

Shivani Illakiya

Chennai, Tamil Nadu | shivani.p.t.illakiya@gmail.com | +91 9360054825

SUMMARY

Journalist and Food Correspondent at *Indulge*, The New Indian Express, with a background in reporting, editing and developing original stories for print and digital. A quick learner who takes initiative, adapts to new responsibilities, and takes ownership of stories from ideation to publication. Passionate about travel and exploring destinations through their food, people, design, heritage and local experiences. Skilled in coordinating with editorial teams, contributors, and industry professionals, with working knowledge of Adobe InDesign and Quintype CMS.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Indulge, The New Indian Express

Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Reporter & Sub-editor | Food Correspondent

Oct 2024 - Present

- **Food Correspondence:** Lead food coverage for *Indulge*, identifying new restaurants, food pop-ups, emerging culinary trends, and noteworthy developments across Chennai's food scene. Collaborate with colleagues on story ideas and restaurant leads, helping sustain a consistent two-page food section since taking charge of the beat.
- **Features and City Coverage:** Develop and report original features across food, travel, hospitality, culture and city life, exploring local communities, heritage and changing lifestyles. Identified over 40 new dining establishments for coverage, contributing to my transition into the Food Correspondent role.
- **Column and Commercial Coordination:** Liaise with a columnist to coordinate copy and column requirements, while working with the marketing team on advertisement placements and advertorial production.
- **Digital Features and Publishing:** Pitch, research, and write online-first stories in collaboration with the digital team, developing original content that receives positive reader engagement.
- **Event Coordination:** Supported guest coordination for the Devi Awards, assisting with on-ground requirements and contributing to the smooth execution of the event.
- **Kolkata Editorial Production:** Managed copy editing, fact-checking, pagination, advertorials and booklets, coordinating with designers, editorial, and marketing teams. Streamlined workflows to move page completion from midnight to 8 pm and independently managed much of the anniversary edition's production.

Daily Thanthi

Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Sub-Editor

Oct 2023 - Oct 2024

- Curated and edited news content for DT Next's national and international pages, exercising editorial judgement in story selection, prioritisation and page composition while ensuring accuracy and adherence to publication deadlines.
- Assisted the editor with mast-page production, gaining exposure to the newspaper's front-page editorial workflow.
- Contributed features coverage of notable cultural events across the city, producing stories that generated strong readership and ranked among the most-viewed articles on the publication's internal platform

EARLIER EXPERIENCE

The Hindu

Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Intern

Jun 2022 - Jul 2022

- Researched and reported stories on Chennai's events and personalities for The Hindu's MetroPlus, publishing four articles, including a front-page lead story in its special Madras Day edition.

Ethiraj College for Women

Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Student Editor & Designer, Scrambler Magazine

Jul 2019 - Apr 2020

- Led a team of 12 student editors and designers to produce the annual literary magazine.
- Reviewed 350+ submissions, shortlisted 100 pieces for publication, and designed editorial layouts.

EDUCATION

Loyola College

Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Master of Arts (English)

Graduation Date: Apr 2023

Ethiraj College for Women

Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Bachelor of Arts (English)

Graduation Date: Apr 2021

SKILLS

Tools: Adobe InDesign, Canva, Quintype CMS, Google Workspace

Specialisms: Research, Editorial Coordination, Food and Travel Photography, Feature Writing, Story Ideation