

## Exploring the strategic landscape of online fish markets in Ernakulam, Kerala

Sajeev M.V.\* and Joshy C.G.

ICAR-Central Institute of Fisheries Technology, Cochin-29

\*sajeev.mv@icar.gov.in

The digital transformation of fish marketing has revolutionized the marketing channels. Online fish marketing platforms have emerged alongside local markets by expanding access to fresh seafood and providing unprecedented convenience (Sajeev, 2021). Leveraging Kerala's vast coastline and rich marine biodiversity, these online platforms have become vital for consumers seeking high-quality seafood (Sajeev et al., 2021). This digital shift not only enhances accessibility but also supports local fisheries, promotes sustainability, and strengthens the

connection between fishers and consumer. To comprehensively explore online fish markets in Ernakulam, Kerala, this study employed a purposive sampling approach, focusing on five prominent platforms. Data collection involved digital scouting, examining critical attributes such as platform choice, advertisement channels, payment options, delivery logistics, fish variety, and product range. The study aims to provide insights into the strategic landscape of online fish vending, shedding light on how these platforms navigate challenges and optimize opportunities. The profile of online fish vending portals is presented in table-1.

Table 1. Profile of online fish vending portals in Ernakulam, Kerala

Portals	Choice of platforms		Advertisement channels		Payment options		Delivery options	Variety of fish		Product Channel
	Platforms used	Numbers	Medium used	Numbers	Options	Numbers	Numbers	Average number	Maximum number	Numbers
I	W, A	2	SM	1	CC/DC/UPI/WLT/NB/COD/CAOD/PL	8	3	28	40	90
II	W, A	2	SM, NP	2	CC/DC/NB/UPI/COD/CRCY	6	3	16	55	48
III	W, A	2	SM, NP, BB	3	CC/DC/NB/UPI/FC/GC	6	2	12	18	15
IV	W, A, SM	3	SM	1	CC/DC/NB/WLT/UPI/COD	6	4	20	45	80
V	W, A	2	SM, NP, BB, TV, RD	5	CC/DC/UPI/NB/WLT/EMI/PL	7	3	36	60	180

W: Website, A: Mobile App, SM: Social Media, NP: Newspaper, BB: Billboard, TV: Television, RD: Radio, CC: Credit Card, DC: Debit Card, UPI: Uniform Payment Interface, INB: Internet Banking, Wlt: Wallet [Paytm, Licious Wallet, Simpl, Ola Money, Airtel Money], PL: Pay Later [Simpl/Lazypay/ICICI/Amazon Pay], CRCY: Cryptocurrency, FC: Food Card, GC: Gift Card, EMI [Zestmoney], COD: Cash On Delivery, CAOD: Card On Delivery

The fish vending portals in Ernakulam exhibited a diverse selection of platform choices, incorporating websites (W), mobile apps (A), and social media (SM) to establish a robust online presence. Some portals adopt a hybrid approach, strategically utilizing a combination of these platforms to implement a comprehensive outreach strategy aimed at a broader audience. This selection of platform choices carries various implications for both the portals and their customers. While portals benefit from an extended reach and caters to different demographics, it poses challenges such as resource allocation and maintaining a consistent brand image.

The advertisement channels used demonstrate variability, while focusing on brand promotion and audience engagement. Utilizing components such as social media (SM), newspapers (NP), billboards (BB), television (TV), and radio (RD) channels to differing extents allows these portals to tailor their marketing mix to appeal to a diverse audience. The maximum number of channels utilized was five. The use of multiple channels allows targeted outreach, enhances visibility, and increases brand awareness. However, challenges include resource allocation and potential information overload for customer.

Fish vending portals provided customers with an extensive array of payment options, reflecting a commitment to catering to

diverse financial preferences. The range includes credit cards (CC), debit cards (DC), net banking (NB), uniform payment interface (UPI), wallet (WLT), pay later (PL), cryptocurrency (CRCY), food cards (FC), gift cards (GC), and instalment options (EMI). This diverse selection is designed to enhance customer convenience and accessibility, with the maximum number of payment options offered being seven. This benefits both portals and customers, although challenges include integration difficulties and potential higher transaction costs for portals. Customers may experience decision complexity due to the wide array of options.

The portals in Ernakulam were found to adopt a customer-centric approach by providing flexible delivery options, offering immediate delivery, scheduled deliveries for the next day, and specific time slots. This diversity aligns with operational efficiency, allowing customers to choose the delivery option that best suits their needs. The maximum number of delivery options offered is four, reflecting a balanced strategy that considers both customer flexibility and operational efficiency. While this enhances customer satisfaction, challenges include logistical coordination and potential decision-making complexity for customers.

Fish vending portals also showcased a commitment to diversity in their offerings, providing a variety of fish that ranges from

an average of 12 to 36, with the maximum varieties reaching up to 60. This broad spectrum caters to the preferences of customers with specific culinary choices, reflecting a dedication to providing diverse fish options. This diverse variety sets portals apart from competitors by providing a wide variety of fish, contributing to market differentiation. This, in turn, attracts a diverse customer base, enhancing overall customer satisfaction. Challenges include inventory management and ensuring freshness.

The portals displayed a significant variation in the number of products offered, ranging from 15 to 180. This diversity in product range allows some portals to present an extensive selection, offering numerous products, while others opt for a more limited selection. For portals, offering a broad range of products enhances their market presence and attracts a wider customer

base, contributing to overall visibility and competitiveness. Additionally, a diverse product offering enables portals to tap into multiple revenue streams, providing financial flexibility. While a broad range enhances market presence, it poses challenges in inventory management.

Fish vending portals strategically navigated the online market, balancing customer satisfaction and operational efficiency across various attributes. Despite challenges, their commitment to differentiation positions them well in the competitive online fish vending landscape. Based on the findings, the strategic landscape of online fish vending portals was mapped as in Figure 1. Ultimately, customer preferences will play a crucial role in determining the portal of choice (Sajeev, Joshy, Jesmi and Abhay, 2023). In conclusion, Kerala's digital fish markets present a diverse landscape with unique

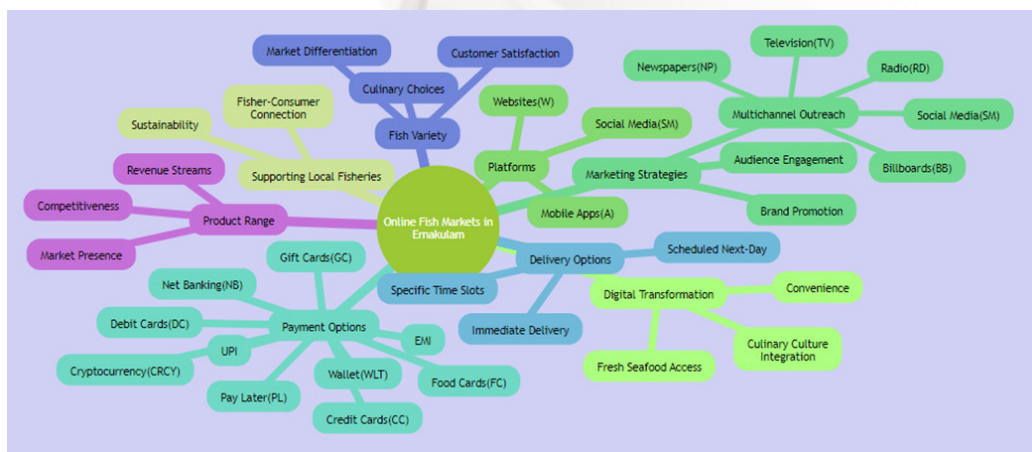


Fig. 1. Strategic landscape of online fish vending portals

strengths and areas for improvement. As consumers increasingly turn to online platforms for seafood, understanding these nuances empowers both businesses and consumers to make informed choices.

## References

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