

CLIMATE JUSTICE PRACTICE

DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT OF QUICK COMMERCE APPS ON CLIMATE

FINAL REPORT

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1. IDENTIFYING THE CLIMATE JUSTICE PROBLEM

With express deliveries, as consumers can buy things on a need basis, caution is shortchanged for the indiscretion of buying more than one needs. Due to the small ticket sizes, the number of people on the road trying to deliver the same amount of products also increases, pushing north the carbon footprint. Transport is already the world's largest source of new greenhouse gas emissions, currently responsible for almost 12% of all emissions worldwide. At the same time, global CO2 emissions rebounded to their highest levels in history in 2021, post-Covid lockdowns.¹ The higher Indian figures for average per-parcel delivery compared to global or European figures are concerning- the rise in India could potentially be attributed to greater congestion in Indian cities compared to other regions and quick commerce delivery is one of the main contributors.

The short trips that millions of delivery vehicles take every day have a disproportionate impact on pollution, smog, air quality, and, ultimately, our health, as well as our ability to achieve a zero-emission future. Five Indian cities – Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bangalore, and Chennai – emit more CO2 from last-mile delivery than the last mile emissions of entire countries such as France and Canada.² According to a World Economic Forum study on the future of the last-mile delivery, the increase in demand will lead to an increase in emissions by 32% globally.³ The problem is because of the actions of few, everyone has to suffer from adverse impact of carbon emission on climate. It results in rural vulnerabilities due to demand-driven consumer urban lifestyle.

¹ Greg Higgs, 'Revealing the Secret Emission of E-Commerce-Hint (It all lies in the Delivery)' Clean Mobility Collective (2022) Available [here](#)

² *ibid.*

³ 'The Problem of Last Mile Ecosystem' World Economic Forum (2020) Available [here](#).

(i) How does this Problem affect people disproportionately?

The consumption of quick commerce services is mainly done by people from upper middle class who holds the economic power, have knowledge but the problem is the disproportionate impact of these services and habits on the people around.

The consumers of these services are restricted to people from specific income group but the impact of their habits is on everyone. Climate justice should not be based on a utilitarian trade-off where a majority of India's population should not be suffering merely because of the actions of a few people whose demand-driven habits lead to carbon emission. Due to demand driven consumer urban lifestyle, everyone has to suffer from the aftereffects of carbon emissions caused by quick commerce. Unsustainable plastic consumption, traffic congestion, and increase in carbon footprint associated with online quick commerce delivery services in the new normal. Do we even require fast food delivery apps like Zepto, BlinkIT, etc? They hardly solve any problem and end up contributing to excessive air pollution.

2. TARGETED AUDIENCE FOR THE PROJECT

The main group of people that the project "speaks" to includes Consumers who are the key contributors to this climate justice problem. Consumers here are the users of quick commerce delivery apps, at the level of consumers its mostly the lack of awareness as to how their actions are affecting the world around them, for consumers, it is just a matter of convenience that they don't have to step out and can get instant delivery within a matter of minutes at their doorstep. The consumer fails to look at how this small action has an adverse impact on the climate and the people around it. Moreover, the users of these quick commerce services are also people within the age group of 22-30 years, which means people from specific age and income groups are the main contributors to this problem. *For the purpose of this project, the targeted audience is the students of NLSIU who are regular users of quick commerce service.*

3 .AWARENESS- A KEY SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF EXCESSIVE USE OF QUICK COMMERCE

One of the essential parts of this project is to create awareness of the problem identified in this project. Many people are not even aware of the impact of quick commerce services on the climate. People who are not even contributing to this problem are made to suffer because of the excessive carbon emission caused by these apps. It contributes to unnecessary consumerism and

creates a separate market that caters to the need of people in the specific income group who hardly face any climate law issues. We need to question the very need for these apps and their impact on climate.

- In order to *create awareness* of this problem, I circulated a Google form wherein I had put forth questions to understand the nature of consumers who are regular users of quick commerce. I had also put up the questions in the form which helped consumers to become aware of their contribution towards carbon emissions and to understand whether they were willing to change their habits as regular consumers of quick commerce services. (The Google Form and Its results are attached as [Annexure 1](#)).
- The Google form also served in *identifying* that this problem exists as almost 90% of the students who filled the form indicated that they are regular users of quick commerce services and rarely go out to buy groceries, despite the fact that the nearby grocery store is just 100m away from campus
- Furthermore I have tried to create awareness and consciousness around this climate justice problem by putting up a policy action plan in the form of a poster around the campus highlighting the disproportionate impact of these apps and how they are contributing to the increase in carbon emissions. (Attached as [Annexure 2](#)). From my conversation with a lot of students around campus, I realized that they were facing the problem of ‘*double blindness*’ wherein they feel helpless towards this climate problem. They are so used to the services of quick commerce that they find it difficult to stop the service of quick commerce and feel helpless about it. To resolve this dilemma I shared with them the policy action plan wherein I have shared alternate options for the service of quick commerce. While I understand that it might take time for people to change their habits but small steps in the right direction might go a long way in resolving this problem.
- In addition to the poster, I shared a Policy Action Plan as a separate document with the students around campus to ensure that they are better aware of the problem in detail and encourage them to use better alternatives to the quick commerce services. The policy action plan is attached as [Annexure 3](#).
- I have also created video for the purpose of this project which mainly summarizes the policy action plan and can further help in creating awareness around this problem on a large scale

because I believe video always have a greater impact and outreach in highlighting this problem. ([Annexure 4](#))

- I have put together the Policy Action Plan, Posters and the Video on a Blog Post, wherein people can read about this problem and act on the proposed solution ([Annexure 6](#)).

4. FEEDBACK ON THE PROTOTYPE

In furtherance of the awareness that I have tried to create through Google forms, Posters and Policy Action Plan circulated to the students on campus, I tried to engage with the student body to understand their views on the project. After I shared the posters and Google form with the students around campus I asked them about their feedback. Most of them were able to relate to the problem and agreed that their actions are contributing to excessive carbon emissions and everyone has to suffer from it. They acknowledged their privilege and were able to understand why this is a problem and how the ‘middle majority’ is contributing for the same. But one concern that many had was that they are *“too used to the service of Zepto, BlinkIT and it will be difficult not to use them.”*

While they agreed to reduce the consumption of quick commerce service but they were not sure about the how long will it take for them to change the habit. To address this concern I proposed alternative options which are available on campus and I have proposed the same in my Policy Action Plan as well. While I understand their concern but consumers need to step out of their comfort zone if they want to reduce the carbon emission and their own carbon footprint. They need to change their habits, because wrong habits over a period of time congeal into practice which in turn becomes a norm.

5. IMPACT OF PROPOSED SOLUTION AND LONG-TERM PLAN

Raising Awareness of this climate justice problem is the main solution of my project for which I have adopted different means such as Google Forms, Posters, Policy Action Plan, and a Video. *The solution that this project focuses on is a mitigation solution, which is to reduce the impact of excessive carbon emissions caused by quick commerce.*

The solution to the climate justice problem identified in this paper has helped in creating awareness around this problem. In order to understand the impact of my project, I circulated a Google form which had questioned related to impact assessment of my proposed solutions. (The

Google form and its results are attached as [Annexure 5](#)). The video, posters and policy action plan circulated around the students of NLSIU has made them question their daily habit of ordering items through quick commerce service. While the usage of quick commerce has not stopped entirely on campus but people has tried to switch to alternate options provided in the Policy Action Plan. Some people have reduced the consumption of quick commerce by ordering through them once in ten –fifteen days etc. The proposed solution has created awareness and made people question their habit which leads to consumerism, increased carbon emissions and unnecessary plastic consumption.

The Long term solution is to approach students outside of NLSIU and reach out to consumers at a large scale and create more awareness around this problem. Since quick commerce is responsible for 12% of carbon emissions in cities like Bangalore, Mumbai, and Delhi it becomes important to reach out to the consumers at a large scale but for the time being, even a small step such as a reduction in usage of quick commerce app can go a long way in reducing carbon emissions. The projects aims to speak to the majority middle, people within the age group of 22-30 years at a large scale and make them aware of the problem and guide them towards the alternative options that are available for this problem.

5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROJECT

The significance of this project will be to ensure that the problem of climate justice associated with quick commerce apps should be brought to light and the consumers must take active steps to intervene and strive for a sustainable solution. The first step for every stakeholder is to understand that there is a problem with quick commerce which creates unnecessary consumerism. The beneficiary for this project will be everyone affected by increase in carbon emission and carbon footprint because this climate justice problem impacts the climate at large in more than one ways and if it is not controlled at this stage it will keep getting worse. Today it's just a matter of convenience for everyone to use these apps but we need to look at the larger picture when we question the very need for these apps.

Annexure 1	Google Form (To Identify the Problem)
Annexure 2	Posters (To create Awareness)
Annexure 3	Policy Action Plan
Annexure 4	Video
Annexure 5	Google Form (Impact Assessment)
Annexure 6	Blog Post