

India Unveils First Sweet Potato-Carrot Vegan Cheddar, Thanks to 71-Year-Old Food Scientist

In a significant stride for India's burgeoning plant-based food sector, Dr. Chaitanya Hoskote, a 71-year-old food technologist and professor at DY Patil College, Navi Mumbai, has successfully developed the country's first Cheddar-style vegan cheese. What makes this innovation truly remarkable is its primary ingredients: **locally sourced sweet potato and carrot**. This groundbreaking product is set to transform the landscape of dairy alternatives for Indian consumers, particularly those who are lactose intolerant or adhere to a vegan lifestyle.

Dr. Hoskote, an alumnus of CFTRI Mysuru, embarked on this journey with a clear vision: to create an affordable, indigenous plant-based cheese that doesn't rely on expensive nuts like almonds or cashews, which dominate the Western vegan cheese market. "I didn't want to replicate almond- or cashew-based cheese — they're costly and elitist. India needs innovation grounded in its soil," he emphasized. The use of sweet potatoes and carrots not only makes the cheese highly nutritious, packed with fiber and vitamins, but also gives it a natural Cheddar-like hue without the need for artificial colorants. Despite facing numerous setbacks, Dr. Hoskote's persistence paid off, proving that "every failed batch brought me closer."

This innovative cheese is a flagship product of **Sattvedik LLP**, a vegan foods company Dr. Hoskote co-founded with his former MSc students. Sattvedik's portfolio also includes vegan curd, buttermilk, and shrikhand, all crafted from enzymatically extracted plant milks. The company prides itself on a **near-zero-waste production model**, transforming leftover filtrates into other valuable products like cookies, spreads, and beverages.

India's plant-based dairy market is on a rapid growth trajectory, projected to reach ₹2,000 crore soon with over a 30% CAGR, according to CII data. However, Dr. Hoskote points out the existing awareness gap. "Most people know paneer, not cheese — and even fewer know there's vegan cheese made in India," he noted.

Currently, Sattvedik supplies its products to B2B clients, including premium cafés like Barista, and is in discussions for exports to Southeast Asia, where demand for affordable vegan cheese is soaring. With imported plant-based cheese accounting for an annual ₹8–10 crore in Mumbai alone, Dr. Hoskote believes India can become a leader in this space by matching quality at half the price.

Looking ahead, Dr. Hoskote's innovations don't stop here. He is now focused on developing a plant-based Mozzarella to make vegan pizzas accessible and affordable for everyone. "No one should have to pay ₹300 for a pizza. I want to bring it down to ₹50," he stated, highlighting his commitment to democratizing clean and ethical food.

As veganism gains momentum and awareness about lactose intolerance grows, Dr. Hoskote's pioneering work is remarkably timely. His dedication to sustainability, affordability, and local innovation serves as an inspiring blueprint for the future of food technology in India. As he aptly puts it, "Science doesn't end with age. If it's helping the planet and people, it's worth every effort."

Reference - <https://agronfoodprocessing.com/indias-first-sweet-potato-carrot-cheddar-cheese-unveiled-by-71-year-old-food-scientist/>