

VEGETARIANISM TO VEGANISM: AWARENESS, MOTIVES AND STRUGGLES FACED BY VEGETARIANS' IN TAMILNADU

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ABSTRACT: Today with the development of lifestyle and technology, people are more concerned about their health and nutrition. The individual's likelihood, income level, education level, health conditions and some other factors play a major role in transition to a particular diet. Vegan diet is one which gained more popularity in western countries. But in the last few years, there was a remarkable rise in Indian adaptations of Western style veganism. This research is a minor attempt to seek out the awareness level about veganism among People in Tamilnadu and analyze the factors that make them to adapt veganism and difficulties that stop them from choosing veganism. This paper also intensifies the perceptions and views on veganism among people in Tamilnadu. This paper gives an interpreted status of veganism and its prevalence in Tamilnadu which will be helpful for future works.

Keywords: Veganism, Awareness level, perception, difficulties

INTRODUCTION

Food is essential for survival for all living organisms in the world. From historical times to modern era, the attitudes and perceptions towards food eating differs from people to people. Today, the people in India are attracted by consumer-driven western lifestyle including western style junk food. Attempt to turn them back to traditional lifestyles have not made much progress. But in the last few years, there was a remarkable rise in Indian adaptations of Western style veganism.

Veganism is currently defined as living that attempts to exclude all forms of animal exploitation and cruelty, be it from food, clothing or the other purpose. People who follow veganism are called as Vegans. The term "vegan" was coined in 1944 by Donald Watson. The prevalence of Veganism is less, which reported only 2% in the United States and less than 1% in Germany (Suyasha Gupta, 2016). The food choices and dietary patterns stem from complex interplay between biological, sociological, nutritional and psychological factors. There are numerous motives and barrier factors like socialization, environmental concerns, stereotypes and health benefits for adaptations of veganism.

OBJECTIVES

- To find out the level of awareness about veganism among Vegetarians' in Tamilnadu.
- To find out the reasons which make Vegetarians' in Tamilnadu change to veganism.
- To find out the difficulties faced by Vegetarians' in Tamilnadu choosing veganism as a way of life.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

- **H₁**- There is no association between level of education and awareness on the term "Vegan"

METHODOLOGY

In this study, quantitative method of research approach has been utilized for collection of data. Primary data was collected from individual respondents through the questionnaire. Secondary data were obtained from research articles and research papers from authorized journals. Snow ball sampling method was used for this research. About 100 Vegetarian respondents in Tamilnadu covering districts like Salem, Erode, Coimbatore, Chennai, Tiruppur, Karur and Dindugal are considered for this survey. The survey was conducted in an online platform i.e., google forms. The questionnaire mainly focusses on questions like awareness on veganism, their willingness, motives and struggles to switch to veganism. The numerical results obtained from research has been analyzed and interpreted using SPSS Software.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Details of the respondents

The participants were 70% female and 30% male. The respondents were classified into 4 different age groups. Majority of them fall into the category of 22-25 years old (45%) and others fall into the category of 26-40 years old (17%), 41-55 years old (29%) and above 55 years old (9%). In terms of educational qualification, 45% are undergraduates, 36% are postgraduates, 7% are diploma, 8% are higher secondary, 3% are high school and 1% doctorate.

Table 1: Awareness about veganism in Tamilnadu

S.No	Particulars	Aware	Not Aware
1.	Awareness on term “vegan”	86%	14%
2.	Awareness on meaning of Veganism	80%	20%
3.	Awareness on vegan symbol	65%	35%
4.	Awareness on vegan products	49%	51%

As per the survey, Table 1 shows that 86% respondents are aware of the term “Vegan”. About 80% respondents are well aware that veganism is not eating animal derived foods and 65% respondents identified the correct vegan symbol. About 49% respondents have identified vegan products available in the market.

Table 2: Comparison between Awareness level and Education

		Are you aware of the term “Vegan”?		Total
		No	Yes	
Educational Qualification	Diploma	2	5	7
	Doctorate	0	1	1
	High School	2	1	3
	Higher Secondary	2	6	8
	Postgraduate	2	34	36
	Undergraduate	6	39	45
Total		14	86	100

Table 2 shows that among 100 respondents, 39% undergraduates and 34% post graduates are aware of the term Vegan. Totally 86% respondents were aware of veganism. People who are not graduates are less aware of Veganism.

Table 3: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.261 ^a	5	.046
Likelihood Ratio	9.012	5	.109
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 6 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 14.

Interpretation: The Pearson chi square’s p-value 0.046 is less than 0.05 and thereby rejecting the hypothesis. Thus hypothesis (H_1) that there is no association between level of education and awareness on the term “Vegan” is rejected.

Table 4: Respondents opinions about Vegan diet

S.No	Particulars	Yes	No	May be
1.	Do you think following vegan diet for a month is easy?	52%	48%	--
2.	Would you like to experience vegan diet on trial bases?	59%	9%	32%
3.	If price is less and availability is more, would you follow a regular vegan diet?	55%	14%	31%
4.	Would you like to change your diet practices?	17%	55%	28%
5.	Would you choose vegan diet for weight loss?	42%	58%	--
6.	Do you think vegan diet is healthy and nutritious?	66%	3%	31%
7.	Do you think following vegan diet is affordable to you?	70%	30%	--
8.	Do you think veganism will improve the morality and ethics of life?	40%	10%	50%

Table 4 shows that 52% respondents thought vegan diet is easy to follow for a month. About 59% respondents were accepting to experience vegan diet on trial basis. About 55% respondents were ready to follow complete vegan diet if price is less and availability of vegan products is more.

As per the opinion of respondents, 17% liked to change their diet practices and 55% unlike to change their diet practices. Only 42% respondents agreed that they would choose vegan diet for weight loss. About 66% respondents thought vegan diet is healthy and nutritious. About 70% respondents consider following vegan diet is affordable to them. About 40% respondents believe veganism gives more morality and ethics to life.

Motivation to follow Vegan diet

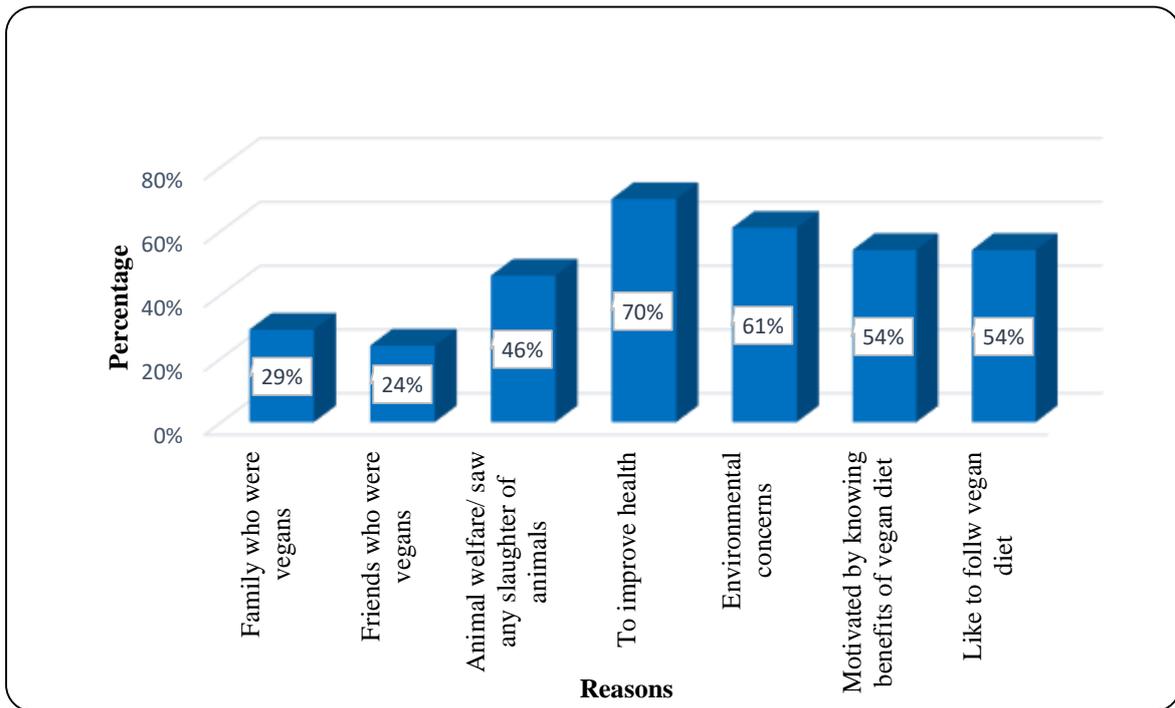


Figure 1: Important reasons motivating respondents to become vegan

Interpretation: Figure 1 analyzed all possible reasons for people to become vegan. As per respondents, to improve health and environmental concerns are the two major driving reasons to become vegan.

Struggles faced by Respondents to become Vegan

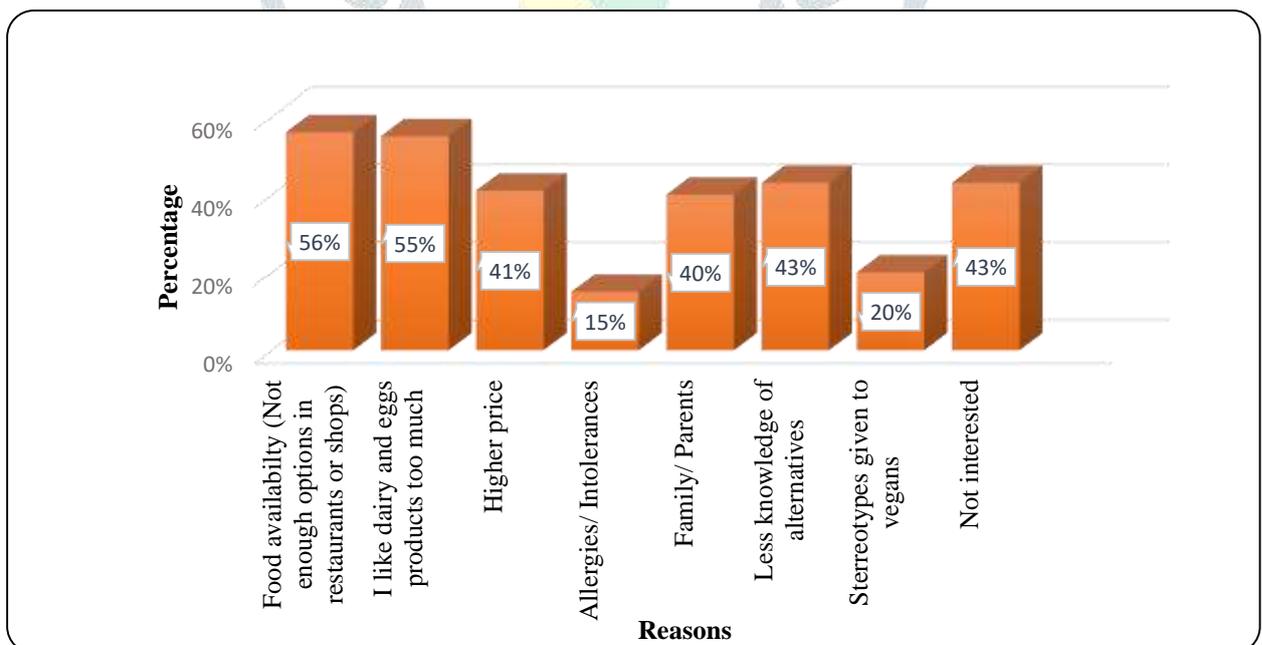


Figure 2: Important reasons stopping respondents to become vegan

Interpretation: As per respondents, the most important struggle was not enough availability of Vegan food and its products.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

As per the research, the awareness level about veganism in terms of word, meaning and symbol was high among Vegetarians in Tamilnadu. Undergraduates and Post graduates are more aware of veganism and respondents possessing high school education are less aware of veganism. It is concluded that there is an association between level of education and awareness on veganism in Tamilnadu. Respondents in the present study were hesitant to change their current diet practice to veganism because of unavailability of adequate vegan products and vegan restaurants in the market. Most of the respondents were found to be motivated towards veganism due to the learnings from vegan diet followed by others, environmental concerns, improved health benefits etc., The major reasons stopping Vegetarians in choosing vegan diet are higher likelihood towards dairy and egg products, lesser knowledge on usage of vegan products and lack of varieties and availability of vegan products in the market.

CONCLUSION

There are several pros and cons on switching to veganism. In order to improvise vegan life style in Tamilnadu the following points should be considered by future researchers and marketers.

- 1) Proper education and communication about veganism.
- 2) The researchers involved in the development of vegan products should focus more on variety.

Veganism will have a significant development in future if difficulties are reduced and motivations are increased. Several NGO's and government organizations may hand together for betterment of people and country wellness by promoting veganism in upcoming years.

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