



NUTRITIONAL AND MEDICINAL VALUES OF TAMARIND

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ABSTRACT:

Tamarind (*Tamarindus indica* L.) It is a multipurpose long-lived tree best known for its fruit. It is a large evergreen tree with an exceptionally beautiful spreading crown, and is cultivated throughout the whole of India, except in the Himalayas and western dry regions. Tamarind plants are hard and drought tolerant. Tamarind is a nutritious versatile fruit. The whole seeds also contain protein, fat, sugars and carbohydrates. Both pulp and seeds are good

sources of potassium, calcium and phosphorous and contain other minerals like sodium, zinc and iron. Tamarind seeds have been used in Cambodia and India, in powdered form, to treat boils and dysentery. Boiled, pounded seeds are reported to treat ulcers and bladder stones and powdered seed husks are used to treat diabetes. Apart from fruits, tamarind leaves are used to treat conjunctivitis, throat infections, coughs, fever, intestinal worms, urinary troubles and liver ailments, cardiac and blood sugar reducing medicines and ulcers.

Keywords:- Tamarind, pulp, seeds, tartaric acid, Triterpenoids etc.

INTRODUCTION:

Tamarind (*Tamarindus indica* L.) or Imli is also called Indian Date. It belongs to the family Leguminaceae. It is native to Tropical Africa, particularly in Sudan and also grown well in the tropical and semi-arid parts of India. It is a multipurpose long-lived tree best known for its fruit. It is a large evergreen tree with an exceptionally beautiful spreading crown, and is cultivated throughout the whole of India, except in the Himalayas and western dry regions. Tamarind plants are hard and drought tolerant. It has special importance in social, urban and agro forestry due to its multipurpose uses as industrial, pharmaceutical and commercial level. Almost all parts of the tree find a use in the food, chemical, pharmaceutical or textile industries, or as fodder, timber and fuel.

NUTRITIONAL VALUES:

Tamarind is a nutritious versatile fruit. The fruit consists mainly of pulp and seeds. Tamarind is valued highly for its pulp used in the preparation of food and beverages for domestic and industrial purposes. The pulp constitutes 30-50% of the ripe fruit, the shell and fibre account for 11-30% and the seed about 25-40%. The most outstanding characteristics of tamarind fruit is its acidic and sweet taste due to tartaric acid (10%) and reducing sugars (30-40%). The fruit, both ripe and dry, contains mainly tartaric acid, reducing sugars, pectin, tannin, fibre and cellulose. The whole seeds also contain protein, fat, sugars and carbohydrates. Both pulp and seeds are good sources of potassium, calcium and phosphorous and contain other minerals like sodium, zinc and iron. The acidic pulp is used in culinary preparations such as a curries, chutneys, sauces, soups etc. Fruits are having the higher content of protein, vitamin B and tartaric acid. Tamarind fruit supplies vitamin A in the form of pro-vitamin A containing carotenoids and is bioavailable to supply the required amount of recommended retinol equivalents (500-600) per day. Tamarind consumption prevents malnutrition and chronic human diseases, and supplies necessary macronutrients (carbohydrates, proteins and fats), micronutrients (calcium, iron, iodine, manganese, magnesium, zinc), fiber, vitamins A, C, D, folic acid, and other vital compounds.

MEDICINAL VALUES:

Tamarind has been used in the treatment of a number of ailments, including alleviation of sunstroke, Datura poisoning and the intoxicating effects of alcohol and 'ganja'. The consumption of adequate amounts of 'poha beer' a popular tamarind fruit drink of Northern Ghana in Africa, could help reduce the prevalence of iron deficiency anaemia. This was based on the vitamin C content in it which enhances bioavailability of non-haem iron. Tamarind seeds have been used in Cambodia and India, in powdered form, to treat boils and dysentery. Boiled, pounded seeds are reported to treat ulcers and bladder stones and powdered seed husks are used to treat diabetes. Triterpenoids, phenols and alkaloids in tamarind extracts are being looked at for their use in controlling pests and diseases, e.g. control of citrus canker, root knot nematode and of a range of fungi. Tamarind plant extracts have been used to purify drinking water.

