

## **A Phenomenological Investigation of being Vegetarian** (Reference to the Undergraduates in University of Kelaniya)

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Right next to air and water, food and shelter is one of the most essential elements of life. Food becomes a converging point to which everyone can relate and eating becomes a favorite pastime in many social, familial, romantic and even professional situations. Relationships are built around food. Sharing food fills awkward spaces, facilitates budding friendships and solidifies partnerships. This research aims to explore the lived experience of being vegetarian in a society and culture. Primarily majority of the society communicate with non-vegetarians. As members of a unique minority group, vegetarians at times can be misunderstood by non-vegetarians and stereotyped as judgmental or difficult to deal with. Living with this type of misunderstanding from others can lead to feelings such as worry, loneliness and fear. As such, the use of phenomenological inquiry is well suited to uncover the lived experience. The population of the sample twenty students fall in to vegetarians. Methods such as questionnaires were used to collect primary data and journal articles, books were used as secondary data. Data analysis has been done by using descriptive method. The findings of this research found that some of students in a state of worry over how their personal food choices would impact their ability to build new relationships sustain current relationships and adequately share meals hosted by non-vegetarians. When these students felt worried and alone in their thoughts, they struggled to feel the bonds of friendship that food often helps them to facilitate in social contexts.

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