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# DECCAN Chronicle

## Vegetarian food is 'not cancer proof'

New research says being vegetarian does not guarantee immunity against breast cancer.



The analysis showed that the risk of breast cancer didn't decrease in lifelong vegetarians and it had no impact at all on a cancer risk. (Representational image)

**Hyderabad:** A lifelong consumption of vegetarian food has little or no impact on the occurrence of breast cancer in women, a new study has claimed. It added that being a vegetarian does not mean a guarantee for immunity against breast cancer.

The new research was carried out by experts to understand if the incidence of cancer in Indian women was lower when compared to the West — where women eat a lot of animal products. But it was found that vegetarianism does not provide any particular protection against breast cancer.

Between 2011 and 2014, women aged between 30-70 years with newly-diagnosed invasive breast cancer were identified and their diet, lifestyle, reproductive and socio-demographic factors were collected and analysed.

Only those women who had a vegetarian diet were selected for the study— totalling 2,101 — at various centres across India.

The analysis showed that the risk of breast cancer didn't decrease in lifelong

vegetarians and it had no impact at all on a cancer risk.

“Breast cancer is due to estrogen levels in the body, prolonged menstrual cycles and also obesity. Estrogen before menopause is in the ovaries and after menopause, it is found in peripheral fat within the body. And it plays a major role in triggering breast cancer,” said senior oncologist Dr T.S. Rao. “Women eating vegetarian food too are often obese, suffer from certain lifestyle diseases, have sedentary lifestyles and are caught in other conditions that can trigger cancer. So, it can’t be directly stated that a vegetarian diet can guarantee an immunity from breast cancer,” he added.

Dr Srinivas C, another oncologist said: “The accumulation of estrogen in blood levels after menopause is found to play a major role in breast cancer in post menopausal women. Blood estrogen levels are due to various factors and needs to be curbed.”

## THE HINDU

### **Govt. seeks ₹100 crore to tackle drought**

The Assembly on Tuesday passed a resolution urging the Union Government to sanction ₹100 crore to tackle drought in the Union Territory.

Moving the resolution, Minister for Agriculture R. Kamalakannan said Puducherry and Karaikal regions have been badly hit due to deficit monsoon. As against 637 millimetres (mm), Puducherry and Karaikal regions have received only 283 mm of rainfall.

### **In search of greener pastures**

Many of the farmers who had lost their crops in drought following failure of north east monsoon and farm workers who were rendered jobless in the district have migrated to other districts and neighbouring ‘towns’ seeking jobs.

Interaction with a cross-section of farmers in Kadugusanthai, Keelaselvanoor, Melakidaram and Panaiadiyendal villages revealed that youngsters have moved to Tirupur and Coimbatore to seek jobs in the knitwear textile companies, while women and elders have moved to Thoothukudi and nearby towns for jobs.

The migration has taken place in large numbers in Kadaladi, Mudukulathur and Kamudhi blocks, the farmers said. “We depend totally on agriculture and this year we are facing the worst situation,” the farmers said.

A large number of women in Kadaladi block, who had exhausted their quota of 100 days employment under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee (MGNREG) scheme, were going for work in saltpans in the neighbouring Thoothukudi.

Salt companies arranged transport facilities and they earned about Rs. 200 a day, they said.

A section of men go for cutting karuvelam trees (*prosopis juliflora*) for 'kari moottam' (charcoal making), while others visit Erwadi, Kilakarai and Rameswaram for loading fishing gears into the vessels and unloading the catches, they said.

Farmers in Kadaladi block cultivated paddy in 17,137 hectares and millets in 1,229.52 hectares and the loss was total, officials also said.

Whenever the farmers lost the paddy crop, they bet on chilli and groundnut crops to make good their loss. But this year, they burnt their fingers as the monsoon let them down badly. "For the first time in 40 years we lost the groundnut crop in Kadaladi block," said S. Chelladurai, a farmer in Kadugusanthai. Every year, a couple of brief spells would be enough to save the crops but this year, it was a total failure, he said.

Farmers have spent about Rs. 17,000 per acre for cultivating sorghum and Rs. 15,000 for groundnut. Most of them had borrowed money from private money lenders at three paise interest and they look to the government to come out from the debt burden, they said.

### **Farms encroach river bed**

Farms have encroached all along the river bed flowing out from the Emerald Dam, prompting concerns that the agricultural run off from these fields could poison the stream which drains into the Kundah Dam.

Crops such as carrots, potatoes and cabbage are being grown all along the stream, which has completely dried up because of the lack of rainfall this year.

The stream-bed attracts encroachments because the soil is rich in nutrients and often gives good yields, said revenue department officials, who have been working to get the encroachments removed.

Environment activists have also flagged up concerns that agricultural run off from the farms could pollute the water in the Kundah Dam, which would in turn contaminate the waters of the Bhavani River.

G. Janardhanan, president of the Ooty Town Public Awareness Organisation, said that the pesticides used to grow the crops contaminate the waters downstream.

“Already, most of the water bodies in the Nilgiris have become polluted, while some have been completely lost altogether.

The authorities need to wake up and remove such encroachments immediately,” he said.

Officials from Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (TANGEDCO), said that they, along with revenue department officials had removed around 40-45 acres of encroachments along the stream bed.

“As there are some pockets with standing crop left, we have told them to harvest the crops and stop farming after,” the official said.

TANGEDCO has also sent a proposal to fence the areas belonging to them, but officials said that there were more encroachments further downstream.

“These areas do not come under the control of TANGEDCO, but to the revenue department,” an official said.