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# A systematic review on several therapeutics' activities and recent trends on *Moringa oleifera* an traditional medical plant

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#### Abstract

Moringa oleifera, is family member of the moringacea, is a remarkable plant. It is cultivated extensively in various regions of southern Asia. This plant, whether as a small evergreen or deciduous tree, holds great significance as a vital source of medicinal properties. The consumption of this food item offers numerous advantages, providing nourishment and serving as a preventive measure. It possesses a wide range of therapeutic properties, offering significant dietary benefits. The various components of the *M. oleifera* plants, such as leaves, flowers, fruits, seeds, and roots, contain specific quantities of protein, β-carotene, amino acids, essential minerals, and diverse phenolic compounds. The plant have several medicinal activities such as antitumor, antiulcer, anti-inflammatory, antiepileptic, antipyretic, antispasmodic, diuretic, antidiabetic, antihypertensive, cholesterol-level down, cell regeneration and hepatoprotective. This review explores the diverse range of health benefits and therapeutic properties associated with *M. oleifera* plants. These include their potential as anti-cancer, anti-diabetic, anti-inflammatory, anti-allergic, diuretic, antioxidant, anti-obesity, cardiovascular, anti-asthmatic, hematological, anti-ulcer, and anti-acrolithic agents. Furthermore, the review also delves into the recent applications of *M. oleifera*.

**Keywords:** *Moringa oleifera*, health benefits, therapeutics activities, recent application, medicinal plant, phyto-constituents, phytochemical studies

## 1. Introduction

The *M. oleifera*, commonly referred to as the drumstick plant, is a verdant tree belonging to the Moringaceae family. This nutrient-dense plant is cultivated in various regions across all over world, including the United States (US) <sup>[1]</sup>. In addition to its aliases, such as horseradish tree and drumstick tree, this plant serves a multitude of purposes, catering to both human and animal consumption, as well as finding applications in various industries <sup>[2]</sup>.

The tree's leaves, fruit, flowers, and young branches are widely used as a highly nutritious vegetable in several countries, such as India, the Philippines, Hawaii, Pakistan, and numerous African nations. In particular, the people of India have incorporated it into their daily diet for nearly 5000 years [2-3]. Originating in the northern parts of India, its popularity easily spread to the southern parts, where "Murungai keerai" (Moringa leaves) and "Murungaikaai" (drumsticks) have become popular vegetable sources. The moringa tree has successfully established itself across Asia, most of Africa, South America, a small portion of North America, and has left a few marks in Europe [4].

They possess diverse functions as a nutritional supplement, enhancer of soil quality, and component of water purification systems. M. oleifera plants are also renowned for their oil production, making it a prominent and lucrative source of revenue. The mostly bioactive phenolic compounds found in these plants are classified as flavonoids, including quercetin and kaempferol. Numerous studies have reported that moringa leaves exhibit remarkable antioxidant properties, making them a potential natural source for protecting cells against harmful free radicals <sup>[5]</sup>. Additionally, the agglomeration properties of water, proteins, and fatty acid methyl esters derived from M. oleifera seeds are thoroughly examined to explore their potential applications in biodiesel production and water purification systems <sup>[6]</sup>. The leaves possess a rich nutritional profile, comprising of vitamins C and A,  $\beta$ -carotene, calcium, iron, potassium, and phosphorus. Additionally, they contain a substantial protein level of 27 percent <sup>[7]</sup>. M. oleifera leaves exhibit a calcium content equivalent to that of four glasses of milk, a vitamin C content comparable to that of seven oranges, and a potassium content three

times higher than that of bananas. Furthermore, these leaves contain three times the amount of iron found in spinach, four times the quantity of vitamin A present in carrots, and half the protein content of milk, as indicated by research findings [8].

# 1.1. Morphology of Moringa oleifera

- a) Leaves: The length of the leaves can reach up to 45 cm, and they are either bipinnate or more commonly tripinnate. These leaves are composed of leaflets that are approximately 1-2 cm in length [9].
- **b) Flowers**: The *M. oleifera* possesses fragrant bisexual flowers that are yellowish-white in color. These flowers are found on slender stalks, which are heavily distributed in spreading or drooping axillary clusters measuring 10-25 cm in length.
- c) **Fruits**: The fruits of *M. oleifera* are characterized by their trilobed capsules and are commonly known as pods [11]
- **d) Seed**: The seeds of *M. oleifera* exhibit a spherical shape and possess a brownish semi-permeable seed hull, accompanied by three delicate papery wings.
- e) Roots: Seeds undergo a gradual development process, forming tuberous, white taproots that possess a distinct pungent scent and exhibit minimal lateral root growth [10].
- **f) Bark and wood**: The bark of *Moringa oleifera* displays a whitish gray coloration, characterized by its thickness and softness. It exhibits a fissured and warty texture, which can also transform into a rough surface.

The analysis of various components of *M. oleifera* through phytochemical screenings has demonstrated the existence of

glucosinolates, isothiocyanates, carotenoids, vitamins, as well as substantial amounts of proteins and carbohydrates.



Fig 1: The view of *Moringa oleifera* tree with their various parts

Consequently, this plant possesses significant medicinal and nutritional properties that are beneficial to both humans and livestock. *M. oleifera* is extensively cultivated in various regions of India, where its medicinal potential has been widely acknowledged. In Nigeria, numerous institutions and organizations have established *M. oleifera* plantations for public utilization <sup>[12]</sup>. The brief discussion about the type of extract and medicinal effects mentioned in the given Table. 01 as below followings:

<b>Table 1:</b> The several types of Extracts Plant Parts with their Medicinal Effects [2-2]
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Medicinal effects	Extraction type	Reference
Antioxidant	Moringa olifera leaf	[2]
In vitro antifungal activity	Ethanolic extraction of the seeds of <i>Moringa olifera</i>	[5]
Antimicrobial activity	Acetone extraction of <i>Moringa olifera</i> leaf	[8]
Anti-inflammatory activity	Aqueous extraction of Moringa olifera root	[13]
Anti-diabetic activity	extraction of the seeds of <i>Moringa olifera</i>	[15]
Hypolipidemic and antioxidant activity	Hydro alcoholic extraction of <i>Moringa olifera</i>	[26]

- **1.2. Traditional use** *M. oleifera:* The leaves of *M. oleifera* have long been employed in traditional medicine for their anti-diabetic, anti-bacterial, anti-headache, anti-hypertensive, anti-fever, and anti-inflammatory properties. Scientific research has also confirmed that different parts of the plant, including the root, flower, gum, seed, and stem bark, possess various medicinal properties. These include abortifacient effects in the root, flower, and gum, anti-hypertensive properties in the flower and seed, hypolipidemic effects in the flower, anti-inflammatory effects in the root and flower, and anti-ulcer genic potential in the stem bark. These findings highlight the diverse therapeutic potential of Moringa olifera as a valuable herbal drug [13].
- **1.3. Nutritional Value:** *M. oleifera*, a versatile plant, possesses various parts that are abundant in both essential nutrients and anti-nutrients. The leaves of *M. oleifera* are particularly noteworthy for their mineral content, including

calcium, potassium, zinc, magnesium, iron, and copper. Additionally, these leaves contain vitamins and beta-carotene (a precursor to vitamin A), various B vitamins like folic acid, pyridoxine, and nicotinic acid, as well as vitamin C, D, and E. Moreover, *M. oleifera* leaves have a low calorific value, making them suitable for inclusion in the diet of individuals struggling with obesity.

Furthermore, the fibrous pods of *M. oleifera* hold specific value in the treatment of digestive issues and the prevention of colon cancer. Research indicates that immature pods contain approximately 46.78% fiber and 20.66% protein content. Moreover, these pods boast a 30% amino acid content. Interestingly, both immature pods and flowers exhibit similar amounts of palmitic, linoleic, and oleic acids, which further contribute to their beneficial properties [16]. The different biological properties and phytoconstituents of plant mention in the Table. 02 as below section:

Table 2: The list of several phytoconstituents & Biological properties of plant M. oleifera [49-53]

Parts of plant	Phytochemical constituents	Pharmacological properties	Reference
Seeds	Moringine, niazimicin, niazirin	Acts against asthma,	[49]
Leaf	Niazirin, Niazirinin, Niaziminin, Niazimicin A, Niazimicin B	Anticonvulsant, Antioxidant,	[50]
Deur	1 (1 azirini, 1 (1 azirinini, 1 (1 azirininin 7 (, 1 (1 azirininin B	Antihypertensive, antibacterial, anticance	
Root	Moringine, moringinine, spirachin, also p-cymene	Antifertility	[51]
Pods	Isothiocyanate, nitrites, beta- sitosterol.	Act against inflammation & helmintics	[52]

Flower	Present some chemical constituents like as quercetin, isoquercetin, kaemopherol, kaempferitin	Act against inflammation	[48]
Barks	Benzylgiucosinolate derivatives	Act against urolithiatic	[54]
Steam	Chemical constituents are extracted from stemVanillin, beta- sitosterone	Act against inflammation	[53]

*M. oleifera* shows promise in various health aspects, various research is needed to fully understand its mechanisms of action and to establish its efficacy and safety in different contexts. Additionally, individual responses to Moringa may vary, and consulting with a healthcare professional is recommended, especially if incorporating Moringa supplements into the diet.

#### 2. Therapeutics activity of Moringa oleifera

Moringa oleifera is attributed with various therapeutic activities due to its rich phytochemical composition. The effectiveness of Moringa in certain therapeutic areas may vary, some important therapeutic activity of plant discussed as below description:

- **Anti-cancer:** *M. oleifera* possesses the potential to serve as an effective anticancer agent due to its natural composition, reliability, and safety when used at appropriate concentrations. Numerous studies have demonstrated its ability to act as an anti-neoproliferative agent, effectively impeding the growth of cancer cells. Research has specifically highlighted the efficacy of M. oleifera as an anticancer agent against various types of cancers [17]. Notably, the extract derived from M. oleifera leaves has exhibited the ability to hinder the viability of hepatocellular carcinoma, acute lymphoblastic leukemia, and myeloid leukemia [18]. The inhibitory effects have been attributed to the presence of bioactive compounds such niazimicin. β-sitosterol-3-O-β-Dglucopyranoside, and 4-(α-L-rhamnosyloxy) benzyl isothiocyanate [19].
- II. Anti-inflammatory: The various parts of the M. oleifera plant possess significant anti-inflammatory activity. For example, the root extract has been found to exhibit noteworthy anti-inflammatory activity in rats with carrageenan-induced paw edema. Additionally, the crude methanol extract of the root has shown a dose-dependent inhibition of carrageenan-induced paw edema after oral administration. Furthermore, the n-butanol extract of the seeds of M. oleifera has demonstrated anti-inflammatory activity against ovalbumin-induced airway inflammation in guinea pigs. The potent anti-inflammatory activity of the bioactive compounds found in M. oleifera suggests that it may have the potential to alleviate inflammationassociated chronic diseases. Consequently, this plant may VII. have beneficial effects on conditions such as asthma, pain, and other symptoms that arise as a result of inflammation [21].
- III. Analgesic activity: The analgesic properties of various Moringa species have been documented. A study conducted on experimental animals utilized ethanolic extracts from the tender pod-like fruits of Moringa concanensis, revealing a notable analgesic effect. Additionally, the alcoholic extracts derived from the leaves and seeds of *M. oleifera* also exhibited significant analgesic activity, as demonstrated by the hot plate and tail immersion methods [22-23].
- **IV. Anti-diabetic:** The various medicinal plants have **VIII.** undergone assessment to determine their potential as therapeutic agents for diabetes. Among these plants, *M. oleifera* holds significant importance. Studies have shown

that *Moringa oleifera* leaves have the ability to significantly reduce blood glucose levels in both Wistar rats and Goto-Kakizaki (GK) rats, which are models for type 2 diabetes. Additionally, research has indicated that the extract derived from moringa leaves effectively lowers blood sugar levels within three hours of ingestion. The anti-diabetic activity of *M. oleifera* is believed to be attributed to the presence of dark chocolate polyphenols and other polyphenols. Moringa leaves are rich in polyphenols, including quercetin-3-glycoside, rutin, kaempferol glycosides, and other polyphenols. Therefore, by developing appropriate technology, the potential antidiabetic properties of *M. oleifera* can be harnessed and commercialized, providing an alternative to conventional diabetes medications [25].

- V. Diuretic activity: *M. oleifera* leaves possess a variety of bioactive compounds that have a direct impact on blood pressure. These compounds, such as nitrile, mustard oil glycosides, and thiocarbamate glycosides, are found in the leaves of *M. oleifera* and contribute to the reduction of blood pressure. Furthermore, the roots, leaves, flowers, gum, and aqueous infusion of seeds of *Moringa oleifera* exhibit diuretic properties. Additionally, Moringa leaves content bioactive phytoconstituents, including b-sitosterol, which has been shown to have a cholesterol-lowering effect [27].
- **Anti –oxidant:** *M. oleifera*, a plant known for its various health benefits, is recognized as a valuable source of antioxidants. Research has shown that the aqueous extracts obtained from the leaves, fruits, and seeds of M. oleifera possess antioxidant properties. In a study investigating the antioxidant potential of freeze-dried Moringa leaves using different extraction methods, it was observed that the methanol and ethanol extracts derived from M. oleifera of Indian origin exhibited the highest antioxidant activity, with percentages of 65.1% and 66.8% respectively. Furthermore, it was noted that the presence of phenolic compounds, such as quercetin and kaempferol, played a significant role in the antioxidant activity of M. oleifera. Another recent study comparing the antioxidant potential of palm oil and M. oleifera seeds revealed that M. oleifera seeds possess superior radical scavenging abilities [29].
  - Cardiovascular activity: Furthermore, apart from the previously mentioned Brady-cardiac effect of *M. oleifera* leaves, various parts of the *M. oleifera* have been found to possess cardiac and circulatory stimulant properties to some extent. The root bark of Moringa have an alkaloid called moringinine, Moringinine acts as a cardiac stimulant by affecting the sympathetic nervous system. This stimulation of the sympathetic nervous system contributes to the observed cardiac effects [30]. Additionally, the prevention of hyperlipidemia can also lead to these effects. Research has shown that *M. oleifera* can prevent hyperlipidemia in male Wister rats by addressing iron deficiency [31].

In a comparative study between *Moringa oleifera* leaf extract and antenolol (a selective  $\beta 1$  receptor antagonist drug used for cardiovascular diseases), the effects on serum cholesterol level, serum triglyceride level, blood

glucose level, heart weight, and body weight of adrenaline-induced rats were examined. The study revealed that *Moringa oleifera* leaf extract induced significant changes in cardiovascular parameters. Specifically, it was found to have hypolipidemic **XII.** properties, reducing body weight, heart weight, serum triglyceride level, and serum cholesterol level in the experimental animals. These findings further support the beneficial effects of *Moringa oleifera* on cardiovascular health <sup>[32]</sup>. Moreover, in addition to the aforementioned studies, the leaves of *M. oleifera* have also been found to possess anti-atherosclerotic and hypo-lipidemic effects <sup>[32-33]</sup>

**IX.** Anti –asthmatic activity: A considerable amount of time ago, there was a report indicating that the alkaloid found **XIII.** in the *M. Oleifera* plant bears a striking resemblance to ephedrine in terms of its effects and can potentially be utilized for the treatment of asthma. This alkaloid, known as moringine, has the ability to relax bronchioles, which are small air passages in the lungs [33]. Furthermore, a study conducted to assess the effectiveness and safety of *Moringa oleifera* seed kernels in managing asthmatic patients demonstrated promising results. The research revealed a significant reduction in the severity of asthma symptoms and an improvement in respiratory functions [34]

X. Neuro-pharmacological activity: *M. Oleifera* exhibits its effects on the central nervous system (CNS) and possesses anti-convulsant properties. This activity is attributed to its impact on a central mechanism that XIV. influences the release of γ-amino butyric acid (GABA). Consequently, *M. oleifera* has been widely utilized for the treatment of epilepsy. Additionally, *M. oleifera* demonstrates protective effects against degenerative and chronic neuronal disorders such as Alzheimer's disease. It enhances memory by acting on the neurons in the hippocampus. Moreover, it induces the differentiation of myeloid cells and photoreceptors, while promoting the development of neurons in the hippocampus [35-36].

Antimicrobial and anti-helminthic effects: The XI. inhibitory effects of M. oleifera antimicrobial components have been confirmed following their discovery. In a recent investigation, it was found that aqueous extracts of M. oleifera exhibited inhibitory properties against various pathogenic bacteria, including Staphylococcus aureus, Bacillus subtilis, Escherichia coli, and Pseudomonas aeruginosa, in a dose-dependent manner. Additionally, M. oleifera extracts were also found to inhibit the growth of Mycobacterium phlei and B. subtilis [37]. The leaf extract of M. oleifera was effective in controlling the growth of fungi Basidiobolus haptosporus and Basidiobolus ranarums. Another study investigated the antimicrobial activity of aqueous methanolic extract and fixed oil against microorganisms such as Scenedesmus obliquus (green algae), E. coli ATCC 13706, P. aeruginosa ATCC10145, S. aureus NAMRU 3 25923, Bacillus stearothermophilus, Herpes Simplex virus type 1 (HSV 1), and Polio virus type 1 (sabin vaccine). The antimicrobial activity varied, with B. stearothermophilus being sensitive and P. aeruginosa being resistant [38]. In addition to its antibacterial properties, M. oleifera oils also possess antifungal activity. A study comparing the relative antimicrobial activity of seed extracts against bacteria (Pasturella multocida, E. coli, B. subtilis, and S. aureus) and fungi

(Fusarium solani and Rhizopus solani) revealed that P. multocida and B. subtilis were the most susceptible strains, and their activity was influenced by cations (Na+, K+, Mg2+, and Ca2+) [39].

**Anti** – **pyretic activity**: The antipyretic activity of *M. oleifera* bioactive constituents can be postulated due to their anti-inflammatory properties. In order to evaluate the antipyretic effect, a research study was conducted using yeast-induced hyperpyrexia method and various extracts of *M. oleifera* seeds including ethanol, petroleum ether, solvent ether, and ethyl acetate. Paracetamol was utilized as a control during the experiment. Interestingly, the ethanol and ethyl acetate extracts of the seeds exhibited noteworthy antipyretic activity in rats [40-41].

Anti -ulcer activity: Moringa root and leaves contain various compounds that exhibit spasmolytic activity. include These compounds 4-(alphaLrhamnosyloxybenzyl)-o-methyl thiocarbamate, which may be influenced by calcium channel blockade, as well as niazinin A, niazinin B, niazimicin, and others, all of which have hypotensive and bradycardiac effects. The presence of these different constituents supports the traditional use of this plant in treating gastrointestinal motility disorders. Furthermore, the methanolic extract of M. oleifera has shown the ability to protect experimental rats from gastric lesions induced by acetylsalicylic acid, serotonin, and indomethacin. Additionally, it aids in the healing process of chronic gastric lesions induced by acetic acid in experimental animals [42-42].

**Anti-fertility activity:** The efficacy of the aqueous extract of M. *oleifera* as an anti-fertility agent was observed in both the presence and absence of estradiol dipropionate and progesterone. Additionally, it was found to enhance the histoarchitecture of the uterine tissue, as indicated by the study conducted [ $^{144-45}$ ].

M. oleifera, known for its rich nutritional profile, exhibits various therapeutic activities. Its antioxidant and antiinflammatory properties may contribute to cardiovascular health by reducing lipid levels and protecting against oxidative stress. With antimicrobial and antibacterial effects, Moringa could support the immune system and combat infections. The some studies suggest potential antidiabetic, immunomodulatory, and hepatoprotective effects, making it beneficial for managing diabetes, enhancing immune function, and protecting the liver. Additionally, Moringa's neuroprotective properties and potential anticancer effects, attributed to compounds like quercetin and beta-carotene, warrant further investigation. While promising, it's essential to approach Moringa's therapeutic potential with caution, emphasizing the need for additional research and consultation with healthcare professionals before integrating it into therapeutic regimens.

# 3. Recent approaches of *Moringa oleifera* as medicinal plant

In recent times, various approaches have been explored regarding the potential benefits of *M. oleifera*. These include its anti-cancer, anti-diabetic, anti-inflammatory, anti-allergic, diuretic, anti-oxidant, anti-obesity, cardiovascular, anti-asthmatic, hematological, anti-ulcer, and anti-acrolithic activities, which have proven to be significant in therapeutic treatments [46]. Particularly in the current scenario of the Covid-19 pandemic, *M. oleifera* has gained considerable attention for its ability to enhance and strengthen the immune

system. Notably, *M. oleifera* is not only valuable during this time <sup>[47]</sup>, but it is also available in various forms such as tablets, powders, and juices, making it a convenient dietary

product in the market. The recent approaches with their examples mentioned in the **Table. 03** as below followings:

**Table 3:** The list of recent approaches in the phytoconstituents with their example [44-47]

Approach	Examples	
Advanced Extraction Methods	Supercritical fluid extraction, ultrasound-assisted extraction	
Biotechnological Enhancement	Genetic modification for increased nutrient content, metabolic engineering	
Formulation of Functional Products	Moringa-based functional foods, nutraceuticals, supplements	
Pharmaceutical Development	Moringa extracts for drug formulations, encapsulation technologies	
Sustainable Agriculture	Integration into agroforestry systems, cultivation for soil improvement	
Phytoremediation	Moringa's role in removing pollutants from soil and water	
Nutraceutical Innovations	Development of Moringa-based products targeting specific health concerns	

Recent approaches to *M. oleifera* have focused on harnessing its diverse bioactive compounds for innovative applications. The advanced biotechnological approaches, including genetic modification and metabolic engineering, aim to enhance specific bioactive compounds to optimize Moringa's therapeutic potential. Additionally, there is growing interest in formulating Moringa-based functional foods, supplements, and pharmaceuticals to address various health concerns. With an increasing emphasis on sustainable agriculture, Moringa is being studied for its role in agroforestry systems and phytoremediation, showcasing its potential not only as a nutritional powerhouse but also as a valuable resource in environmental conservation [48-54].

#### 4. Conclusion

This review examines the diverse therapeutic effects of Moringa oleifera in different parts of the plant, including antitumor, antiulcer, anti-inflammatory, antiepileptic, antipyretic, antispasmodic, diuretic, antidiabetic, antihypertensive, cholesterol-level lowering, regeneration, and hepatoprotective properties. Furthermore, the nutritional value of moringa plant, encompassing protein, B-carotene, amino acids, essential minerals, and various phenolic compounds, has been recognized for its usefulness in both modern and ancient times in everyday life. In conclusion, the systematic review on the therapeutic activities and recent trends of M. oleifera, a traditional medicinal plant, underscores its multifaceted potential in promoting health and wellness. The plant's rich phytoconstituents, including vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and bioactive compounds, contribute to its diverse therapeutic activities. The review highlighted Moringa's antioxidative, anti-inflammatory, cardioprotective, antimicrobial, and potentially anticancer properties. Furthermore, recent approaches, such as advanced extraction methods, biotechnological enhancements, and the formulation of functional products, showcase the evolving nature of Moringa research. The systematic exploration of Moringa's traditional uses, coupled with contemporary scientific investigations, underscores its relevance in modern healthcare. Overall, the comprehensive analysis presented in this review consolidates the existing knowledge on Moringa oleifera, laying the foundation for future studies and applications that can harness its full potential for human health and environmental sustainability.

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#### **Conflict of interest**

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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