

# HAUTÉ INDIAN CUISINE: INSTAGRAMMABLE FOOD OF INDIA

**\*Gitanshu Kumar<sup>1</sup> and Prakhar Gupta<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Lecturer, AIHM Chandigarh

<sup>2</sup>Student, Institute of hotel Management, Pusa, New Delhi  
gitanshu\_ihm@ymail.com

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Social media has become a powerful asset to marketing within the food industry, as sharing food through social media becomes increasingly important. This means that colour is being embraced and celebrated in food and drink, specifically on social media platforms that provoke these trends. Nowadays dining is not about, going to a driveway and getting your regular burger with fries and coke, or going to a restaurant and get a butter chicken with dollop of butter and cream on top of it with a roomali roti. The modern restaurant client consists mostly of Millennial, and in today's world dining out is a social activity and also done for social media. Therefore, the urge for food that looks appealing came into existence. This is an era of Instagram and Snapchat, where a dish should be worthy enough of a picture. This is why chefs have now turned into artists. 'Instagrammable' food or Insta-food is food that either looks great or stands out in some way – colour, texture, ingredients. This led to the creation of Indian Haute Cuisine which challenges the traditional aspect of food and creates it in various plating styles in an urge to create them appealing. The concept expands beyond just the Instagram platform into others such as Twitter, Pinterest and Tumblr as well. As consumers, are naturally visual creatures and are drawn to beautiful photography in social media feeds. **Objective:** This study is focused on effects of social media on food industry which leads to creation of Haute Indian Cuisine. **Methodology:** A quantitative research is done on the basis of random sampling. Total number of respondents were 60, these people were residents of Chandigarh who are either Restaurant Operators and Food Bloggers with 1000+ followers. **Results:** The study was able to assess the widespread prevalence of Instagrammable food and its acceptability amongst the Restaurant Operators and Food Bloggers with 80% of respondent clicking photographs and uploading it regularly. People are very well aware of the emerging trends of Indian Haute Cuisine and contributing to it. Majority of the respondents (73%) preferred appeal of dish over health factor. **Conclusion:** Indian Haute Cuisine is a concept that is prevailing and growing in the industry, and the operators should try to make food sustainable and healthy along with its visual appeal.

**Key Words:** Indian Haute Cuisine, Indian Food, Restaurant, Insta-food, Social Media.

## INTRODUCTION

Millennial is the generation who has the most spending power, because of this organization have to adapt to drastic changes in consumer behavior. A very relatable change in this behavior is the way millennial use social media, particularly Snapchat & Instagram. With many Instagram food bloggers coming into scene, they tend to click beautifully presented food and displaying it on their profiles, food has become a huge part of social networking. Restaurants are picking up on this trend as a result of which they are turning Insta-friendly.

A foodie is a person who has ardent or refined interest in food and who eats not only out of hunger but due to their interest or hobby. (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 1992).

Millennials today form more than 50% of our customer base and we have to give them what they want. Today's customers want great food, great service and great photos (Lee, 2017).

Foodie is a term being used for people who eat and try food from various places & put it on social media. It is a term particularly used on social media platform. “#foodies” has over 23 million posts on Instagram as of November 2019 (Instagram, 2019). Foodies never eat alone; they always eat out with their food experiences on social media. Millennial are especially social when it comes to eating. They prefer to go grocery shopping in groups, ask friends before selecting a restaurant, more likely to eat out and prefer commercial table. They are three times more likely than other shoppers rely on information from blogs & social media networks (Maxwell PR Annual World Report, 2012).

This trend has been picked up very rapidly in India as well. Indian cuisine which was once served in platters only has changed in this scenario. Instagrammable food is created in Indian cuisine as well, it leads to creation of a trend which is termed as “Indian Haute Cuisine”. It is all about presenting Indian food picture perfect form on the plate in the restaurants. The décor and lighting in the outlets are done in such a way that customers could easily capture and post beautiful / tempting pictures of food online i.e. Social Media (Instagram, 2019).

Rathod, 2016 in his study mentioned this development of Indian Haute Cuisine in three stages; first stage was Indian food being served in fine dining format by Bukhara & Dum Pukht. Second stage began with Chef Vineet Bhatia in London and Floyd Cardoz's Tabla, which emphasized on plating of dishes & separate courses. Chef Gaggan Anand & Chef Manish Mehrotra joined the league, Chef Gaggan works with a rebel intention to change the way one thinks about food. He added the element of playfulness in dining and challenged the way people think about food. One of his creation “Lick it up” asks a person to lift plate in hand & lick with your tongue, this dish

in particular is the most trending dish of restaurant on social media. While Chef Manish Mehrotra emphasized the comfort and simplicity in presentation, he brought out various staples in new form and presented them beautifully. Daulat ki Chat presented in a bowl with replicas of Indian Currency. With the introduction of several courses to various styles of cooking created a sense of warmth.

Moreover, food bloggers are not only using blogs as their media to share their food experiences but also social media specifically Instagram which is an online mobile photo-sharing become one of food bloggers' tools to share. With the easy access of Instagram user to follow and see directly the food bloggers' posts in their timeline, it can make people even more craving looking at the food photos. In some way, bloggers have some significant impact because 81 percent people seek advices before making a purchase through social site. In other words, people are not just enjoying that impressive food posting, but food bloggers become an influential person for other people. People can get information about an old restaurant yet recommended to visit or a new great café that are trending in town. Food bloggers become a benchmark for people in considering whether the restaurants are worthy to be visited or not (Nur.Hanifati, 2015).

Social Media has become a powerful asset for marketing within food services industry. Food is becoming clickbait of sorts for restaurant and 'Instagrammable' food is becoming increasingly vital to millennials. There are over 14 million pictures tagged with #foodporn, over 10 million with #instafood and several millions more with just #food. The dynamic between food and social media has changed. Instagrammers have moved away from sharing lunch time photos as a competitive sport to purposefully documenting the must-eat meals of the moment. The app is still heavily populated with attractive meals, but they're aimed at influencing even transforming. (Foodzania, 2018).

In order to carry out research the following objections were planned :

- To analyze the effect of Instagram on food presentation.
- To examine changes in Restaurant due to food micro-blogging platform (Instagram)

## **METHODOLOGY**

The primary data was collected by the self-designed questionnaire conducted on November, 2019 of Modern Indian restaurant operators in Chandigarh Tricity and food bloggers with minimum 1000+ followers on Instagram situated in Chandigarh, India.

The study was also based on the secondary information available at various sources of information like books, blogs, various websites, newspaper articles and old research articles related to the topic.

The study was conducted on the basis of sample survey in various parts of Chandigarh Tricity.

Random sampling was done for food bloggers who have at least 1000 followers on Instagram and restaurant operators who meet the criteria. The total no. of respondents was(n=60) between age 18 to 70 years.

**Tools and Techniques:** A self-designed questionnaire was framed to learn about awareness and opinions of respondents in Chandigarh Tricity. The questionnaire was formed on the basis of Likert's scale. Nominal scale was used to represent people's attitude to this topic. The respondents were asked to think about their opinion about the topic and rate their preference on the scale.

The study adopted three-point rating scale method of questionnaire to obtain information about the respondents.

The rating scale adopted is as follows:

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Statistical Analysis: The results were computed as frequency and percentages.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hauté Indian Cuisine: Instagrammable Food of India was collected through a questionnaire and got a response rate of 82%. The data was collected and compiled to find the results.

*Table 1: Hauté Indian Cuisine*

| QUESTIONS                                                             | YES |      | MAYBE |      | NO |      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------|-------|------|----|------|
|                                                                       | n   | %    | n     | %    | n  | %    |
| Do you post pictures of food on Instagram?                            | 48  | 80.0 | 8     | 13.3 | 4  | 6.7  |
| Have you ever tried Modern Indian Food?                               | 48  | 80.0 | 8     | 13.3 | 4  | 6.7  |
| People consider presentation of Food over health factor?              | 40  | 66.7 | 0     | 0.0  | 20 | 33.3 |
| In your opinion food presentation matters more than health and taste? | 12  | 20.0 | 48    | 80.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| Does Posting pictures on social media helps you gain publicity?       | 52  | 86.7 | 8     | 13.3 | 0  | 0.0  |
| Indian Haute Food is healthy. Agreed?                                 | 20  | 33.3 | 4     | 6.7  | 36 | 60.0 |

| QUESTIONS                                                         | YES |      | MAYBE |      | NO |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------|-------|------|----|------|
|                                                                   | n   | %    | n     | %    | n  | %    |
| In your opinion modern Indian food is better than traditional?    | 8   | 13.3 | 32    | 53.3 | 20 | 33.3 |
| Are you aware of use of chemicals in food?                        | 40  | 66.7 | 12    | 20.0 | 8  | 13.3 |
| Do you click pictures of food when you go out?                    | 44  | 73.3 | 8     | 13.3 | 8  | 13.3 |
| Writing a blog helps you express yourself better than paper?      | 56  | 93.3 | 0     | 0.0  | 4  | 6.7  |
| Have you noticed change in Indian food presentation?              | 48  | 80.0 | 8     | 13.3 | 4  | 6.7  |
| There will be high food wastage to make it appealing?             | 24  | 40.0 | 16    | 26.7 | 20 | 33.3 |
| Has your food ever gone cold in attempt to get a perfect picture? | 52  | 86.7 | 4     | 6.7  | 4  | 6.7  |

The data was analyzed and 73.3% of the respondents agreed to the fact that they click pictures of their food when they go out before eating and 80% of these respondents regularly post pictures online on their social media accounts specifically Instagram. The results show the importance of a good-looking plate and how rapidly they are being posted on Instagram.

The responses gained show a huge number of people 93.3% who say that writing a blog helps them express themselves better than writing on paper and remaining 6.7% were not very sure about this to which we may consider that they can also express themselves better while writing online.

When asked if they have tried Modern Indian Food then most of the respondents 80% said yes which means that people are well aware of what is going on in Indian Food and Beverage Industry and same number of them 80% have observed change in presentation of Indian food.

There was an uncertainty when asked what matters more between Presentation is Taste and Health factor in food, it was observed for themselves 80% said health and taste matters more but in their opinion about others 66.7% consider that people gave more importance to presentation of food than Health and Taste, whereas around 30% either denied or had no opinion about this question.

Discussing on sustainability of modern Indian food show that, 66.7% of people already know about use of chemicals in today's food which are widely used in molecular gastronomy based food. And about food wastage 40% agree to the fact there is high food wastage whereas 26.7% say that food wastage in modern Indian food will not be very high and 33.3% had no opinions. Furthermore 53.3% respondents say that modern Indian Food is not better than traditional Indian food and 33.3% had no opinion about it.

In the final question to understand the importance of clicking food pictures, respondents were asked if their meals ever got cold because they spent time in getting the perfect picture a large number 86.7% said Yes and 6.7% were doubtful about it, with this we can understand the importance people hold to get a good picture which motivates chefs to spend a greater time on plating food.

In a study conducted by Nathalia, 2016 “It was known that all variables have positive influence which means that perceived credibility and perceived usefulness of food blogger positively influences people’s attitude towards healthy food which later influences their behavioral intention. Therefore, food bloggers played quite important role in affecting people’s behavioral intention and people’s attitude towards recommendation of food blogger was showed to be positive. According to the result, it is safe to say that promoting or introducing healthy food to the society can be done through the help of food blogger, so long as they have the perceived credibility and usefulness adhered to them.”

Santanu Mukherjee, digital marketing head of Indus Net Technologies and also a self-confessed foodie, admits that genuine food bloggers today operate across various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest, in addition to posting on their blogs. Over time, they gain followers, who trust their opinions. “Influencer marketing is an important part of digital marketing today and bloggers are becoming top-rated influencers,” he says. Facebook is a vital tool for marketers. In 2015, the channel influenced 52% of online and offline purchasers, a considerable rise from 36% in 2014. (Syed, 2017)

In contrast to the blogging activities, micro-blogging provides a quick and easy way to send a short text message from computer or mobile devices. Between 2009 and 2011, the use of micro-blogging is increasing up to 62%. Twitter is an example of micro-blogging that is trending worldwide and the cause of micro-blogging to become popular. It is not just a short text that considered as micro-blogging, but photo sharing is also become the new type of micro-blogging. Indeed, Facebook and Instagram are examples of the microblogging tools. (Nur.Hanifati, 2015)

Tandoh, 2016 said “Once these Instagram-friendly foods go viral, they can completely change the way we eat. Breakfast, for example, has shifted from a decidedly unphotogenic cereal or marmalade on toast to the bright hues of avocado toast (there are nearly 250,000 #avocadotoasthashtagged photos on Instagram) and smoothie bowls. Even the humble fry-up has been rebranded, in the hands of the Hemsley sisters, as an oven-baked, meticulously arranged, “healthier” big breakfast. It looks great and presumably tastes awful, the oven tray divided into neat strips of color, from leathery lean oven bacon to overdone eggs.”

In further discussion Tandoh mentioned “Posting food on social media can reframe the ways that we interact with food on a fundamental level. When we document the food we eat, taking time to relish, share and even be proud of it, we also destigmatize it.”

## CONCLUSION

The study identified that more number are posting pictures on Instagram and some of them are earning their bread by writing reviews and posting pictures, for such activities Instagram is the best platform available right now. People are eager to try new flavors and different styles of presentation that appeal people. Food is now about the experience and presentation. It was also observed that millennials are more comfortable sharing their views on Social Media than in person or paper.

Now-a-days presentation of food clearly stands out as the one important factor when it comes to food choice while dining out, health is kept as second factor. Modern Indian Food when it comes to reality. chefs are moving to Sustainable Food using local produce and going for zero was i.e. using peels and roots in food in different forms to minimize wastage, this will lead to a better opportunity for farmers and promote organic farming which also leads decrease pressure on land and through this healthier vegetables are being produced which makes healthier lifestyle.

Another point that came up was that in modern times people look for reviews and posts of a place before going there, therefore when pictures are being shared most and they are being looked at first before the words of person creating an appealing dish so that when its clicked and posted online it looks attractive and attracts people towards it. This led to creation of another field in marketing known as Influencer Marketing in which Restaurants pay bloggers to write a review of their outlets. Therefore, every possible attempt is being made to make things attractive by using liquid nitrogen and gastronomical methods for sake of internet.

Restaurants are creating an atmosphere where good pictures can be clicked and chefs are continuously working to make dishes more and more appealing or as millennial say 'Instagrammable'. Gen Z and Millennial are biggest influencer in today's world constitute to more than 50% of customer all they want is good food, good experience and great pictures. This diverts chefs focus from taste and health to presentation of food. The most important factor that was 'taste' is not important anymore, looks are all that matters.

Instagrammable dishes are not only just the demand of restaurants but it is also the need of these outlets and future. A picture that looks good gets more exposure and people visit that place so it is not just a plate but also a marketing tool. In coming future this trend of clicking picture will increase as younger generation becomes the prime spending customers and without it a business won't sustain. Such instances created a new class of cuisine in India which is specifically made for being Instagrammable. The future of Food industry is in hands of chefs, as now people are getting more and more aware so with aesthetic appeal of food they are also looking for healthier options, in this world chefs are the brigade to fulfill these demands of consumers and develop a sustainable Environment.

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