



Sangri: The Desert Superfood with Health and Income Benefits

*Dr. Shraddha Kapadiya, Dr. D. A. Sadarasaniya, Dr. P. B. Singh and Dr. M. D. Jehani
Scientist, Krushi Vigyan Kendra, Sardarkrushinagar Dantiwada Agricultural
University, Deesa, Gujarat, India

*Corresponding Author's email: shraddharkapadiya@gmail.com

India possesses a rich heritage of traditional foods that are deeply connected with local climate, culture, and health. Among the valuable foods of arid and semi-arid regions, Sangri holds a special place. Sangri is the immature pod of the Khejri tree (*Prosopis cineraria*), a tree popularly known as the “Kalpavriksha of the Desert” because of its immense usefulness. Khejri is the state tree of Rajasthan and is commonly found in the dry regions of Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Haryana. For generations, Sangri has been an important component of the traditional diet in desert areas. Today, with increasing awareness regarding nutritious and climate-resilient foods, Sangri is receiving recognition as a healthy superfood and a profitable agricultural product. The Khejri tree is highly adapted to harsh climatic conditions and can survive in areas with very low rainfall and extreme temperatures. Apart from providing shade and improving soil fertility, it produces edible pods that are rich in nutrients and medicinal properties. Sangri has been traditionally consumed in fresh as well as dried form and is considered an important food during drought periods because of its excellent storage quality and nutritional value.

Nutritional Importance of Sangri

Sangri is highly nutritious and contains several essential nutrients required for maintaining good health. It is rich in protein, dietary fiber, minerals, and antioxidants. The pods contain important minerals such as calcium, iron, magnesium, and potassium, which are necessary for proper body functioning. Sangri also contains bioactive compounds that contribute to its medicinal value. Due to its high fiber content and low fat composition, it is considered beneficial for modern healthy diets. In recent years, changing food habits and sedentary lifestyles have increased the occurrence of obesity, diabetes, digestive disorders, and cardiovascular diseases. Traditional foods like Sangri can help improve nutritional quality naturally and support better health. Since it is a locally available and naturally grown food in arid regions, it also serves as an economical source of nutrition for rural communities.

Traditional and Modern Recipes of Sangri

Sangri is widely appreciated for its unique taste and versatility in cooking. The most famous preparation is the traditional Rajasthani dish known as Ker-Sangri or Panchkuta, which combines Sangri with ker berries and aromatic spices. This dish is commonly served with bajra roti and buttermilk and is considered a delicacy of desert cuisine. Another popular preparation is dry Sangri vegetable, in which boiled Sangri is cooked with onion, garlic, cumin, and traditional spices to prepare a flavorful dish. Tender Sangri pods are also used to prepare pickles that possess excellent shelf life and unique taste. In many households, Sangri is added to pulao, kadhi, and mixed vegetable preparations to enhance nutritional value and flavor. With growing demand for innovative traditional foods, several modern products based on Sangri are also emerging in the market. Food entrepreneurs are developing products such as Sangri chips, ready-to-cook Sangri mixes, dehydrated Sangri packets, and instant curry

preparations. These value-added products are helping introduce Sangri to younger consumers and urban markets.

Value Addition and Processing Opportunities

Processing and value addition play an important role in increasing the market value and shelf life of Sangri. Farmers and rural women groups can earn better income by adopting simple processing techniques. The harvested Sangri pods are first cleaned and graded before blanching and drying. Proper drying helps preserve the pods for long periods while maintaining quality. Dried Sangri has high demand in both domestic and export markets because it can be stored and transported easily. Value-added products such as Sangri pickle, ready-to-cook curry mix, dehydrated Sangri packets, and packaged dried Sangri can significantly increase profitability. Many self-help groups and small-scale entrepreneurs are now involved in Sangri processing and marketing, which creates employment opportunities in rural areas.

Sangri as a Source of Farmer Income

Cultivation of Khejri trees and processing of Sangri can become an excellent source of livelihood for farmers living in dryland regions. One of the major advantages of Khejri cultivation is its low input requirement. The tree requires very little irrigation and survives well under drought conditions, reducing cultivation expenses for farmers. Since Sangri is considered a premium desert vegetable, dried Sangri often fetches high prices in urban and export markets. Farmers can generate additional income not only from Sangri pods but also from leaves used as fodder, nursery plants, and fuelwood. Khejri trees are highly suitable for agroforestry systems and can be grown along with crops such as bajra, cluster bean, moth bean, and cumin. This allows farmers to obtain multiple benefits from the same land without affecting crop productivity. Women entrepreneurship related to Sangri processing is also gaining popularity. Rural women can prepare pickles, dried products, and packaged Sangri items for local markets and exhibitions. Such activities strengthen household income and promote rural employment opportunities.

Conclusion

Sangri is much more than a traditional desert vegetable; it is a highly nutritious, climate-resilient, and economically valuable food resource. Regular consumption of Sangri can support better digestion, improved mineral intake, enhanced immunity, and overall health. At the same time, cultivation and value addition of Sangri can create sustainable income opportunities for farmers and rural women. In an era where people are increasingly searching for healthy and sustainable foods, Sangri offers the perfect combination of nutrition, tradition, and environmental sustainability. Promotion of Sangri cultivation, processing, and consumption can greatly benefit consumers, farmers, and the environment while preserving the rich food heritage of India's desert regions.