

Beyond Ethics: A Study of Attitudes Towards Animal Cruelty Among Jain Vegans and Non-Jain Vegans

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Abstract

This research examined the motivations for the shift towards veganism, the practice of refraining from consuming or utilising animal products in the diet, amongst adherents of Jainism. As a religion, Jainism advocates strict non-violence and has specific injunctions against meat-eating and a variety of other plant products, but dairy products are permitted. This study investigated Jain vegan attitudes' particularly towards issues of animal cruelty since a prime motivator for the contemporary vegan movement is the exploitation in the dairy industry. It sought to compare attitudes of Jain vegans with other self-identified (non-Jain) vegans. The study drew upon in-depth telephonic interviews with thirteen vegans from all over India and abroad. The interview findings have been divided into four themes: Exploitation in the Dairy Industry; Animal Advocacy: a Lifestyle; Ethical concern; and Everyday Veganism: Challenges. The study indicates that exploitation in the dairy industry was the primary motivator for most participants to adopt veganism. Participants from both Jain vegan and non-Jain vegan communities view veganism as a lifestyle change rather than a change in dietary preferences. 90% of participants avoid using products – leather, silk clothing, etc. – derived from animals. The participants shared their challenges and experiences while transitioning to veganism. Participants from both groups faced similar challenges while adopting a vegan lifestyle. My study suggests that Jain and non-Jain vegans seem to be united in their attitudes toward

minimising animal cruelty and exploitation. Whilst there are a few studies on the shift to veganism amongst Jains based abroad, this exploratory study is the first to query Jain vegans based in India. It contributes to the broader discussion around animal welfare and ethical dietary choices animating the concerns of many in the subcontinent.

Keywords: animal cruelty, dairy industry, ethics, Jainism, meat industry, vegan

Introduction

Veganism is a worldwide movement that advocates refraining from consuming or utilising animal products, particularly in the diet. It is a philosophy that condemns exploiting animals as a commodity (Guha & Gupta, n.d.). According to Statista, 9% of the Indian population identified as vegan in 2021, indicating that the movement has increasingly caught the attention of many Indians. This makes India one of the countries with the largest share of non-meat eaters in the world (Wunsch, 2023). Several Indians identify themselves as vegetarians. Also, other animal products like honey are not taboo. The adherence to a vegetarian diet follows mainly from religious injunctions against meat-eating in several Indian religions. However, some scholars maintain that meat was a permitted food, at least in Hinduism and Buddhism, at some point (Rampal, 2022).

Nevertheless, vegetarianism has been integral to Jainism, which traces its origins to the non-violent philosophy (*ahimsa*) espoused by Vardhamana Mahavir and other religious leaders from 500 CE. Jains, even today, are overwhelmingly vegetarian since research indicates that roughly 9 in 10 Indian Jains identify as vegetarian (Starr, 2021). Known all over the world for their stringent dietary choices, many Jains are now turning vegan, eschewing all animal-based products in their diet. The Jainism studies scholar Anne Vallely argues that Jain veganism aligns with the concerns of the broader transnational vegan movement, which also focuses on the well-being of livestock (2004).

Boredom and Creativity

The key objective of this qualitative investigation was to examine the perspectives of Jain vegans and non-Jain vegans and identify if there were any disparities in their motivations and attitudes toward adopting a vegan lifestyle.

I reached out to the members of the VeganFirst city-based WhatsApp groups, the links to which can be found on the VeganFirst Instagram linktree. I contacted 20 members of the VeganFirst group, and 13 responded. All participants in this study were recruited via WhatsApp and were over the age of 18. There were no specific inclusion criteria for participants only that they should be Indian and adults. They were all interviewed between August and September 2023. Advocating for animal welfare while delving into animal cruelty taxed me emotionally and took a psychological toll on me. To avoid burnout inflicted by watching videos and documentaries which my respondents referred to, I took a break between my interviews.

The interviews were conducted via telephone. With the approval of the participants, the interviews were audio-recorded. A semi-structured interview approach was used to carry on conversations to elicit rich data for qualitative analysis. I structured the interview to focus on the research question. I probed the respondents with follow-up questions to understand the respondents better. I paraphrased the participant's responses after every response to avoid misdirection and misunderstandings. Open-ended questions were used throughout the interviews to encourage participants to talk freely and respond openly to queries. Asking participants questions such as: "What motivated this transition?" allowed them to share their own experiences and opinions. Such questions helped me identify the fundamental reasons behind their choice to adopt a vegan lifestyle.

To improve the credibility of the study findings, the experiences of participants were explored in depth during interviews that lasted approximately 45 minutes. The audio recordings were carefully transcribed verbatim in a Microsoft Word document. In this investigation, participant identification was facilitated through the utilisation of labels (e.g., participant 1). All participants engaged in the study of their own volition, volunteering their participation.

I took the consent of all the participants through a consent form. After taking their consent, I briefed them about the goal of the study and the intended use of the participant data. If participants requested anonymity, I made sure that their identities would remain obscured. Participants are not referred to by their names in this paper. The study was reviewed by the department-level ethics committee.

During the initial interviews, I was unsure of my interviewing skills, and therefore I requested my interviewees to provide suggestions and feedback on the interview process. This feedback helped me refine the wording of the questions to ensure the flow of the interview. These adjustments based on feedback improved the quality of the interviews. I also took guidelines from the *SAGE Handbook for Interview Research* (Gubrium et al., 2012).

The study included individuals with varying lifestyle preferences before transitioning into a vegan lifestyle. Among the participants, three followed a non-vegetarian lifestyle, one followed

an ovo-lacto vegetarian lifestyle, and nine transitioned from a vegetarian lifestyle to a vegan lifestyle. One of the participants was an 18-year-old transitioning Jain vegan. The participant has been avoiding dairy products for several weeks although has been unable to completely eliminate it. As a Jain, she consumes a vegetarian diet and eliminates root vegetables

The Trans-National Vegan Movement and Jainism-Intersections and Overlaps

There is a synthesis between Jainism's philosophy of non-violence and the trans-national vegan movement based on ethical and theoretical considerations surrounding animal welfare. This concoction provides a holistic view, particularly in advocating for a compassionate way of living.

The Vegan Society was co-founded by Donald Watson, who coined the concept of "veganism". Today, it encompasses more than just dietary preferences (Dutkiewicz & Dickstein, 2021). According to the UK Vegan Society, a vegan is an individual who makes a conscious choice to lead a life that avoids cruelty to animals, with a focus on the welfare of animals, people, and the environment. Vegans consume a plant-based diet and avoid any products obtained from animals, such as meat, milk, eggs, and honey. A vegan lifestyle also includes avoiding apparel made of materials derived from animals, such as leather, wool, and silk. Vegans do so, primarily due to moral considerations concerning the rights and welfare of animals and also for health and environmental concerns. Online surveys and studies demonstrate that veganism has become increasingly accepted in recent years. Millennials are anticipated to be an important catalyst for the trend's growth (Parker, Graf, & Igielnik, 2019).

Greenebaum (2012) identified the following motivations within the vegan community for adopting a vegan diet:

1. Health: These individuals adopt a plant-based diet primarily for health reasons, aiming to lose weight or improve their physical well-being.
2. Environmental Concerns: These individuals are primarily concerned with the environmental impact of the meat industry. They may choose leather products over polyvinyl chloride (PVC) materials.
3. Ethics: These individuals adopt a vegan diet for moral, ethical, and political reasons. Their dietary choice is just one aspect of a broader lifestyle built upon a philosophy of animal rights.

These distinctions within the vegan community are not merely descriptive but carry significant value-based implications. According to Greenebaum (2012), certain influential figures in the vegan movement endorse individuals who make efforts to remove animal-based foods from their diets, regardless of their underlying motivations, as long as they contribute to reducing animal suffering. Conversely, other leaders within the vegan movement critique those who adopt a

purely dietary approach to veganism without considering its broader political and ethical implications. They argue that veganism should be intrinsically linked to animal rights and advocate for its preservation as a form of revolutionary politics. Advocates of animal rights not only condemn animal slaughter but also the various forms of harm that precede it, especially in the dairy industry. It stems from the practice of killing milch cows after they stop lactating. This concern for animal well-being has led to shifts in dietary choices and marketing, with some individuals moving from vegetarianism to veganism as only the latter completely avoids direct animal use (Miller & Dickstein, 2021).

Jainism, one of the oldest and toughest faiths in the world, is largely found in India, predominantly in western India. The Jain population in India is estimated to be around 4.5 million, or 0.4% of the total population (Starr, 2021). Western scholars have occasionally linked it with Buddhism and Hinduism (Grim & Tucker, 1994). The primary responsibility of the Jain community is to practise *ahimsa*, which is one of the toughest vows to adhere to. This Sanskrit term, which translates to ‘non-injury,’ not only encompasses non-violence in actions but also in speech and thought. It entails refraining from causing harm to others through words, deeds, or thoughts (Nirmala & Priya, 2020)

The last great teacher of Jainism was Vardhamana, also known as Mahavira. Bhagwan Mahavir’s message in the Acharanga Sutra is explicit: “All living, sentient beings, breathing or not, should not be killed, subjected to violence, abused, tormented, or driven away.” (Jain, 2016). Ahimsa in Jainism is more than just refraining from physical or social violence. It is a process of withdrawal and renunciation where Jains aim to protect themselves from the violence in the external world to prevent the accumulation of *karma*. Ahimsa goes beyond surface-level non-violence; it involves a deep connection with mental processes, aiming to eradicate *karma*, break free from the cycle of *samsara* (reincarnation), and attain *moksha* (liberation). The central belief of *ahimsa* revolves around the idea that every living entity possesses a soul caught in the cycle of *samsara*, marked by an endless journey of death and rebirth. The ultimate goal for every living being is to transcend this cycle and achieve *moksha*, a goal marked not by pleasure but by facing hardship and the inherent violence known as *himsa* (Gopalan, 1973).

James Laidlaw (1995), in “*Riches and Renunciation: Religion, Economy, and Society*,” described the traditional interpretation of *Ahimsa* in Jainism as the “ethic of quarantine.” He argued that it is impossible to stop the relentless cycle of death and rebirth; the most one can do is briefly delay it. These practices, fundamental to Jain non-violence, don’t aim to reduce deaths or preserve life in the conventional sense (Craig, 2013). Essentially, the traditional Jain perspective on nonviolence isn’t about making the world better but serves as a reminder that the external world can be harsh, and one should avoid getting entangled in it (Gopalan, 1973).

Permissible and Non-Permissible Food in Jainism

In the Jain theory (Sen et al., 2014), there are lifeless things and *jivas* (souls), the living things. *Jivas* are classified according to the number of senses they possess:

1. One Sense- Touch
2. Two Senses- Touch and Taste
3. Three Senses- Touch, Taste and Smell
4. Four Senses- Touch, Taste, Smell and Sight
5. Five Senses- Touch, Taste, Smell, Sight and Hearing

The most widely exploited animals, particularly those raised for food, are considered “five-sensed” beings, including humans (Wiley, 2006). These beings are believed to have a heightened capacity for experiencing pain and suffering. This understanding triggers deep compassion and serves as a warning to Jains about the serious karmic consequences of harming them.

Vegetables exhibit both single *jiva* and multiple *jivas*, including those with underground roots (such as ginger, beetroot, carrot, and potato), bulbs (such as onion and garlic), buds, figs, and fruits and vegetables containing numerous seeds (Jain et al., n.d). Alcohol is condemned because the process of fermentation and distillation destroys living creatures. Jains have traditionally avoided eating after sunset since they may unexpectedly destroy unseen life forms, and they only consume boiled and filtered water to avoid consuming minute water-borne organisms (Sen, et al., 2014). Jain scriptures include comprehensive regulations for how long meals can be kept before eating. Wandering Jain monks wear masks to avoid breathing in microorganisms and sweep the ground before them with a broom. Jain temples do not allow worshippers to wear animal products. Jains establish animal sanctuaries and hospitals for cows, birds, and other creatures. Contemporary Jains typically do not keep household pets.

The concept of *Jain abhaksyas* encompasses foods that are deemed unsuitable for consumption within Jainism. Traditional lists of *abhaksyas* include items like meat, eggs, and honey, among others. Moreover, these lists also encompass “secondary” items, including fruits with many seeds like pomegranates, root crops like potatoes and onions, and foods eaten at night (Wisdom Library, 2022). Most Jains are vegetarians and not vegans. Cows are believed to be treated well because of the importance of milk products for nutrition. In the Jain diet, dairy products comprising yoghurt, buttermilk, clarified butter, or ghee play an important role due to their content of vital nutrients. Wealthy individuals are renowned for utilising a significant amount of ghee due to the long-standing associations with wealth and health in India.

In diasporic Jain communities, according to Valley (2004), some individuals tend to disregard these “secondary interdictions” and instead emphasise a “new category” of *abhaksya*, which

includes dairy products, gelatine, casein, and similar items. This shift highlights changing dietary perspectives within Jain communities outside of their traditional settings. Valley argues that adopting new dietary restrictions, like avoiding dairy products, is driven by compassion, not just self-control. It is a concrete rejection of animal exploitation.

In 2019, ascetic Padmasagar Maharaj urged the Maharashtrian Jain community to go dairy-free due to concerns about blood and pus in dairy milk. His message influenced many of the 650+ lay Jains present to either give up dairy or try a dairy-free diet for at least three months. He highlighted the health benefits and recommended nutritious alternatives like mung beans and legumes, aligning with a plant-based diet (Jain Vegans, 2021)

The UK-based organisation ‘Jain Vegans’ is aiding the Jain community in transitioning to a low-*himsa* vegan lifestyle. They conduct an annual “*Give up dairy for Paryushan*” campaign during the Jain holy festival of *Paryushan* (Jain Vegans, n.d.). The campaign encourages Jains to reconsider dairy consumption due to the violence associated with milk production. *Paryushan* is a suitable time for this campaign as it is when Jains reflect on and seek forgiveness for the harm inflicted on all living beings. This festival involves fasting as a form of purification, and Jain Vegans advocate abstaining from dairy consumption because of the significant violence involved in the dairy industry (*ibid*).

While some studies regarding the motivations of Jain vegans based in the West exist (Miller & Dickstein, 2021), we know very little about the attitudes of India-based vegans. This research is directed at understanding and comparing the perspectives of Jain and non-Jain vegans towards issues of animal exploitation and cruelty-free practices. This exploratory study draws findings from in-depth interviews conducted with self-identified vegans from across India.

Results

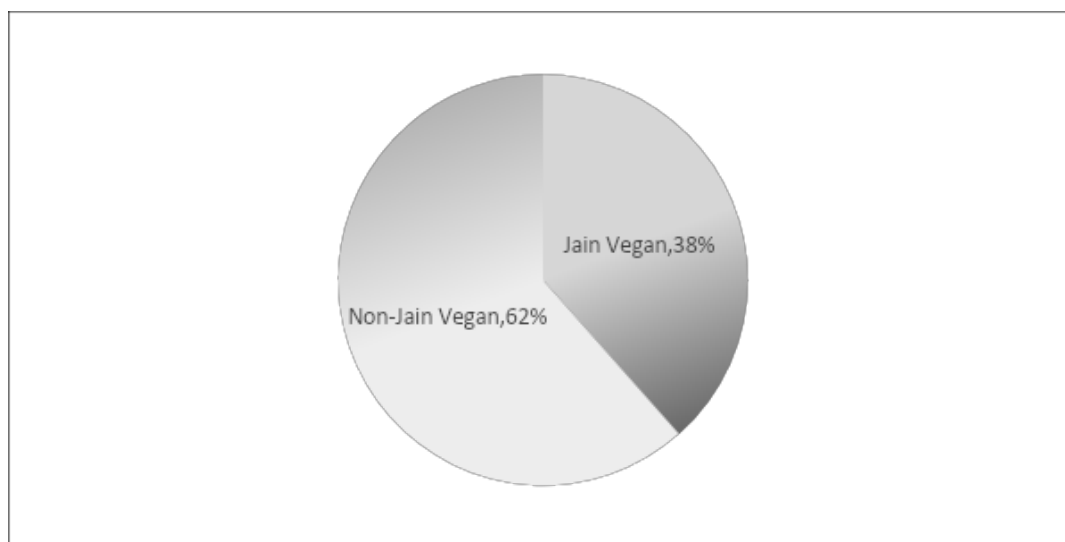


Figure 1: Participant's Identity- This figure represents the percentage of Jain vegan and non-Jain vegan participants in the study.

The participant responses were grouped under four themes: Exploitation in the Dairy Industry, Animal Advocacy: A Lifestyle, Ethical concern, and Everyday Veganism: Challenges. I spoke to five Jain vegans and eight non-Jain vegans residing in Delhi, Mumbai, Chandigarh, and the United Kingdom. All of them were Indian and aged between 18-50 years, although a majority of them were in their twenties. There were eight men and five women, all employed in various service-based professions. All the non-Jain vegans belonged to the Hindu religion.

IDENTITY	
Jain Vegan	5
Non- Jain Vegan	8
GENDER	
Male	5
Female	8
LOCATION	
Delhi	7
Mumbai	4
Chandigarh	1
United Kingdom	1
YEARS OF TRANSITION	
Below 1 Year	11
Above 1 Year	2
Transitioning	1

Table 1: Participant's Data

Exploitation in the Dairy Industry

While many Jains in India avoid certain root vegetables to prevent harm to tiny beings, they still consume dairy products, which are directly linked to severe harm to cows, goats, and sheep. This harm includes practices like forceful artificial insemination, separating calves from their mothers at birth, slaughtering male calves, and prematurely slaughtering non-milk-producing cows. Several participants became aware of exploitation in the dairy industry through documentaries like “*Ma ka Doodh*,” “*Earthling*,” and “*Cowspiracy*.” These films shed light on the harm inflicted on cows, shaping the participant’s understanding of the issue.

There’s a widespread cultural notion in the Indian subcontinent that portrays cows as willingly providing their milk to humans, using terms like “giving” or “offering” instead of “extracting” or “taking” (Miller & Dickstein, 2021). In some interpretations, *ahimsa* has been equated with non-killing rather than non-harming. However, there is increasing concern about cruelty in the contemporary dairy industry.

For example, participant 3 (a Jain vegan) highlighted their transition to a vegan lifestyle due to concerns about cruelty in the dairy industry, stating: “The practice of artificially inseminating cows multiple times where the calves don’t receive their mother’s milk; instead, it’s us humans who consume it. I can’t imagine being in the cow’s position and being exploited like that. This was one of the major factors that pushed me towards adopting a vegan lifestyle.”

Participant 4 (a Jain vegan) said: “When you learn about these processes and watch documentaries like *Maa ka Doodh*, you realise how cruel the dairy industry is. And that’s when the Jain in me woke up. Giving up dairy should be more important to Jains than giving up root vegetables because, with dairy, you are looking at cruelty toward a sentient being with all five senses. That’s where Jainism and veganism converge...”

Animal Advocacy: A Lifestyle

The majority of study participants strongly perceived veganism primarily as a lifestyle rather than a dietary choice. The study found that the participants weren’t all animal enthusiasts, but they cared about animal welfare. As a result, they adopted a lifestyle aimed at preventing harm to animals. Around 90% of the participants actively embraced veganism by avoiding leather products like shoes and jackets, refraining from using silk products like silk sarees, and choosing cosmetics not tested on animals. They avoided products that harmed animals in any manner.

Participant 2 (a Jain vegan) expressed a similar viewpoint by saying: “Veganism is not about health, if you’re going for health, that is a plant-based diet. Health and the environment do not cross over with animal rights, an ethical thing goes beyond health also.” Participant 10 (a non-Jain vegan) also stated, “Some people don’t grasp the fact that being vegan involves a

complete lifestyle change. They often overlook the need to forgo items such as silk and leather, among other things.”

With organisations like PETA in society, an increasing number of individuals are becoming aware of veganism and being inspired to adopt this lifestyle. However, none of them mentioned being members of PETA.

The vegan interviewees were keen to dispel the misconception that veganism was an elite choice. One of the criticisms that is often levelled against store-bought vegan products like almond milk, oat, milk, soy milk, etc is that they are twice or even more expensive than dairy milk. However, many interviewees pointed out that one could make these alternative products at home at a much lesser expense. Therefore, they pointed out that one need not be wealthy to embrace veganism. Participant 2 (a Jain vegan) shared that she regularly made almond milk at home. She also refrained from buying many vegan products from the market.

Only families of two participants transitioned and about half the participant’s families partially transitioned by avoiding dairy produce at certain times. For instance, Participant 10 (a non-Jain vegan) shared how her family consumed coconut milk tea in the evenings. These participants emphasised the importance of a gradual approach to transitioning to veganism. This suggests that people should start reducing consumption of animal products in other forms before adopting a plant-based diet. This shows an aspect of social dynamics when a majority is presented with consistency from a minority in presenting viewpoints, they start believing the information to be credible.

In families where participants felt resistance, they often expressed difficulty in social settings. Participant 1 (a Jain vegan) and Participant 8 (a non-Jain vegan) said that they did not receive much support from their families towards veganism. I was then prompted to ask how they kept themselves going. They were committed vegans and were adhering to their central ethical values. I could see that adopting a vegan lifestyle hindered their family time. Traditionally, family-oriented Indians consume meals in a family together. Having an exclusive meal made many vegans feel left out, especially during festivals and social gatherings. Both Jain vegans and non-Jain vegans affirm that veganism constitutes a lifestyle change, rather than a mere dietary choice.

Ethical Concern

All the participants highlighted the importance of ethical considerations for adopting a vegan lifestyle. 90% of participants chose to become vegan due to ethical considerations, aiming to minimise harm to animals. One participant adopted veganism primarily for health reasons. Ethical vegans prioritise reducing suffering, while others are often influenced by fad diets,

aiming to improve health like the one in our study who adopted a vegan lifestyle solely for hypertension-related problems.

Most interviewees had to make changes in their social circle after adopting veganism. They socialised in like-minded circles because many a time, they were ridiculed for their veganism. They feel judged and invalidated by their peers and therefore, many of them were forced to sacrifice friendships and outings with friends. Participant 9 (a non-Jain vegan) shared, “I couldn’t go to a book club meeting yesterday because in the café’s menu, there are only limited choices for vegan items and I don’t want to pay ₹200 for a lemon water.”

While moral considerations were common in responses, the content of these discussions varied. Participant 7 (a non-Jain vegan) expressed his opinion by saying: “Any decision that affects the freedom of another being should not be upheld simply. The concept of ‘Speciesism’ exists in reality and this leaves me with no justification for continuing to consume animal products.”

The preference for a definition that included ethical concerns was frequently prevalent in other non-Jain vegan participants as seen in Participant 12’s conversation: “It was a combination of all three aspects; however, I would say that one of the biggest factors was the welfare of animals and not wanting to be a part of the exploitation of other beings for my satisfaction. Being healthy and helping the environment was certainly a bonus.” Participant 11 (a non-Jain vegan) elaborated on their perspective by saying: “Humans will never be perfect; cruelty will always exist, at least to some extent. However, individually, we can strive to do better. For me, it’s straightforward... Animals should not be treated as human property.”

Nevertheless, this positive view of the ethical implications can be contrasted with participant 6 (a non-Jain vegan) who did not identify ethical considerations as within the bounds of his transition to veganism. For instance, they outlined how veganism was something they did for themselves: “My transition was only to help me. There are other reasons. You’re not contributing to these dairy farming atrocities... but they are all secondary things. Ultimately, it will keep you healthier for long. You are helping yourself.”

Everyday Veganism: Challenges

When asked about the challenges faced by participants in social settings, there was a mixed response. Vegans highlighted that a major challenge stemmed from people’s ignorance. While many vegan participants received support from immediate family members, some struggled in social settings due to a lack of vegan-friendly cafes, and loss of friends. It was seen that only two participants had been vegan for over two years, and their advice on sustaining the diet included dedicatedly reading and watching helpful materials. All participants suggested watching documentaries like “*Maa Ka Doodh*,” “*Cowspiracy*,” and “*Earthling*,” which made them

understand and adapt better to veganism. Participants view veganism as a moral obligation, parallel to the moral obligation of not enslaving another human being.

It was also observed that the three non-vegetarian participants in the study did not face significant challenges when transitioning to a vegan lifestyle. This transition was facilitated by the moments of realisation related to the positive impact they could make on society as a whole. A study highlighted that maintaining a vegan diet depends on the epiphanic moments and those who had one tended to be persistent in their diet (McDonald, 2000).

The interview process itself was an emotionally charged one for both me and the interviewees. Most interviewees were frustrated when their family and friends refused to understand their feelings towards issues of animal cruelty. For instance, Participant 4 (a Jain vegan) highlighted, “I was ignorant all these years. It’s not like I was born a vegan but when you get the information and guidance and continue to stick to the wrongdoing then it gets very frustrating.”

Participant 5 felt frustrated and helpless when people around her refused to see her point of view. Many vegans recounted facing hostility and negativity from their peers during their transition to a plant-based lifestyle. Participant 7 (a non-Jain vegan) shared: “People were so insensitive sometimes with consideration to the choices I made, they insisted me on having dairy products by saying “a little bit won’t hurt anyone”.”

While some participants remained frustrated and angry, others chose to deal with the resistance by increasing the tempo of their advocacy and consciousness-raising. Participant 3 (a Jain vegan) and Participant 10 (a non-Jain vegan) mentioned they were advocating through public-facing campaigns.

Participants were asked to consider the practical feasibility of incorporating veganism into their everyday lives. The phrase “As long as you are at home, it is possible and easily practicable” was prevalent across all participants. For instance, participant 9 (a non-Jain vegan) affirms: “Being a vegan is quite straightforward: you can’t go wrong with *roti*, *sabzi*, *dal*, and *chawal* (bread, vegetables, lentils, and rice). However, when it comes to trying out new things or experimenting with different foods, that’s where the challenge arises.”

Participant 13 (a non-Jain vegan) further demonstrates the emphasis on practicability for their conceptualization of veganism: “There are poor vegans in the world, and homeless vegans exist. It’s about ethical commitment, as simple as that. This world has a diverse range of food, and it is meant for human society. So, we lack nothing; we have everything. We just don’t take what doesn’t belong to us.”

The value-based implication Greenebaum (2012) talked about in their study is particularly evident in the explanation offered by Participant 1 (a Jain vegan): “Being 98% vegan is fine. However, the vegan community doesn’t go for that approach, they’re all about being 100% vegan all the time. That’s where I differ from a lot of other vegans.” Vegans often face stigma associated with extreme beliefs. The implementation of veganism and animal rights ideology in real-life consumption presents challenges, as “pure” veganism, according to Greenebaum (2012), is unattainable on several fronts.

Discussion

Many participants expressed their commitment to boycotting not only dairy products but also other items associated with animals, such as cosmetics tested on animals, leather goods, and silk due to concerns about harm to silkworms. One of the primary findings of my research was that neither gender-based nor age-based discrepancies discern to influence motivation toward adopting a vegan lifestyle.

As asserted by Cherry (2006), vegans constitute a novel form of social movement that is rooted in the daily practices embedded within an individual’s lifestyle. In the context of this study, participants from both groups perceived veganism not merely as a dietary choice but as a profound lifestyle commitment.

My findings indicated that many vegans expressed a favourable view regarding the affordability and practicability of adopting a vegan lifestyle, particularly in a country such as India. A diverse array of dietary options, including fruits, vegetables, nuts, grains, seeds, beans, and legumes, constitute the core components of a vegan diet. Additionally, as mentioned by Pabby, Bhagat, & Senthilmurugan (2022), it is noteworthy that a vegan diet accommodates the consumption of a wide spectrum of favourite foods, ranging from pizza to pastries, curry to cake, as long as these items are prepared using plant-based ingredients.

Both Jain and non-Jain vegans attached great importance to the concept of ethical concern. This shared perspective emphasised the ethical perspective of their vegan lifestyle and it remained consistent among the participants. This congruence between their self-perception and the prevailing themes underscores the unified perspective governing their motivation and attitude towards veganism.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings have revealed a striking commonality in motivation between these two groups: a shared ethical concern for the welfare of animals. Prominently, the exploitation of

animals within the dairy industry emerged as a pivotal catalyst for their adoption of veganism. This motivation subsequently engendered a profound attitudinal shift, leading to the integration of veganism into their daily lives.

This study has a few limitations. The limited time to conduct this study restricted the potential of the research overall. The primary difficulty in recruiting volunteers for this study was contacting vegans. The study's limitation lies in its small sample size of 13 participants, which may hinder the applicability of findings to broader contexts. The age group of the sample may also be a limitation on the interpretation of results, younger people may be more familiar with the concept of veganism and therefore, this would impact their perceptions of what it means in society. If the study were to be replicated it is recommended that the researchers balance the ages of participants.

In examining the comparative analysis between Jain vegans and non-Jain vegans, a consensus emerged, primarily centred on both behavioural and value-related aspects. Specifically, 92% of participants overwhelmingly viewed veganism as a lifestyle rather than a mere dietary choice. Consequently, their motivation for embracing veganism was consistently rooted in ethical considerations related to animal welfare. This ethical perspective constituted the common ground among participant responses, emphasising veganism as a lifestyle geared toward promoting animal welfare and mitigating animal suffering. This study addresses a critical gap in veganism literature by investigating motivational differences between Jain vegans and non-Jain vegans in India, making it the first of its kind to do so comprehensively.

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