

MOVE TOWARDS ETHICAL CONSUMPTION- A REFLECTION OF MORAL RESPONSIBILITY OR DISTINCTION?

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ABSTRACT

Food habits have been understood as a site of social distinction for a long period of time. There have been numerous trends/fads associated with food over the years which have had significant impact on the food choices of people. Ethical consumption is one such trend which has provided consumers an avenue for expressing an alternative style of life, identity, cultural values and class distinction. The study employed qualitative methods to investigate the motives and concerns of ethical food consumers from two organic restaurants and two organic food stores in Chandigarh. The paper focuses on whether people indulge in ethical consumption as morally conscious beings or they use it as a marker of social status and distinction. The impact of Covid - 19 on the consumption of ethical products was also observed. The results reveal the primary motive for consuming ethical food products is health and food safety concerns which has further increased after covid-19. The concern for environment and welfare of animals ranked low for the consumers while opting for ethical products which shows that moral responsibility was not of paramount importance. Dining and shopping at organic restaurants and grocery stores was more a marker of distinction and sophistication.

KEYWORDS: *Ethical Consumption, Organic Food, Fair Trade, Distinction, Moral Responsibility.*

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