

A Study of the Operations of Food Trucks in Pune and Their Challenges

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Abstract

In this study of the operations of Food trucks in Pune, the authors have attempted to review in detail the food truck scenario in the city. Their inception, operations are studied in detail. A food truck is a large vehicle equipped to cook and sell food. Some, including ice cream trucks, sell frozen or pre-packaged food; others have on-board kitchens and prepare food from scratch. Sandwiches, hamburgers, French fries, and other regional fast food fare is common. In recent years, associated with the pop-up restaurant phenomenon, food trucks offering gourmet cuisine and a variety of specialties and ethnic menus, have become particularly popular. Food trucks, along with portable food booths and food carts, are on the front line of the street food industry that serves an estimated 2.5 billion people every day.

Keywords: Food Trucks, Challenges, Pune, Zomato, Policies, Association, Fast Food, Gourmet

INTRODUCTION

What is Meant by Food Truck?

A food truck is a large vehicle equipped to cook and sell food. Some, including ice cream trucks, sell frozen or pre-packaged food; others have on-board kitchens and prepare food from scratch. Sandwiches, hamburgers, French fries, and other regional fast-food fare is common. In recent years, associated with the pop-up restaurant phenomenon, food trucks offering gourmet cuisine and a variety of specialties and ethnic menus, have become particularly popular. Food trucks, along with portable food booths and food carts, are on the front line

of the street food industry that serves an estimated 2.5 billion people every day.

History of Food Truck

In the United States, the Texas chuckwagon is a precursor to the American food truck. In the later 1800s, herding cattle from the Southwest to markets in the North and East kept cowhands on the trail for months at a time. In 1866, the father of the Texas Panhandle, Charles Goodnight, a Texas cattle rancher, fitted a sturdy old United States Army wagon with interior shelving and drawers and stocked it with kitchenware, food and medical supplies. Food consisted of dried beans, coffee, cornmeal, greasy cloth-wrapped bacon, salt pork, beef, usually dried or salted or smoked, and other easy to preserve foodstuffs. The wagon was also stocked with a water barrel and a sling to kindle wood to heat and cook food.

Another early relative of the modern food truck is the lunch wagon, as conceived by food vendor Walter Scott in 1872. Scott cut windows in a small covered wagon, parked it in front of a newspaper office in Providence Rhode Island, and sold sandwiches, pies and coffee to pressmen and journalists. By the 1880s, former lunch-counter boy, Thomas H. Buckley, was manufacturing lunch wagons in Worcester, Massachusetts. He introduced various models, like the Owl and the White House Cafe, with features that included sinks, refrigerators and cooking stoves, also coloured windows and other ornamentation.

Later versions of the food truck were mobile canteens, which were created in the late 1950s. These mobile canteens were authorized by the U.S. Army and operated on stateside army bases.

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Food trucks are not only sought out for their affordability but as well for their nostalgia; their popularity continues to rise.

In recent years, the food truck resurgence was fuelled by a combination of post-recessionary factors. Due to an apparent combination of economic and technological factors combined with street food being “hip” or “chic”, there has been an increase in the number of food trucks in the United States.

Food trucks are also being hired for special events, like weddings, movie shoots, and corporate gatherings, and also to carry advertising promoting companies and brands.

OBJECTIVES

- To study food trucks in Pune.
- To understand the various challenges faced by the owner's, licences needed.
- To study the operations of a food truck.
- To study the various kind of food trucks.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary Survey

- Questionnaire for the Owners of the Food Trucks.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1-6T_eGWULIsVX0T-37PFuu_7c_reO_-0e5LMCaYM7BA/edit

- Questionnaire for Customers Visiting the Trucks.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1pQim9d09gFaQjxHnFpdc15sXhSSkDtAAfFO3qiHw5-8/edit#responses>

Secondary Survey

Social Media

- Zomato: This site helped me in searching for food trucks. This site gave me a clear idea of the total number of food trucks which are there in Pune. <https://www.zomato.com/pune/food-truck>
- Facebook: Instagram enabled me to gather information like their pages, events, owners, contact number, etc.
- Instagram: Instagram helped me to gather information like their pages, events, owners, contact number, etc.

Books

- The Food Truck Handbook: Start, Grow and Succeed in the Mobile Food Truck. Author - David Weber.

(3rd April 2012) Wiley Publications. <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/13599109-the-food-truck-handbook>

Running a Food Truck.

Author - Richard Myrick. (3rd July 2012) For Dummies Publications. <https://www.dummies.com/business/start-a-business/running-a-food-truck-for-dummies-cheat-sheet/>

Statistical Analysis of the Survey

Responses on the Basis of Survey Did with the Help of Google Form

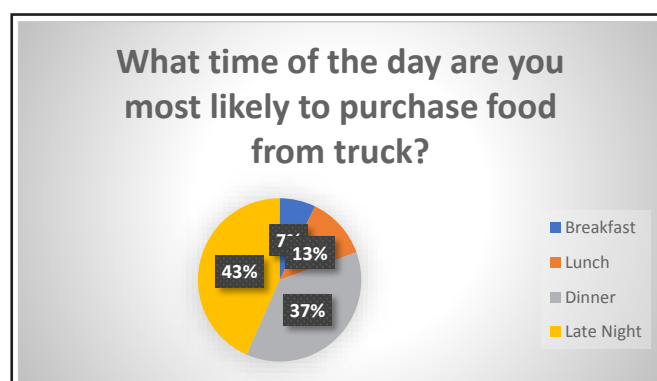


Fig. 1

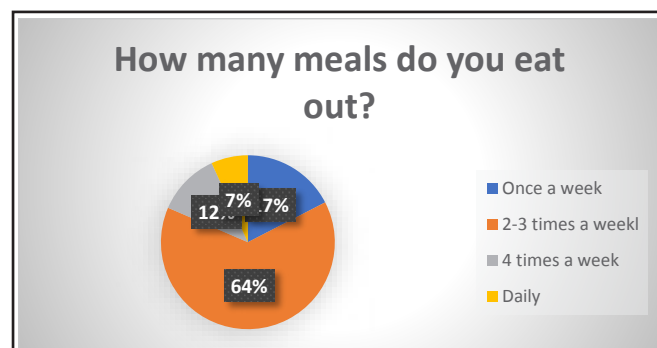


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

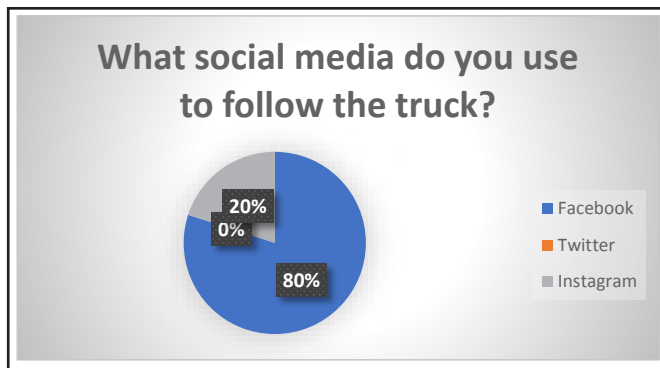


Fig. 4

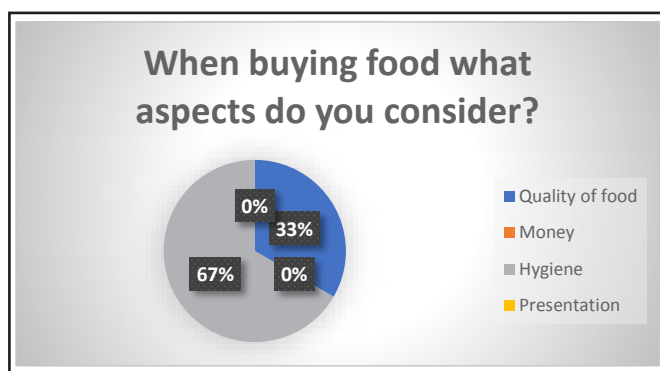


Fig. 5

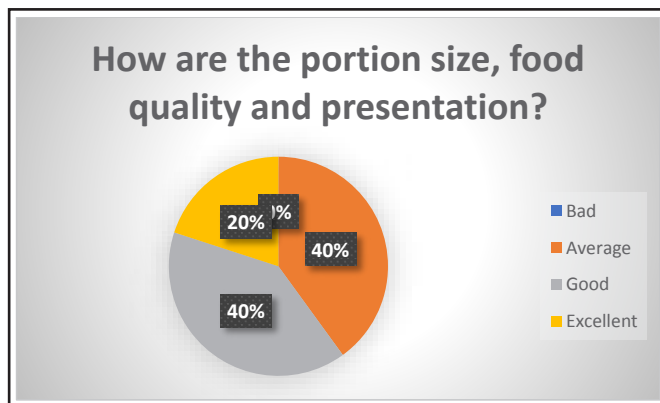


Fig. 6

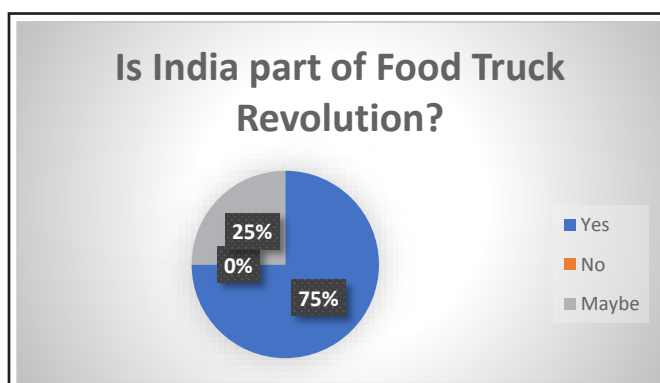


Fig. 7

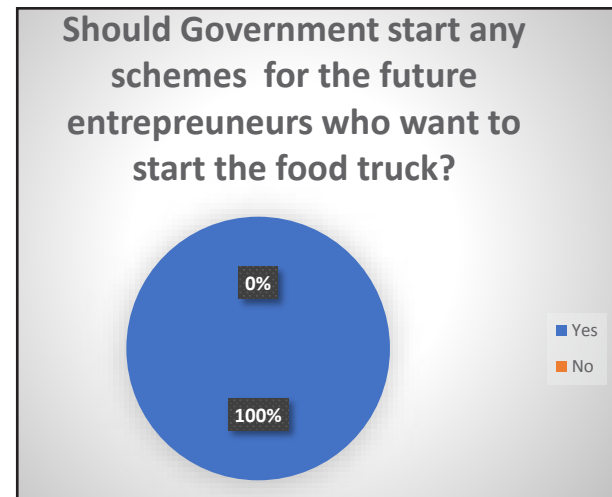


Fig. 8

LIMITATIONS

- While doing this project there were many limitations like there was no information about food trucks on the internet. I had to visit the food trucks.
- There were also many limitations and I had to fix the appointments with the owners as I am a student I was free on weekends, but the owners were not free on weekends as they have more business on weekends.
- For the meeting, I had to travel to the trucks to gather information. While I was working on this project there was monsoon season, so I also had to deal with it.
- The biggest problem was to search the address as the people were not having any information about the address, so I had to search on my own.

Food Trucks Visits

Pune is a very big and expanding city in this country. Pune is called as the oxford the east, so there are various colleges situated in Pune. The students from all over the country and across the globe come here for their education. This city is the most developing in the country. This city is also will be one of the metropolitan city in this country. There are many food trucks in this city. The total number of food truck goes around fifty.

I was able to visit only six food trucks in total, personally. I gathered information on this food truck. I took the interview of the owners and the employees who worked there. Clicked some photos had a long talk with the owners. The owners said that till date Pune is not a part

of the food truck revolution. Pune is at the initial stage of the revolution.

There is a committee of the food truck owners named “Food truck association, Pune”. This committee takes care of all the food trucks. It is like an association which guides the food truck owners. We will see on this association in detail in further pages.

The list of food trucks visited for this survey are as follows:

Yummistry - the Frozen Lab

- This truck is the only food truck in Pune, which serves the food made using molecular gastronomy techniques.
- It is not a food truck, and it is a lab in which they research the food. According to the owner, they do not cook food, and they play with the food with chemicals on the pan.
- It is a dessert based food truck which serves only desserts. It is like a chemistry lab.

About the Owner

- The name of the owner is Mr Shrey Menghwani. He is an M.B.A. graduate in marketing.
- He worked in Abu Dhabi for over 5-7 years. He came back to India and started a food truck in Viman Nagar in the year 2017, October.
- He is the president of the “Food Truck Association, Pune”.

About the Truck

- The truck used for the operations is a 2006 model tempo traveller who is converted in food truck which special modification suggested by the owner for the ease of use.
- The truck is painted in blue and black, and blue represents the calmness of food and the black represents the twist in the food by using chemicals.

The equipments used are as follows: Industrial oven, Deck oven, Waffle maker, A huge griddle, Electric fryer and other equipment which are used in normal kitchen.

Address: Near Dorabjee Supermarket, opposite to Queens land Society, Viman Nagar, Pune, Maharashtra.

Menu: All type desserts like waffles, ice-creams and many other desserts.

Advertisement & Marketing and Competitors

- As the owner is MBA graduate in marketing he has good knowledge of the market.
- The advertising of the truck is through social media like Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.

Owner's Opinion About Food Truck as a Business

- According to the owner, the food truck is the business where you have to invest less but there are high returns if you have patience.
- This is a sector where you should have to work daily for approximately 13-14 hours a day in which you cannot run away, take a holiday etc.

Challenges Faced

According to the owner, the word “challenge” is a very small word for the food truck business because there are many challenges faced by the food truck owner.

- Licences required.
- There are no proper rules and regulations for food trucks.
- Fear of the police.
- There is no scope for the more innovative dishes because of the mind-set of the customers.
- There are no policies for starting this business.
- It is a one-man show, i.e., from cooking to advertising and from purchasing of raw material to selling the dish, everything is done single-handedly.

Suggestions of Owner to the Future Entrepreneurs

- According to the owner to start the truck one should gather all the information related of the market. He must be having good market research.
- One must research what type of truck he is going to open and study of all the eating habits of the local customer.
- Never cheat your customers, always be loyal to them.

L'Dorado Food Truck

- The name L'Dorado is a Spanish name meaning “Golden”.
- This truck serves the world street food in the streets of Aundh.
- The truck is very popular for the burgers, french fries and other dishes made from chicken and other meat.

About the Owners

- This truck is having two owners named “Pratik Shetty” and “Rashi Majithia”.
- They have done their hotel management degree from IHM, Mumbai.
- They both are having six years of experience in the hotel and restaurant industry.
- After some years of experience, they thought of opening a restaurant, but for opening a restaurant they need huge amount of investment. So they started a food truck.

About the Truck

- The truck used for the operation is a 2003 modelled tempo traveller.
- The truck was opened on October 2006.
- They have modified the truck according to their use.
- The truck is painted in yellow and is having various symbols and slogans which represents the world street food.
- As one of the partners is a girl, so the truck has an attractive look.

The equipment used is as follows: Microwave oven, Deep Fryers (veg and non-veg different), Refrigerators, Separate chopping boards for veg and non-veg, a hot griddle for sautéing burgers and vegetables, Pans and vessels, Water supply for washing the utensils.

Address: New Aundh-Baner link road, near Medipoint hospital, Aundh, Pune, Maharashtra.

Menu: They serve the dishes like burgers, fries, nachos, chicken wings and many more. The menu changes according to the availability of ingredients.

Advertisement & Marketing and Competitors

- The advertising of the truck is social media like Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.
- The marketing statistics are unique, which the owner did not reveal to tell us.
- The competitors are the other food truck and the restaurants.

Owner's Opinion About Food Truck as a Business

- The food truck business is not the easy one, as they are having many challenges.
- You have to work very hard daily to fulfil your dreams.

- We have to consider the tastes and the opinions given by the customers.
- You should be self-motivated to work this long hour.

Challenges Faced

- Licences required.
- There are no proper rules and regulations for food trucks.
- Fear of the police.
- There are no policies for starting this business.
- As this business requires the most attention of the owner himself/herself so from cooking the food to selling it and from purchasing raw material to doing advertising and marketing of the truck is done single-handedly by the owner itself. So the presence of the owner is very important to face the challenges.

Suggestion of Owner to the Future Entrepreneurs

- According to the owner to start the truck, one should gather all the information related of the market. He must be having good market research.
- One must research what type of truck he is going to open and study of all the eating habits of the local customer.
- Never cheat your customers, always be loyal to them.
- Never mess with the government authorities and police department.
- It is very hard to keep running the food truck business as it very complicated because of the hectic schedule and other issues.

Gourmand Food Truck

- The name “Gourmand” is the french word meaning “foodie,” i.e., also known as “Bhukkad”.
- It serves street food in the streets of Aundh.
- This truck is famous for serving Italian food with a little bit of twist. All types of Italian food is served on this truck.

About the Owner

- This truck has three owners named “Ambar, Nikhil and Nimai”.
- They have graduated hotel management degree from the college
- The idea of opening a food truck was there from the college days only, and all three had decided to open a truck after graduation.

- One of them had worked on the cruise for 5-6 years; one worked with Oberoi's, Mumbai for 5 years and the third one had worked at the Marriott, Mumbai.
- After completion of their job they came together and started a truck together.

About the Truck

- The truck was opened in May 2017.
- The truck which is in operation is the 1999 model of Tata LPT 613.
- This truck is converted into a fully equipped kitchen with the help of various modifiers.
- The kitchen on the truck is very modern.
- As the truck is having some free space so they are having sitting arrangements. With some lights and Melo music.
- The equipment used are common which are used in common kitchen and other as follows: Deck oven, Salamander, Griddle, Fryers (veg and non-veg separate), a small microwave, Griddle.

Address: Near spires society, new Aundh-Baner link road, Vidhate Chowk, Pune, Maharashtra.

Menu: This truck serves Italian and Mexican food. The street food from Mexico and Italy are served on this truck.

Advertisement & Marketing and Competitors

- The competitors are the other food truck and the restaurants.
- The food truck-like l'dorado, Nina pina Santamaria, la kheer deli etc.
- The other restaurants are also competitors.
- The advertising of the truck is social media like Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.
- The marketing statistics are unique, which the owner did not reveal to tell us.

Owner's Opinion About Food Truck as a Business

- You have to work very hard daily to fulfil your dreams.
- The food truck business is not the easy one, as they are having many challenges.
- We have to consider the tastes and the opinions given by the customers.
- You should be self-motivated to work this long hour.

Challenges Faced

- Licences required.

- There are no proper rules and regulations for food trucks.
- Fear of the police.
- There are no policies for starting this business.
- As this business requires the most attention of the owner himself so from cooking the food to selling it and from purchasing raw material to doing advertising and marketing of the truck is done single-handedly by the owner itself. So the presence of the owner is very important to face the challenges.

Suggestion of Owner to the Future Entrepreneurs

- According to the owner to start the truck, one should gather all the information related to the market. He must be having good market research.
- One must research what type of truck he is going to open and study of all the eating habits of the local customer.
- Never cheat your customers, always be loyal to them.
- Never mess with the government authorities and police department.
- It is very hard to keep running the food truck business as it very complicated because of the hectic schedule and other issues.

Nina Pinta Santamaria Food Truck

- This name "nina pinta santamaria" are the three ships of Columbus which were sailing in search for India. But they were not able to discover India so this is a small tribute from the owner to Columbus.
- This truck is having a very interesting story behind it.
- This truck is a crepe truck.
- It is very popular since its opening. Serves on the streets of Aundh.

About the Owner

- This truck was opened in January 2018.
- The name of the owner is Soham Bhatawde.
- There is a very interesting story behind opening this food truck, i.e. the owner and his family went to Europe to for a vacation so there they found an exciting dish called "crepe". The owner wondered why this dish is not sold in India, so after returning to India, he started the research and gathering information about this dish. Then he started this truck in January.

- The response was pretty good.
- The owner is a graduate in MBA 'sales'.

About the Truck

- The truck is 2001 model tempo traveller. It was previously also a food truck in Mumbai. They purchased and changed according to the operations.
- This truck has only 8 dishes. They have made the crepe according to the palate of Pune-kars.
- The truck has many equipments which are not available in India so they had to import it from France.

Address: 200m from Jupiter hospital towards Aundh, Aundh-Baner link road, Aundh, Pune, Maharashtra.

Menu: This truck serves a french delicacy named crepe. Crepe is thin pancake-like a thing. Usually, they are served as desserts. It is made from refined flour, egg, milk and other ingredients.

Advertisement, Marketing and Competitors

- As the truck is new, there are many competitors. The truck is using social media as a tool for advertising.
- The truck has a secret marketing strategy to compete with others.
- The competitors are l'dorado, gourmand, la kheer deli etc.
- There are restaurants which are the competitors of this truck.

Owner's Opinion About Food Truck as a Business

- You have to work very hard daily to fulfil your dreams.
- The food truck business is not the easy one as they are having many challenges.
- We have to consider the tastes and the opinions given by the customers.
- You should be self-motivated to work this long hour.

Challenges Faced

- Licences required.
- There are no proper rules and regulations for food trucks.
- Fear of the police.
- There are no policies for starting this business.
- They had some special challenges like equipments. They were not able to find a crepe stick which is one

of the important tools for making the crepe. They had to make it from a carpenter.

Suggestion of Owner to the Future Entrepreneurs

- According to the owner to start the truck, one should gather all the information related to the market. He must be having good market research.
- One must do research on what type of truck he is going to open and study of all the eating habits of the local customer.
- Never cheat your customers, always be loyal to them.
- Never mess with the government authorities and police department.
- It is very hard to keep running the food truck business as it very complicated because of the hectic schedule and other issues.

The JW Marriot Food Truck

The JW Marriott has opened the food truck because they have the idea they want that the common man should also experience the five-star experience of the big hotels. They wanted some medium to give the five-star experience to the common people. As they were studying they saw that nowadays food truck are in trend. So they decide to open a food truck serving some local dishes with some International twist and the innovative ideas applied by the chefs at a higher level who do the research and market survey of the eating habits of the common people.

About the Owner

As the owner of this food truck is a five-star hotel. This truck directly reports to the main kitchen of the hotel.

About the Truck

The menu of this truck is designed directly by the head chef of the hotel. The truck is an old truck which is imported from England. The truck is then renovated as per the use. It is coloured twice in a year for attracting more and more customers. The menu is seasonable and depends on the availability of the ingredients.

As this truck is a part of five-star hotel so other information is not available like their own ideas and other points covered in the other truck information.

Food Truck Association, Pune

About Food Truck Association: Aims and Objectives

- The Food Truck Association is a non-profit organisation that represents the existing and upcoming Food Trucks.
- We seek to create a definition for its members, to come together to promote, discuss and help regularise the Food Truck community and the laws governing them.
- We believe Food Trucks are the future of the restaurant industry, and we shall act as a catalyst for innovation in hospitality, high-quality food, and community development.
- The association aims to reinvent food truck vending in a way that is beneficial to the nation, food truck entrepreneurs, and their patrons along with the entire ecosystem supporting their endeavours.

CONCLUSION

There are many strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for this business. There is a room for growth of business. This business needs more attention:

Policies Made by the Government

For food truck business there are no special schemes like there are for other start-ups and other business. So the government should give special attention to start-ups like food trucks. If you don't want the food trucks should not do business on roads, then provide them with a place where all the food trucks can come together in one place so they can do business. The government should understand that these trucks are not a threat to society. They are helping the economy in their own little way. So the government should take some serious steps for the future of food trucks in Pune so that Pune also becomes a part of the food truck revolution.

Threat of Police

One of the biggest threat to food trucks is the Police. They are a threat because they come and seize the truck. Operations come to a stop. The truck can remain in the custody of the police for a minimum of one month and a maximum of six months. There is an exact example of this scene, and there is a truck situated at Aundh-Baner link

road named Gourmand. This truck was seized a couple of months before. The truck was seized by police for three months, and after many tries the owners were able to free the truck. So there must be proper rules and regulations for doing the business of the food truck.

Governing Body

As I mentioned in the project, there is a special association for the help of food trucks, namely food truck association, Pune. They work for the betterment of the food truck business. They help in the above situation like seizing of truck. They help in getting licences; they help in start-ups for the new entrepreneurs who are willing to start a truck. There are many other functions which are performed by the association.

Opportunities for Future Entrepreneurs

As mentioned in the project the food trucks are only situated in places in Pune like Baner, Aundh, Viman Nagar, Wanowire, Hinjewadi, Koregaon Park. So the trucks are situated in these areas only. There are many other places like Pimpri, Chinchwad, Bhosri, Akurdi, Nigdi, Ravet, Kalewadi and many more. So there is a huge opportunity for future entrepreneurs to open their trucks in places where there are no trucks. There is huge opportunity for a good business by starting the truck in the above-mentioned areas.

Innovations in this Sectors

There is huge room for changes. As they serve on a truck they can be flexible and may not have to adhere to norms which are followed in the restaurants. The cuisines served are all fast food. There is huge opportunity to serve the local cuisine. Transformation of local cuisine into fancy food which can attract the locals can be done. So there is a huge opportunity for food trucks in Pune.

Competition

There is no such huge competition nowadays, but there may be more competition in the coming future. So the future entrepreneurs should know how to tackle and overcome the competition and sustain their business.

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<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1pQim9d09gFaQjxHnFpdcl5sXhSSkDtAAfFO3qiHw5-8/edit#responses>

Zomato: Zomato had the list of the food trucks which are there in Pune and surrounding areas. <https://www.zomato.com/pune/food-truck>.

Facebook: The food trucks visited had their own Facebook page thus facilitating their appointment for the interview.

<https://www.facebook.com/yummistry/>

<https://www.facebook.com/ldoradopune/>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/JW-Marriott-Food-Truck/314158639080980>

<https://www.facebook.com/gourmandfoodtruck/>

Instagram: The food trucks which I visited, had their own Instagram page.

https://www.instagram.com/yummistry_thefrozenlab/?hl=en

<https://www.instagram.com/ldoradoindia/?hl=en>

<https://www.instagram.com/gourmandfoodtruck/>

<https://www.instagram.com/pages/JW-Marriott-Food-Truck/314158639080980>