

## Veganism: Saving The Environment and Agriculture

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### Introduction

Veganism has become a fad these days and these are some of the common questions which trigger our mind. So here are the answers to these questions which help us to rethink our way of life today.

### What is Veganism and who is a Vegan?

Veganism is a way of living which seeks to exclude, as far as is possible and practicable, all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose. Consciously not participating in any violent or cruel activities whether for animals, humans for all practise of refusing animal products like meat, milk, egg, animal skin, taking an ethical stand against all utilization of animal items. If we don't eat animals it is called dietary veganism. The person who follows this philosophy is a Vegan.

### A brief history

Veganism was practiced by humans long back but the term was coined by Donald Watson in November 1944, who was the founder of Vegan Society along with five other

vegetarian pioneers who met to discuss non-dairy lifestyles and diets and that led to the rise of the modern day vegan movement.

**Vegan Day**-November 1 is celebrated as Vegan day throughout the world spreading awareness about the way of life for strengthening the individual and encouraging ecological insurance just as the existence of creatures.

### **Is Veganism the perfect solution for the changing climate and ecological devastation? Is it the most effective way to protect mother Earth?**

Here are two takeaways from the journal Science,

- Meat and dairy give just 18% of our calories and 37% of our protein, yet go through 83% of our farmland.
- Without meat and dairy utilization, worldwide farmland use could be diminished by over 75% – a region comparable to the U.S and China, the European Union and Australia consolidated – and still can feed the world.



This study by Oxford's researchers produced a massive data set based on approximately 40,000 farms in 119 countries. It covered 40 food products representing 90% of all food consumption. It also looked at the full impact on these foods, from farm to fork, land use, emissions, fresh water use and water pollution-eutrophication and air pollution-acidification. The results, according to the researchers, were very convincing.

A vegan diet is probably the single biggest way to reduce your impact on planet Earth, not just greenhouse gases, but global acidification, eutrophication, land use and water use, said Oxford's Joseph Poore, who led the research. It is far bigger than cutting down on your flights or buying an electric car, he said, as these only cut greenhouse gas emissions.

### **Veganism Environment and Agriculture-**



According to the recent statistics and data collected here are some of the main reasons why veganism is good for the environment.

#### How veganism impacts the Environment?

- Animal Agriculture is one of the biggest causes of deforestation in the world. According to Global Forest Atlas-Soy cultivation is a major driver of deforestation in the Amazon basin. Seeds from the soybean plant provides high protein animal feed for livestock, and 80% of Amazon soy is destined for animal feed, smaller percentage are used for oil or eaten directly. Which has caused havoc in South America's Amazon rainforests, not just in Africa's Congo Basin and also in India's Himalayan forests.
- According to Soil Degradation in India-MDPI there are 46.7 billion domesticated animals in our country in 1.1 billion hectares of land which is 42 animals per hectare. When the sustainable threshold is only 5 animals per hectare. It is reported that 67% of our National Parks and 83% of our wildlife sanctuaries have fallen prey to overgrazing. It's obvious that because of cutting down so many forests which are home to thousands of wild animals and birds we are destroying the Earth's Biodiversity. Animal Agriculture has reported being the top cause of wildlife extinction.
- Water-There is a water shortage all over the world. However in reality India's annual water usage, domestic usage accounts for less than 5%.Crop production, maintaining land for grazing and animal agriculture account for 92.6% of water usage.1 litre milk=2941 litre of water

- Global Warming-Methane and its ill effects make drastic contributions, from respiratory and digestive systems of animals into the atmosphere. According to NASA, even single molecule of methane that enters the atmosphere holds up to 100 times more heat than a carbon dioxide molecule. So from India, 190 million cows, 135 million goats, 108 million buffaloes, 65 million sheep, and 11 million other domesticated animals contribute among the world's highest amount of methane.
- Pollution-The more amount of animal waste like urine and manure emits ammonia, nitrous oxide, hydrogen sulphide and other gases that are extremely harmful to humans. The antibiotics and pesticides filled water used for chicken production when let out into the surrounding land and water bodies, pollutes the crops and plants growing there. Wastewater from dairies and cheese industries contains dangerous chemicals like nitrogen and phosphorous that disrupts the aquatic ecosystems by causing oxygen depletion, leaving the fishes to suffocate to death. One of the major causes of Ganga River pollution is regarded to be animal agriculture. These are some of the ill effects based on various studies conducted as part of vegan studies.

### The Vegan Revolution In India



Plant based movements have gained much attraction with the outbreak of COVID 19, along with microgreens, kitchen garden, indoor gardening, veganism is also on trend though it's not a new concept which received a lot of limelight lately. Indian celebrities Sonam Kapoor, Virat Kohli, Amir Khan and many have major role in its burgeoning popularity. The taste, cost and the ingredients were a tough question at first eventually social media and YouTube channels got flooded with vegan lifestyles and recipes. The cashew cheese, stewed apples,



almond milk, soy milk, coconut milk, fresh greens gave a fabulous picture for 'in the pink of health'. Many hotel, restaurants and bake house has got the vegan menu now. Even Baskin Robbins have introduced vegan ice creams in India.

### **Is the future Vegan?**

Yes, Is the answer by many researchers world wide, Marco Springmann from Oxford University tells; By 2050 world population could approach 10 billion and around 60% more food could be needed to feed everyone. The environmental impacts of the food system are daunting. Which is responsible for the quarter of the greenhouse gas emission and uses about 70% of all freshwater resources and occupies about 40% of earth land surface. Food rate emission could increase by 50% by 2050 and fill up the total emission budget we have in order to avoid dangerous levels of climate change. Farmed animals are land hungry. Over 80% of the world's farmland is used for animal production. But produces only 18 % of the world's calories. We need to feed a cow about 10 kilograms of mostly grains for it to grow by one kilogram, for chicken three to four kilogram. So lot of food is wasted as feed for animals that we would then eat. Agricultural reforms may also happen shifting much attention to horticultural and cereal crops than fodder crops as of now being cultivated.

### **Conclusion**

Veganism, the philosophy which thinks about all lives, helps in expanding the boundaries of our own existence, something wonderful to go with an experimental pallet as a beginner eventually adding more beauty physically, mentally and spiritually. Interest in vegan food has been booming in the world. Growing animal feed means more land per calorie of food needed to produce beef than broccoli. A well balanced vegan diet, more varied with less calorie could save lives from many lifestyle diseases also. Which could make global economy healthier. Plant based meat could be the next step for the evolving agriculture in a long history of developments.