

Value Added Products of Under-Utilized Fruits

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Introduction

Underutilized fruit crops encompass plant species traditionally utilized for food, fodder, fiber, oil, and extensive medicinal benefits. Despite their conventional uses, these species possess untapped potential in guaranteeing food security, nutrition, health, income generation, and environmental benefits. A significant number of these underutilized indigenous fruit crops are recognized as medicinal plants across India and hold prominence in various indigenous medical systems. A targeted approach is necessary to develop value-added products from these fruits, aiming to capture both national and international markets. This current overview focuses primarily on the value added products of these lesser-known fruits. In India the most common underutilized fruits are Bael (*Aegle marmelos*), Jamun (*Syzygium cumini*), Karonda (*Carissa carandas*) Ber (*Ziziphus mauritiana*), Lasora (*Cordia myxa*), Phalsa (*Grewia subinaequalis*) etc.

The different value added products of under utilized fruits are :

Bael

The bael fruit undergoes processing to yield an array of products. The green bael fruit slices are sun-dried for subsequent use. The pulp is utilized to create sherbet and syrup, while marmalade made from the fruit aids in treating diarrhea and dysentery. Additionally, the fruits are employed in producing powder, preserve, nectar, and toffee.

Jamun

Jamun fruits find application in creating a variety of revitalizing health beverages and items such as jam, jelly, squash, preserves, and wine. Furthermore, they are utilized in crafting clear, purple-hued vinegar with a mild yet appealing flavor and aroma. Ripe jamun fruit juice is a key ingredient in sauces and beverages. The fermented juice of jamun is also harnessed for producing brandy and distilled liquor.

Karonda

Karonda fruits find application in making pickles, chutney, sauces, jelly, carissa cream, or jellied salad. Dried karonda fruits can serve as an alternative to raisins. In the summertime, ripe karonda fruit is utilized to create a refreshing cooling beverage. Although it releases sticky latex while cooking, the fruit yields a vibrant red juice that turns clear upon cooling.

Ber

Ber fruits are commonly consumed either fresh or in a dehydrated state. Ber fruit offers versatility in product options, including ber powder, ber candy, ber murabba, ber jam, ber preserve, ber pickle, ber beverages, ber wine, and ready-to-serve (RTS) ber products.

Lasora

Mature lasora fruits are enjoyed in their fresh state, while the unripe ones are predominantly used as vegetables and for pickling, especially when standard vegetables are scarce (typically in April - May). Occasionally, the fruits are blanched and dehydrated to serve as vegetables for consumption during non-seasonal periods. Additionally, the gummy extract derived from ripe fruits is commonly utilized to make glue.

Phalsa

Phalsa fruits remain fresh for a brief period post-harvest, necessitating prompt consumption. In India, particularly during the hot summer season, people enjoy the ripe fruits either freshly as part of desserts or utilize them to create invigorating beverages like sharbat, squash, RTS, and more.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the cultivation and utilization of underutilized fruit crops in India represent a valuable opportunity for addressing various socio-economic and health-related challenges. These fruits, including Bael, Jamun, Karonda, Ber, Lasora, and Phalsa, have the potential to contribute significantly to food security, nutrition, and income generation. Moreover, they hold traditional and medicinal value in indigenous medical systems. The value-added products derived from these lesser-known fruits demonstrate their versatility and commercial potential. From dried slices and marmalades to syrups, jams, and beverages, these fruits offer a wide range of possibilities for processing and marketing. These products not only enhance food diversity but also provide remedies for various health conditions. By promoting the cultivation and value addition of these underutilized fruits, India can harness its rich



biodiversity to bolster both domestic and international markets. This approach aligns with the goals of enhancing food security, improving nutrition, and reducing rural poverty. Moreover, it encourages sustainable agricultural practices and supports the preservation of traditional knowledge and biodiversity. The development of value-added products from underutilized fruits can significantly contribute to India's agricultural and economic growth, offering a win-win situation for farmers, consumers, and the environment. It is imperative to continue research, development, and promotion efforts to unlock the full potential of these fruits and strengthen their role in ensuring a healthier and more prosperous future for the nation.

