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Odisha: Home chefs to satiate your food cravings during pandemic

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BHUBANESWAR: Amidst pandemic when safety and hygiene are the top priority for dining out, a group of home chefs are here to fulfil your cravings for all kinds of food items and get it delivered at your door step. Started by two youths just passed out from college 'Chef Junction' has assembled 40 home chefs, including homemakers and professional men and women, delivered over 2000 orders in the last couple of months. And the menu included an array of cuisines ranging from authentic Odia dishes to deserts, to traditional Indian food items, biryanis, pizzas to bakery items. Suryanshu Panda and Ipari Pritam, graduates in Bachelor of Business Management from Xavier University Bhubaneswar and foodies started Chef Junction, a food delivery platform from where a customer can order hygienic home cooked food prepared by handpicked home chefs.

“We were never liked the concept of a 9-5 job and wanted to do something of our own. We believed in independent and challenging work along with creative boost. Being big time foodies, we were drawn towards this brainchild of ours. We started with seven home cooks in August,” said 23-year-old Suryanshu.

He said, a team of six persons has been ensuring hygiene and quality of food provided by the home-cooks. “Before we sign in a person for cooking food for our customers, the first thing we see is what kind of oils and spices they are using. Cleanliness in kitchen is also our

priority,”

Panda

added.

If a home cook wants to join, they call us and the team get to taste their food. If the team approves they get them a licence under the Food Safety & Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), which is mandatory for any food business. The licence remains valid for one year.

Each home cooks associated with the platform is earning around Rs 2000 to Rs 4000 a week adding to their family income. Among the 40 home cooks 20 are homemakers, 10 are professionals while rest are men.

“Chef Junction is a great platform for an amateur chef like me. I get very good response from customers and feel excited when I get good comments. The concept of home chefs is the new normal in the post pandemic period and dine at home is the new dining out,” said Sitesh Tunga, a 21-year-old home chef. A student of Culinary Academy of India, Sitesh serves Italian, continental and Biryani at Chef Junction.

Chef Junction is also serving food as per the need of people with medical requirements like diabetics, high blood-pressure and kidney related ailments. Among the customers 70% are repeat customers, which indicates people are loving the food, Panda pointed out.

Another home-chef Arpita said, “She always wanted to start her own food business. But due to various reasons could not start it. Chef Junction fulfilled my entrepreneurial dream and also gave me a chance to innovate.”