**Moringa oleifera** LAM. as Medicinal and Food Plant to Fight Against Malnutrition in India

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Received: 12-05-2022; Revised: 26-07-2022; Accepted: 03-08-2022; Published on: 15-08-2022.

## ABSTRACT

Moringa is an indigenous plant which belongs to Family-Moringaceae, scientifically, known as Moringa oleifera Lam. It is distributed all over India. The plant is the store house of enormous nutrients. The Fresh leaves juice contains Vit-A, Vit-C, Vit-B complex, Calcium, minerals, Carotenoids and essential amino acids. The tree is also known as miracle plant. The plant is used as a good source of food, i.e., root, stem, leaves, flower, fruits and seeds. The fresh leaves are the rich source of food which has high nutritive values, i.e., 100 g high calories, vitamin C-0.5 mg, 229 mg phosphorus, calcium 285 mg, and many other important minerals viz. Iron (0.007 mg) Manganese (27 mg), Copper (0.029 mg), Potassium (366 mg), Vitamins B-Complex, Vitamins-A, and Vit-C. This indigenous plant is a ray of hope for farmer and it can boost up the health. The tree can be grown by seeds as well by stem cuttings. The high yield is obtained by purpose full agriculture of Moringa. It is a miracle plant which can helps to fight malnutrition.

**Keywords:** Moringa oleifera, Food Plant, Vitamins, Calories, malnutrition, cultivation.

## INTRODUCTION

The demand for complete food in future will be a great challenge for us people. There should be search more and more alternative food resources will be met from our nature. The cheap resources of the balanced diet for the human are a big problem. The indigenous source of food would be better and safe for all of us. Their domestication and agricultural practice may introduce into the new food crops. Moringa is one of the greatest boons of nature for the man. This is the nature plant of India. It has been consumed traditionally since long time. Now, there is a demand to re-introduce it into our compulsory food list.

In Our country a serious discussion on malnutrition is still awaited as we are globally on a low ranking. Malnutrition takes a huge number of lives per year. According to UNICEF, India’s performance is very poor and it needs to do more efforts. The mortality rate of infants and young children has increased. In 2017, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare had launched the National Health Policy, 2017. NITI Ayog released the National Nutrition Strategy in 2019. The worst effect of malnutrition on children caused ≥ 30% stunted, more than 7 million wasting and suffered with many diseases. Most of the children of underweight resided in the rural areas of M.P., Rajasthan and U.P. comprising 23% percentage of the children. About 50% children are anemic while among the adults 23% women and 20% men are in this list. Every government of our country takes initiatives to eradicate malnutrition and poverty. The governments took all steps what were guided by WHO as Mid-Day Meal Scheme, National Food Security Mission, Integrated Child development Services (ICDS), the National Health Mission, the Janani Suraksha Yojana, the Matritva Sahyog Yojana etc. seek to improve the nutrition status in the country. All these efforts are imposed to eradicate the malnutrition issues. *Moringa* is the most important plant which is extremely good source of nutrients. This plant has been already well known in our society. Now it is the need to popularize this plant. *Moringa* is also known as Sehjan, scientifically it is *Moringa oleifera* Lamm. belongs to Moringinaceae Order – Brassicales, in dicotyledinous angiosperms. It is the tree of Indian origin (Fig. 1,2,3). It has vast environmental adaptations. Commonly it is known as drum stick, Horse radish tree, Ben oil tree, sondna, etc.

## AIMS AND PROSPECTIVES

*Moringa oleifera* Lam. is the tree to the explored and popularized in the community. It is the boon for human race due to its rich source of food contents. The present study solely based on the security of alternative food resources in present scenario. We have to plan for food security, clothes, shelter and dignity. The dignity is also a part of human right it is possible after only-
➢ Health security according to WHO Health standards for every one
➢ Fight against the malnutrition in children and other citizens
➢ Chief resources of food and saving the capital money

Literature Review

*Moringa oleifera* Lam. is the miracle plant for nutrition therefore a lot of studies have been done on different aspects were also done as food, fodder and medicine⁶,¹⁰,¹¹,¹². Many more workers examined the efficacy of food from seed¹,¹³,¹⁴. The chemical composition of protein supplement of animal protein was experimented by Bridgemohan et. al., in 2014¹⁵. Malnutrition in children data collection and work was done in a vast scientific community¹⁶,¹⁷. A protocol was developed by the scientists of ICAR, ICCARI Goa²,¹⁸. Both the Global and regional data were collected by UNICEF, WHO & World bank. These are monitoring agencies. The survey was based on the Children Malnutrition. A country level survey data was concentrated on the age wise health information including malnutrition, stunting, wasting, mentally and physically weakness⁵,¹⁴. Some work was also done by the Ministry of Health and Family welfare, Govt. of India⁹.

Study Area

Western Uttar Pradesh the area is highly populated and agricultural economically sound. There is good agriculture area and the farmers are well developed and highly equipped. A huge waste land is also found in this area. Aligarh barren area is so vast, road side, river side, railway track side and other government unplanned land is also useless. Such type of land can be utilized by the propagation of *Moringa* plantation. It has the favorable environmental conditions for *Moringa* adaptation. This area covers only 13 % forest area which need more and more plantation. The local community relies on the market base agro resources. The complete source of food the milk production is above normal but supply and quality is not sure. The Milk may be either synthetic or adulterated. The availability of nutritive and reliable food is a great challenge².

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present work is mainly based on the survey and communication with local inhabitants. The survey based on set questionnaire. Literature survey was from libraries and internet. The specimens and their photographs were kept in the herbarium and album. Taxonomical investigations and their identifications authenticity was from BSI (Botanical Survey of India), Dehradun, Uttarakhand. Furthermore, organoleptic study, plant morphological, plant anatomy and biochemical tests were taken in the lab, Department of Botany, M.M. (P.G.) College, Modinagar.

Agriculture Practices

At present *Moringa* is under great vigilance of scientific and academic world. Mostly wildly cultivated bio-resources found but now the agro-practices are under hit and trials. It is cultivable either by seed or by cuttings.

Nursery

Varieties, *i.e.*, Rohit-1, Coimbatore 2, PKM-1, PKM-2, which were produced by ICAR, Regional Lab. It is grown in the poor soil, hot and humid. Well drained sandy or loamy soil, pH 6.2 to 7.0 is adaptable. Climate for flowering is hot humid. Temperature required is 25-30°C. Seeds are shown with the prepared soil beds. The poly bags of 18 cm height and 12 cm diameter. Light sand and soil mixture should be in 1: 3 ratios. Even organic manure should be mixed. 2-3 seeds are kept in 1-2 cm deep in well prepared and moist bags. The seeds will take time to germinate between 5-12 days. But is also depend on the seeds age, quality, plants age, and surrounding environment. Direct seed sowing in the field is another way of propagation.

Land Preparation

The land is prepared for the direct seed propagation. Well ploughed the land, dig the planting pits about 50cm in deepened aerated soil. Never remove the top soil it should be filled in holes before seedling transplanting. Make a mound for seedlings. Heavy water should avoid in starting but after seedlings come out the support given to the plant to stand straight. Propagation by cuttings, we should use the hard wood twig of 45 cm to 1.5 m long and 10 cm thick. It planted directly or in sacks in the ground (1/3 of the length). A sufficient amount of phosphorus should be added in the soil so that the roots may get soon. The plants will be developed within 2 or 3 months.

Spacing

During the plantation the spacing between two plants should keep- 10 cm X 10 cm to 20 cm X 20 cm or 50 cm X 100 cm. For the leaf production 2.5 m X 2.5 M or 3 m X 3 m or seed production. Spacing is essential for air flow and sufficient light. Irrigation is not needed but sprinkled the water regularly in first three months. The Soil and pH testing will be helpful to grow the plant. These are grown in rich flooded planes on river bottom meadow. The plants are grown in the favorable condition. The seeds may be germinated in the raining seasons naturally in the *Moringa* tree area.

Harvesting

When the pods are ripened and one centimeter in diameter is picked. About 50–55 tons of pods per hectare will be obtained. The pods are used as vegetables. Let the pods are allowed to dry, the seeds are utilized for oil purpose¹³,¹⁸.
Yield

The first yield starts within 6 to 8 months after plantation. It gives high yield up to 10 years two to three seasons may get for 10 years.

Figure 1: (a) Moringa plant in a propagated dig and (b) its flowers

Taxonomical Description

*Moringa* is a perennial tree plant. Its root is tap type even secondary roots are fleshy. The stem has soft wood. Leaves are green, yellow dark green and compound. Flowers are pedicellate, white creamy, zygomorphic and complete. Fruits are up to 10 to 16 inches, pod like, green delicately in early but woody hard at maturity. Seeds are many in each pod having caruncle like structure, contain 40% oil.

Figure 2. *Moringa oleifera* Lam. in a Colony Road side

Uses of *Moringa*

*Moringa* is an Indian Origin tree plant. *Moringa* is widely distributed in our country. *Moringa* is a good source of food, every part of plant is useful e.g. Leaves, roots, stem, flowers, fruits, and seeds. It’s uses are mentioned here-

TRADITIONAL FOOD: At every home some special recipes are prepared from the *Moringa* plant products by using gum, fruits, leaves, bark, flowers etc. *Moringa* is used as main ingredient for making laddu and sandha for the jachha (young baby’s feeding mother). The Gum of *Moringa* is mixed with saunth, dakhni mirch (black piper), saunth (ginger), chironji, bura/khand, cow ghee, almonds and cashew used. This mixture is known as sandha, it is given to jachha as food. This product is also recommended for vision, joint and knee pains².

VEGETABLE: As the south Indians use *Moringa* fruit/pod in sambhar, in the same manner North Indians people also use the plants parts at different occasions viz flowers and young leaves for bhujia preparation. Pods, tree bark, roots parts are used to prepare the pickles, parantha, laddu, etc¹¹.

AS FODDER: In the rural areas the *Moringa* leaves are fed to the milk producing cattle like, cows, buffaloes, goats etc. It helps to produce high quality and more yield.

AS WATER PURIFIER: In the interior villages, somewhere the water quality is very low. It is contaminated by many additives. The additives are removed by adding the *Moringa* seeds and leaves powder.

AS SUPER FOOD: In Comparison to different food plant resources the *Moringa* is the only plant which has equal to many more food resources contents. It contains > 8X Protein than Yoghurt, > 15X Potassium than banana, > 10X Vitamin-A than Carrot, > 12X Iron than Spinach, > 16X Calcium than Milk and > 7X Vitamin-C than Orange (Table-1). There are 92 Nutrients, 46 antioxidants, 36 anti-
inflammatories, 18 amino acids and 9 essential amino acids are found4,14,19.

**Table 1:** *Moringa oleifera* Lam. is a good source of diet. It has 306 Kcal/128Kj in 100 gm leaves soup which has following major nutrients20:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. N.</th>
<th>Vitamins S. N.</th>
<th>Other contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Vit-A 1510 ug</td>
<td>Proteins 25.0 gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vit-E 810 mg</td>
<td>Carbohydrate 26.0 gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Vit-K 1190 ug</td>
<td>Sugar 26.0 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Vit-C 23.0 ug</td>
<td>Fat 0.60 gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Vit-B1 0.80 mg</td>
<td>Fibers 24.0 gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Vit-B2 01.10 mg</td>
<td>Antioxidants +++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Vit-B6 01.00 mg</td>
<td>Carotenes +++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Vit-12 02.00 ug</td>
<td>Salt 0.17 gm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The cow milk is a well-known complete food. It has almost all necessary food elements which is recommended to all young children and mother. The milk availability to all is too hard to think. So, the nature has provided a beautiful example of all contents of food, the *Moringa* (Table-2).

**Table 2:** Comparison between Indian *Moringa oleifera* Lam (100 gm leaf powder soup) and Cow Milk (1 Cup = 240 ml)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. N.</th>
<th><em>Moringa oleifera</em> Lam. (100 gm)15</th>
<th>Cow Milk (1 cup = 240 ml)20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Vit-A 1510 ug</td>
<td>Vit-A 134 ug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vit-E 810 mg</td>
<td>Vit-E 0.07 gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Vit-K 1190 ug</td>
<td>Vit-K 0.50 ug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Vit-C 23.0 ug</td>
<td>Vit-C 0.50um</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Vit-B1 0.80 mg</td>
<td>Vit-B1 0.095 gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Vit-B2 01.10 mg</td>
<td>Vit-B2 0.451 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Vit-B6 01.00 mg</td>
<td>Vit-B6 0.093 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Vit-12 02.00 ug</td>
<td>Vit-12 1.12 um</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Proteins 25.0 gm</td>
<td>Proteins 0.17 um</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Carbohydrate 26.0 gm</td>
<td>Carbohydrate 0.17 gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sugar 26.0 gm</td>
<td>Sugar 0.17 gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Fat 0.02 ug</td>
<td>Fat 0.17 gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Fibers 0.17 gm</td>
<td>Fibers NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Salts 0.02 gm</td>
<td>Salts 0.17 gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Antioxidants +++</td>
<td>Antioxidants NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Carotenes +++</td>
<td>Carotenes NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Ca 1985 mg</td>
<td>Ca 285 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Fe 45.00 mg</td>
<td>Fe 0.07 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>P 61.20 mg</td>
<td>P 229 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Na 86.20 mg</td>
<td>K 0.50 mg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Figure 3. *Moringa* tree in wild condition with fruiting and flowering]

**ULCER TREATMENT:** Its seeds oil is so nutritive and act against the ulcer as well wounds.

**CANCER:** The high amount of Vitamins-C and phosphorus promotes the drugs where are used in Chemotherapy to target the cell which require the nutrients without having the normal cells, the lung and ovarian cancer effecently can be treated.

**EYE AILMENT:** Vitamins A, C, E, Copper & Zinc helps to prevent & reduce the eye muscular degeneration or Stargardt’s disease can be prevented.

**BONE TREATMENT:** Manganese with Vitamins D, Zn, Cu, and Ca helps to prevent the bone loss in older age. The deficiency of Manganese increases the chance of bone related ailments and it helps in bone metabolism, Osteoporosis also treated.

**ANEMIA:** The Iron treats Anemia. Fe is present in high amount in *Moringa*. The low amount of Fe cause low amount of oxygen to the cells, result is low level of energy, poor immunity and slow brain functions but here huge amount of iron helps to trap high amount of oxygen.

**MIGRAIN:** B2 (Riboflavin), 400 mg dose helps to treat, cure the headache and migraine attack. It will be helpful from the leaf’s parts.

**DIGESTION:** Phosphorus act as phospholipids which is a component of biological membrane e.g., nucleic acid and nucleotides helps to balance the pH level in body. Phosphorus reduces the water retention, diarrhea bloating. Product the heavily growth bacteria.

**OTHER AILMENTS:** Hair treatment, Skin Problems, Anti-ageing, Aphrodisiac etc.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Moringa is a food plant, it has a huge food value estimated by Bridgemohan et. al., in 2014, Mathew et. al., in 2000 and Thayer in 2006. It was characterized by Leone et. al., in 2016. Compaore et. al., in 2011, Saa et. al., in 2019 and Ijarotimi et. al., in 2003 estimated the nutritive characters and complimentary flours for nutritional values of Moringa seeds. Anonymous in 2019 did the work on Moringa leaf powder. There would be more challenges for health problems. Kashyap et. al., in 2009 worked on Moringa for food, fodder and medicinal utility. Ramabulana, et. al., in 2016 did the work on Moringa effect against radiations. Anonymous in 2019 worked on agro-practices of Moringa to guide the farmers. Anonymous in 2018, 2011 and 1991 gave the WHO standard on health information and NSSO reporting to uplift the health standards. Many Scientists and agencies to manage surveys and collect the data on Malnutrition and different aspect hence the Moringa oleifera Lam. is the best plant for human food.

Future Plan

We can set the standard parameters for an alternative food list which could be in easy reach. Scrutinizing the new herbs and food resources to add in food list can solve our problem. There would be available chief source of food and balanced diet to all citizens. No one would die due to malnutrition. There is a very shameful situation that a huge number of populations live under below poverty line and have insufficient food! We must have plan to eradicate the problem of poverty and malnutrition. We have just an idea to propagate more and more Moringa trees on waste and wild land. Try to Familiarize among farmers and common people. It can help not only to fight against malnutrition as well as poverty.

Recommendation

It should be a common practice among all. It should be available very cheap and easily to everyone. It is a recommendable source. The farmers and traders also having a good opportunity to boost up their economy.

CONCLUSION

Moringa is a miracle plant and a boon given by the nature. It has valuable supplements of food. It is also medicinally valuable herb which helps to cure many diseases. It should be grown with modern agro-technical methods everywhere.

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Source of Support: The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Conflict of Interest: The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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