

INDIA'S CRYPTO PORTFOLIO Q1 2026

How India Invests



Introduction

The first quarter of 2026 saw one of the most significant geopolitical shocks in recent history; the escalation of the Iran conflict and its ripple effects across global markets.

The impact was not just confined to one asset class. Oil prices surged sharply, with Brent crude briefly crossing the \$100+ mark, triggering a broad inflationary impulse across economies. Equity markets globally saw heightened volatility, with sharp intraday swings across major indices, while bond yields moved higher as inflation expectations re-priced. Safe-haven assets like gold and the US dollar saw renewed inflows as investors moved defensively amid rising uncertainty. This was not a localized shock, but a broad-based repricing of global risk sentiment across asset classes.

Against this backdrop, the crypto industry also experienced a highly volatile but structurally resilient quarter. Globally, digital assets initially reacted in line with broader risk assets, witnessing sharp sell-offs during peak risk-off phases. However, the market demonstrated a relatively faster recovery compared to earlier geopolitical cycles, supported by deeper institutional participation and improved liquidity infrastructure. Bitcoin and major large-cap assets continued to dominate flows.

In Q1 2026, institutional adoption remained a key driver, supported by regulatory certainty, approved products, custody improvements, and expanding ETF-like exposure in multiple jurisdictions. At the same time, macro uncertainty accelerated interest in alternative stores of value and decentralized financial systems, particularly in regions experiencing currency volatility and capital outflow pressures.

In India, the crypto market reflected a similar pattern of short-term volatility but long-term stability in participation. Trading activity across retail segments moderated during periods of global stress, but user engagement remained strong, indicating a more resilient and conviction-driven investor base compared to earlier cycles.

Further strengthening this environment, the Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND) updated its Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (CFT) guidelines for Virtual Digital Asset Service Providers (VDASPs) in January 2026, mandating registration for both domestic and offshore platforms serving Indian users. The framework introduced enhanced KYC norms, stricter due diligence, and tighter transaction monitoring, reinforcing transparency and aligning the ecosystem more closely with global standards.

Overall, this quarter reinforced a clear theme: while geopolitical shocks and macro cycles will continue to drive short-term volatility across global markets, the structural trajectory of the crypto industry remains intact. India, in particular, is steadily evolving into one of the most mature retail-driven crypto markets globally, underpinned by strong digital adoption, improving awareness, and a long-term shift toward responsible participation in digital assets.

Ashish Singhal
Co-founder, CoinSwitch

Note: This report is based on data from the CoinSwitch platform and does not include crypto users on other platforms.



Executive Summary

India's crypto ecosystem in Q1 2026 continued to deepen with investor behaviour clearly evolving, moving beyond early hype cycles into more structured and strategy-driven participation. From when India trades to what it buys, this quarter reflects a market that is more active, more aware, and more confident than ever before. Both the investors and traders took cautious approaches during the uncertainty.

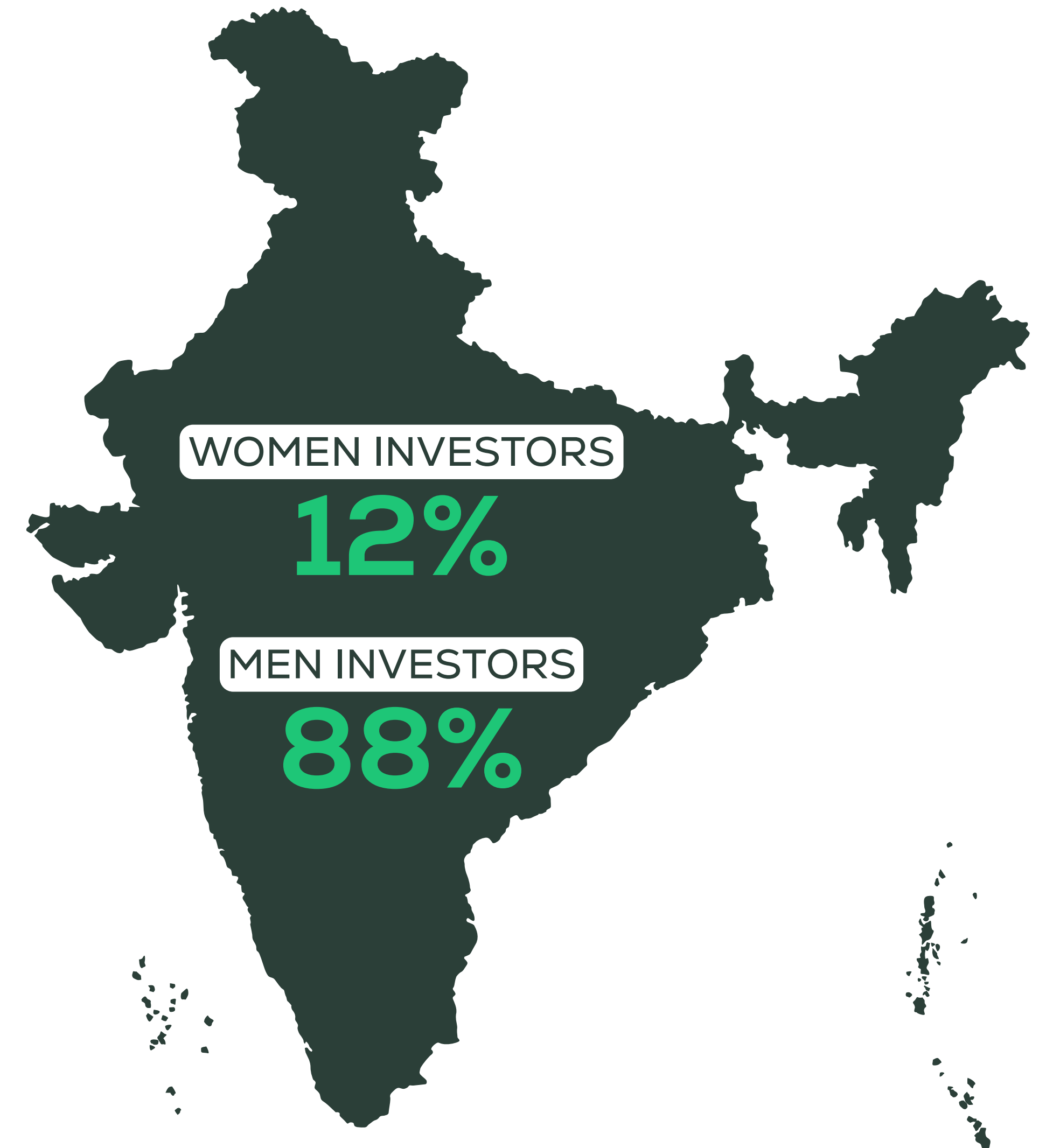
Key Highlights:

1. While 26–35 dominates at 48%, the fastest growth this quarter came from the 35+ segment, driven by Gen X and older millennials entering the market.
2. Uttar Pradesh (~12.9%) and Maharashtra (~12.3%) remain the top crypto markets, underscoring the scale and maturity of adoption in India's largest states.
3. Bitcoin (9.2%) remains the most invested asset, while also dominating trading activity at 17.4%, reaffirming its position as the market anchor.
4. Crypto trading continues to peak between 10–11 PM, reinforcing India's position as a late-night trading market. Despite being a 24x7 asset class, weekdays consistently outperform weekends.
5. February emerged as the standout month, with Feb 05 & 06 recording peak trading volumes, driven by sharp buying during market corrections.
6. Strong long-term conviction persists with 61.3% HODLers, while growing momentum trading (28.3%) and dip buying (20.4%) highlight a shift toward more tactical investing.
7. Different cities, different strategies & behaviours:
Karnataka shows the highest conviction in bluechips
Bihar leads in small-cap risk-taking
Andhra Pradesh stands out with the highest female participation
Haryana records the highest male participation
8. Across states, portfolios show a balanced mix of blue-chip, large-, mid-, and small-cap assets, signalling a shift from hype-driven investing to more thoughtful allocation strategies this quarter



2.5 CRORE+ CRYPTO INVESTORS

- February clearly had main character energy in Q1 2026, stealing the spotlight as crypto activity hit a high.
- Feb 05 & 06 emerged as peak trading days, driven by sharp buying during market dips, as investors moved quickly to capitalize on corrections.
- While the country winds down, crypto traders dial up. 10–11 PM continues to be prime time, proving that when India sleeps, crypto doesn't.
- And despite being a 24x7 market, there's still a rhythm, weekdays bring the hustle, weekends take it slow, with trading activity consistently higher during the workweek.



Coins India loves the most*

Bitcoin (BTC) tightened its grip on Indian portfolios in Q1 2026, covering 9.2% of holdings of investors. Dogecoin (DOGE) stayed right behind at 6.0%, proving meme coins still have serious fan power, while Ethereum (ETH) and Shiba Inu (SHIB) held their ground. The rest of the top 10, from XRP to Solana, reflected a healthy mix of blue-chip stability and utility tokens, with Pepe (PEPE) continuing to ride the meme wave.

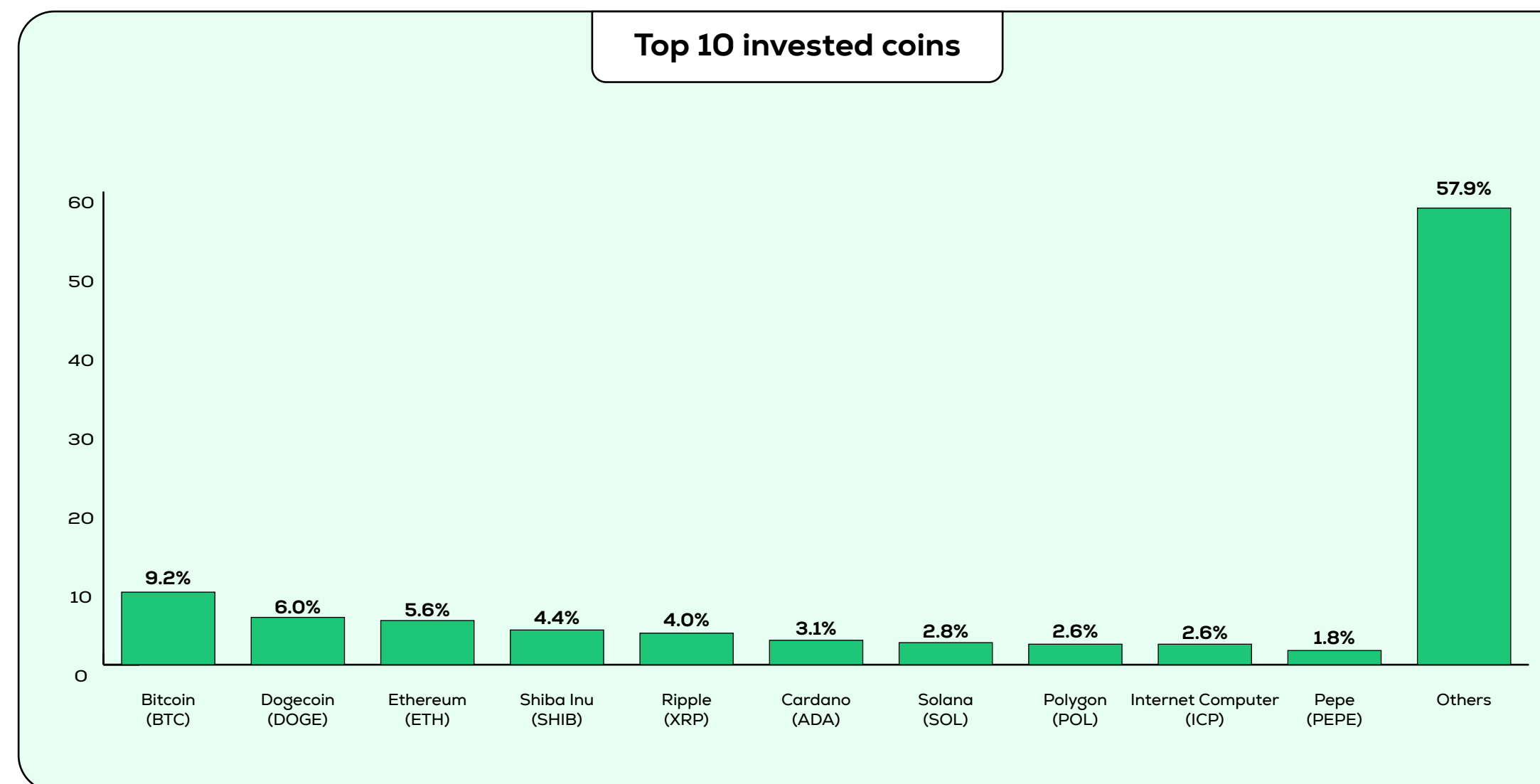
On the trading side, things got more action-packed. Bitcoin (BTC) dominated with 17.4% of trades, followed by Ethereum (ETH), XRP, and Solana (SOL), as traders leaned into high-liquidity names capitalizing on market movements. But it wasn't all serious business, tokens like Light (LIGHT), Sui (SUI), and meme favourites like DOGE, SHIB, and PEPE also kept the momentum game alive.

All in all, Q1 was a classic mix; steady conviction in portfolios, fast moves in trading. While investors stuck with familiar favourites, traders weren't shy about chasing trends, making it a lively quarter across the board.



(USDT accounts for a significant portion of volume. However, the primary use of USDT on CoinSwitch is transactional, not for long-term holding or trading. Hence it has been removed from this chart.)

**This is as per the 450+ coins that are listed on the platform*

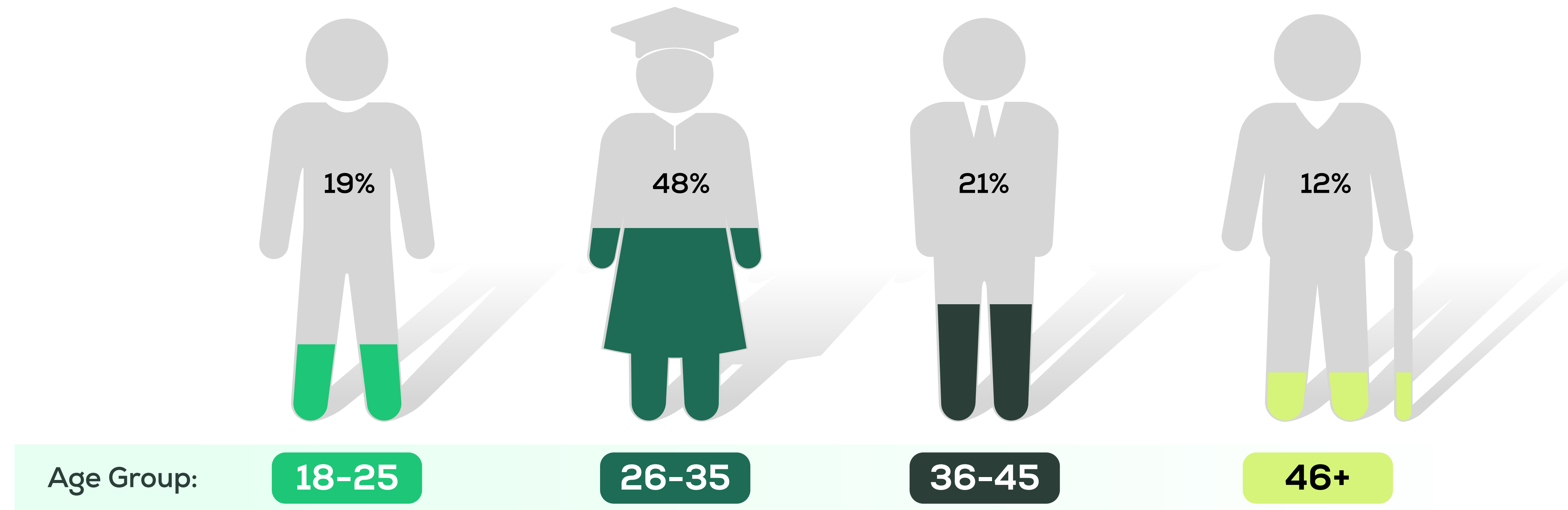


Investors who love crypto

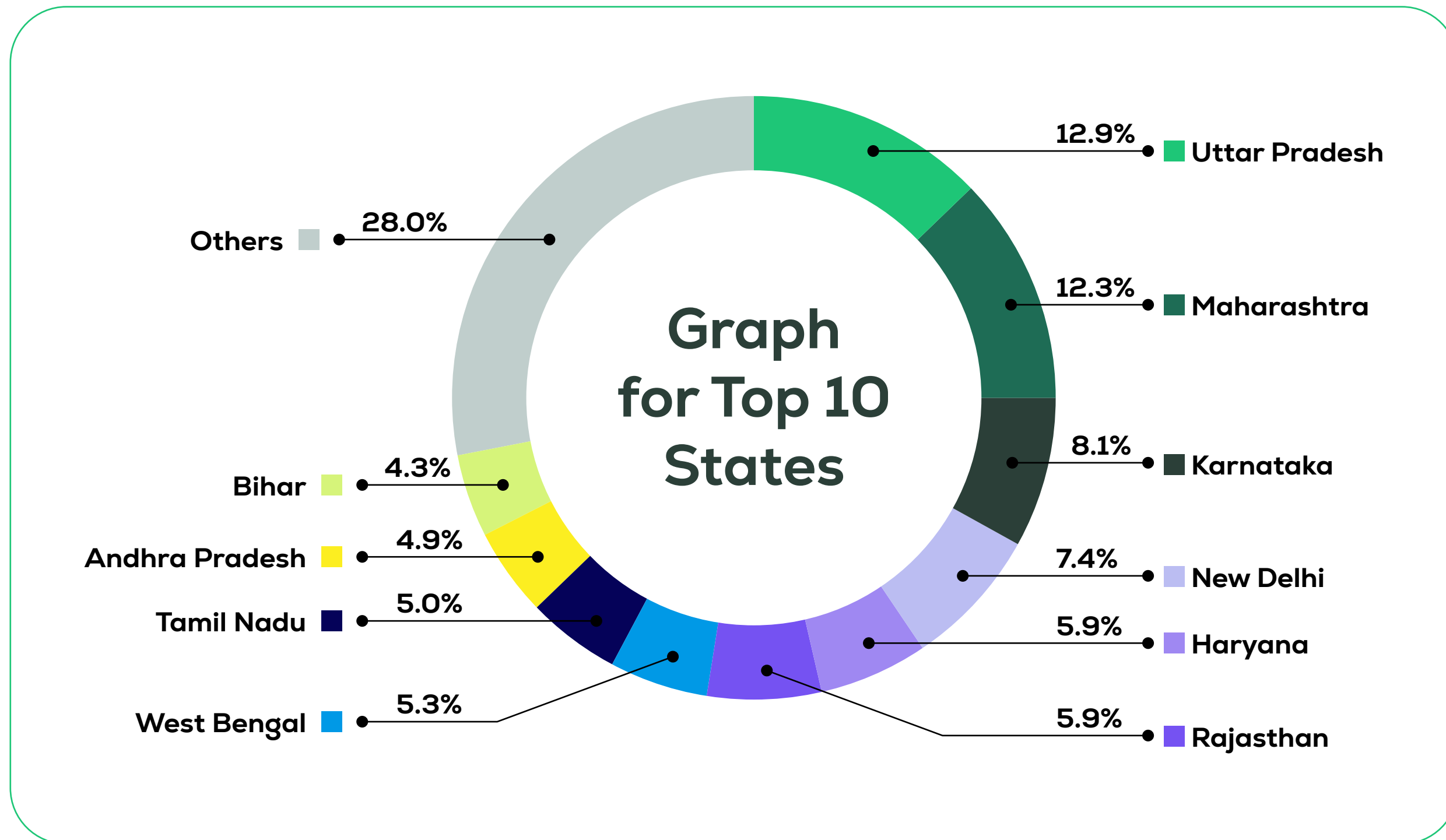
Q1 2026 marked a notable shift in investor demographics, with the fastest growth coming from the 35+ segment, driven by increased participation from Gen X and older millennials entering the market.

While the 26–35 cohort continues to dominate at 48%, the evolving trend signals a broadening of the crypto investor base beyond its traditionally younger audience.

Meanwhile, the 46+ segment, at 12%, reflects gradual but growing interest, underscoring widening participation and a move toward more mainstream adoption across age groups.



States that love crypto



India's crypto activity in Q1 2026 shows a clear concentration at the top, with Uttar Pradesh (~12.9%) and Maharashtra (~12.3%) leading by a noticeable margin, setting the pace for major crypto participation. Karnataka (~8.1%) and New Delhi (~7.4%) continue to anchor the next layer, reflecting a mix of tech-driven adoption and established investor bases.

Beyond the top tier, the distribution starts to even out, Haryana and Rajasthan (~5.9% each), along with West Bengal (~5.3%), Tamil Nadu (~5.0%), and Andhra Pradesh (~4.9%), indicating steady and consistent participation across regions rather than sharp spikes. Bihar (~4.3%), too, remains firmly in the mix, pointing to gradual but sustained growth.

The pattern this quarter is clear: while leadership remains concentrated, participation is becoming more evenly spread across states, signalling a maturing market where crypto adoption is stabilising beyond early hotspots and building depth across the country

Top 10 states x Market Cap

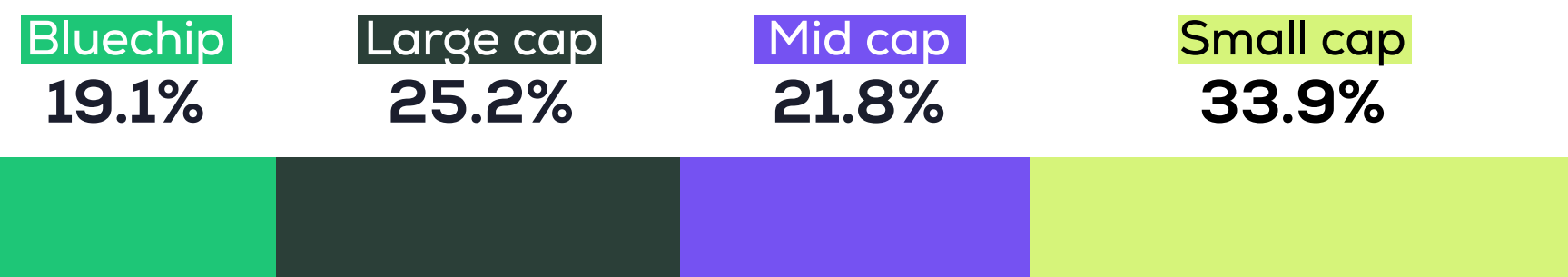
Here's how the top 10 states with the highest crypto adoption allocated their digital assets portfolio in Q1 2026



Uttar Pradesh

Uttar Pradesh investors are keeping it balanced, with allocations spread across large cap (25.2%), mid cap (21.8%), small cap (33.9%), and bluechip (19.1%), signalling a well-rounded approach rather than leaning too heavily in one direction.

The investor base remains male-dominated (79.1%), though female participation at (20.9%) is steadily shaping the mix. With Noida contributing (30.4%), activity is anchored in emerging urban centres, while BTC remains the top choice.



Gender ratio



Coin Preference

Most Invested
BTC

Top Performing City

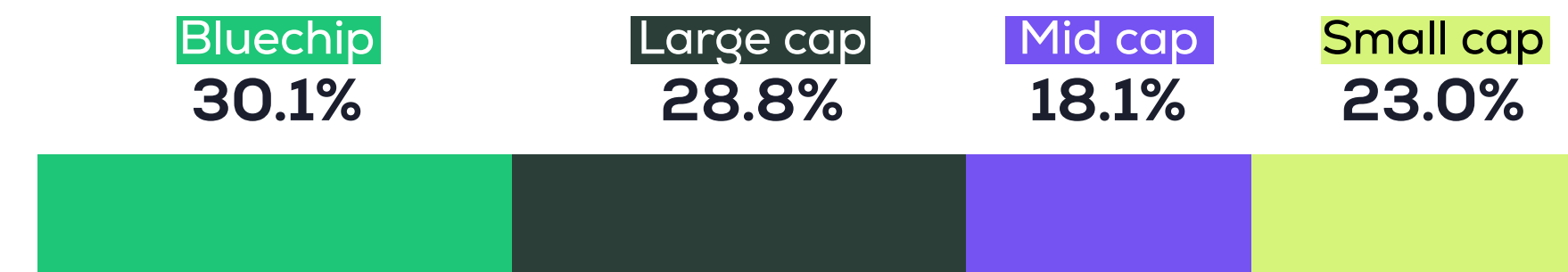
City	Allocation
Noida	30.4%



Maharashtra

Maharashtra's investment profile in Q1 2026 leaned towards stability, with bluechip (30.1%) and large cap assets (28.8%) forming the core of portfolios, while mid (18.1%) and small caps (23.0%) added measured exposure to growth.

The investor base remained predominantly male (79.6%), with female participation at 20.4%, indicating steady but gradual diversification. Bitcoin (BTC) continued to be the most preferred asset, while Mumbai, with a 38.7% share, stood out as the leading contributor, reinforcing its position as the state's primary crypto hub.



Gender ratio



Coin Preference

Most Invested
BTC

Top Performing City

City	Allocation
Mumbai	38.7%



Karnataka

Karnataka leads with the highest bluechip allocation (32.0%) among all states, signalling strong conviction in established assets.

Its portfolios reflect a stability-first approach, with balanced exposure across large, mid, and small caps. With Bengaluru contributing 68.4%, activity remains heavily concentrated in its tech-driven ecosystem.

Bluechip
32.0%

Large cap
27.1%

Mid cap
19.0%

Small cap
21.9%



Gender ratio



Coin Preference

Most Invested
BTC

Top Performing City

City	Allocation
Bengaluru	68.4%



New Delhi

New Delhi showcases one of the most evenly distributed portfolios, with near-equal allocation across bluechip (27.1%) and large caps (27.8%), complemented by steady mid and small cap exposure.

This balance points to a measured, diversification-first approach, where investors are spreading risk rather than chasing extremes in any one segment.

Overall, the capital reflects a mature and steady investing style, anchored by BTC, with consistency taking precedence over high risk positions.

Bluechip
27.1%

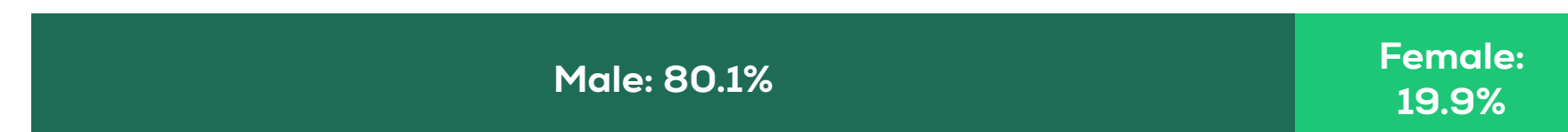
Large cap
27.8%

Mid cap
20.6%

Small cap
24.5%



Gender ratio



Coin Preference

Most Invested
BTC



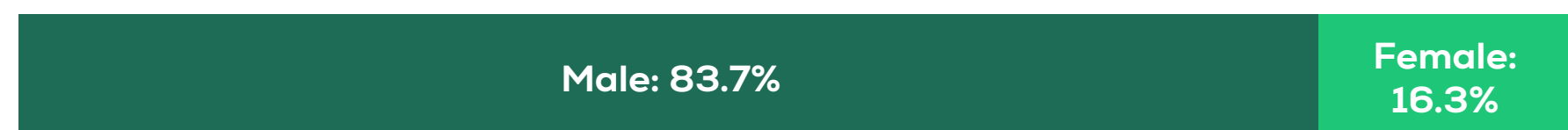
Haryana

Haryana stands out with the highest male participation (83.7%) among all states, indicating a highly concentrated investor base. Its portfolios show a strong tilt towards small caps (30.3%), signalling a clear growth-first approach and appetite for higher-risk opportunities.

Gurugram contributes 39.9% of the state's activity, driven by corporate and startup-led participation, reflecting the influence of a young, financially active workforce.



Gender ratio



Coin Preference

Most Invested
BTC

Top Performing City

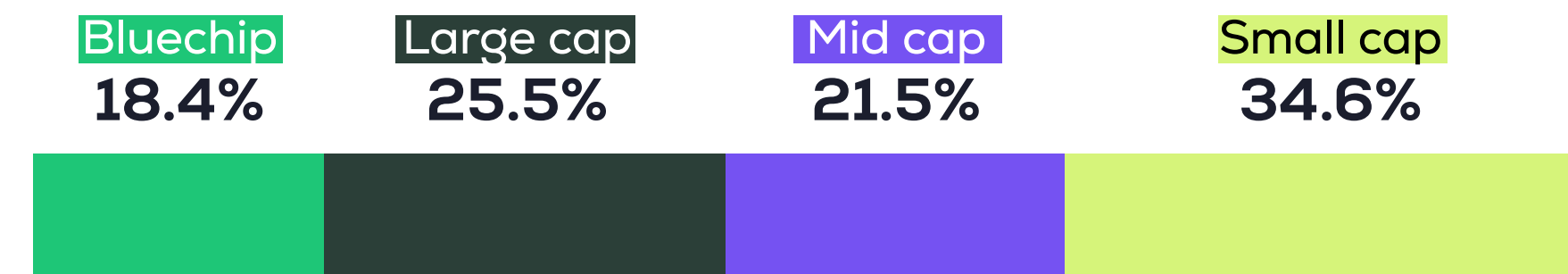
City	Allocation
Gurugram	39.9%



Rajasthan

Rajasthan reflects a well-distributed portfolio mix, with steady allocation across large, mid, and small caps. The state shows consistent participation across investor segments, pointing to a gradually expanding base.

With Jaipur contributing 46.9%, crypto activity is strongly anchored in key urban centres while continuing to build momentum.



Gender ratio



Coin Preference

Most Invested
BTC

Top Performing City

City	Allocation
Jaipur	46.9%



West Bengal

West Bengal reflects a balanced allocation across segments, without extreme tilts towards any one category, indicating a steady and measured investment approach. It also ranks among the top states for female participation (26.8%), signalling more inclusive adoption.

With Kolkata accounting for 48.8%, activity remains strongly city-driven, anchoring the state's crypto momentum.



Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu stands out for its near-perfect balance between bluechip (26.1%) and large caps (26.2%), reflecting a well-structured portfolio approach. This points to a disciplined, strategy-driven investor mindset, with limited tilt towards extreme risk.

With Chennai contributing 45.8%, activity remains steady and consistent, anchored by a strong urban base. The state reflects a calm, methodical investment pattern focused on long-term stability.

Bluechip 23.2% Large cap 26.1% Mid cap 21.8% Small cap 28.9%



Bluechip 26.1% Large cap 26.2% Mid cap 20.3% Small cap 27.4%



Gender ratio



Gender ratio



Coin Preference

Most Invested
BTC

Top Performing City

City	Allocation
Kolkata	48.8%

Coin Preference

Most Invested
BTC

Top Performing City

City	Allocation
Chennai	45.8%



Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh clearly leads with the highest female participation (59.1%), making it the most gender-diverse crypto market in the country. Portfolios lean towards large caps (29.3%), indicating a preference for relatively stable and established assets.

Interestingly, DOGE emerged as the most invested coin, breaking away from the broader BTC-led trend. This unique mix highlights a distinct investor behaviour, blending stability with selective interest in community-driven tokens.



Bihar

Bihar stands out as the most aggressive growth market, with the highest small cap allocation (38.0%) among all states. This reflects a strong risk appetite and focus on high-upside opportunities among investors.

With Patna contributing 38.1% and SHIB leading preference, the state shows a clear tilt towards emerging, community-driven assets.

Bluechip
20.5%

Large cap
29.3%

Mid cap
21.7%

Small cap
28.5%



Gender ratio



Coin Preference

Most Invested
DOGE

Top Performing City

City	Allocation
Hyderabad	35.2%

Bluechip
15.0%

Large cap
25.1%

Mid cap
21.9%

Small cap
38.0%



Gender ratio



Coin Preference

Most Invested
SHIB

Top Performing City

City	Allocation
Patna	38.1%

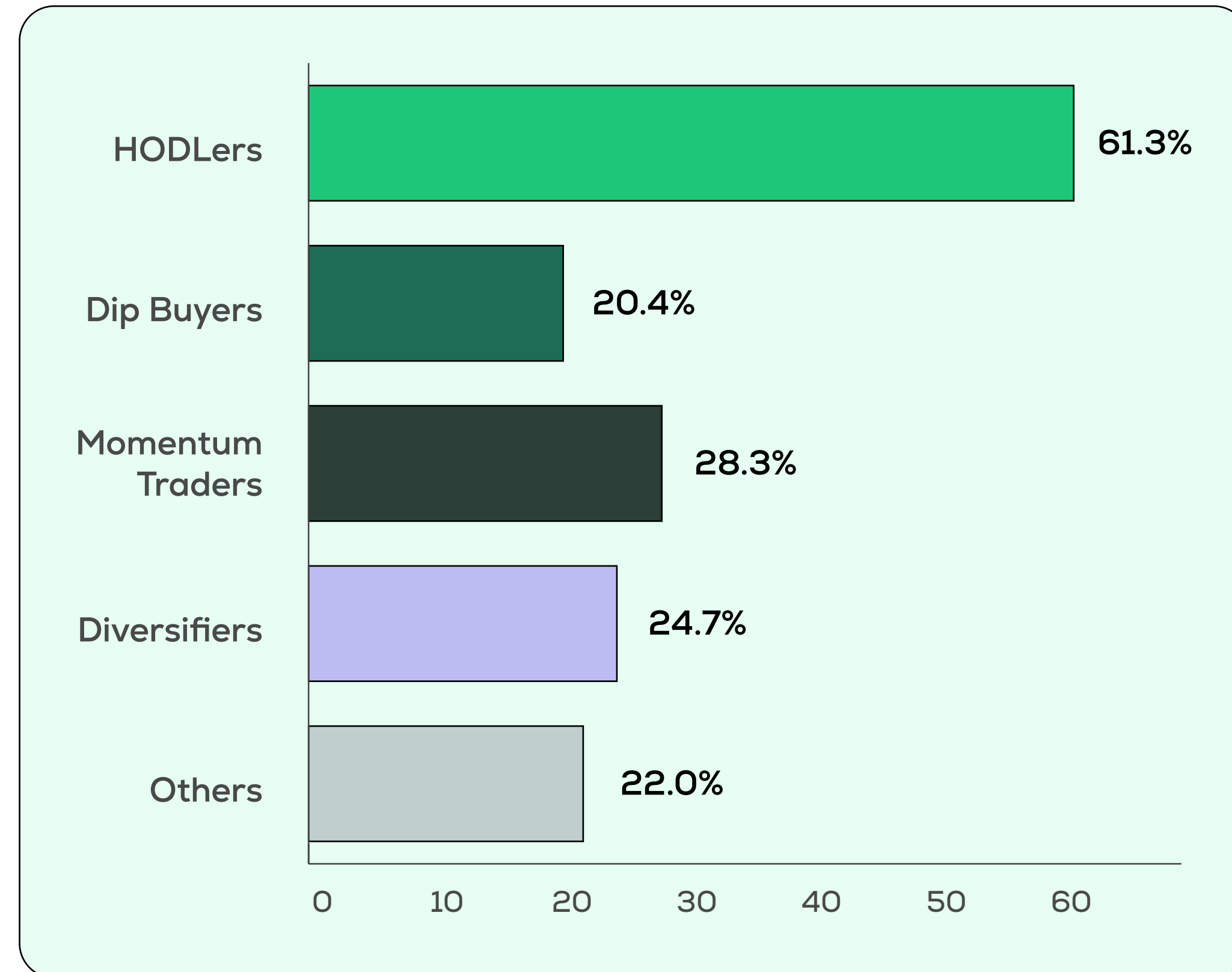
- Small-cap category: Any coin that is less than or equal to a hundred million USD
- Mid cap category: Any coin that is more than a hundred million and less than one billion USD

- Large cap category: Any coin that is valued more than one billion and less than fifty billion USD
- Bluechip category: Any coin that is more than fifty billion USD

Users' Behavioural Trends

In Q1 2026, conviction clearly led the way, with 61.3% of users choosing to HODL, signalling strong belief in long-term crypto growth. But it wasn't all patience, 28.3% rode the momentum wave while 20.4% actively bought the dips, showing users weren't afraid to time the market when opportunities showed up. On the other hand, Meme coins (17%) continued to draw significant interest. DeFi (11.5%) maintained a steady share as users remained engaged with yield opportunities, liquidity protocols, and broader on-chain financial activity.

In addition, 24.7% of users are diversifying their portfolios, while 22.0% are experimenting with alternative strategies, highlighting that India's crypto investors are increasingly adopting a multi-strategy approach rather than relying on a single investment style.



Please note: Users can appear in multiple segments (percentages may sum to >100%).

About CoinSwitch

Founded in 2017, CoinSwitch is India's largest crypto investing & trading platform and a pioneer in shaping the country's crypto ecosystem. With over 2.5 crore users, CoinSwitch operates a regulatory-compliant platform that simplifies and enhances crypto trading for both retail and professional investors. Backed by global investors such as Coinbase Ventures, Tiger Global, and Sequoia Capital India to the tune of \$300 million, CoinSwitch offers 450+ coins on its platform. CoinSwitch is a PeepalCo product and is ISO/IEC 27001:2022 certified and Financial Intelligence Unit - India (FIU- IND) registered.



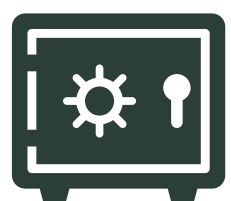
FIU Registered

We are compliant with anti-money laundering laws and registered with the Financial Intelligence Unit - India.



ISO/IEC 27001:2022

Our ISO certification highlights our commitment to global best practices of information security.



Safe Custody

Our custodians are SOC 2 Type II certified, insured and undergo regular cybersecurity testing.



Proof of Reserves

Our periodical proof of reserves from a reputed third-party auditor assures users of funds and crypto balances.

Disclaimer

Crypto products and NFTs are unregulated and can be highly risky. There may be no regulatory recourse for any loss from such transactions. The information provided in this post is not to be considered investment/financial advice from CoinSwitch. Any action taken upon the information shall be at the user's risk.

Credits

Data Analytics: **Nikhil Deshraj**
Editorial: **Shivani Thakur, Shivani Muthyala**
Design: **M Ragavendra**