Naveen Shodh Sansar (An International Refereed / Peer Review Multidisciplinary Research Journal)
RNI No.- MPHIN/2013/60638, ISSN 2320-8767, E- ISSN 2394-3793, Scientific Journal Impact Factor (SJIF)- 8.054,
July to September 2025, E-Journal, Vol. I, Issue LI (51), ISO 9001:2015 - E2024049304 (QMS)

Medicinal Value and Relevance of Jackfruit Tree and Leaf

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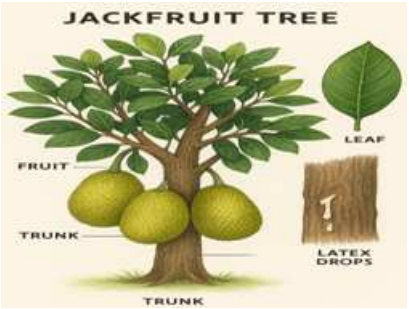
Abstract: The jackfruit tree (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*), widely grown in tropical regions, has long been valued for its large edible fruits. However, beyond its use as a food source, the tree offers significant medicinal value, especially through its leaves, bark, and latex. Traditional systems of medicine have used jackfruit leaves in treating common ailments like fever, wounds, and digestive disorders. Modern studies have begun to support these age-old practices, identifying powerful compounds in the leaves that offer antidiabetic, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and antioxidant properties. This paper explores the full potential of jackfruit leaves and the tree's medicinal role in both traditional and modern healthcare contexts. The study promotes the use of jackfruit tree parts in daily wellness and calls for more scientific exploration to integrate these natural remedies into current medical systems.
Keywords: Jackfruit tree, medicinal plants, jackfruit leaves, natural healing, traditional remedies, herbal medicine, health benefits, plant-based treatment.

Introduction - The jackfruit tree is one of the most familiar trees in tropical regions, especially in countries like India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and the Philippines. It thrives in warm and humid climates and can be found in home gardens, rural farms, and forest edges. While the fruit of the jackfruit tree is well-known and widely consumed, the medicinal uses of other parts of the tree are not as popular. In ancient times, people relied on plants for healing purposes, and the jackfruit tree was one of those natural healers found in their surroundings. Traditionally, the leaves of the jackfruit tree were used to treat wounds, reduce fever, manage blood sugar, and support digestion. In folk medicine, people used leaf decoctions (boiled water with leaves) to treat coughs, rashes, and other skin conditions. Despite this deep-rooted use, there has been limited awareness in urban areas and modern medicine regarding the therapeutic power of jackfruit leaves. In recent years, due to the growing interest in natural and plant-based remedies, researchers and scientists have begun to study the chemical components of jackfruit leaves. Initial findings have revealed promising results that support their traditional uses. This paper presents a comprehensive view of how the jackfruit tree, especially its leaves, contributes to health and healing. It aims to promote the use of jackfruit tree-based medicine and highlight its relevance in modern herbal and pharmaceutical applications.

Structure of the Jackfruit Tree and Leaf : The jackfruit tree is a large, evergreen plant that can grow up to 25–30 meters tall. It has a strong and straight trunk covered with thick, brown bark. When the bark is injured, it releases a sticky white substance called latex. This latex itself has some medicinal applications and has traditionally been used to treat skin infections and wounds.The tree's leaves are glossy, dark green, and oval-shaped. They are thick, smooth to touch, and grow alternately on the branches. Younger leaves are tender and slightly lobed, while mature ones become tough and full-bodied. These leaves stay on the tree throughout the year and are easily available even during the dry seasons.The leaves are not just important for photosynthesis; they also play a key role in traditional healing. Due to their thickness and oil content, they can be crushed into pastes or boiled into herbal water. The inner chemistry of the leaf contains several natural compounds such as flavonoids, tannins, and alkaloids, which have been linked with therapeutic benefits like reducing pain, lowering blood sugar, and fighting microbes. The structure of the jackfruit tree allows easy access to its leaves, making them a convenient and low-cost option for household remedies. The leaves can be collected, dried, and stored for future use. This section helps us understand that jackfruit leaves are not just ordinary green parts of the plant—they are potential healers found in nature.



Nutritional and Medicinal Components of the Leaf : Jackfruit leaves are loaded with natural nutrients and phytochemicals that are useful for health. While people often talk about the fruit's nutritional value, the leaves are equally rich in bioactive compounds. Scientific testing has shown that jackfruit leaves contain flavonoids, tannins, saponins, alkaloids, essential oils, and natural antioxidants. These elements work together to provide multiple health benefits.Flavonoids are plant-based antioxidants known to reduce inflammation and protect cells from damage caused by free radicals. This helps in fighting chronic diseases like cancer and diabetes. Tannins are natural compounds that have antimicrobial properties. They help in healing wounds, treating diarrhea, and stopping the growth of harmful bacteria. Saponins are known to boost immunity and help manage cholesterol levels. Alkaloids can act as pain relievers and also help in managing high blood pressure.Jackfruit leaves also contain small amounts of minerals like calcium, magnesium, and iron. Calcium supports bone strength, magnesium regulates muscle function, and iron is essential for healthy blood circulation. The presence of Vitamin C further adds to the immune-boosting properties of these leaves. Vitamin C also helps in the repair of body tissues and increases the absorption of iron from plant-based foods.Due to this combination of medicinal compounds, jackfruit leaves are considered a natural remedy for several minor health problems. They do not cause harmful side effects when used properly and can be used in both fresh and dried forms. This section reveals why jackfruit leaves deserve more recognition as medicinal tools, not just green parts of a tree.

Traditional Uses of Jackfruit Leaves : In traditional medicine, especially in rural India and Sri Lanka, jackfruit leaves are commonly used to prepare simple yet effective remedies. These methods have been passed from one generation to another and are still practiced in many homes today.One of the most common uses is for managing fever. Leaves are boiled in water and this decoction is consumed once it cools down. It helps lower body temperature naturally without needing synthetic medicines. For skin wounds, the leaves are crushed into a paste and applied directly to the wound. This helps reduce swelling and infection, and supports fast healing. People suffering from high blood sugar levels or early signs of diabetes often use jackfruit leaf water daily. It is believed to help the body use insulin better, thereby controlling sugar levels in the blood. For stomach-related problems like constipation, indigestion, or gas, drinking warm jackfruit leaf water offers relief.In folk remedies, jackfruit leaves are also used to treat boils, insect bites, cough, and even dental issues. Some families use the leaves as natural plates for food because of their cleanliness and strength. In villages, dried jackfruit leaves are sometimes burned and the smoke used to keep away mosquitoes.Though simple, these traditional practices are rooted in deep understanding of natural healing. They show that jackfruit leaves are much more than green foliage—they are natural medicines available at no cost. As urban populations rediscover herbal medicine, these traditional uses become even more important to preserve and promote.

Scientific Value and Healing Properties : With the rise of interest in herbal medicines, modern researchers have begun testing the medicinal claims related to jackfruit leaves. Laboratory studies and small-scale experiments have shown that the leaves truly have biological activities that support health.

1. Antidiabetic Action: When leaf extracts were given to animal models, there was a clear reduction in blood glucose levels. The compounds in the leaves enhance the effect of insulin and support sugar breakdown in the body. Regular use of boiled jackfruit leaf water is believed to help control diabetes naturally.

2. Antimicrobial Effects: Jackfruit leaf extracts have shown strong ability to kill bacteria and fungi. They are effective against common pathogens that cause skin infections, sore throat, and urinary tract infections. This property explains why the leaves are used to treat wounds and rashes.

3. Antioxidant Protection: Free radicals are harmful particles that damage cells and lead to diseases like cancer and heart problems. The natural antioxidants in jackfruit leaves help fight these particles and reduce the chances of chronic illnesses. Antioxidants also help in skin health and delay aging.

4. Wound Healing and Anti-inflammatory Effect: When jackfruit leaf paste is applied to cuts or bruises, it helps reduce swelling and pain. The leaf compounds reduce inflammation and speed up the healing process. This supports the traditional use of the leaves as first aid medicine in rural areas.

These findings support the age-old wisdom of using

jackfruit leaves for healing. Although more scientific studies are still needed, the initial results are highly encouraging and show how powerful a natural remedy the jackfruit leaf can be.

Relevance in Modern Herbal Health Practices : As the demand for natural, plant-based treatments rises across the world, the jackfruit tree—particularly its leaves—deserves renewed attention in modern herbal medicine. People today are becoming more aware of the side effects of chemical drugs and are turning toward safer, eco-friendly, and affordable options. Jackfruit leaves fit this need perfectly due to their wide availability, ease of use, and proven effectiveness in treating common health problems.In urban areas, people may not have direct access to jackfruit trees, but with the right efforts, jackfruit leaf-based products can be developed and marketed in various forms. Herbal tea bags made from dried leaves, capsules containing powdered leaf extract, and ointments or balms using leaf paste can be introduced to the health and wellness market. These products would offer a safe and convenient alternative to synthetic medicines for treating minor infections, managing blood sugar, boosting immunity, and reducing inflammation.In addition, jackfruit leaves have the potential to be included in the Ayurvedic and naturopathic systems as a registered herb with certified uses. Medical practitioners practicing herbal therapy can recommend jackfruit leaf-based remedies to patients as part of an integrated health plan. Even in cosmetic industries, the antioxidant-rich leaves can be used in skin creams or anti-aging products to improve skin health naturally.Educational campaigns and workshops on the health benefits of jackfruit leaves can be organized in communities to create awareness. Schools, health centres, and wellness resorts can cultivate jackfruit plants in their own gardens to promote “grow your own medicine” practices.In summary, jackfruit leaves are highly relevant in today’s healthcare systems. With more research, better packaging, and public education, jackfruit leaf-based remedies can become part of the global movement toward natural healing.

Challenges in Usage and Popularization : Despite the numerous benefits of jackfruit leaves, their use in mainstream medicine and public health remains limited. One of the main reasons is the lack of awareness. Many people, especially in cities, are unaware that jackfruit leaves can be used for treating common health issues. As a result, the knowledge of this valuable plant remains confined to rural and tribal communities.Another challenge is the **absence of standardized products**. Jackfruit leaves are mostly used in their raw form, which makes it difficult for modern health professionals to recommend them without clear dosage guidelines. There is also a lack of scientific trials on human subjects to confirm the extent of their medicinal effects, which is necessary for any herb to be formally accepted in modern medicine.Furthermore, jackfruit leaves are **highly perishable**. Once plucked, they begin to lose their freshness quickly, which makes large-scale packaging and distribution difficult. Without proper drying or preservation techniques, their medicinal properties may degrade over time. Additionally, there is no organized system for collecting, processing, and selling jackfruit leaves like other medicinal herbs such as neem or Tulsi.Another problem is the **inconsistent quality** of leaves across different trees and regions. Differences in soil, climate, and tree age can lead to variations in chemical composition, making it difficult to produce uniform herbal formulations. Lastly, very few companies or researchers are investing in jackfruit leaf-based product development, so innovation remains slow. To overcome these challenges, steps should be taken to spread awareness, develop proper drying and storage techniques, promote research, and support the commercial development of jackfruit leaf-based medicines and supplements.

Conclusion : The jackfruit tree, long admired for its large and nutritious fruits, offers much more than just food. Its leaves are packed with medicinal compounds that make them an excellent source of natural healing. Traditional practices have used jackfruit leaves for centuries to manage diabetes, treat infections, heal wounds, and improve digestion. Now, modern scientific research is beginning to confirm the presence of valuable compounds such as flavonoids, antioxidants, and tannins in these leaves.Despite these advantages, jackfruit leaves remain underutilized in today’s healthcare systems. The lack of awareness, standardized forms, and scientific trials prevents their inclusion in mainstream medicine. Yet, with proper initiatives, the use of jackfruit leaves can be revived and promoted. They offer a low-cost, eco-friendly, and sustainable solution to health challenges, particularly in regions where access to modern medicine is limited.Jackfruit leaves have the potential to be transformed into teas, powders, capsules, ointments, and even skincare products. Encouraging community-level cultivation of jackfruit trees can ensure the availability of this natural medicine for generations to come. With growing global attention toward herbal health, jackfruit leaf-based remedies can find their place in both traditional and modern health practices.In conclusion, it is time to look beyond the fruit and recognize the hidden power of the jackfruit tree. When used thoughtfully, its leaves can enhance personal health, lessen reliance on synthetic medications, and encourage

a more natural lifestyle. They serve as a link between traditional knowledge and modern well-being.

Suggestions for Further Research :

1. **Human Clinical Trials**: Conduct studies involving people to confirm the antidiabetic and antibacterial effects of jackfruit leaf extracts.
2. **Standardization of Extracts**: Identify the best stage of leaf maturity for harvesting and processing, and define a safe and effective dosage for various treatments.
3. **Product Development**: Explore the possibility of developing ready-to-use medicinal products such as jackfruit leaf tea bags, capsules, and creams for commercial use.
4. **Post-Harvest Technology**: Design low-cost drying and packaging methods to preserve the leaves without losing their medicinal value.
5. **Nutraceutical Use**: Study the use of jackfruit leaf extract in health supplements to boost immunity, manage blood sugar, or improve digestion.
6. **Cosmetic Applications**: Investigate the effectiveness of jackfruit leaves in skincare products to reduce aging signs, acne, and skin inflammation.
7. **Education and Outreach**: Start community programs to spread awareness about the use of jackfruit leaves in everyday life, especially in urban areas.
8. **Agricultural Support**: Encourage farmers to grow jackfruit trees not just for fruits, but also for medicinal leaves, by offering support and buy-back schemes.

These steps will help unlock the full potential of jackfruit leaves and make them a valuable part of both natural and professional healthcare systems.

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