

# Food Blogging: A Niche Career

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## Abstract

Food blogging has become an increasingly innovative and commercially viable occupation. The relationship between Restaurateurs and Food bloggers has been growing over the last few years. Foodies are eager to discuss and explore various recipes and cuisines. Customers form their purchase decisions based on food reviews. Restaurateurs, Caterers, Professional Chefs, Home Chefs, Home Bakers, Food Stylists and Food Photographers are important figures in the food marketing business. Food blogging is a current and upcoming unconventional career option for graduates and post-graduates in hotel management and catering technology.

**Keywords:** Food Blogging, Food Journalism, Blog Writing, Food Photography, Food Styling, Restaurateurs, Chefs, Caterers, Home Chefs, Home Bakers

## INTRODUCTION

Food blogging is a notable feature of Food journalism, interlinking a gourmet interest in cooking with that of Blog writing and Food photography. A majority of blogs use pictures taken by the blogger himself/herself and some of them focus specifically on Food Styling and photography. These blogs can be used commercially by the blogger for earning profit. They may either be personal or entirely public-oriented.

Food blogging includes writing and uploading traditional and contemporary recipes, as well as reviewing food at different restaurants. Certain aesthetic aspects such as Food styling are also applicable in this area of writing. Some

blogging websites used for Food blogging are Wordpress, Blogger, Tumbler and Medium etc. Bloggers select unique domain names, create and publish food related content, engage in SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and promote their blog posts on social media platforms.

A core activity in food blogging is the creation of an Information source which is utilized by numerous readers who may be connoisseurs of food. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest feeds display a wide variety of food-themed pictures. The popularity of food-related hashtags presently has increased largely.

Blogging about food not only advertises the food quality served but also the entire meal experience an establishment offers. Restaurateurs, Chefs, Caterers, Home Chefs and Home Bakers are now marketing their business by clicking pictures of and sharing their culinary creations and spreading the word about these delicacies on various social media.

Modern-day foodies pursue a hobby in food with a keen interest in the sourcing, preparation, presentation, consumption and description of food. Equipped with smartphones, social media profiles and blogs, the modern-day foodie has a considerable impact on the success of a restaurant business. This is a phenomenon that restaurant owners and chefs are taking into account to improve the profitability of the business. With the advent of food blogging, innovation and competition have seen great heights in the Restaurant business in India.

The term “foodie” was introduced in 1982 by New York magazine Food critic Gael Greene, and was used to identify a person with a specific interest in food.

Due to changing times and dynamism in technology, the foodie has now developed into another category of food lovers —professionally, he is now termed as a Food

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blogger. Food bloggers find pleasure in giving descriptions of food and sharing them with their readers. They use their imagination and literary creativity to describe and publish meal experiences.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Bloggers as Opinion Influencers

Bloggers are just as influential as media journalists and in fact, they assert greater freedom of expression.

Food is definitely a foodie's first love and all else follows. Memories of a special meal can make one's day very flavourful and enjoyable. Browsing through some of the platforms of some of the famous food bloggers reveals that they are equipped with lists of good restaurants to try, food specialties, and also have a journal of food recipes. Following the writings of a Food blogger can be an enlightening experience as one can understand details about what unique dishes they are preparing, which popular or niche eat-outs and restaurants they are visiting or what food preparations they are actually tasting.

### Blogging as a Career Option

Some of the popular Indian food bloggers who made a mark in the field of Food blogging as a career in 2018 were:

#### Swati Sucharita – Eatopian Chronicles

Swati Sucharita is an all-rounder. She has a flair for writing and has been doing so for a long span of time, currently is involved in providing consultancy services for content writing and is also a Food blogger.

'Eatopian Chronicles' is her blog covering a wide range of cuisines and chefs. She tasted Bohri food for the first time and felt the cuisine was not given its due ratification as compared to other Indian cuisines. She felt that Bohri dishes need to be explored. She also presented an Orissa food festival held at a luxury hotel in Hyderabad, and is now involved in promoting the cuisine.

Her favourite cuisine is Thai and Vietnamese. She also highly regards and appreciates the traditional cuisine and taste of speciality dishes like, Hyderabad Kacchigoshit biryani and haleem. She also savours the spicy dishes

from Andhra and Telangana, such as gonguramamsam, pepper rasam and paachipulusu. She keeps in touch with professional Chefs and is also a member of the Food blogging community.

#### Archana Doshi – Archana's Kitchen

Archana Doshi started Archana's Kitchen ten years back. In spite of an Engineering background, she started food blogging as she was keen on trying out new recipes. She influenced people known to her to start using various food commodities and prepare something special.

Her website is very popular and the recipes and videos featured are referred to by a large number of people all over the globe for trying out authentic recipes for day to day cooking, such as daily luncheon and dinner menus as well as dietary foods. The website has more than 250 writers on its platform.

Archana keeps trying out new recipes and aims to provide better and diet-conscious cooking methods. Retention of our traditional culinary heritage is also one of the objectives.

Archana's vision is to touch every home and heart through the tool of home cooking and that's what keeps her going with newer ideas, hoping that her kitchen will be an attraction for years to come.

#### Karthik Gandhi – Gastro Hogger

Karthik Gandhi, a hardcore biryani loyalist from Hyderabad, says Biryani is his favourite food, being a typical Hyderabadi. He craves for the authentic Dum Biryani made typically as a traditional food in the homes and palaces of Hyderabad.

Gastro Hogger is a Food blog which is basking in the limelight amongst food lovers.

#### Adarsh Munjal – The Big Bhookad

"Aaj khaane mein kya hai?" is a phrase we use daily.

Adarsh Munjal, a young Food-writer from Mumbai, answers this question in his food blog every day. His blog 'The Big Bhookad' was created in 2009 when he discovered his penchant for food and when his dream of

pursuing a course in Culinary Art abroad did not work out. This eventually led him to becoming a blogger. He feels that food is very subjective and customizable. He prefers cooking authentic traditional homemade recipes, like, yummy savoury spiced-cheese omelettes and masala tea. He can be contacted on social media for home-style authentic recipes.

### **Priyanjana and Rudra – The Foodie Land Blog**

The creators of this Food blog were Rudra and Priyanjana, through which they tried to provide information with regards to hot-spots for different types of food. Being foodies, they knew the right places where to eat. And that was how the blog came into being.

When asked to share their passion for food, they said that they love trying out various cuisines, foods with varying flavours and local authentic tastes. The food blog helped them to record their culinary journey. Their Instagram posts are also well sought after. “Both of us have different preferences when it comes to food. Priyanjana is more keen on trying everything vegetarian and seafood. Rudra tends to gravitate towards all sorts of meaty dishes. So we find it interesting to come across places that cater to both our requirements while surprising us.”

### **Ankiet Gulabani – Belly Over Mind**

This blog targets one and all. Belly Over Mind is a popular Food-website created by Ankiet Gulabani. He doesn't write restaurant reviews as he feels there are already too many bloggers and more established restaurant critics on the scene. Instead, he wanted to have a recipe website. He says, “I wanted to create a recipe website that inspires one to cook at home.” The recipes are authentic and prepared with easily available ingredients. The website has helped him to develop his culinary skills, honing them with inputs from global professional chefs. He takes inspiration from a niche restaurant in Mumbai ‘The Bombay Canteen’ which uses locally available seasonal ingredients from India, to prepare traditional recipes like Sindhi mutton curry.

### **Surya Sharma – Foodiepreneur**

Surya Sharma draws inspiration from his mother for his special interest in food and food consequentially

his Food blog. It is his hobby to discover hidden food hot-spots in and around Pune serving vegetarian food. His blogging journey started with writing his first food blog on Zomato. He works in an advisory role as a Consultant for Restaurants offering inputs for enhancing Customer experience. He says, “Being a food blogger you get deeply involved in the food industry. There's more to food than just eating it blindly”. His advice to aspiring food bloggers, “Just be yourself. Try to add uniqueness to your blog which again would be your personality. Be consistent with your work and always keep your feet on the ground.”

### **Mohit Balachandran – Chowder Singh**

Mohit Balachandran is an ardent street food lover. He started his Food blog to share his knowledge of Indian cuisine, an integral component of traditional Indian culture.

In his blog description, he gives some useful tips about food, such as visiting well-frequented places as these will serve fresh food. He also advises to avoid uncooked foods like chutneys.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- To study the concept of Food blogging.
- To understand the impact of Food blogging on the Restaurant business.
- To assess the potential for making a career as a Food blogger.

### **Impact of the Emergence of Food Blogging on the Restaurant Industry**

Blogging has overpowered traditional Food critics and Restaurant Industry professionals, empowering Food Bloggers to attract an online following, rather than professionals hired for the job.

### **Information Spreads Far and Wide Like Wildfire**

Food blogging helps in giving huge publicity to Restaurants and has made restaurateurs more aware of how quickly information and opinions of their restaurants can spread. Food reviews written by a Food blogger have a profound impact on the restaurant business. A positive

review can make it a hot-spot, while a negative review can cause a decreased footfall.

### Communication between Food Bloggers and Restaurants

Food bloggers are now almost equivalent to professional critics. As bloggers walk the line in between professional reviewers and civilian critics, their comments can be accepted in a defensive or thankful manner by a restaurateur; or a Chef can directly call a blogger and make a comment on something posted online by the blogger.

### Food Critics vs. Food Bloggers

Food blogging is now indulged in by both professional food critics as well as amateur food writers. Food Critics work on a reasonably high budget while Bloggers have a minimal budget. Food critics are more professional in their approach to reviewing restaurants while bloggers are amateurs. Bloggers are at an advantage as they get the feel of the pulse of the dining experience of the common man.

### Ethical Questions

Questions of ethics are now posed between Restaurants and Food bloggers. Since bloggers actually review food, it may pose questions like, has the blogger been bribed in any way? Is there a particular interest for this blogger to support a particular restaurant? are now cropping up.

Food bloggers enjoy freedom of expression and have no limitations to regulate their writings.

### Contributing to a Culinary Evolution

Food blogging has become very popular recently. Recipe books, Food blogs and Celebrity TV Cook-shows like Master-Chef are now attracting attention. Indian society has now undoubtedly opened itself up to International cuisines and all its associated culinary pleasures.

### CONCLUSION

Food blogging has become a channel for marketing and promotion in the Restaurant Industry. Blog writers

communicate with their readers very quickly through their blogs. They act as a medium for publicity. With advances in Information technology, the relationship between Restaurateurs and Food bloggers has been developing over the last few years.

Despite the ethical issues and some negative backlash from the Restaurant industry, there's no doubt that the mass public wants to talk about food, recipes and cuisines. They want to know the opinion and views of the bloggers. Customers form their purchase decisions based on what the Food blogger opines.

Increasingly, Restaurateurs, Caterers, Professional Chefs, Home Chefs, Home Bakers, Food Stylists and Food Photographers are now turning to Food bloggers for marketing their business in this era of competition.

Providing Incentives to Food bloggers has become crucial for those in the food business. It is crucial that they should get their due monetary benefits as well as social recognition from the Industry as well as the mass customer base for their inputs. This aspect still needs to be paid attention to by decision makers in the Restaurant Industry.

Food Critics and bloggers should be impartial while writing food reviews. Some reviews and blogs are biased and highly influenced by Public Relation content, thus creating a partial impression favoring the Restaurant or the cuisine.

Food blogging can also be considered as a lucrative niche career by students pursuing their graduation and post-graduation in Hotel Management or Culinary Art and so also by students of Arts faculty with an avid interest in food (Foodies).

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