of demand, preference, and challenges of launching a meal kit subscription service in the Indian market.

- A. Growing Demand for Convenience in India
- The survey responses show that urban residents prefer convenience because they are busy.
- A large proportion of respondents prepare food less often at home (0–3 times a week), which emphasizes the difficulty of meal planning and supermarket shopping.
- The desire for easy and convenient meal solutions matches the increasing interest in meal kits that make home cooking easier.
- B. Consumer Choices for Meal Kit Services
- The largest drivers of the selection of meal kit services, based on the data, are:
- Price (21%) Customers are price-conscious, indicating that cost is an important factor.
- Quality of ingredients (21.6%) Fresh, high-quality ingredients are needed to satisfy customers.
- Variety and customization (13.8%) Individuals want meal kits that can accommodate different dietary requirements.
- Convenience and ease of use (10.8%) A meal kit must provide a hassle-free cooking experience.
- This emphasizes that the balance of cost with quality and variety will be critical for meal kit services in India.

C. Health and Wellness Trends

- Most respondents indicate a move towards healthy eating, fueled by increasing lifestyle diseases.
- In spite of this trend, a significant number still find it difficult to cook healthy meals on a regular basis, further emphasizing the need for a service that facilitates healthy eating while conserving time.

Drivers of Meal Kit Service Selection



D. Competitive Landscape and Market Challenges

- Competition from home food ordering portals such as Swiggy and Zomato is a main challenge.
- Few consumers will find home food familiar and desirable and hence more challenging to penetrate the market.
- Continuing with low-cost offerings to maintain pricing efficiency while focusing on quality and quantity will be very important in a successful endeavor.



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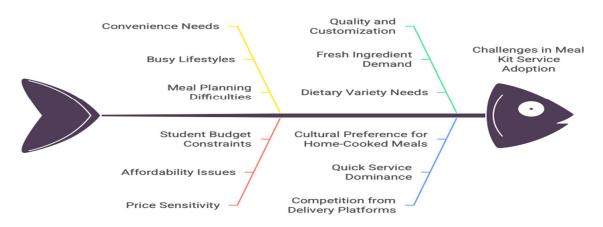
E. Meal Kit Service Viability of Market

- To provide cheap meals for students and professionals.
- Offering personalized meal plans as per the various needs.
- Developing a strong brand image to develop trust among customers.
- Competition through proper marketing of better, fresher, and cheaper meal options as compared to ready-to-eat food.

VI. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION

- A. Findings
- *1)* Increased Need for Convenience
 - Most urban residents, particularly students and working professionals, find it difficult to plan meals and shop for groceries.
 - A majority of the respondents prepare meals at home only 0–3 times a week, reflecting the necessity for alternative meal options.
- 2) Price Sensitivity
 - 21% of the respondents rate price as the most significant factor in selecting a meal kit service.
 - This reflects that affordability is a critical issue, particularly among students and young professionals.
- 3) Quality and Customization Matter
 - 21.6% value ingredient quality, indicating that consumers desire fresh and high-quality meal kits.
 - 13.8% value variety and customization, reflecting a desire for meal plans designed around dietary requirements.
- 4) Health and Nutrition Awareness
 - In spite of increased health awareness, most individuals still struggle with preparing healthy meals on a regular basis.
 - This is where meal kit services can step in and connect health-consciousness to convenience.
- 5) Challenges from Food Delivery Platforms
 - Established players such as Zomato and Swiggy own the market in quick food delivery.
 - Indian customers retain a high cultural affinity towards home-cooked meals, potentially constraining the adoption of meal kits.

Analyzing Meal Kit Service Challenges



- B. Recommendations
- *1)* Affordable and Competitive Pricing
 - Provide affordable meal kit alternatives to lure students and working professionals.
 - Provide subscription packages at discounted rates with referral incentives for long-term utilization.



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- 2) Focus on Health and Quality
 - Provide superior quality, fresh ingredients to enhance customer confidence and distinguish from processed food delivery.
 - Create nutrition-centric meal plans targeting fitness-focused consumers and special-diet consumers.
- 3) Customization and Variety
 - Offer customizable meal kits with veg, vegan, high-protein, and low-carb.
 - Launch regional and seasonal meal varieties to cater to a variety of consumer tastes.
- 4) Boost Convenience and User Experience
 - Include simple recipe guides with quick preparation times.
 - Offer pre-chopped ingredients and easy-preparation meal kits for busy consumers.
- 5) Strategic Marketing and Awareness Campaigns
 - Emphasize the health and cost advantages of meal kits over fast food.
 - Employ social media influencers, fitness bloggers, and reviews to establish credibility.
 - Provide trial kits or first-time discounting to induce consumers to try the service.
- 6) Utilize Technology for Smooth Operations
 - Create an easy-to-use mobile app for placing orders, monitoring, and tailoring meal plans.
 - Have a subscription plan that is flexible, where customers can suspend, skip, or alter plans.

VII. CONCLUSION

The report identifies a huge market potential for meal kit subscription in India, fueled by quick urbanization, busy lives, and increasing emphasis on convenience. Suburban residents, especially working professionals and students, find it difficult to plan meals, shop for groceries, and cook healthy meals on a daily basis. This makes a strong argument for meal kit services that offer fresh, pre-portioned ingredients and simple recipe instructions to allow easy home-cooked meals.

Despite that, price sensitivity is of vital importance, considering that affordability matters most when consumer purchasing decisions are made. Cost-conscious young professionals and students comprise a critical consumer base. Being competitive in prices, offering affordable subscription options, promotions, and value pricing would be essential to win over and retain customers. Emphasizing cost savings from reduced frequency in food delivery would be imperative to persuade customers.

In addition, ingredient quality and freshness are of utmost importance to Indian consumers, who prefer home-cooked meals to processed or pre-packaged ones. High-quality sourcing, sustainable packaging, and clear ingredient labeling will foster trust and long-term loyalty. In addition to quality, meal variety and customization are also essential. Providing vegetarian, vegan, high-protein, and low-carb options, as well as regionally inspired meal kits, can cater to varied consumer tastes.

In spite of the promise, competition from meal delivery platforms such as Zomato and Swiggy continues to be a challenge. The latter already dominate the quick and convenient food delivery market. In order to stand out, providers have to concentrate on health-conscious consumers, price sensitivity, and convenience of preparation. Marketing campaigns must highlight the health and cost advantages of meal kits over fast food, utilizing social media influencers, nutritionists, and special offers to increase awareness and uptake.

In addition, technology will play a pivotal role in providing seamless customer experiences. An intuitive mobile app with adaptable subscription plans, customized meal planning, and live delivery tracking can improve customer satisfaction. Giving users the option to pause, skip, or personalizing their plans will offer more flexibility, rendering meal kits a more appealing substitute for conventional food delivery.

In summary, although the Indian market offers great growth opportunities for meal kit delivery, success will be a result of finding an ideal balance between cost, quality, personalization, and convenience. By meeting consumer demands and distinguishing themselves from other food delivery services, meal kit companies can create a solid foundation and catalyze a movement towards healthier, home-prepared meals in urban India.



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 - 500+ responses from urban consumers in leading Indian cities.
 - Expert interviews with nutritionists, food service experts, and industry analysts.











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