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ECONOMICAL POTENTIAL OF AGARWOOD, THE GOD'S TREE

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ABSTRACT:

AGAR (UDE) is the most expensive wood in the world, which is used as incense, perfumes, and medicines are also used for ornamental purpose and vilification. It is the odoriferous wood formation of agar wood trees, due to resinification of accumulated oleoresin followed by fungal action.

AGAR WOOD is a perennial ever green tree, profusely grown in Tropical rain forests of South-East Asia. It comes under the family Thymelaeaceae and Gerera- aquilaria. About 16 species of Aquilaria are being cultivated in major Aqr growing countries like India, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia, Vietnam, China, New Guinea, Moluccas, Bangladesh etc. Major species are Aquilaria melaccansis, Aquilaria, Khasiana, Aquilaria Crassna, Aquilaria apiculina, Aquilaria Filaria, Aquileria grandiflora, Aquilaria rostrata etc.

AGAR WOOD trees were indiscriminately fallen for the distillation of oud, which led them in to the list of endangered trees. As the demand for oud is increasing day by day, commercial cultivation of agar wood trees has become prominent in recent years.

AGAR WOOD trees do not produce oud/agar under normal condition.

Thus the physical age, growth rate, wood volume or physiological maturity does not govern the harvesting age of agar wood trees. During the life span of trees, may get affected by a special type of fungi. The plant produces a resin to kill the infected plant cells so as to protect the other parts of the tree. This is called resinification. It is dark in colour and has magnificent aroma, when burned. This is called Agar wood. Oud/agar is extracted from agar wood through hydro distillation or steam distillation or carbon dioxide extraction method.

In recent years, the fungus causing damages to agar wood trees were isolated and cultivated in an artificial media. There fungal inoculums can be mechanically injected in to the plants, which infects the healthy tissues of agar wood trees.

Simultaneously tree produces resins to kill the affected plants cells, which results the formation of Agar wood.

A ten year infected tree can yield up to 10kgs of useful wood. 70 Kg of heart kill wood can produce 20ml of oud oil. Cost of one kg good quality resinous agar wood comes to 30000 Us Dollars.

Even the farmers having small holdings can plant few numbers of agar wood trees in their backyard, which can provide adequate financial stability in a very short span of time. Hence it is the need of the era to promote the cultivation of AGAR WOOD Trees.

Some of the medicinal usages of oud oil

- Stimulant
- Tonic
- Anti-inflammatory
- Aphrodisiac - Increase sexual desire
- Diuretic - Stimulates the production of Urine
- Anti Microbial - Kills pathogenic microbes

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- Carminative - Settles the digestive system and relieves gas
- Febrifuge - Combats fever
- Digestive
- Expectorant - Loosens mucus in the respiratory tract
- Muscle relaxant
- Demulcent - Protects mucus membranes
- Emmenagogue - Stimulates menstrual flow
- Analgesic - Relieves pain
- Anti-arthritis - Combats arthritis.
- Anti-pruritic - relieves itching
- Stomachic - Digestive aid and tonic- Improve appetites
- Emotional, nervous psychological issues – (in Tibet)

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