



UNDERSTANDING AND ADOPTING A VEGAN DIET

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ABSTRACT:

A well-planned vegan diet is a healthy way to meet nutritional needs. Only plant-based items are allowed in vegan diets. Veganism is the practice of avoiding the consumption of animal products, notably in the diet, as well as a philosophy that rejects the status of animals as commodities. Vegans are those who adhere to the vegan diet or philosophy. Vegan diets high in plant-based foods have been linked to lower LDL cholesterol, better blood glucose, and lower blood pressure, according to research. Vitamin B12, calcium, iron, and specific omega-3 fatty acids are among the nutrients that vegans should be aware of. Veganism became increasingly popular in the 2010s.

Keywords : *Veganism, Health benefits, Healthy Food.*

INTRODUCTION:

There are numerous types of vegetarianism that can be distinguished. Dietary vegans, usually referred to as "strict vegetarians," abstain from eating meat, eggs, dairy products, and other animal-derived goods. An ethical vegan is someone who not only eats a plant-based diet but also applies the idea to other aspects of their lives, opposes the use of animals for any purpose, and attempts to avoid all forms of cruelty and exploitation of animals, including humans. Another phrase is "environmental veganism," which refers to the avoidance of animal products based on the belief that industrial animal raising is unsustainable and harmful to the environment. Vegan and vegetarian diets appear to be popular, however evidence suggests that some people have been eating a plant-based or vegetarian diet for generations. The term "vegan" was not coined until 1944, nevertheless. Vegans, on the other hand, have chosen to avoid all animal-based meals. Vegan apparel, home goods, and personal care products are popular choices. The majority of vegans do so because they believe it would improve their health or they want to support

animal rights. Vegan diets are made up of only plant-based foods. This type of diet includes fruits, vegetables, soy, legumes, nuts and nut butters, plant-based dairy alternatives, sprouted or fermented plant foods and whole grains. Vegan diets don't

include animal foods like eggs, dairy, meat, poultry or seafood. They also are devoid of animal byproducts such as honey (made by bees) and lesser-known animal-based ingredients like whey, casein, lactose, egg white albumen, gelatin, carmine, shellac, animal-derived vitamin D3 and fish-derived omega-3 fatty acids.

Definition of Vegan Diet :

Donald Watson and his then future wife Dorothy Morgan invented the term "vegan" in 1944. It was developed from the terms 'Allavega' and 'All Vegan,' which were previously used and recommended by founding members and future officers George A. Henderson and his wife Fay, the latter of whom produced the first vegan recipe book. Vegans abstained from "eggs, honey; and animals' milk, butter, and cheese" at first, but by May 1945, they were specifically abstaining from "eggs, honey; and animals' milk, butter, and cheese." It has been described as "the

belief that man should exist without exploiting animals'' by the Society since 1951.

Aim and Objectives :Aim :

In this study a survey was conducted to know about the understanding of veganism among the general public and to know their views on adopting it as a lifestyle.

Objectives :

1. To increase awareness about the benefits of a vegan diet
2. To let the general public know some of the drawbacks of veganism
3. To avoid unhealthy junk food
4. To maintain healthy food habits and a lifestyle

METHODOLOGY :

The goal of this project is to raise awareness of veganism, understand the obstacles that vegans encounter, and learn how veganism is promoted among the general community aged 17 to 77. Number of participants in the survey was 75. The primary data was collected by the self-designed questionnaire. The responses were recorded and results were interpreted. The study was conducted on the basis of sample survey via Google Forms.

Types of Veganism

Religious Veganism : Veganism is promoted by several religious streams, sometimes for ethical or environmental reasons. Jewish veganism and Jain veganism have grown in popularity in the twenty-first century, according to experts. Veganism is also recommended or mandated by several Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist vegetarianisms. "

Environmental Veganism : Environmental vegans are concerned with conservation

and reject the consumption of animal products based on the belief that fishing, hunting, trapping, and farming, particularly factory farming, are unsustainable. According to a study published in 2022, a change to plant-based diets

and the rewilding of farms might remove 100 billion tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by the end of the century for high-income countries alone. The term "double climate dividend" was coined by the researchers to explain the impact of rewilding after a diet change. The researchers do point out, however, that "We don't have to be strict about it; simply reducing animal consumption would be beneficial. Even if half of the population in wealthier countries reduced their use of animal products by half, there would still be a significant improvement in environmental and public health outcomes ".**Veganism in India:**

For many generations, India may legitimately claim to be a vegetarian-dominated country. Vegetarianism has traditionally been linked to religion in this country, particularly among Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains. Today, the consumer-driven western lifestyle, which includes western style, has tempted many young people away from their religion. Attempts to reintroduce them to traditional lifestyles have largely failed; nonetheless, there has been a noticeable increase in Indian adoption of western-style veganism in recent years, particularly among young people. Lacto-Vegetarian Societies have been in India for a long time, and they represented the International Vegetarian Union (IVU) for 50 years until 2006. Traditionally, these organisations worked within the Hindu and other smaller vegetarian communities, providing essential assistance to existing vegetarians and encouraging additional Hindus to become vegetarians. According to a survey, the number of vegans has risen from 2,000 to 20,000 since 2006.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

- According to the survey, the conclusion is that almost 84% of the people who undertook the survey are aware of vegan diets and their benefits. It can be successfully concluded that a large chunk of the Indian population is quite

aware of vegan diet.

- In order to understand the general trend of consumption of the type of food of the general population, questions were included in the google form. It helped to understand how the volunteers go about their daily food habits and what are the most commonly consumed food products among the population. It was observed that more than 90% of the people who took the test consume foods like fruits, vegetables, caffeinated drinks, and dairy products. Nuts, chicken, sweets, soft drinks and eggs were among the other highly consumed food categories by people.

- From the survey, the conclusion was that almost 62% of people have never tried or tested vegan diet. This can be due to multiple reasons like unawareness about veganism and societal norms etc. while 26.7% of people have said that they have tried a vegan diet. 12% are not sure whether they have successfully tried a vegan diet.

- It can be said that a huge chunk of the population, 86.7% to be precise, are still sceptical about veganism and prefer a non-vegan diet over a vegan diet. There can be multiple reasons for this like not being familiar with a vegan diet, or its expensive, sometimes inaccessible etc.

- People who followed a vegan diet have confessed that they did not face any such major difficulty while following a vegan diet. While those who did face them, mentioned problems like lesser choices and unavailability of resources etc.

- It is observed that when people change their eating habits, they may face various health issues like increased blood sugar levels or heart related issues. On stumbling upon the above question, 50% of the population agreed that no adverse effects were observed on their health by them. Protein deficiency, B₁₂ deficiency was observed by 12% of people, 9.3% of people complained

about Iron and vitamin D deficiency. While 10.7% of people said that they dealt with eating disorders.

- Since a part of the population sensed some health problems regarding vegan diet, it was important to understand whether or not they felt consumption of meat improved their health, and it turns out that 9.3% of that population feels that consumption of meat did improve their condition. 16% disagree and say that consumption of meat did not have any positive effect on their health. And 13.3% are still not sure if it did improve their health or not.

- Vegan diet consists of many restrictions on consumption of foods. Even though a lot of vegan alternatives are available, sometimes they are expensive and inaccessible. Multivitamins, lentils, fortified non-dairy products were among the top products that people consumed while following a vegan diet. People also consumed Vitamin D and Vitamin B₁₂ supplements to enhance their diet.

- Only 9.3% people were interested in resuming a vegan diet and a large population was never going to resume or adopt to a vegan diet.

- Veganism is often associated with social causes and societal norms. Causes like Animal protection and concern for the environment are some of the prime reasons for people to follow a vegan diet and stick with it. 37% of people voted for animal protection as the main cause for them to follow a vegan diet. While 29% voted environmental concerns as the main reason. Vegan diet is also often recommended by doctors to their patients as a precautionary step for

various health issues, hence some people (33.3%) also sighted health issues as one of the prime reasons for them following vegan diet.

- When people undertake a vegan diet, it is often observed that they slack off and do not continue it for a long period of time and hence

their objective is lost. People who start a vegan diet often do it for a purpose, but when the purpose is accomplished, they tend to discontinue it.

Recommendations for a Healthy Vegan Diet :

Vegans should consume vitamin B₁₂ enriched foods, such as fortified soy and rice beverages, certain morning cereals and meat analogues, and B₁₂ fortified nutritional yeast, on a regular basis to avoid B₁₂ deficiency, or take a daily vitamin B₁₂ supplement. Active vitamin B₁₂ cannot be found in fermented soy products, green vegetables, or seaweed. There is no large amount of active vitamin B₁₂ in unfortified plant foods.

Calcium-fortified plant foods, in addition to typical calcium sources, should be consumed on a regular basis to guarantee adequate calcium in the vegan diet (green leafy vegetables, tofu, tahini). Ready-to-eat cereals, calcium-fortified soy and rice beverages, calcium-fortified orange and apple juices, and other beverages are among the calcium-fortified foods. Calcium carbonate in soy beverages and calcium citrate malate in apple or orange juice have bioavailability similar to that of calcium in milk. The calcium bioavailability of tricalcium phosphate-fortified soy milk was found to be somewhat lower than that of cow milk.

Vegans must take vitamin D-fortified foods such as soy milk, rice milk, orange juice, breakfast cereals, and vitamin D-fortified margarines on a regular basis to maintain adequate vitamin D levels, especially during the winter months. In the absence of fortified foods, a daily vitamin D dose of 5–10 g would be required. Vegans over the age of 65 may find the supplement appealing.

Ground flaxseed, walnuts, canola oil, soy products, and hemp seed-based beverages are all natural sources of the n-3 fatty acid ALA, which vegans should consume on a daily basis. Vegans should also eat items supplemented with DHA, a long-chain n-3 fatty acid, such as soy milks and cereal bars. DHA-rich microalgae

supplements might be beneficial to those with higher long-chain n-3 fatty acid requirements, such as pregnant and breastfeeding mothers. Due to the high phytate content in a normal vegan diet, it is critical for vegans to consume foods high in zinc, such as whole grains, legumes, and soy products, in order to meet their zinc requirements. Vegans who consume fortified ready-to-eat cereals and other zinc-enriched foods may also benefit.

CONCLUSION:

Even if we practice Ayurveda, Indian society is still unable to embrace a vegan diet. With organisations like PETA in the culture, the situation has changed, and more and more individuals are becoming aware of Veganism and being inspired to pursue this path. There has been continual debate about whether this practice is healthy or not, and there are some benefits and drawbacks to it. One big disadvantage is the lack of some fundamental dietary demands for the human body. An advantage is that there will be no cruelty towards animals, and there will be no health difficulties such as lactose intolerance, gluten-free meals, and so on. There is a need to raise awareness about how to effectively pursue this lifestyle. Some blogs provide information on this, but only a few of them are from India, and others fail to meet the needs of Indian consumers, therefore they are of little use to Indians. Various food bloggers provide recipes, but often involve foreign ingredients or procedures that are difficult for everyone to follow, making Vegan items more expensive. Because of the limited number of shops that sell vegan food, and because demand is gradually expanding, some specialised outlets may emerge. Vegan options are available on a distinct or dedicated menu at various establishments.

In final words we can agree that Vegan diet is healthy if followed properly and its demand and awareness is increasing. General public needs to

be sensitised about the concept so that they don't make fun of the ones following it. This can be done if the subject is made interesting. However, more research is needed to determine whether vegan diet was a direct cause of those benefits.

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