

How Are Turmeric and The National Turmeric Board (NTB) Important?

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Turmeric is a member of the Curcuma, which is part of the ginger family, known as Zingiberaceae. Its botanical name is *Curcuma longa*. Native to southern India and Indonesia, turmeric is widely cultivated on the mainland and in the islands of the India. The handsome diversity of Curcuma species by number alone is in India, at around 40 to 45 species. Various species currently utilized and sold as 'turmeric' in other parts of Asia have been shown to belong to morphologically similar taxa, with common vernacular names. Species belonging to the genus Curcuma, namely, *Curcuma caesia* (Black turmeric), *Curcuma rubescens* (Wild turmeric), *Curcuma amada* (Mango Zinger), *Curcuma leucorrhiza*, *Curcuma montana*, *Curcuma aromatica* (Wild turmeric), *Curcuma zedoaria*, *Curcuma angustifolia*, *Curcuma pseudomontana*, and *Curcuma longa* are of high medicinal value.

India's Scenario in turmeric production

In India, the use of turmeric dates back to nearly 4000 years, when it was used as a culinary spice and had some religious significance. India is the largest producer, consumer, and exporter of turmeric in the world. India has shared more than 62% of the world trade in turmeric. As per the sources, in the year 2022-23, an area of 3.24 lakh ha was under turmeric cultivation in India, with a production of 11.61 lakh tonnes (over 75% of global turmeric production). As per the available information, during 2022-23, India dominated the turmeric market, and 1.534 lakh tonnes of turmeric and turmeric products valued at 207.45 million USD were exported by more than 380 exporters. The leading export markets for Indian turmeric are Bangladesh, the UAE, the USA, and Malaysia. More than 30 varieties of Turmeric are grown in India, and it is grown in over 20 states in the country. The largest producing states of Turmeric are Maharashtra, Telangana, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. With the focused activities of the Board, it is expected that turmeric exports will reach USD 1 billion by 2030.

There is no doubt that India will earn more revenue in this sector in the days to come.

High-value medicinal plant: Turmeric contains curcumin, an antioxidant that may have anti-inflammatory properties. It may be helpful in treating arthritis, cancer, metabolic syndrome, and depression. Turmeric is an intrinsic part of our Indian cooking. From curries to dals and sabzi, turmeric is literally added to anything and everything. Turmeric can reduce inflammation, heal internal injuries and shield the body from the flu during the winter season. Also called the Golden spice, turmeric can be found in a number of age-old remedies in Ayurveda. As per the scientific report, the "Lakadong" variety of turmeric originates from the Lakadong area of the Jaintia Hills district of Meghalaya. This variety is considered to be one of the world's best varieties of turmeric, with a curcumin content of about 6.8 - 7.5 %.

A few popular turmeric in India:

Black turmeric (*Curcuma caesia*): It is a perennial herb with bluish-black rhizome. The rhizomes are traditionally used in treatment of stomachache, typhoid and wounds by the indigenous communities of north east India. The rhizomes are used as stimulants, anti-diarrheal, diuretic, anti-emetic, wound cleanser and in treating various skin disorders.

Wild turmeric (*Curcuma aromatica*): It is a kind of wild turmeric that is often used as a beauty aid. Unlike conventional turmeric, it is often considered to be the superior form of the spice for topical use. The rhizomes have antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, wound-healing, and anti-melanogenic qualities provide it several uses in skin and facial care.

White turmeric (*Curcuma zedoaria*): It is a perennial herb found in tropical countries, such as India, Japan and Thailand. The different parts of this plant are used in Ayurveda and other folk medicines for the treatment of different ailments such as diarrhoea, cancer, flatulence and dyspepsia.

Mango ginger (*Curcuma amada*): It is a rhizomatous aromatic herb and is cultivated throughout in India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and in many South-East Asian countries for its rhizomes.

The rhizome of mango ginger is a popular spice and vegetable due to its rich flavour.

Narrow leaf turmeric/wild turmeric (*Curcuma angustifolia*): It is a rhizomatous herb well known as narrow-leaved turmeric. The rhizomes are used as a source of colouring and flavouring agents ethnomedicine, spices, dyes and perfumes in many south Asian countries.

Establishment of National Turmeric Board (NTB)

The Government of India notified the establishment of the National Turmeric Board, which is aimed at the development and growth of turmeric and turmeric products in the country. The objectives of the Board are to increase awareness and consumption of turmeric and develop new markets internationally to increase exports. Board to promote research and development into new products and develop on our traditional knowledge for value-added turmeric products. The National Turmeric Board will provide leadership on turmeric related matters, augment the efforts, and facilitate greater coordination with Spices Board and other Government agencies in the development and growth of the turmeric sector. In this regard, Honourable PM Modi said "it is important to pay more attention professionally and take an initiative in the value chain of turmeric, from production to exports. He further added "After Covid,

awareness about turmeric has increased and global demand has also increased. Today it is important to pay more attention professionally and take an initiative in the value chain of turmeric, from production to export".

Significance of the Turmeric Board

There is significant potential and interest world over on the health and wellness benefits of turmeric, which the Board will leverage to further increase awareness and consumption, develop new markets internationally to increase exports, promote research and development into new products, and develop on our traditional knowledge for value-added turmeric products. It will especially focus on capacity building and skill development of turmeric growers for harnessing greater benefits out of value addition. The Board will also promote quality and food safety standards and adherence to such standards. The Board will also take steps to further safeguard and usefully exploit turmeric's full potential for humanity.

The activities of the Board will contribute towards greater well-being and prosperity of the turmeric growers through their focussed and dedicated attention to the sector and the larger value addition closer to the farms, which would provide better realisation to the growers for their produce.

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