Phytopharmacological Properties of *Tamarindus indica*: An Overview

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ABSTRACT

*Tamarindus* is a monotypic genus and belongs to the family Fabaceae. It is commonly known as Tamarind tree. It is indigenous to tropical Africa and exotic to Asia and Central America. Traditionally it is used for Inflammation, tumours, ring worm, diseases of blood, small pox, eye disease, ear ache, snake bite, urinary discharges, bad odour in perspiration, astringent, appetizing, laxative, anthelmintics, heals wounds and fractures, biliousness, bile disorders heals ulcer, liver, Ankylostomiasis (hookworm). Every part of the plant (leaves, stem, seed, root, bark and fruit) is therapeutically effective in treating various human diseases. The aim of the present review is to describe its nutritional values, geographical conditions, collection and cultivation, chemical constituents, pharmacological activities of various plant parts of *Tamarindus indica*.

**Keywords:** *Tamarindus indica*, Fabaceae, Inflammation, Astringent, Laxative, Ankylostomiasis, Anthelmintics.

INTRODUCTION

Plants are the basic elements of traditional medicine and are used in larger amount. *Tamarindus indica* (*T. indica*) is multi-stemmed, it needs dry climate for its growth, It reaches 24 m height and 7 m girth and it has pale yellow and pink flowers. Every single part of *T. indica* (fruit, leaves, stem, root, body) has its own nutritional value and extensive usage in the area of medicine. In traditional medicine, it is used in wound healing, abdominal pain, diarrhea, dysentery, parasitic infestation, fever, malaria and respiratory problems. It is also frequently used in tropical countries because of its laxative and aphrodisiac properties. The plant lives for 80-100 years produces fruits more than 50 years. The seeds of *T. indica* has an available protein source, mainly in the countries where the protein deficiency as a common problem. Based on the phytochemical analysis, *T. indica* contains the phenolic compounds like catechin, procyanidin B2, epicatechin, tartaric acid, mucilage, pectin, arabinose, xylose, galactose, glucose, uronic acid and triterpen.1 Kernel composed of D-glucose, D-xylose, D-galactose and L-arabinose. The leaves alone contains flavone C-glycosidesorientient, vitexin, isoorientin and isovitexin. The leaves and in combination with fruits contains tartaric acid and malic acid. The fruit pulp yields tamarindienal(bitter) and certain amino acids include serine, beta-alanine, proline, pipercolinic acid, phenylalanine and leucine.2

**Table 1:** Scientific Classification3

| Domain      | Eukaryota |
|-------------|-----------|
| Kingdom     | Plantae   |
| Phylum      | Spermatophyta |
| Subphylum   | Angiospermae |
| Class       | Dicotyledonae |
| Order       | Fabales   |
| Family      | Fabaceae  |
| Subfamily   | Faboideae |
| Genus       | Tamarindus |
| Species     | T.indica  |

**Binomial Name:** *Tamarindus indica*. L

**Synonyms4:**

*Tamarindus umbrosa* Salisb.
*Tamarindus officinalis* Hook.
*Tamarindus occidentalis* Gaertn.

**Figure 1:** The nutritional values of *Tamarindus indica* raw fruit1

**Nutritional value of Tamarind (T. indica)**

- Energy
- Carbohydrates
- Protein
- Total fat

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Available online at [www.globalresearchonline.net](http://www.globalresearchonline.net)
| Principle    | Nutrient value | Percentage of RDA |
|--------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Energy       | 239.00 Kcal    | 12%               |
| Carbohydrates| 62.50 g        | 40%               |
| Protein      | 2.80 g         | 5%                |
| Total tat    | 0.60 g         | 3%                |
| Cholesterol  | 0 mg           | 0%                |
| Dietary fiber| 5.10 g         | 13%               |

**Table 2:** Nutritional value per 100 g of Tamarind (T. indica)
(Source: USDA National Nutrient data base).

| Vitamins | Names     | Nutrient value | Percentage of RDA |
|----------|-----------|----------------|-------------------|
| Vitamin A| 30.00 IU  | 1.0%           |                   |
| Vitamin C| 3.500 mg  | 6.0%           |                   |
| Vitamin E| 0.100 mg  | 0.8%           |                   |
| Vitamin K| 2.800 μg  | 2.0%           |                   |
| Vitamin B1| 0.428 mg | 36.0%          |                   |
| Vitamin B3| 1.938 mg | 12.0%          |                   |
| Vitamin B5| 0.143 mg | 3.0%           |                   |
| Vitamin B6| 0.066 mg | 5.0%           |                   |
| Vitamin B9| 14.00 μg | 3.5%           |                   |

**Vernacular Names**

| Arabic    | Daralsida |
|-----------|-----------|
| Assam     | Tamar, Teteli |
| Bengal    | Tetula, Nuli, Tintil, Tinturi |

| Brazil     | Jubay, Tamarindo |
|------------|------------------|
| Coorg      | Pulinje          |
| Dutch      | Tamrinden boom   |
| English    | Tamarind tree    |
| French     | Tamarindien      |
| German     | Tamarindenbaum   |
| Gujarati   | Amli, Ambli      |
| Hindi      | Amli, Imli       |
| Italian    | Tamarindo        |
| Kannada    | Hunise, imli.    |
| Malayalam  | Puli, valampuli, kolpuli. |
| Marathi    | Ambali, Amli     |
| Mysore     | Asam, Hunese     |
| Nepal      | Titri            |
| Persian    | Ambalah          |
| Portugese  | Tamarindo        |
| Punjab     | Imbli            |
| Sanskrit   | Amlika, Chincha, Tinthidi, Chukra |
| Sind       | Amri, Gidamri    |
| Telugu     | Amlika, sinja, Tinthrini |
| Urdu       | Imli             |
| Uriya      | Tentuli          |
Description Of Plant Parts

Leaves
The leaves are green, even, oblong, unequal, alternate, pinnate and 8-15 cm long with 10-20 pairs and 5-6 mm wide. The rachis is 7–15 cm long with opposite leaflets. The leaves closes at night and may open during the day time. Leaves having a feathery appearance in combination with open branch structure.

Flowers
Flowers (5-13 cm in length and2.5 cm in diameter) that emerges on the new branches. The buds are pink in colour. The flowers may be bisexual and the development of flower-bud takes about 20 days from the starting period of time.

Fruit: The fruit (7-20 cm in length and 1.5-3.0 cm in width) having irregular curves. The outer part is brown in colour, scaly and small constrictions between the seeds. As the pod ripens it becomes brittle and can be easily broken. The pod loses its water content during drying.

Biology And Ecology

Climate
The tamarind grows best in semi-arid tropical and subtropical conditions tolerating temperature is upto 47°C. The annual temperature range between 29-36°C (maximum), with a minimum of 10-18°C. In many humid conditions, plant provides a dry season that allows for ripening of fruit, and is well-adapted to arid regions. A dry climate is very important to increase the yield of flowers and fruits. The plant requires the annual rainfall of 500-1500 mm for its growth. In areas of wet tropics, tamarind does not produce flowers and also production of fruit is decreased over 4000 mm of rainfall

Soil
Tamarind can grow in all types of soil, such as alluvial, deep, loam, sandy, clay, rocky and silt. The plant production is little or no cultivation in poor and rocky soils, and tolerates saline soils, although yields are not as high. Preferably soils should be slightly acid in nature. It flourishes best in loamy, deep, alluvial soils which benefit the development of a long taproot. It also allows slightly alkaline or saline soils.

Propagation
Plant can be propagated easily from cuttings or by shield-budding, side-veneer grafting, or air-layering.

Season
Most of the studies reveals that the fruits starts to dehydrate after 203 days of fruit-set, losing half of the moisture at the state of full ripeness, about 245 days from the fruit-set. The flowers appear in summer, the green fruits are found in December and January and ripening of fruits takes place from April through June.

Harvesting
Harvesting is done with the help of fruits and are often by pulling the pod from the stalk in which fibers gets attached. In India, harvesting taking place by shaking the branches to cause mature fruits to fall and they leave the remainder to fall naturally when they ripe.

Yield
Afully developed tree may annually produce (150-220 kg) of fruits, of which the pulp may constitute 30-55%, the shells and fiber 11-30 %, and the seeds, 33-40%.

| Plant part       | Uses                                         |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Leaves           | Reduce Inflammation, tumours, ring worm, diseases of blood, small pox, and other eye disease, ear ache, snake bite |
| Flower           | Appetizing, urinary discharges, bad odour in perspiration |
| Fruit pulp (unripe) | Astringent, to the bowel and cure “vata” |
| Fruit pulp (ripe) | Appetizing, laxative, anthelmintics, heals wounds and fractures, biliousness and bile disorders |
| Bark             | Astringent, heals ulcer, liver complaints |
| Root             | Treat Ankylostomiasis (hookworm) |

Table 5: Traditional uses of Tamarindus indica
Medicinal Uses of *Tamarindus indica*:

**Leaves**

Leaves are grounded in the form of a paste in order to prevent the inflammation. A decoction of leaves act as foaming agent on abscesses and reduces pain. The leaves can be used as purgative, diaphoretic, emollient and also for treating stomach disorders. The powdered form can be used in treatment of wounds.

**Bark**

The bark is used as an astringent for treating diarrhoea and the decoction is used as a lotion to wash ulcers and wounds.

**Seed**

The seed testa is mixed with lime juice or vinegar, helps in reducing the formation of pimples. The powdered form of seed is used for treating dysentery. The oil extracted from the seed is used for hair.

**Fruit pulp**

The fruit pulp is for laxative, fever, as a liniment for rheumatism, in treating inflammation, as an astringent and also used in treating scurvy which is having a common ingredient in blood sugar-reducing and also in cardiac medicines. The ripe fruit is used as a refrigerant, digestive, carminative and laxative.

**Flowers**

The flowers are used internally for treating jaundice and applied on eyes externally for reducing conjunctivitis.

**Therapeutic Uses**

- Antioxidant
- Anti-diabetic
- Anti-microbial
- Anthelmintic
- Anti-inflammatory
- Analgesic
- Antivenom
- Hyopolipidemic and weight reducing
- Immunomodulatory
- Anti diarrhoeal and Anti dysentery
- Wound healing
- Anti-emetic
- Hepatoprotective
- Antihistaminic
- Anti-pyretic
- Anti-malarial
- Cytotoxic
- Laxative
- Acarical

Uses of Various Parts of *Tamarindus indica*

**Fruit pulp**

The pulp has a wide range of domestic and industrial purposes. The acidic pulp is used as an important ingredient for culinary preparations, such as curries, chutneys, sauces, ice cream, and sherbet. Tamarind pulp is used as a raw material for manufacturing of industrial products, such as Tamarind Juice Concentrate, Tamarind Pulp Powder, tartaric acid, pectin, tartarates, and alcohol.

**Seed**

The seed comprises of seed coat or testa (20-30%) and the kernel or endosperm (70-75%). It is commercially available as a food additive for improving the viscosity and texture. Thename “jellose” used for the seed polysaccharide as it describes both its jell forming properties and the carbohydrate character. The jell form is used as a stabilizing agent in ice-cream, mayonnaise, and cheese, the seed oil is used for making varnish to paint idols, light lamps.

**Flowers and leaves**

The leaves and flowers are also useful as a mordant in dyeing. Used to make curries, salads, stews, soups, and in times of scarcity. These are used in Thai recipes because of their sourness and aroma. Mature leaves are used as a bleaching agent A yellow dye can be obtained from the leaves.

**Wood**

The wood is used for making furniture, wheels, mallets, rice pounders, mortars, pestles, ploughs, well construction, tent pegs, canoes, side planks for boats, cart shafts and axles, and naves of wheels, toys, oil presses, sugar presses, printing blocks, tools and tool handles, turnery, and soon. Used for making gunpowder. The ash is used for removing of hair from the animal hides and it can also be mixed with fruit pulp for cleansing and brightening brass and copper vessels.

**Seed testa & bark**

The seed testa and bark contains tannin, used for making leathers, heavy soles, suitcases and also used in the preparation of ink. The seed husk has been found to be effective on fish poison.

**Tamarind kernel powder**

Tamarind Kernel Powder (TKP) obtained from the seeds used as a source of carbohydrates, the binding agent in paper and textile sizing, weaving and in making jute products, as well as textile printing.
Lac

The tree is an anchor for the lac insect named Kerria lacca, that deposits a resin on the twigs, it can be harvested and is sold as stick-lac which is used for the production of lacquers.

Twigs and barks

Tamarind twigs are usually called as "chewsticks", bark (6-7% tannin) is used in dyeing, and is burned to make an ink. A low-quality fiber is obtained from young bark used for twine and string. Galls present on the young branches are used in tanning.11

| S. No | Plant part used | Pharmacological activity |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------|
| 1.    | Leaves         | Analgesic Activity⁹      |
|       |                | Anti-inflammatory Activity¹¹ |
|       |                | Anti-bacterial Activity¹² |
|       |                | Astringent Activity⁹     |
|       |                | Anthelmintic Activity⁷   |
|       |                | Anti-microbial Activity¹³ |
|       |                | Antidiabetic Activity¹⁴  |
|       |                | Antiasthmatic Activity¹⁵ |
|       |                | Laxative Activity¹⁶      |
|       |                | Adaptogenic Activity¹⁵   |
|       |                | Hepato-protective activity⁷ |
|       |                | Wound healing Activity¹⁷ |
|       |                | Anti malarial Activity¹⁸ |
|       |                | Hypolipidemic Activity¹⁹ |
|       |                | Spasmyloytic Activity²⁰  |
|       |                | Antidiabetic Activity²¹  |
|       |                | Laxative Activity⁸       |
|       |                | Wound healing Activity⁷  |
|       |                | Antibacterial Activity²² |
|       |                | Antioxidant Activity²³   |
|       |                | Constipation Activity²⁴  |
|       |                | Antihypertensive Activity²⁵ |
| 2.    | Fruit          | Antidiabetic Activity²⁶  |
|       |                | Neurotoxicity Activity²⁷ |
|       |                | Hyperglycemia Activity²⁶ |
|       |                | Hyper-lipidemia Activity²⁶ |
|       |                | Antiulcer Activity²⁸     |
|       |                | Anti-carcinogenic Activity²⁹ |
|       |                | Anti-inflammatory Activity³⁰ |
|       |                | Antioxidant Activity³¹   |
|       |                | Ameliorative effect on metabolic syndrome³² |
| 3.    | Seed           | Wound healing Activity³³ |
|       |                | Nerve regeneration Activity¹ |
|       |                | Anti-venom Activity³⁴     |
|       |                | Insecticidal Activity³⁵   |
|       |                | Fish Poison³⁶            |
|       |                | Protease inhibitor Activity³⁷ |
|       |                | Antibacterial Activity³⁸ |
|       |                | Goitrogenic effect³⁹     |
| 4.    | Bark           | PurgativeActivity⁴⁰      |
|       |                | Wound healing Activity⁴¹ |
|       |                | AntimicrobialActivity⁴²   |
|       |                | Analgesic Activity⁴³     |
|       |                | Neuramidase Activity⁴⁴   |
|       |                | Antiasthmatic Activity⁴⁵ |
|       |                | Anthelmintic Activity⁴⁶  |
|       |                | Amenorrhoea Activity⁴⁵   |
|       |                | Antidiabetic Activity⁴⁷  |
| 5.    | Root           | Antimicrobial activity⁴⁸ |
|       |                | Anti dysentery Activity⁷ |
|       |                | Anti-inflammatory Activity⁴⁸ |
|       |                | Analgesic Activity⁴⁹     |
| 6.    | Stem           | Anti-inflammatory Activity⁴⁹ |
|       |                | Conjunctivities⁵         |
|       |                | Antiseptic⁵⁰            |
|       |                | Hepatoprotective Activity⁵⁰ |

**Table 6: Research work done on Tamarindus indica**

**CONCLUSION**

*Tamarindus indica* has a rich nutritional value containing vitamins, minerals, electrolytes. It is well known with its usage in traditional medicine purpose having various therapeutic and pharmacological activities

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