

Federation of All India Caterers

FAIC

FEDERATION OF ALL INDIA CATERERS

FAIC

NEWS

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HARD RECOVERY FROM PANDEMIC DILEMMAS

How the catering industry will revive



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The Future Awaits Us with a Positive Boom

The catering sector is undergoing a massive upheaval as technological advancements, and the drive toward industrialization transform the business climate at breakneck speed. The catering sector is inextricably linked to Indian culture and tradition. In these scenarios, COVID-19's impact is spreading globally, causing massive economic harm, and economic expansion to pre-COVID-19 levels is projected to take a long time.

The most challenging phase for the Federation of All India Caterers (FAIC) is surviving in such extraordinary adversity, especially in the small-scale catering business. However, FAIC currently intends to conduct and promote knowledge of new and changing policies as soon as possible.

The caterer and beverage sector contributes significantly to the growth of economies and the productive employment of human resources worldwide. They are also crucial in the development of India's overall industrial sector. It accounts for around 3% of the country's GDP.

Federation of All India Caterers serves as a voice for the catering and beverage industry, collaborating with the government to develop, disseminate, and implement policies that will help the industry grow, as well as to address various issues that the industry faces and find solutions to them through efficient collaboration with government bodies.

Federation of All India Caterers intends to regularly hold seminars to raise awareness of new and changing policies as soon as possible. Following the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, FAIC's restoration and expansion position in the catering industry is becoming increasingly important.

FAIC aspires to be financially successful and profitable for its partners while also providing royalties to its consumers. Since its founding in 2013, we have offered unrestricted assistance to our members, individual caterers, and organizations to help them run a safe and productive business. I hope to see a flourishing business phase sooner than later.

Narendra Somani
President, FAIC



TIMES ARE CHALLENGING & CHANGING OVER TIME

“ We have established a strong basis as a provider of industrial catering materials, and we've proceeded to expand our operations by incorporating fundamental technology. We have provided unfettered support to our members, individual caterers, and organizations to assist them in running a safe and effective business.”

As the Secretary, I am delighted to see that the Federation of All India Caterers' business associates is establishing a catering sector. I applaud all of my partners for their work in compiling this useful directory, and I'd like to single out the Federation of All India Caterers (FAIC) for completing the project on time despite requiring a significant amount of effort, talent, organization, and labor.

Additionally, we strive to be an "Excellent Organization" capable of competing on a worldwide scale. We will adjust flexibly to the needs of these changing times. Our efforts will keep improving and flourishing steadily. I am confident that the database will be a valuable resource for Indian entrepreneurs and other partners, as well as international customers.

Technological innovations and the drive toward industrialization are transforming the business climate at a rapid pace. The catering industry is no exception to this. Indian culture and heritage are intricately related to the catering industry. COVID-19's impact is spreading internationally in these scenarios, causing tremendous economic devastation, and economic recovery to pre-COVID-19 levels is expected to take a long time.

The Federation of All India Caterers acts as a voice for the catering and beverage industry, working with the government to develop, disseminate, and implement policies that will help the industry grow, as well as address and resolve various issues that the industry faces through effective collaboration with government bodies.

FAIC has used its superior development capabilities and expertise to launch a slew of new products and extend its operations around the world. We've established a strong basis as a provider of industrial catering materials, and we've proceeded to expand our operations by incorporating fundamental technology. We have provided unfettered support to our members, individual caterers, and organizations to assist them in running a safe and effective business.

Kirit Budhdev
Secretary, FAIC



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DILEMMAS

How the catering industry will revive

Hospitality and Catering industries thrive where people exist, and this social culture has been put to a standstill with the coming of Covid-19. The article reveals the extent to which the pandemic has threatened the catering ecosystem and the future of this business as well.

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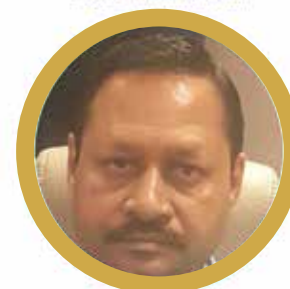
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SANTÉ SPA CUISINE USHERS MUMBAI INTO CURATED GASTRONOMIC WELLNESS & HEALTHY CUISINES

The award-winning and widely lauded Santé Spa Cuisine in Pune is recognized for its “selection of fresh and preservative-free cooking.”

Spread over 2500 sq ft, this food space offers guests the freshest, wholesome, natural, organic, and healthy ingredients. It’s a concept through which they hope to spread their core values of vegetarianism, veganism, environmental activism, consciousness, and minimalism to the next generation.

They opened the Khar location with a Sattvik menu that includes aspects such as “Hot Pumpkin Parfait,” “Cocoash Nectar,” and “The Methi Mungo Casserole,” among others. Khar One is the brainchild of SonalBarmecha and is helmed by chef Shailendra.

Appetizers, ragi-based pizzas, and a variety of balanced main courses with vegan, gluten-free, amino-rich, protein-rich, and high-fiber options are available.



VEEBA FOODS BRINGS PROVEE-PLANT-BASED CHILD NUTRITION DRINK

Veeba food has recently launched an excellent health drink for kids – “Provee”.

The health drink is 100% made from natural substances; plant proteins, jaggery, ragi, etc. More than 100 mothers have approved these ingredients, which proves how excellent the end product will be.

Viraj Behl, the founder of Veeba Food, wants to give India the best available in the world. It is a homegrown business, and due to the lockdown, they couldn’t sell their stocks. It took them around six to seven months to reach all 550 cities where they are doing business now.

Veeba raised a massive investment of \$6 million in 2016. Currently, this Indian condiments company gets investment from Verlinvest and Saama Capital.



QUICK-SERVICE RESTAURANT CHAIN CELEBRATES INDIAN STREET FOOD

During the lockdown, most people have admitted missing their favorite Indian street foods. When food outlets started to open up; Suraj Mahant, a Delhi resident, realized how difficult it was to get authentic street food at home. This presented a unique market opportunity. As a result, he launched Chaat & Chai Co in 2020.



Suraj began his career in the food and beverage industry after receiving his B.Com degree from Delhi University. He has started working with well-known brands such as Lite Bite Foods and the Dabur Group throughout the last decade.

Before the brand’s launch, extensive research was conducted to determine the most popular flavors and types of street food.

Chaat & Chai Co. created authentic items based on previous research. The brand is particularly proud of the chai it serves, India’s most famous and well-liked beverage. Their masala mix is created on-site.



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UDAIPUR IS HOME TO ITC HOTELS' FIRST MEMENTO PROPERTY, "EKAAYA"

Mementos by ITC Hotels is the newest luxury brand, with hotel choices ranging from contemporary marvels to hidden retreats to historical treasures. It officially signed the first Memento property, Ekaaya, in Udaipur.

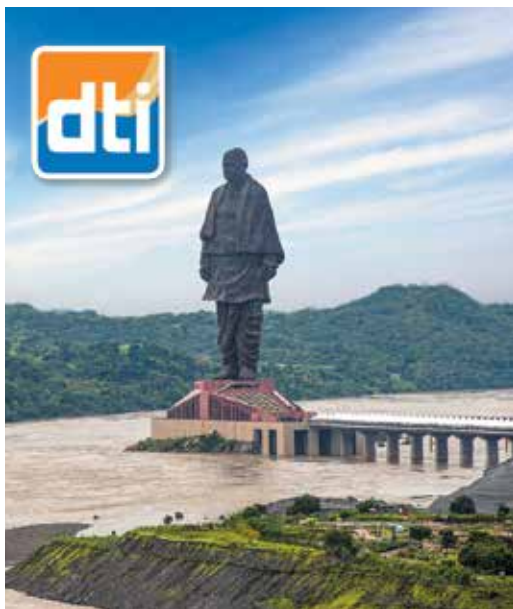
This destination has 130 rooms spread out over 106 acres. Trademark service excellence is supported by a massive 25,000 sq. ft. of covered meeting space.

Nothing compares to the horizon's vast glory as you are mesmerized by the breath-taking 360-degree view of the Aravallis. Ekaaya is among nature's best-kept secrets, located close to the Nathdwara / Eklingji temple, and it is only 20 kilometers from Udaipur city.

This tranquil oasis will open in the first quarter of the fiscal year. It offers extensive guest facilities and a library, gym, spa, swimming pool, rock Bar, and a gigantic Ollies Club.



GUJARAT WILL HOST DRINK TECHNOLOGY INDIA 2021 FROM DECEMBER 2 TO 4



Drink Technology India 2021, which will occur from December 2 to 4 at the Helipad Exhibition Centre in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. It's the most significant networking opportunity for professionals and experts in the soft drinks, juice, dairy, bottled water, and liquid food industries.

The event's top points will be first-rate guidance and expert knowledge, as well as a future-oriented Covid business recovery. Above all, the event is a cutting-edge business platform in collaboration with International PackTech India.

It's the ideal venue for networking and forming beneficial business partnerships and is designed to showcase solutions for the Indian market. Visitors can learn about the future of the Indian beverage and liquid-food market.

The show includes IndiaPack, FoodPex, and PacProcess, and is India's most significant event for the beverage and liquid food industry, packaging production, and printing.

The event covers the entire spectral range of India's liquid food and beverage industry. The show is divided into multiple exhibition sectors, ranging from soft drinks, beer, and brewery materials to liquid food, oils, and fats.



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HARD RECOVERY FROM PANDEMIC DILEMMAS

How the catering industry will revive

Hospitality and Catering industries thrive where people exist, and this social culture has been put to a standstill with the coming of Covid-19. The article reveals the extent to which the pandemic has threatened the catering ecosystem and the future of this business as well.

Don't you simply miss those chit-chats and casual photo sessions around a well-laid catered ambiance?

Admit it or not, catering means human happiness, and that translates into meetings, parties, events, and what not! Sadly, though, Covid-19 does not allow human close contact, which is the exact issue that the hospitality industry faces today.

The pandemic caused by COVID-19 has posed a severe threat to the catering industry. The virus and the mitigation measures taken to control its spread have targeted this industry very badly.

MANAGING CATERING DURING THE PANDEMIC

Family Gatherings:

Large congregations can only make a catering event successful. Due to the present health constraints, such groupings are impossible. Nowadays, family-style service will not be available. Everyone enjoys passing platters around the table with friends and family, but the goal is to keep our hands to ourselves for the coming months.

The Indian hospitality industry is expected to suffer a loss of at least Rs



620 crore. According to Hotelivate, the most significant losses will occur in Q4 FY2020 and Q1 FY2021.

Customer Base Reduction:

However, we are concerned that if the epidemic spreads, this loss could be just the beginning. The decline of hotels and restaurants is due to reduced traffic. The catering industry will suffer a setback as a result of the end of gatherings and functions.

Indian Weddings

Weddings, which are a major source of revenue for caterers, were the



catalysts for the pandemic in India. They were among the areas with the highest rates of early transmission.

Government Neglect

Caterers haven't been high on the list of government bailout candidates. As a result, their primary sources of revenue have vanished, even though bills continue to arrive and employees expect to be paid. Thousands of catering workers have been laid off. Currently, holding events or functions is permitted, but only with limited guests and restrictions. As a result of all of this,

the catering industry is presently bearing the brunt of the losses.

COEXISTING WITH THE PANDEMIC

Keep a palm's distance, please:

For the time being, social distancing is the order of the day, but we must eventually come together again with a good number of people. The restaurant and catering industries, on the other hand, will have to reduce their table sizes to give their customers more breathing room.

The food industry will revive:

Social gatherings are a part of Indian culture. So, naturally, the food and restaurant industries will not disappear. Although the lockdown was brutal for the food and catering industry to bear, the reviving industry would undoubtedly bloom.

Hygiene:

The restaurant and catering industries, in particular, must adopt strict practices to ensure that the working staff follows best hygiene practices when preparing and serving food. Because, even if the pandemic is over, diners would prefer to eat somewhere where they know the sanitation standards are up to par.

PREPARING FOR A POST-COVID CATERING SEASON

In reality, the pandemic fear will linger, but business will reinstate on a slow and steady basis.

Planning ahead is crucial

Catering businesses that survive are those that anticipate how the world will change and plan accordingly. They are, above all, businesses that are well-prepared for smaller events. Catering companies should put greater emphasis on catering to small

groups. This focus will be beneficial in the months ahead. Thousands of businesses are returning to work and resuming their normal operations.

Healthy Desi Food

After the crisis is resolved, the industry is anticipated to be dominated by vegetarian and delicious seasonal foods. Imported ingredients must be removed and replaced with locally sourced ingredients. Due to low revenue, importing supplements or components would be a bad idea. This time, Ayurveda will play a significant role. It would be used more frequently and widely. In the future, hot food may be preferred over cold food.

Suffering cannot be ignored.

The catering and tent industries are suffering so much. We conducted interviews with prominent post holders in associations or experts to understand the future scope, the problems, and the changes they feel will take place shortly.

Many people have committed suicide as a result of their difficult circumstances. The future of this industry is bright, but it is in the hands of the government, the customers (or the general public), and the service provider. If all three worked together for each other's betterment, getting back on track would be easy.

ON A FINAL NOTE

The country is dealing with the pandemic with the utmost grace and poise. We could use this as an opportunity to reinvent or innovate in the food and catering industry. New challenges bring new ideas, and we'll only see the bright side of things. During this pandemic, we will stand united and work tirelessly to ensure the country's prosperity. Read on for further interviews to understand the perspective and possibilities. ●



The Pandemic Impact on the Catering Industry and Future Trends

– **NARENDRA SOMANI**

President, Federation of All India Caterers (FAIC)

Narendra Somani, the President of the Federation of All India Caterers (FAIC), summarizes how the caterers and their families survived the pandemic during the past years. It was a pathetic walkthrough, but now the situation is improving.

The catering industry has been one of the most affected by the pandemic's lockdowns, social distancing regulations, and price rises. The President of FAIC, Mr. Narendra

Somani, explains the present situation of caterers and how to survive in the food business ecosystem.

We all know that the catering industry has changed a lot after the pandemic. What are the changes that occurred after it? What are the differences in the size and budget of the people doing the party?

We put in a lot of effort during the time of Covid. We prepared meals for the government hospitals and offices. We put in a lot of effort with our team over the last 12–18 months. Everything changed after Covid. It used to be for 4000-5000 customers, but now it's just 1000. The majority of the population has now curtailed their spending habits.

Is smaller guest capacity influencing indoor or outdoor changes? What changes have you seen regarding guest capacity and food preference?

The hotel business has increased, and people are opting for a destination wedding. As guest capacity has also decreased, within the limited budget, they can have an extravagant wedding.

Is there a change in food or other customer demand?

No, there are no major changes in the food selection or even customer demand. People prefer traditional food over exotic food.

Is there any collaboration between small and big caterers or between hotels and caterers?

No, as far as I'm aware, there is no such collaboration. They are competing against one another. However, in the case of a large food selection for the guests, hotels give out orders to small caterers. If there is a demand for a small section, such as kulfi or sweets, they become add-ons.

Has the government provided any assistance with the duty costs for the caterers or hotels?

No, the government has yet to provide any benefits to caterers. In Gujarat, however, the

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government has provided a one-year tax-free period for corporations. In addition, there is no charge for electricity. The government has also offered an additional 20% loan on the same security, for a total of 20% on all loans. Hotel owners who already had loans were given a nearly 40% discount. This benefit is now available to everyone in the country.

It is observed that the raw materials in the catering industry have become quite pricey. Will it have any effect on the final prices delivered to the customers?

Yes, it will undoubtedly impact the catering industry, as the cost of everything is rising. Logistics, raw materials, and gas costs are doubled. Many caterers have raised their prices, while others have kept their prices low to compete. However, this has an impact on the industry because public spending on social ceremonies has decreased.

Many of the members are not given GST numbers as they are unregistered. The government has also reduced the GST by 5%. But without registration, they will be unable to get any help.

This industry is primarily affected by the pandemic. How long do you think it will take to get everything back to normal?

See, this year is critical. People are taking vaccines, and booster doses are being given. Many marriages are left due to this pandemic, which will happen in November or December. But if a wave comes, this will affect us a lot.

What is the final message you want to give to the people working in this industry?

I believe people should not engage in any unfair competition, as we can see that raw material rates are rising. Instead, they should focus on providing high-quality food and services to their customers. Customers and the industry as a whole will benefit from this.

What are the things that we, as an All-India Catering Association, should do for the benefit of our caterers?

This is a very poorly managed industry. Many of the members are not given GST numbers as they are unregistered. The government has also reduced the GST by 5%. But without registration, they will be unable to get any

“

Many of the members are not given GST numbers as they are unregistered. The government has also reduced the GST by 5%. But without registration, they will be unable to get any help.”

help. The total number of registered caterers is only 5000–10,000. But the actual numbers are in lakhs. Now, if they get registered, then only then can they earn benefits.

Are we having any meetings with the caterers to train them about the association and its benefits?

Yes, we are doing everything possible. We are doing Zoom meetings to teach them. We are also planning a big conference or an exhibition soon because the last one was canceled in Surat. ●

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The Whereabouts of the Catering Industry Post-Covid: An Insight

– **KIRIT BUDHDEV**

Secretary, Gujarat Catering Association

The following is an interview with Mr. Kirit Budhdev. He gives us great insights into the catering industry.

What was the state of the catering industry in your state following the COVID phase? What types of event inquiries are you receiving at the moment, and how do their sizes and budgets vary?

Fear of COVID is still present in people's minds. In Gujarat and all over India, clients insist on hygiene and that catering staff be fully vaccinated. Every gathering is planned with the

safety of clients in mind. The demand for impressive items is on the rise.

Events are planned according to each client's capacity. Pan India, catering services are on between 200-2000 people. Clients from cities and megacities are hygiene-conscious and want guests' safety.

During COVID, the catering industry learned to modify our approach. Caterers should ask for full payment in advance and have a clear discussion with clients. The earlier approach was like, "we will work it out, we will do it, no problem". This system has changed now.

There has been a 33% price rise in this business. I always tell caterers to first find out the budget and work out the details with the client, and only then go ahead. During COVID, many people have suffered a financial crunch.

What role do indoor and outdoor events play? On a broad scale, what changes have you noticed? Has customer demand altered in terms of price, guest capacity, and food selection?

Small gatherings of about 200 people are suitable for banquet halls under one roof. The past 2 years have been pretty good for hall and package arrangements. Outdoor gatherings with customized menus involve more than 500 people and are picking up now.

Demand for outdoor catering is set to increase. Lawn gatherings are more enjoyable, have open spaces, and are safer than banquet gatherings.

Are small and large caterers collaborating to help one another?

Honestly, large and small have both suffered in the two years of COVID. Larger caterers have faced bigger challenges, while smaller ones have had fewer problems, but the financial problems are there for all. Collaboration is a good idea in this situation.

For instance, if a larger caterer has six jobs on hand, instead of keeping them all to himself, it is better to share them with smaller caterers to benefit both. People must stand by each other.



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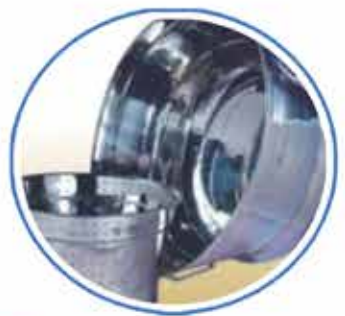
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Do you see hoteliers and caterers collaborating? What are your thoughts on how they might collaborate?

Hotels normally work with outdoor events if they have tie-ups with the respective authorities. Normally, hotel kitchens are their bread and butter. If they tie up with someone, they have to work according to their schedule.

But now, many caterers tie-up with hotels depending on their scale of work. If the client's budget allows, one can have an event at one place and get caterers from elsewhere.

Have the state and central governments aided or assisted the catering community in re-establishing their businesses?

There has been no help from the government during Covid-19. The Catering Associations are planning to request the Central Government for support for the catering segment. Our industry has not received any help during this pandemic as compared to other industries.

Caterers have suffered losses during this period, and it seems the government has not looked into this matter yet.

Material costs have increased as a result of Covid's impact. As a result of this, purchasing power has decreased. What effect will this have on the catering industry?

Prices have increased 33% in all aspects of the catering sector. Whether it is material or labour, costs are up and profits have come down. This is making it difficult for us to bargain with clients.

For any catering event, we need 338 items, and the prices of all of them have gone up. Margins have been reduced drastically.

In your opinion, how likely is it that the catering industry will experience positive change and growth soon? How long will it take for normalcy to return?

The biggest learning during Corona times has been to get clear payment from clients so that the finance chain is intact between supplier and vendor. It will take around 6

more months to get back to normal.

A new system is needed where we take advance payment. The fund crunch is there, and a smooth cash system is the need of the hour.

“

There has been a 33% price rise in this business. I advise Caterers to find out the budget of the client, and clearly work out the details with the client, before starting a contract.”

Any messages to the catering industry from your end?

- ✦ Take care of your staff's health and vaccinate them.
- ✦ Only after thorough clarification with clients should you proceed.
- ✦ If we don't do this, there will be more problems with finances and suppliers.
- ✦ It is best to adopt the 'Advance' system of payment now, and 'Debit' work should stop now.

We will overcome this situation if we adopt this as soon as possible. Quality and service are the identities of the catering industry, and this is the way to keep clients happy. ●

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Strategic Diversification in Business During a Pandemic is wise

– **SUNIL SONKHIA**

Chairman (West Zone), FAIC Association &
MD of Maharaja Caterers, Jaipur

After the markets have opened, Sunil Sonkhia, Chairman of the FAIC Association, pinpoints the vital deal-breakers that would help caterers all over India sustain. His thoughts will enlighten everyone in the food and catering industry.

Sunil Sonkhia, Chairman (West Zone), FAIC Association & MD of Maharaja Caterers, Jaipur, has contributed immensely in this field as a guide and mentor to many food-based entrepreneurs. He explains that a change is required for this industry to meet the demands of the post-pandemic consumer demand.

Tell us about the situation of the catering industry in your state. What changes have you noticed recently?

Following the lockdown, the government eased restrictions on social gatherings and implemented COVID protocols. Over the past 20 days, the government has reduced the number of people attending functions. Standard Covid protocols like social distancing, wearing a mask, etc, have kept guests at peace and are enthusiastic about the wedding season.

What are the underlying factors that will restore normalcy to the catering industry?

I believe the catering industry is dependent on the wedding season and also corporate bookings. To date, companies had virtual meetings and webinars. Slowly they are opening up and taking out budgets for such training, conferences, and seminars. If the corporate sector becomes offline wholly, there will be a new boom in the industry. If the third wave does not come, then 2022 is a year full of hope.

The year 2022 can fulfill all the backlog events like medical conferences, Start-up meetings, etc. We can just keep our fingers crossed and hope everything goes smoothly now.

What advice would you provide to caterers who are looking to re-establish their business? Is diversification a wise course of action?

With Covid, many people have diversified their business by associating with Zomato or Swiggy or have started to deal with home catering, etc. So, one needs to adapt according to the situation. People will not close their diversification if it works well as it is an additional source of income that is viable for them.

What changes are you currently experiencing in terms of customer demand and requirements while arranging an event?

The customer is not demanding as much as they used to be. One can only deliver what they have, even though the customer has high demand; if I don't have the necessary resources, I can't fulfill the work anyway. Over time, things are improving.

But the expenses like raw materials, food sources, edible oils, vegetables, logistics, fuel are very high. It is a more significant challenge than fulfilling the needs of the customers. The main issue is that the cost of the resources required to run this industry has gone up by 40–45%.

How do you feel about the rising costs of raw materials, transport, and other commodities your business requires? Can a caterer still earn a profit in the current environment?

One has to calculate the expenses accurately and not worry or get into price competition. I think the person who gets involved in price competition will not survive in the long run.

“
Stay Healthy, Stay Happy” – the only Motto Sunil Sonakhia has and believes everyone should follow. ”

Are you able to forecast how the catering industry will develop in the future and what message you would like to send to the sector?

The future is very bright as there are a lot of weddings and events. If there is no third wave or if it comes and the government can manage it properly, then there is so much work that a person will be overloaded. With planning, it can be managed.

Are you receiving the backlog of 2019 now? Is there any added pressure?

40-50% of weddings have already taken place during Covid, and whatever is left will take place in 2022.

Last words of wisdom

I will end it with a strong suggestion that people should work on their costs and not get worried about the competition in the market. There is enough work in the market. If someone gets into pricing competition, they won't survive in the long run. Just focus on providing good quality food and service. ●



Normalcy in the Catering Industry-yet to be witnessed

– PANKAJ KOTHARI

Founder President, Federation of Karnataka Caterers

The pandemic has left the catering industry to wade in the dark, and Pankaj Kothari shares his concern about the future of the food industry and all its related industries. From social distancing to small-sized guest groups and soaring prices, the catering scenario is not too pretty but has hope.

For over 40 years, Pankaj Kothari, the Founder President of the Federation of Karnataka Caterers, has been running successful restaurants, events, parties, and catering services. An interview with him will surely enlighten you on the Catering Industry's survival and revival trends.

What was the state of the catering industry in your state post the Covid phase? What types of event inquiries are you receiving at the moment, and how do their sizes and budgets vary?

We, the hospitality and catering industry, have been affected and hit the most. Due to the pandemic, the number of enquiries has gone down drastically. Due to the norms established by the government and the fear incurred by people all over, our business is at risk.

What role do indoor and outdoor events play? On a broad scale, what changes have you noticed? Has customer demand altered in terms of price, guest capacity, and food selection?

The public prefers events in the open rather than in indoor and banquet halls. The air-conditioned halls don't seem very healthy. The changes were the limitations of guests, less movement to other cities, and more weddings performed at temples and homes. Customer demand varied invariably in terms of price, guest capacity, and food hygiene, but not much food selection.

Are small and large caterers collaborating to help one another?

Whether small or large, all caterers were in deep trouble and there was no source for mutual help and support.

Do you see hoteliers and caterers collaborating? What are your thoughts on how they might collaborate?

Hoteliers and caterers have not collaborated. Our caterers and hoteliers have suffered the most. Hoteliers have gone through the worst as tourism has gone down tremendously.

Has the state and central governments aided or assisted the catering community in reestablishing their businesses?

The state or central government has never assisted us in reestablishing our business. There has been no consideration regarding rent, electricity bills, gas supply, taxes, and other overheads. On the contrary, market prices of commodities seem to be rising.

Material costs have increased as a result of COVID's impact. As a result of this, purchasing power has decreased. What effect will this have on the catering industry?

With food and material costs going up immensely, purchasing power has decreased a lot. Our catering prices have dropped, so purchasing raw materials is difficult. The guest capacity has decreased, rates have decreased, and purchases have gone up. The entire process has affected our industry a lot.

“
Our caterers and hoteliers have suffered the most. Hoteliers have gone through the worst as tourism has gone down tremendously.”

In your opinion, how likely is it that the catering industry will experience positive change and growth in the near future? How long will it take for normalcy to return?

I personally think positive change and growth in the near future will be quite difficult. Until and unless norms of capacity limitations decrease, travel, and tours increase, it will look dark. At this stage, it becomes very difficult to predict the return of normalcy. ●

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Post-Covid Catering Scenario: How smooth will the return be?

– VIPUL SINGHAL

President, All India Tent Dealers Welfare Organization

Vipul Singhal, President, All India Tent Dealers Welfare Organization shares his insight on how Covid-19 has transformed the catering business and the necessity of adapting to new situations.

Vipul Singhal, President of UP catering Association runs Saat Phere Restaurant & Banquet and Hotel Grand Amari in Meerut.

His other accomplishments are:

- National President, All India Tent Dealers Welfare Organization (Regd.) New Delhi.
- National General Secretary, Bhartiya Vaish Sangam (Regd.), New Delhi.
- General Secretary, Joint Trade Committee (Regd.), Meerut.

What is the most important thing to a caterer at any given point in time—food, taste, or anything else?

Food, taste, and presentation are the three most essential things in the catering line.

What are the main points to keep in mind while customizing the menu?

First - the welcome drink. Snacks like paneer, samosa, and Chinese items are a must. The Chaat stalls: Golgappa and Tikki are the mandatory items for every party.

The main course section must have dal, paneer, one dry, and gravy vegetable. 2-3 types of rice, and Raita and salad are included.

Is a catering business a good option for business now?

This is not the correct time to enter this business. The survival rate for newcomers will be significantly lower. Maybe 10-20% of them could stay, but others will bear losses.

How can we support and help the caterers?

We had put up a stall in Pragati Maidan. In that stall, we provided all the latest trends in décor and other departments to help them better.

Usually, people used to pay a certain amount in advance, but have things have changed now?

People are only paying a certain amount, and in the case of any unpredicted event, caterers have to bear the loss of that small amount.

What tips will you give to the new caterers entering this line of business?

In my opinion, the new caterers entering this line should not have stock of cutlery or anything else for more than 400-500 people. Start slow and then pick sales with experience.

New caterers should not have enough stock to feed more than 400-500 people.

Do you think start-ups can fare well in this industry?

Yes, start-ups have a fair chance. One

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must have presentation and confidence, slight innovation and experimentation, and they will have a bright future in this sector. ●

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Kamal Agarwal advises the catering industry to get back on track

– KAMAL KR. AGARWAL

President, Jharkhand Caterers Association (JCA)

Kamal Kr. Agarwal, President of Jharkhand Caterers Association (JCA), is an amazing person with an interest in experimenting with excellent and healthy food options without compromising on taste.

Kamal Kr Agarwal presides over prominent responsibilities and he is President of “Jharkhand Caterers Association (JCA); Member of “Federation of All India Caterers (FAIC) and Secretary of Seth Rameshwarlal Poddar Smriti Bhawan, Chutia, Ranchi.

In your opinion, what is the current situation of the catering business, and how is it dealing with the crisis?

We began our catering business in the first week of March 2020 and it was thriving. However, when the epidemic struck, the wedding business was badly hit, and we suffered losses. Then the second wave arrived, and lockdowns were imposed. As we can see, business is not doing well.

The medium- and small-scale caterers have been hit the hardest. What are your thoughts on such instances?

If we look at the large caterers, they survived because they were wealthy. Medium-sized businesses survived by reducing their spending. However, the bottom pyramid part was forced to change occupations. They became rickshaw drivers or sold vegetables to earn a living. They made every effort to survive.

What factors are required to restore normalcy to the catering industry?

It will require a lot of effort. The next phase is to earn the public’s trust. We must reassure them that the meal is completely hygienic and that all precautions have been taken.

The catering industry has seen dramatic changes. What piece of advice would you provide to novices in this industry?

As you can see, everyone has contributed a significant amount of time, money, and sweat to this endeavour. Some have switched their businesses. I want to emphasise that if they are successful in their new business, they should continue in it. Alternatively, you may come to this business. As with every sunset, there is a sunrise; this business will soon reach its peak.

What strategic advice do you have for running a catering business in Post-Covid? Which areas need to be focused on – workforce, funds, or anything else?

The critical point is to avoid making any investment through the use of a loan. They should begin the business with whatever resources are available. The primary consideration is manpower. They should contact their existing employees and begin business operations.

Together, we can overcome the losses from this pandemic. We must prepare ourselves to face the new future and reduce the impact by helping each other with the support of the government – Kamal Kr Agarwal

What changes have occurred in customer behaviour? What is your personal experience with it?

Customers are the industry’s primary focus. They look for methods to save money and gain an advantage. The parties have become smaller. They want food that is more hygienic and nutritious. The employees should be well-mannered and dressed appropriately. They should wear a mask and remain completely sanitised. They prefer staff who has received both doses of the covid-19 vaccine.

The cost of procurement has grown as a result of Covid. Beginning with logistics, food, oil, and metal etc. What is your advice to caterers to continue operating their business in this circumstance?

Everything in the market is more expensive due to an increase in fuel costs. It has increased by about 15% to 20%. Existing clients who are familiar with our original rates would refuse to do business with us; if we inform them of the increased charges.

The solution would be to reduce production costs. This may involve assigning numerous duties to a single person or devising a strategy for reducing transportation costs. It is critical to avoid wasting any food.

When will the catering business revert to pre-crisis levels?

Every day, I pray to the Almighty that the business would revert to its former glory. I encourage people to get vaccinated and take all necessary precautions to protect themselves and their families during this epidemic.

“

Together, we can overcome the losses from this pandemic. We must prepare ourselves to face the new future and reduce the impact by helping each other with the support of the government ”

The wedding season has begun in earnest. I spoke with several of our vendors, and they informed me that they are currently fully booked. Everyone has made a reservation for around 45-60 days. As a result, this is a positive indicator for the sector.

In my experience, catering segment food is both for taste and appearance. However, you have developed immunity-boosting rasgullas, chocolate, and sugar-free laddoos made with flax seeds. You used fresh fruit that has a long shelf life.

We used khand. And for the alsli [flax seed] laddoo, we used date pulp. However, ragi laddoo is cooked with khand. It is highly nutritious. Khand is a sub-category of jaggery. It is brown in colour and fairly low in sugar content. ●



Coming Together is the Beginning, Staying Together is Progress, and Working Together is Success

– DADU (RAMKISHAN) B. PUROHIT

- President of All Maharashtra Tent Dealer Welfare Organization
- Vice President of All India Tent Dealer Welfare Organization
- Vice President of Federation of All Maharashtra Caterers.

Dadu Ramkishan B. Purohit, President of All Maharashtra Tent Dealer Welfare Organization holds invaluable years of expertise in catering, He talks about his intuitions about the future of caterers, their business, and the Covid-19 impact.

How has the Tent industry impacted the Covid-19?

Since the Covid-19 has impacted our country, I have noticed that the tent industry is the worst victim of all. Many people have committed suicide because of the tough times they are facing. It is pretty disheartening to see.

The future of this industry is bright but lies in the hand of the government as new people are continuously scared of the third wave hitting and making things slow down.

The primary demand is not merely aid from the government but to open the market freely so we can earn money the way we want.

What role do indoor and outdoor events play? On a broad scale, what changes have you noticed? Was customer demand altered in terms of price, guest capacity, and food selection?

What I have seen is that indoor events are preferred currently. People don't want to spend too much now as the corona has impacted everyone's income.

However, this is a short-term problem, and things will be back to normal soon. In Maharashtra currently, the cap for indoor events is 100, whereas for outdoor events it is 200.

Though the association had made a lot of protests to increase the cap to 500, it wasn't fruitful at all. I feel people have shifted from quantity to class quality as they are ready to spend that much money.

Are small and large caterers collaborating to help one another?

There is no such thing as small or large caterers. Today, it all boils down to service

and food. Whoever provides the best survives the best.

But leaving this aside, big or small, all people are being helped in the best way possible, be it financial aid or emotional support. We all should not forget that everyone is suffering; we can all strive for it together.

Have the state and central governments aided the catering community in re-establishing their businesses?

To be honest, I, personally, with the people of the association, have knocked on all the doors, be it State or Central. But the government has not shown us anything substantial. They are just saying words that are not visible in action form.

The primary demand is not aid but to open the market freely so we can earn money the way we want.

One vital piece of information that I want to share is that, if anyone's organization is registered with MSME, the government has granted us an MSME loan scheme to take a loan from 10 Lakhs to 2 crores.

If you take a loan under a lady's name, then 35% subsidy, and if male, then 25%. If the money gets blocked, then one can later take the amount with interest from the government.

As a result of COVID's impact, material costs have risen. Purchasing power has dwindled. What will be the impact on the catering industry?

I think it is not expensive or cheap; the focus should be on providing a quality product.

I request that everyone not get into the competitive zone, meet the requirements and help each other survive this difficult time.

The government has granted us an MSME loan scheme to take a loan from 10 Lakhs to 2 crores.

How likely is it, in your opinion, that the catering or tent industries will see positive change and growth soon and get back to normal?

See, in my opinion, if the third wave does not hit our country until December and things go the same way, then I think we can see the quantity of the capping increase and items get better.

If I take the other situation that our country suffers from the third wave, I think we should have terms clear with the hosts or client for that scenario.

The booking amount or initial deposit which the client gives should be taken with two clauses:

“ However, this is a short-term problem, and things will be back to normal soon. In Maharashtra currently, the cap for indoor events is 100, whereas for outdoor events it is 200 ”

- ✧ There won't be any refund if we are hit with the next wave
- ✧ There will be no kind of date change for the function.
- ✧ If we are clear with ourselves, then things will go our way.

Do you see hoteliers and caterers collaborating? What are your thoughts on how they might collaborate?

The hoteliers and caterers are both two different segments. They both have very different working patterns.

The hotel has a system of monthly wages, whereas, in the caterer's line of business, there is a daily wage basis. They are collaborating now as they are both going through a tough time. Together, they can showcase a more robust front. ●

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Bakeries are a different niche of food business that requires a touch of art, passion, and the drive to provide exemplary, delicious food products in the finest manner. If you aspire to launch your bakery, take time to choose from below - the type of bakery that resonates with your identity.

Let's talk baking!

To start a bakery, you need to first research the various types of bakeries. Choose the one that suits your bakery business dreams the most.

Various aspects need to be considered before choosing the bakery that you would like to run. It should include what equipment you'll need, how many employees you must employ, and what kind of premises you'll require.

Though it sounds intimidating, relax, get familiar and explore something awesome beyond your baking tins.

What's your pick? Retail or Wholesale

First things first! Decide whether you want to operate a retail bakery or a wholesale bakery before you can start arranging the details of your bakery.

This is a crucial decision since it will affect how you connect with clients, what kind of acquisition of fixed assets you'll require, and the amount of investment.

RETAIL BAKERY

Retail bakeries come in a variety of shapes and sizes, but they all require at least one employee to manage the cash register and assist customers. Some common methods and back-end operations are required in retail bakeries.

Seating customers cannot be neglected. The bakery store does need to invest in furniture, upholstery, crockery, flooring, and, of course, delicious treats!

WHOLESALE BAKERY

Wholesale bakeries offer to a variety of enterprises, including restaurants, grocery stores, specialized shops, or

even cafes. Individuals stopping in for a snack will not affect your income since wholesale enterprises rely on repeat large-scale customers.

This can be a major advantage over store-bought baking. Let's not forget that the high overhead cost of wholesale baking could be a disadvantage.

If you're transporting a huge amount of merchandise, you'll need extra people to assist you. Not to mention that baking on a large scale will almost certainly necessitate extra equipment. A huge wholesale bakery might not be the best option if you aren't willing to invest more money upfront.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT TYPE OF BAKERY SERVICE

Bakery Cafe

A standing bakery, also known as a bakery cafe, is a retail bakery with a dining room where customers may sit and eat their cuisine.

Because you'll require a site with both home and front-of-house space, opening a bakery café with seats can be more difficult than other bakery company concepts. In addition to baked goods, most bakery-café also serve fresh food and beverages.



Specialty Bakery

A specialized bakery specializes in manufacturing one or a few types of baked goods. A birthday cake store, for example, would be classified as a specialty bakery because it specializes in a single type of product.

Specialty bakeries include allergy-friendly and wellness bakeries, such as those that serve vegan or allergen-baked goods. Specialized bakeries are versatile since, while they specialize in a single product, they can make it in either a retail or wholesale environment.



Counter Service Bakery

Counter service bakery is small in size, and there is no dining facility. This business strategy may save you cash on overheads while also allowing you to serve coffee as well as other food products.

Another advantage of a counter-service bakery is that it can accommodate both walk-in consumers who want a few products and consumers who need large orders. You can devote considerable time filling huge orders if you don't put as much emphasis on the front-of-house area.



Home Bakery

Baking from home is ideal for businessmen who don't have a lot of money to put into their new venture.

To begin a home bakery, all you need is the right equipment, enough room, and the relevant permits. Verify your local laws before commencing one of these.



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Can the Catering Business recoup from the Impact of Covid-19?

– **MANJEET KANSAL**

Vice President Marriage Palace & Catering Association, Punjab

Manjeet Kansal, the Vice President Marriage Palace & Catering Association, Punjab talks about how Covid-19 has left a solid scar in the catering businesses. However, he advises caterers how to manage weddings, and effectively cater without wasting resources and money.

How has the catering industry been impacted by Covid-19?

Our catering business has not been spared by the pandemic. The Punjab state has been severely impacted, with numerous catering businesses collapsing. Caterers, whether big or small, continue to struggle to stay afloat.

With the legislation implying a reduction in the number of public events, it is no longer viable to pursue catering initiatives with razor-thin margins. It does not even cover our costs; we are unable to pay even our working staff's daily compensation.

What changes do you see in your industry, Pre & Post-Covid?

Weddings are big events, and they have always generated a lot of revenue for us. A Punjabi wedding is a grand affair, marked by great fervor and large gatherings.

As the pandemic spread, wedding parties were canceled; caterers and mandap decorators who had made significant investments suffered significant losses.

This sector has endured a particularly trying period.

In comparison to other states that have exhibited signs of improvement in the post-covid period, Punjab state has not fared well. The state has not yet recovered, and the catering industry has yet to establish a foothold in these tough times.

How did you convince the host to have limited guests post-covid ease?

While the restrictions have been relaxed, the event size has been significantly reduced. We also cannot say no to business; even families have waited an extended time to perform marital duties. As a result, guest lines are significantly lowered.

Families are on a tight budget and demand more from catering services. We persuade them to work out a solution that benefits both groups. We make every effort to save costs across the board by altering the food menu, decoration, lighting, and sound, while still providing a positive experience for our guests. Even for us, this is a difficult task.

Are small and large caterers collaborating to help one another?

Though we would prefer things to happen like this, reality dictates otherwise. Both large and small caterers have faced losses. Without other options, many caterers have branched into alternative businesses to survive. This is an unforgiving reality.

With the number of events dwindling, every caterer has been adversely affected.

In some states, large caterers assist small caterers by collaborating on specialized services and attempting to meet financial obligations. I don't believe it will happen here.

Has the state and central governments aided or assisted the catering community in re-establishing their businesses?

We have made several pleas to the government to exempt us from our tax burden. Our business has hit an all-time low and is unable to repay the loan. We expect the government to give us a favorable reply.

Our state catering association has made a representation on behalf of the catering members, but we haven't received any satisfactory response despite numerous efforts.

As we all know, a wedding is the main purpose of a tent, but do you get orders for any other events?

In our location, customers like outdoor weddings more than indoor weddings, mainly because the wedding event is always combined with numerous other ceremonies. As a result, there was a high demand for tent weddings.

However, much has changed since the pandemic hit. Smaller gatherings typically take place in hotels and banquet halls, and so do not require a tent. I'm hoping the scenario changes soon.

Is insurance mandatory? What is your cancellation policy now that COVID is in place?

Insurance is a necessary safeguard for our business, and caterers must understand this. In the recent past, a fire incident at a tent wedding resulted in a significant loss for a caterer. Insurance coverage can protect against such unforeseen events. The catering business should give it serious consideration.

As far as the cancellation policy goes, we are working on advance payment terms to protect our catering investment before procuring any order.

Material costs have increased as a result of Covid's impact. As a result of this, purchasing power has decreased. What

effect will this have on the catering industry?

Yes, it is a fact that, overall, material prices have shot up. This has weakened the purchasing capacity of every caterer. Food ingredients, logistics, and other goods have to be purchased at a higher price. We are even paying higher excise on liquor.

Caterers cannot absorb the price hike, hence there is a significant price variation. Customers are not ready to cough up more, but we try to convince the client and execute the order. Many caterers even handle events at a loss so that orders are not lost. An opportunity is lost and not healthy for business

“

As the pandemic spread, wedding parties were canceled; caterers and mandap decorators who had made significant investments suffered significant losses ”

In your opinion, how likely is it that the catering industry will experience positive change and growth shortly? How long will it take for normalcy to return?

We are going through a difficult time, but things are improving gradually. There are signs of new businesses as regulations ease and the wedding season approaches.

By January 2022, a positive transformation will take place. It is too early to expect complete normalcy, but the catering industry's business model must evolve, and new entrants must be risk-averse.

Our catering association is collaborating to assist the growth of the state's catering business, and we are hopeful that the golden days will return soon. ●



Can we experience a Sustained Catering Industry Comeback?

– VUPPALA VARADARAJULU

CEO, Sasi Groups, President of the Caterers Association Federation of Andhra Pradesh

Vuppala Varadarajulu is the CEO of Sasi Groups, president of the Caterers Association Federation of Andhra Pradesh, which has 13 districts and 1100 members. Listen to his expertise, predictions, and catering strategies that are a must-follow for every caterer.

What are the side-effects of Covid-19 that you have seen or faced in your state, particularly in your industry?

We can still wish for the COVID-19 genie to be re-captured, but the more likely reality is that the virus will become an endemic problem that we will have to learn to live with. Climate change is also a problem to overcome daily.

Because of Covid, the government has restricted parties and functions to 100–200 people only. Small or big, all kinds of caterers are suffering. It was the wedding season, and covid cases had subsided, so it was again business time.

What kind of customers are coming to you? What type of budget do they have? Is taking part in these events profitable or feasible for you?

All customers want to spend is a limited amount. Small events are not feasible for me. The hall's capacity is greater, and the expense for that is identical, but with a smaller number of people and less payment, it makes the cost high for us.

There are two kinds of people, one saves money due to limitations. The second type of person utilizes the previously decided amount for a grand setup.

What kind of events do people want, indoors or outdoors? What are the demands and preferences? What difference are the customers asking?

People look for good customer service as well as flexibility and creativity when hiring a caterer. A good caterer will have a variety of sample menus that are within your budget. Tailor your event to your preferences and the occasion. People usually mix up the terms “indoor” and “outdoor” catering. They think outdoor catering means an open banquet. But to clarify, this is not the case.

An “outdoor caterer” refers to a caterer providing catering services at a location other than his own, including a site supplied by the person receiving the services through tenancy or otherwise. Outdoor catering deals with venues that do not have fixed caterers.

The demand for outside catering increases when the caterer is famous, and people rely on that specific person for the quality of the food and service over others. In the current marketing scenario, when people are limited, they spend a little more for the best caterer for their function.

Nowadays, people have limited guests, but they want the food items to be different. They don't enjoy the same bland North Indian food. They want more fanciful food items. Like chaats, there are 75 different types of chaats, and people want to try new things.

Are the hoteliers and caterers working together?

No, Hoteliers do not allow outside catering of any sort, and to be honest, why would they allow it? They are also running into losses; many hotels are even shutting down. So, if they are getting bookings, they will want to self-cater it and not outsource.

What changes will you see in the catering industry?

By 2020, it will get better. We can divide the catering service into four parts.

- **Catering for corporate events**

The corporate catering market may not recover to pre-COVID levels for several years. This is because some employees work remotely permanently and offices are not fully functioning. However, it will undoubtedly improve from its current state.

- **Retail delivery catering**

Many caterers pursued this market after their event business crashed during the pandemic. Some have

succeeded in developing this as an additional catering line and will continue to do so once the event business picks up again. Other caterers have had a hard time breaking into this market.

“
In the current marketing scenario, as people are limited, they spend a little more on using the best caterer to cater to their function. Hence outside catering is more in demand.”

- **Social Catering**

Buyers of weddings are already eager to start planning their receptions. It may take some time for the destination wedding market to recover, but local weddings are expected to rebound quickly as people will get married even if the number of people in just 100–200. Soon the cap will increase to 500-600. ●

Cloud Kitchens

Garner hope for Restaurant Business Models

Sometimes, small is powerful, and that is exactly what the modern cloud kitchens prove today. The super-efficient and cost-effective Cloud Kitchen business model has nurtured a new way of living, and hope for the catering industry.

With the onset of the Covid-19 in 2020, the Indian restaurant business had been existing on risky waters. Thanks to the concept of Cloud Kitchens in India, the pandemic situation has thrown light on new ways of handling food

in small spaces, delivering food via technology, and running the food business in more affordable business models.

A QUICK REWIND

In 2020, people lost their jobs and recognition. One of the worst sufferers is the restaurant owners. Research says that there is a shrinkage of 53% in the restaurant industry in India in the year of the pandemic.

To cope up with the challenging situation that prevails even in 2021, many restaurants ran cloud kitchen space.

WHAT IS THIS CLOUD KITCHEN SPACE?

Well, cloud kitchen restaurants are those places where one can order food, but there are no facilities for eating food in the restaurant. During Covid-19, this was a boon to people who have been already using apps for food ordering and delivery.

The concept of cloud kitchen is more flexible. The owner of the restaurants can run multiple brands out of the same kitchen. They can also serve different demographics at the same time.

Another advantage of it is that we can target several segments of the market at the same time.



DID CLOUD KITCHENS REALLY THROW A RAY OF HOPE?

Yes, of course. Better known as Ghost Kitchens, nobody knew where these food saviors existed, but they were just a call away.

In 2020, with the uneasy COVID-19 fears lurking among people, no one wanted to meet anyone, go outside, or even interact. Still, man needs to exist and food cravings cannot be done away with.

Cloud Kitchens seemed to fit into their needs at the right time. The customers were giving orders via a call or app. Delivery staff would reach homes with the ordered food. In this way, they met both hunger pangs and safety issues.

HOW FEASIBLE ARE CLOUD KITCHENS DURING THE PANDEMIC?

Yes, a cloud kitchen is a perfect idea, especially in a pandemic situation.

Rohan Agarwal, the director of **Redseer**, said that “In Asian countries, there were almost 50,000 cloud kitchens. In these two years, there is a great demand for cloud kitchens. It has increased to 1,00,000. They estimated that in the upcoming five years, there will be one cloud kitchen for every ten restaurants.”

Food is prime:

The restaurant owners concentrate only on food quality. Previously, they needed to take care of everything, like table management, arrangement of food, cleaning, sweeping, maintaining decor, etc.



Cost-Effective:

As it is cost-effective, many restaurant owners have settled for cloud kitchens even after the pandemic situation is over.

Affordable:

Because of the better pricing of products, restaurants are getting more delivery orders than before.

Safety:

In a cloud kitchen, many safety measures are being maintained as per the Covid-19 regulations.

The Odds:

However, the concept of cloud kitchens is still new for many customers. In remote areas, people don't like this concept. Placing an order seems to be difficult for some customers. Other than that, getting the food timely is another factor to worry about.

WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF COVID ON CLOUD KITCHENS?

With the coming up of cloud kitchens, there is again rapid growth in the food industry. As the pandemic situation prevails in 2021, the number of cloud kitchens is increasing.

“In Asian countries, there were almost 50,000 cloud kitchens. In these two years, there is a great demand for cloud kitchens. It has increased to 1,00,000.”

It is a known fact that Covid and its mutant variants will remain among us. The only way for the food industry to co-exist with the virus - is with the help of Cloud Kitchens in India.

This concept would prove extremely beneficial for small-budget restaurants, which were affected due to the pandemic.

FINAL WORDS

Coronavirus is here to stay for a while and we as humans can find new ways to survive this phase of life. The food industry needs to be more resilient and the Cloud Kitchens are the sure way towards building a sustainable Restaurant Model for all food business owners.

Do not judge but its size, the cloud kitchen is home to plenty of tailor-made food-related business opportunities. It surely holds immense avenues, food tech services for India. ●

The Packaged Food Industry

A Great Pandemic Survivor

Phase one of the Covid-19 pandemic was the shock zone for all. Now it is the Rebound time and people are longing for food that is safe, “untouched,” and delivered to their homes. Packaged food products fit the bill in terms of money, health assurance, and business.

Here, the packaging industry has taken the role of the Good Samaritan to help people enjoy clean, nutritious, well-packed food right at home. Let’s dig into this new profitable business idea this time!

With a new range of opportunities coming our way, we have seen the rapid growth of work, especially in the packaged food industry.

WHY IS PACKAGED SNACKING PREFERRED TODAY?

People demand a significant share of quick snacks and accessible food packs in their houses today. The packaged food industry has grown manifold during the pandemic.

India is one of the fastest-growing economies globally. As an added advantage, it has a significant portion of domestic raw materials. Ever since the lockdown restrictions were lifted, there has been a phenomenal increase in the amount of food that is delivered to homes. As people are unwilling to go to restaurants and have close social contact, the number of takeaways has increased directly from the restaurant or via online food delivery apps.



Be it hot or cold foods, fresh foods, or processed foods, everything is packed and sealed to perfection! It has been the assurance point for farmers, food manufacturers, and consumers during the pandemic, and that is why the packaging industry is great for the F & B industry.

THE PACKAGING INDUSTRY’S ROLE IN THE FOOD AND CATERING INDUSTRY’S SURVIVAL THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

Positivity in the Food & Beverage Industry

The food and beverage (F & B) industry has always experienced a positive trajectory in India. Even though it faced a rough patch at

the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak, it survived and is now one of the country’s most thriving businesses.

However, in light of the demand for responsible and highly nutritious food to maintain a healthy body, it is essential to understand ethical food processing across the country. Hence, packaged foods like ready-to-eat packs, frozen food products, and intermediary food products like confectionery food items have a high demand.

FULFILLING THE NEEDS OF THE HOUR

Providing people with packaged food that is sustainable, healthy, and nutritious during these difficult times is a necessity today. With less need to spend outside, households have a more significant portion of their income available to them. It has increased their spending capacity. Increased use of cereals and other packed food items has been inspired by the farm-to-table trend, where people tend to make use of cereals more often in their everyday meals.

FEEDING CONSUMER SENTIMENTS

With uncertain demand shocks and less travel, consumers prefer ordering online as it is easy, and, of course, they can avoid the social touch. Today, bulk cereal packages, oil pouches, snacks, and baby foods are packed, sanitized, and delivered during the pandemic.

PRODUCT PACKAGE QUALITY

People have turned to non-toxic, organically sourced, and body-friendly packaging. These will be sealed and glued, and double packs will be used to prevent leaks. From medicine, food, stationery, to toiletries, people love to receive them in sustainable packages that are better for nature.

FILLING THE DEMAND-SUPPLY GAP

Pandemic brought unexpected constraints in logistics, storage, quality maintenance, and proper employee coordination. The packaging industry has prepared well for this lacunae by storing bulk stocks in secure containers and appropriate packages. Today, as per the need,



“Providing people with packaged food that is sustainable, healthy, and nutritious during these difficult times is a necessity today. With less need to spend outside, households have a more significant portion of their income available to them”

every commodity in India has a custom-made package design.

THE FUTURE OF THE PACKAGED SUSTAINABILITY CYCLE

Sustainability is the order of the pandemic era. The packaging industry can outweigh most customer demand woes and also create a well-organized sales cycle for various players in the

B2C and B2B industries.

Today, the packaging is a must-have for grocery stores, online delivery entities, hotels, restaurants, and even machinery. Naturally, this industry has endless scope if used innovatively to fulfill the present demands.

The world has moved forward after a significant setback due to the outbreak. It has been a remarkable journey, and with the help of specific improvements here and there, things will surely get back on track! ●



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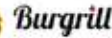
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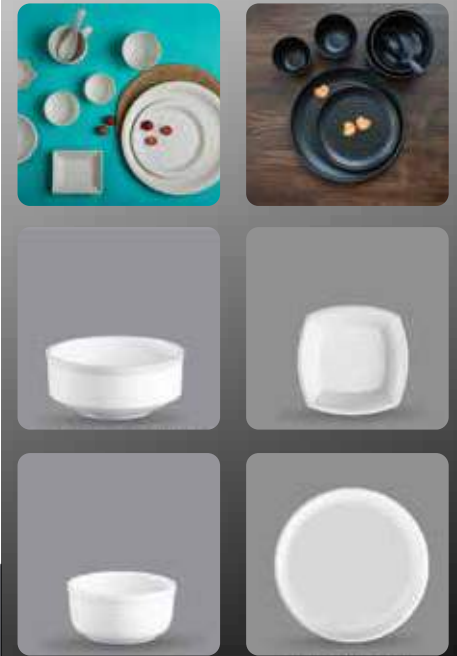
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Mira Steels banks on steel as the safest cooking metal

– BHARAT RAJAWAT

Founder, Meera Steels

Mira Steel company takes an intelligent move to manufacture steel cookware utensils, envisioning the huge requirements of the catering industry, eateries and the Indian households on the whole.

Tell us about Mira Steel's success story and how the current generation is expanding the company.

Every day, we strive to provide safe and high-quality cookware, which is a major accomplishment for us. Since the last 90 years, we've been in the utensil industry. Bharat Kumar Hastimal & Co., our parent company, began making brass and copper utensils. Mira Steel was founded by my brother and me in 1994 after my graduation, with the assistance of the parent firm. Our new venture's business plan was to launch a stainless steel cookware line, as stainless steel is long-lasting and low-maintenance. We began by producing these huge stainless steel cookware utensils. We now produce items that are required in the hotel and catering industries. Nikhil and Mitesh Rajawat, our fourth generation, have also joined our firm and are running it with the same zeal. However, I believe that our organisation as a whole has yet to reach success. It will happen when the entire cookware in the hotel and catering industries switches from aluminium containers (bhagona) to stainless steel. We're absolutely on our way there.

Which user segment, whether commercial or residential, is the most significant for your business? Please provide additional information.

Our focus has always been on the commercial segment and also on the temples or religious eateries. We were also in touch with the caterers for around 25 years. So whatever suggestions and ideas we got, we applied them to the commercial sphere.

Tell us about the new advancements you've implemented in your company's stainless cookware line.

The new products introduced by us in the recent years are wide range of commercial kitchen equipments which include pizza ovens, sandwich grillers, deep fryers, gas ranges etc. Refrigeration section and water coolers are also some of our new developments.

We also have sandwich bottom cookware (induction friendly) fry pans saucepans, Cook-pots, etc.

We have also started a new range of electric-based cookware like electric jalebi kadai, electric stoves, as in many places fire is not allowed for cooking.

How has been the response to your products from the hotel and restaurant industry, particularly in the market, where there is a lot of competition? How do you set yourself out from the competition?

The sector's response has been overwhelmingly positive. Mira Steel and catering are inextricably linked. We give them whatever they require, from exact shapes to sizes. We have always been interested in developing new products and alternatives to brass, copper, and aluminum. This distinguishes us from the majority. Additionally, by providing high-quality products and after-sales service, we can maintain our standards. As a result, our consumers always choose Mira steels over any other option.

When a variety of metal cookware is available, why is stainless steel regarded as the preferable and safest cooking metal?

To be frank, steel is the future. You can visit any large restaurant, hotel, or bistro and just see stainless steel. Aluminum has never been beneficial to human health. It is hazardous. Stainless steel maintains optimum cleanliness, conserves fuel, and imparts a pleasant taste. Additionally, it is not toxic. The critical factor to remember is that stainless steel is extremely durable.

Tell us about your export business. What kind of international inquiries do you get?

Our primary customers include Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Oman, Qatar, and Yemen. African nations such as Sudan. The majority of them require specialized catering products to meet their specific requirements, which we fulfill.

There are a few requests from Europe and the United States as well.

“Our new venture's business plan was to launch a stainless steel cookware line, as stainless steel is long-lasting and low-maintenance. Stainless steel maintains optimum cleanliness, conserves fuel, and imparts a pleasant taste”

What are your future expansion plans for Mira Steels?

My real success would be when all Indians would shift from aluminum to stainless steel. Aluminum is so toxic that it melts and contaminates food during cooking. Second, even when food is not cooked in it, but only stored in it, the food darkens. At the same time, stainless steel is durable and accepted worldwide because it is not harmful at all. As a result, our long-term goal is to phase out dangerous utensils and replace them with safe stainless steel ones.

Furthermore, we wish to expand our showrooms and manufacturing facilities. Additionally, we anticipate increased exports. We are also focussing on manufacturing more and more unique products that no one manufactures. We're excited to see how the future and the market fare for us. ●

Kamal Caterer wins hearts with **Healthy Bites**



Sweet lovers can now indulge in sweets that are enriched with healthy ingredients. Kamal Caterer has aesthetically created immunity-boosting sweets that are perfect for all ages and also with natural everyday fruits, spices, and chocolate.

Kamal Caterer is well known for its rigorous experimentations in the food industry. Last year in the COVID-19 pandemic era, Basil (Tulsi), Indian Gooseberry (Amla), Turmeric (Haladi), Green Chilly, Orange, and Strawberry Rasgullas were prepared to boost our immunity. Subsequently, Immunity Booster Chocolates were prepared, which were made up of Liquorice (Mulethi), Basil (Tulsi), Black Pepper, Turmeric (Haladi), Indian Gooseberry (Amla), Figs (Anjeer), and dry-fruits. Later on, they prepared fruit-based chocolates of a variety of flavors, such as Kiwi, Orange, Strawberry, Pineapple, Tamarind, Guava Chilly, etc.

Mr. Kamal Agarwal happens to be the owner of Kamal Caterer and president of Jharkhand Caterers Association (JCA), who also represents Jharkhand at the Federation of All India Caterers (FAIC). Acknowledging the efforts lately, “Global Triumph Foundation, Bangalore” has included him in its magazine - “Famous Top 50 Inspiring Icons of the Country”.

One after another, Kamal Caterer has been experimenting meticulously and winning the hearts of the people. This Diwali, Kamal Caterer added three more sweets to its portfolio, viz Oats Dry-Fruits Laddoo, Ragi

Laddoo, and Flax-seed Dates Laddoo. We all are fond of laddoos but are unable to eat them with all our hearts because of the sugar content. To find a solution to this problem, Mr. Kamal Agarwal, came up with a special range of laddoos and named the range - “Healthy Bites”.

NEXT LEVEL SUGAR-FREE MOUTHFULS

“Healthy Bites” are sugar-free and only Jaggery powder has been used to sweeten the laddoos. Each laddoo has its health benefits. We all know about the health benefits of adding Oats, Ragi, Flaxseeds, Dates, and Jaggery (Gud) to our diet, but we find adding them to our diet difficult. Oats are rich in antioxidants, can lower cholesterol levels, can improve blood sugar control, and may help you lose some weight. Ragi is rich in fiber minerals and amino acids which make it a good choice for diabetics. While on the other hand, Flax seeds may reduce cancer risk, are rich in dietary fiber, may improve cholesterol, may lower blood pressure, may help control blood sugar levels, and may aid in weight control. Adding Flax seeds with Dates, which is in itself very nutritious, promotes brain health, and is an excellent natural sweetener removes the need for Jaggery powder

to sweeten the laddoo. Jaggery powder, which has immense health benefits such as improving digestion, immune function, aiding glucose control, and weight loss, is used to sweeten the Oats Dry-Fruits Laddoo and Ragi Laddoo.

DIWALI AND HEALTHY MEETA

People loved the range offered by “Healthy Bites”. Instead of going old school by gifting “Dry-Fruits”, “Healthy Bites” was a great choice of gift amidst this Diwali, as it was a healthy choice. Mr. Kamal Agarwal says that not only in Jharkhand, but people from other states of India also loved the laddoos. Since the winter season is down the line, “Healthy Bites” is a great option to add to your diet as dates are good for health during the winter season and Gond (Dink), which is also used in the preparation of Ragi Laddoo is beneficial in boosting our stamina.

He adds that people can get in touch with his team through any social media platform to buy “Healthy Bites” as they are getting it delivered all over India. At last, he says that he prays that this pandemic will soon be a thing of the past, the world will get rid of it and everything will be back to normal as it was before. ●



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