

The New Trend of Veganism

Christina Sandra Singh

Executive- Research and Development, CP Milk and Food products Pvt. Ltd (Gyan Dairy), Lucknow, U.P

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In early times, the human population relied on both vegetarian and non-vegetarian or animal-based food as a source of energy. However, this situation has changed in recent times. More people are switching from a non-vegetarian diet to a plant-based diet. Veganism can also be called vegetarianism and this term was reportedly coined in 1944. Although the term came into existence quite early, this shift in diet choice is not a rapid, but a gradual change. Many celebrities and famous people are turning vegan and adopting a different diet style leading to a huge influence on common consumers. This is working as a driving force behind the vegan trend in a huge section of society.

What is Veganism?

Veganism refers to the trend of consuming and feeding on only vegetarian food items and avoiding any type of food products obtained from live animals. It excludes any and every food product that can be obtained from animals like eggs, honey, milk, meat, and other related products. People who are more health conscious or environment friendly are following veganism more compared to the ones with different interests. More alternatives of food items produced from live animals are being manufactured on a large scale to prevent vegan consumers from missing out on non-vegetarian dishes and further promote veganism. The field of food innovation and new product development has led to the production of plant-based meat as an alternative to conventionally obtained meat and meat products. Similarly, Soy milk, manufactured using soybean as raw ingredients, is a fine example of an alternative to normal milk obtained from buffaloes and cows.

The Levels of Vegans-

Vegan people are divided into five levels depending on their conviction to eat only vegan food items and avoid the intake of even the smallest quantity of animal-based food items.

- **Level 1-** Vegans belonging to this category adopt vegan diet because they are health conscious, but they also believe in having a balanced diet. Environment safety might



not be their main concern related to animal-based food items. Vegans at this level might skip their food trend to enjoy food products from animal sources like milk chocolate or honey.

- **Level 2-** Vegans at this level choose vegan diet not only to gain health benefits, but also to save animals from being slaughtered and harmed in any way. They are environment friendly and are more committed to a vegan diet than level 1 people, but still may be tempted to purchase animal-based products like purses, clothes, and other items.
- **Level 3-** Vegans at this level are more confident of their choice and are determined to only depend on a plant-based diet and lifestyle. They not only strictly follow a pure vegetarian diet, but also avoid getting any regular animal-based product. Because of their experience, they can encourage vegans on lower levels. These people are outspoken and try to defend harm to animals and the environment.
- **Level 4-** People belonging to this level purchase, cook, and eat only vegan food products, or rather choose to eat from vegan restaurants. Their home and lifestyle contain only plant-based products without a trace of products of animal origin. They actively take part in protests against animal cruelty and harm.
- **Level 5-** Vegans at level 5 are stated as extreme vegans who go to the extreme ends to follow vegan culture. Veganism is like a religion to them and they follow it dutifully. They do not use accessories like make-up, food colorings, clothes, shoes, and related items containing some part of animal ingredients. They strictly say no to eggs, dairy products, seafood, honey, and other animal-derived foods.

Factors positively influencing Vegan food and food products-

Several factors can influence consumers to change their choice of food and adopt an eco-friendlier way of food consumption. These factors can play a vital role in spreading the trend of veganism and includes-

1. Ethical and moral mindset can be the biggest factor that influences the trend of veganism. People who wish to see no harm to animals and those who seek better environmental conditions and protection are more likely to turn vegan to support their beliefs.
2. Social influence can be another positive factor. Consumers tend to be easily persuaded by the latest trends in the society. They wish to try out what others are doing for experience. Most times, highly devoted vegans encourage others to adopt a vegan lifestyle.



3. More vegan food products in the market due to more emerging vegan start-ups is again an enticing factor leading to consumers trying out these food products and eventually turning vegan seeing its positive impacts.
4. Animal-derived food alternatives like plant-based meat and soy milk, tofu, soy, and nut-based cheese which taste quite similar to the original products aid consumers in gradually shifting to vegan diet consumption.

Benefits of this new trend of Veganism-

Some of the obvious benefits of a vegan lifestyle and following veganism strictly are as follows-

1. **Protection of animals and environment:** One of the major benefits of adopting veganism is the security and safety this trend provides to animals and the environment as a whole. For the production of meat and meat products and other animal-based products, several animals are harmed, killed, or their lives are put at risk and their numbers dwindle. This not only is inhumane but also ultimately affects our ecosystem on some level or another.
2. **Healthier in nature:** Some studies have illuminated that a plant-based diet can be healthier than animal-derived food or a non-vegetarian diet. Consuming non-vegetarian foods like meat products frequently can cause obesity, high blood pressure, cholesterol, and other health-related issues. On the other hand, a diet with ingredients from plant sources can prove to be a healthy alternative and help keep the consumer fit.
3. **Taste similar to non-vegetarian dishes:** With the increasing popularity of veganism, the new trend of plant-based meat and meat products also came into existence. These carefully prepared alternatives look and taste quite similar to the non-vegetarian food they are representing. This provides some amount of satisfaction and pleasure to the newly turned vegans who earlier enjoyed feeding on other types of diets.
4. **Boon for the allergic consumers:** Some people show allergic responses after consuming animal-based products like honey, cotton cheese, fish, and milk. For these consumers, plant-based substitutes like soy milk, almond milk, chia seeds, flax seeds, and tofu are suitable and safe for consumption

Drawbacks of Veganism-

Along with some benefits, there are some estimated disadvantages of adopting veganism which might affect the consumers. These demerits are as follows-

- 1. Expensive:** Plant-based substitutes for meat and other animal-derived products and an overall vegan diet on a regular basis can be quite expensive and might take a toll on the budget for food. People belonging to middle-class financial backgrounds might face problems in adopting to total vegan lifestyle.
- 2. Lack of nutrients:** A vegan diet may lack in (or provide a lesser quantity of) some essential nutrients present in animal-derived food products like essential fatty acids, amino acids, vitamin B12, Creatine, and other nutrients which can be one of the drawbacks of depending on vegan food items.
- 3. Giving up on taste:** Many non-vegetarians or regular consumers of animal-obtained food products love the taste and overall eating experience of these foods. Giving up on their desired flavour and texture (which might not be present or less available in the alternative vegan foods) can be one of the major drawbacks of veganism for them.
- 4. Difficulty in switching:** Some of the consumers with the habit of including at least one or more non-vegetarian food elements in their regular diet can face great difficulty in leaving their previous choice of food and totally depending upon vegan food products. They cannot switch to their earlier food choices if they wish to be a pure vegan.

Conclusion-

Vegan food consumption can lead to various essential advantages, especially animal protection, but some people can also face difficulties associated with this new trend. Consumers can intake nutrients via both vegan and non-vegetarian diets, but the healthy nature of both categories of food items is still a topic of debate. In the end, the decision remains in the hands of consumers, whether they choose Veganism or not.