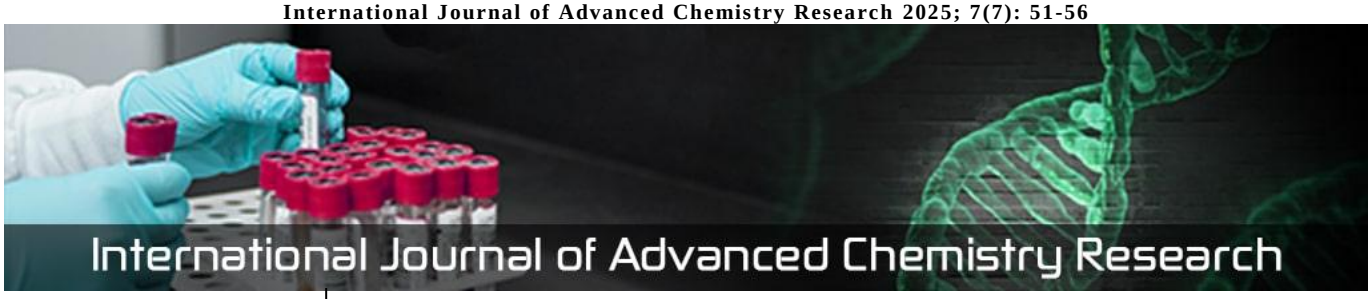

ISSN Print: 2664-6781
ISSN Online: 2664-679X
NAAS Rating (2025): 4.77
IJACR 2025; 7(7): 51-56
www.chemistryjournals.net
Received: 19-05-2025
Accepted: 21-06-2025

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Phytochemical characterization and antioxidant potential of Karonda (*Carissa carandas*): Unlocking a neglected fruit for nutraceutical chemistry

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DOI: https://www.doi.org/10.33545/26646781.2025.v7.i7a.309

Abstract
Carissa carandas, commonly known as Karonda, is a tropical fruit native to South Asia, widely recognized for its unique flavor and potential therapeutic applications. Despite its historical use in traditional medicine and culinary practices, Karonda remains an underutilized resource in the field of nutraceutical chemistry. This paper provides a comprehensive review of the phytochemical composition and antioxidant properties of *Carissa carandas*, emphasizing its untapped potential as a source of bioactive compounds. Phytochemical analyses have identified a variety of secondary metabolites in Karonda, including phenolic acids, flavonoids, anthocyanins, alkaloids, and triterpenoids, which contribute to its potent antioxidant activity. Through *in vitro* and *in vivo* assays, such as DPPH radical scavenging, ABTS assay, and lipid peroxidation inhibition, Karonda extracts have demonstrated significant antioxidant potential, comparable to established antioxidants like ascorbic acid. The fruit's antioxidant properties are primarily attributed to its high phenolic and flavonoid content, which plays a vital role in mitigating oxidative stress and associated diseases, including cardiovascular and neurodegenerative conditions. Furthermore, the paper explores the potential applications of Karonda in functional foods, pharmaceuticals, and cosmetics, highlighting its ability to enhance health benefits and improve product formulations. Despite its promising potential, the fruit faces challenges in terms of post-harvest handling, standardization, and clinical validation. Future research focused on these areas will be crucial to unlocking the full nutraceutical potential of *Carissa carandas*, positioning it as a valuable addition to the growing market of natural health products.

Keywords: *Carissa carandas*, Karonda, phytochemicals, antioxidants, nutraceuticals, phenolic compounds, flavonoids, functional foods, oxidative stress, bioactive compounds

1. Introduction
Carissa carandas L., commonly known as Karonda, is a tropical fruit indigenous to South Asia, particularly found in India, Bangladesh, and Southeast Asia. Belonging to the *Apocynaceae* family, Karonda is characterized by its small, oval-shaped fruits, which transition from pink to dark purple as they ripen. This resilient plant thrives in a variety of soil conditions, making it suitable for cultivation in arid and semi-arid regions. Although Karonda has been traditionally used in culinary preparations such as pickles, jams, and juices, it remains an underutilized resource globally. The fruit is also utilized in Ayurvedic medicine, where it is employed as a remedy for digestive disorders, fever, and inflammation.
Historically, Karonda has been recognized for its medicinal properties in Ayurveda, where it is noted for its astringent, anti-inflammatory, and antidiabetic effects. However, the full scope of its therapeutic potential has not been comprehensively explored. Recent studies have identified a variety of bioactive compounds in Karonda, including phenolic acids, flavonoids, alkaloids, and terpenoids, which contribute to its antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and antimicrobial properties. The fruit's rich phytochemical composition positions it as a promising candidate for nutraceutical applications, offering potential benefits for human

health. The demand for natural and plant-based health products has led to a renewed interest in underutilized fruits like Karonda. The increasing awareness of oxidative stress and its role in various chronic diseases has highlighted the importance of antioxidants in diet. Karonda's significant antioxidant activity has been demonstrated through several *in vitro* and *in vivo* assays, making it an ideal candidate for incorporation into functional foods, dietary supplements, and cosmetics.

Despite the promising findings from initial studies, there remains a need for further research to establish the clinical applications of Karonda, including its potential to prevent or manage diseases such as cardiovascular disorders, diabetes, and neurodegenerative conditions. Additionally, challenges related to post-harvest handling, standardization of extracts, and clinical validation must be addressed before Karonda can be fully integrated into commercial nutraceutical products.

The aim of this paper is to provide a comprehensive review of the phytochemical characterization and antioxidant potential of Karonda, focusing on its bioactive compounds and their therapeutic applications. This review will explore the chemical constituents of the fruit, evaluate its antioxidant properties through various assays, and investigate its potential in the nutraceutical industry. Furthermore, the challenges and future directions for Karonda's commercialization will be discussed, with the goal of unlocking the fruit's potential as a valuable resource in nutraceutical chemistry.

2. Phytochemical Composition

The phytochemical composition of *Carissa carandas* (Karonda) has been the subject of various studies due to its potential health benefits. The fruit contains a wide variety of secondary metabolites, which contribute to its antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and other therapeutic properties. These bioactive compounds can be broadly categorized into primary metabolites (such as carbohydrates, proteins, and lipids) and secondary metabolites (including phenolic compounds, flavonoids, alkaloids, and terpenoids). This section provides an overview of the major phytochemicals identified in Karonda and their respective biological activities.

2.1. Primary Metabolites

- **Carbohydrates:** Karonda fruits are a significant source of sugars, primarily glucose and fructose, which contribute to the fruit's energy value. These simple sugars play a key role in providing quick energy for the body. Additionally, some studies have indicated the presence of polysaccharides, which are known to have potential health benefits such as improving gut health and immunity.
- **Proteins and Amino Acids:** The protein content in Karonda is moderate, and it contains essential amino acids that are vital for human health. Amino acids such as alanine, proline, and glutamic acid have been identified in the fruit, contributing to its nutritional value. These amino acids are involved in various metabolic processes, including protein synthesis and cellular repair.
- **Lipids:** Karonda fruits also contain lipids, primarily in the form of fatty acids. Some of the fatty acids present in Karonda include palmitic acid, oleic acid, and linoleic acid. These unsaturated fatty acids are important for maintaining healthy cell membranes, reducing inflammation, and promoting overall cardiovascular health.

2.2. Secondary Metabolites

Secondary metabolites are compounds that are not essential for the basic metabolic processes of the plant but are responsible for the medicinal properties of the fruit. These include phenolic compounds, flavonoids, anthocyanins, alkaloids, and terpenoids, all of which have been shown to contribute to the antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and antimicrobial effects of Karonda.

- **Phenolic Compounds:** Karonda is rich in phenolic acids, such as chlorogenic acid, caffeic acid, and ferulic acid, which are well-known for their antioxidant properties. These phenolic compounds neutralize free radicals in the body, reducing oxidative stress and preventing cell damage. The presence of phenolic compounds also supports the fruit's potential in preventing diseases such as cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. Studies have reported that the total phenolic content in Karonda is significant, contributing greatly to its antioxidant capacity.
- **Flavonoids:** Flavonoids are a group of plant metabolites that are widely known for their antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and antimicrobial properties. In Karonda, flavonoids such as quercetin, kaempferol, and myricetin have been identified. These compounds contribute to the fruit's health benefits by scavenging free radicals, inhibiting oxidative stress, and supporting immune function. Additionally, flavonoids are known to enhance the bioavailability of other beneficial compounds, thereby increasing the overall efficacy of the fruit's medicinal properties.
- **Anthocyanins:** Anthocyanins are responsible for the pigmentation in Karonda fruits. The fruit contains various anthocyanins such as delphinidin, cyanidin, and petunidin, which have demonstrated potent antioxidant properties. These compounds not only contribute to the color of the fruit but also play a significant role in reducing oxidative damage and inflammation, protecting cells from oxidative stress, and promoting cardiovascular health.
- **Alkaloids:** Alkaloids, such as carindone and carissone, have been isolated from Karonda. Alkaloids are well-known for their pharmacological activities, including anti-inflammatory, analgesic, and antidiabetic effects. These compounds interact with various biological systems in the body, providing therapeutic benefits in conditions like chronic pain and diabetes.
- **Triterpenoids and Steroids:** Karonda also contains triterpenoids and steroids such as carissin and 20-hydroxycarissone. These compounds have been shown to exhibit anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial activities. Triterpenoids are known to modulate immune function, reduce inflammation, and possess anticancer properties. Steroids found in Karonda may contribute to its ability to modulate metabolic processes and support overall health.

Antioxidant Activity

The antioxidant potential of *Carissa carandas* (Karonda) has garnered significant attention due to its high

concentration of bioactive compounds that contribute to its ability to scavenge free radicals and reduce oxidative stress. Oxidative stress is a condition characterized by an imbalance between the production of reactive oxygen species (ROS) and the body's ability to neutralize them, which can lead to cellular damage and is associated with various chronic diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, and neurodegenerative disorders. The antioxidant properties of Karonda make it a promising candidate for inclusion in functional foods, dietary supplements, and therapeutic interventions. This section explores the various *in vitro* and *in vivo* antioxidant assays used to evaluate Karonda's antioxidant potential.

3.1. *In vitro* Assays

Several *in vitro* methods have been employed to assess the antioxidant activity of Karonda fruit extracts. These assays measure the ability of the fruit's compounds to neutralize free radicals and prevent oxidative damage.

- **DPPH Radical Scavenging Activity:** One of the most common methods for assessing antioxidant activity is the DPPH (2, 2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl) assay, which evaluates the ability of antioxidants to donate electrons or hydrogen atoms to neutralize DPPH radicals. The fruit extracts of Karonda have shown significant scavenging activity against DPPH radicals. The IC_{50} (the concentration required to inhibit 50% of the radical activity) of Karonda extracts has been found to be comparable to that of standard antioxidants such as ascorbic acid, indicating the fruit's potential as a powerful antioxidant.
- **ABTS Assay:** The ABTS (2, 2'-azino-bis (3-ethylbenzothiazoline-6-sulfonic acid)) assay is another commonly used method to evaluate antioxidant capacity. This assay measures the ability of antioxidants to reduce ABTS radicals to colorless forms. Karonda extracts have demonstrated significant decolorization of the ABTS radical cation, suggesting that the fruit possesses strong antioxidant activity. The antioxidant capacity in this assay is directly related to the phenolic content, particularly flavonoids, which are abundant in Karonda.
- **Reducing Power:** The reducing power of Karonda extracts has been measured using the ferric reducing antioxidant power (FRAP) assay. The assay involves the reduction of Fe^{3+} to Fe^{2+} in the presence of antioxidants. Karonda extracts exhibit increasing reducing power with higher concentrations, correlating well with their total phenolic content. This indicates that the antioxidants in Karonda contribute to reducing oxidized molecules and preventing cellular damage.
- **Total Phenolic and Flavonoid Content:** The antioxidant activity of Karonda is closely linked to its total phenolic and flavonoid content. Studies have reported that the fruit's total phenolic content ranges from 40 to 60 mg GAE (Gallic Acid Equivalents) per gram of extract. The flavonoid content is similarly high, ranging from 8 to 12 mg RE (Rutin Equivalents) per gram. These compounds, particularly phenolic acids like chlorogenic and caffeic acids, contribute significantly to the antioxidant properties of Karonda by neutralizing free radicals and reducing oxidative damage.

3.2. *In vivo* Studies

While *in vitro* assays provide a preliminary understanding of Karonda's antioxidant potential, *in vivo* studies offer deeper insights into its biological effects on living organisms.

- **Nitric Oxide Scavenging Activity:** Nitric oxide (NO) is another free radical that plays a role in inflammation and oxidative stress. Karonda extracts have demonstrated significant scavenging activity against nitric oxide in animal models. This activity suggests that Karonda may have potential therapeutic applications in conditions associated with excessive NO production, such as hypertension and inflammatory disorders.
- **Lipid Peroxidation Inhibition:** Lipid peroxidation is a process in which free radicals attack lipids in cell membranes, leading to cell damage. Karonda extracts have been shown to inhibit lipid peroxidation, particularly in liver and kidney tissues, thereby preventing oxidative damage. The inhibition of lipid peroxidation *in vivo* suggests that Karonda may offer protective benefits in diseases related to oxidative stress, such as cardiovascular diseases and liver disorders.
- **Protective Effects against Oxidative Stress in Diabetic Rats:** In animal models of diabetes, where oxidative stress is a major contributor to disease progression, Karonda extracts have demonstrated protective effects by reducing the levels of ROS and improving antioxidant enzyme activities. These studies support the potential of Karonda in managing oxidative stress-related conditions, particularly in metabolic disorders like diabetes.

3.3 Bioactive Compounds Correlation

The antioxidant activity of Karonda is strongly correlated with its high content of bioactive compounds, particularly phenolic acids and flavonoids. The fruit's ability to scavenge free radicals and reduce oxidative stress is largely attributed to its phenolic compounds, such as chlorogenic acid, caffeic acid, and ferulic acid, as well as its flavonoids, including quercetin, kaempferol, and myricetin. These compounds have been shown to exhibit significant radical scavenging activity, inhibiting oxidative damage and contributing to the overall antioxidant potential of Karonda.

In addition, the fruit's anthocyanins, which are responsible for its color, also contribute to its antioxidant activity. Anthocyanins, such as delphinidin and cyanidin, have been found to possess potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, further enhancing the fruit's therapeutic potential.

3.4 Clinical Implications

The antioxidant properties of Karonda have potential clinical applications, especially in managing diseases related to oxidative stress, such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, and neurodegenerative disorders. The fruit's ability to reduce oxidative stress through its phenolic and flavonoid content positions it as a promising candidate for the development of functional foods, dietary supplements, and therapeutic interventions aimed at combating these chronic diseases.

However, clinical validation through human trials is necessary to fully understand the efficacy of Karonda in disease prevention and management. Additionally, standardization of its extracts and formulations will be

critical in ensuring consistent quality and potency in clinical applications.

Nutraceutical Potential

Carissa carandas (Karonda) has emerged as a promising candidate for the development of nutraceutical products due to its rich phytochemical composition and potent antioxidant properties. The growing interest in plant-based health products, driven by consumer demand for natural alternatives to synthetic medicines, positions Karonda as a valuable resource for functional foods, dietary supplements, and pharmaceutical formulations. This section explores the nutraceutical potential of Karonda by examining its application in functional foods, its potential role in pharmaceutical products, and its emerging use in the cosmetic industry.

4.1. Functional Foods

Functional foods are foods that provide health benefits beyond basic nutrition, often due to their high content of bioactive compounds. Karonda's rich phytochemical profile, including phenolic acids, flavonoids, anthocyanins, and alkaloids, supports its use as an ingredient in functional foods aimed at promoting health and preventing disease.

- **Incorporation into Food Products:** Karonda's fruit extracts can be incorporated into various food products, such as beverages, snacks, dairy items, and bakery products, to enhance their antioxidant content. For example, studies have shown that adding Karonda powder to bread formulations significantly increases the total phenolic content and antioxidant activity of the bread. Additionally, the inclusion of Karonda in fruit juices or smoothies can provide consumers with a convenient way to benefit from its bioactive compounds. These functional food products can be marketed to individuals seeking to improve their health, particularly in terms of managing oxidative stress, preventing chronic diseases, and supporting immune function.
- **Glycemic Index Reduction:** Recent studies have also investigated the role of Karonda in reducing the glycemic index (GI) of certain food products. The inclusion of Karonda extract in bread formulations has been shown to reduce the GI, making it a potential ingredient for diabetic-friendly foods. This is particularly beneficial for individuals with diabetes or those at risk of developing metabolic disorders.
- **Nutritional Enhancements:** Besides its antioxidant properties, Karonda's nutritional benefits include its vitamin C content, which is known to support immune health, and its dietary fiber content, which aids in digestion and gut health. Incorporating Karonda into functional food products can, therefore, provide consumers with multiple health benefits, including improved digestion, enhanced immunity, and reduced risk of chronic diseases.

4.2. Pharmaceutical Applications

The bioactive compounds found in *Carissa carandas* also hold significant potential for development in the pharmaceutical industry. The fruit's antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and anti-diabetic properties make it a candidate for the formulation of medicinal products aimed at preventing and treating various health conditions.

- **Antioxidant-Rich Supplements:** Karonda's rich antioxidant profile, derived from its high phenolic and flavonoid content, supports its use in the formulation of dietary supplements designed to combat oxidative stress. These supplements could be marketed as adjuncts in the prevention of oxidative stress-related diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, neurodegenerative conditions (e.g., Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases), and cancers. Clinical studies validating its efficacy in reducing oxidative damage would be crucial for the widespread acceptance of Karonda-based supplements.
- **Anti-Diabetic Formulations:** Several studies have indicated that Karonda has anti-diabetic properties, owing to its ability to regulate blood glucose levels and improve insulin sensitivity. The presence of bioactive compounds like flavonoids and alkaloids contributes to the fruit's ability to modulate glucose metabolism, making it a potential candidate for inclusion in anti-diabetic formulations. Karonda extracts could be used in the development of natural remedies or adjunct therapies for managing type 2 diabetes.
- **Anti-Inflammatory and Analgesic Products:** The anti-inflammatory properties of Karonda, linked to its phenolic compounds and flavonoids, also make it an attractive candidate for the development of pharmaceutical products aimed at reducing inflammation and pain. These products could be beneficial for individuals suffering from conditions like arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), and other chronic inflammatory conditions.
- **Antimicrobial and Antiviral Agents:** The antimicrobial properties of Karonda have been well-documented, with studies showing its effectiveness against a range of pathogens, including bacteria and fungi. As such, Karonda extracts could be used in the development of natural antimicrobial agents or topical formulations for skin infections. Additionally, emerging research into the antiviral properties of Karonda suggests its potential in combating viral infections, including those caused by the influenza virus and other pathogens.

4.3. Cosmetic Industry

In addition to its pharmaceutical and functional food applications, Karonda is gaining attention in the cosmetic industry due to its antioxidant and anti-tyrosinase activities. The fruit's high concentration of anthocyanins, phenolic acids, and flavonoids makes it a valuable ingredient in cosmetic formulations aimed at promoting skin health and reducing signs of aging.

- **Anti-Aging Products:** Karonda extracts are being explored for their potential use in anti-aging cosmetics, particularly in products that target oxidative damage and reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. The antioxidant properties of Karonda help protect the skin from free radical damage caused by UV radiation and environmental stressors, which are major contributors to skin aging. Additionally, Karonda's anti-inflammatory effects may help soothe irritated skin and promote a more youthful appearance.

- **Skin Lightening and Brightening Agents:** The anti-tyrosinase activity of Karonda has also been studied for its potential to reduce melanin production, making it a promising ingredient in skin lightening and brightening products. Tyrosinase is the key enzyme responsible for melanin synthesis, and inhibiting its activity can help lighten hyperpigmentation and age spots. Karonda-based formulations could be used to create natural alternatives to synthetic skin lightening agents, offering a safer, plant-based option for consumers.
- **Antimicrobial Skincare Products:** The antimicrobial properties of Karonda also support its use in skincare products aimed at treating acne and other skin infections. By preventing the growth of acne-causing bacteria, Karonda extracts can be incorporated into cleansers, masks, and spot treatments designed to reduce acne lesions and improve overall skin health.

4.4 Challenges and Future Directions in Nutraceutical Development

While Karonda shows immense potential for nutraceutical applications, several challenges need to be addressed before it can be widely utilized in the industry. These include:

Karonda fruits have a relatively short shelf life, which limits their use in commercial applications. Developing effective preservation techniques, such as drying or freeze-drying, will be essential for ensuring the long-term availability of Karonda-based ingredients for nutraceutical and cosmetic products.

For Karonda to be used consistently in nutraceutical formulations, standardized extracts with well-defined concentrations of bioactive compounds must be developed. This requires research into optimal extraction methods, storage conditions, and quality control protocols to ensure the potency and safety of Karonda-based products.

While *in vitro* and animal studies have shown promising results, clinical trials involving human subjects are essential to validate the efficacy of Karonda-based supplements, functional foods, and pharmaceuticals. Large-scale, randomized controlled trials are needed to assess the therapeutic potential of Karonda in various diseases and health conditions

Challenges and Future Directions

Despite the promising therapeutic and nutritional potential of *Carissa carandas* (Karonda), several challenges remain in fully harnessing its benefits for commercial and clinical applications. The fruit's short shelf life presents a significant barrier to its widespread utilization, as Karonda is highly perishable, and its quality deteriorates quickly after harvest. This limits its availability for large-scale production of Karonda-based nutraceuticals and other products. To address this, effective post-harvest preservation techniques, such as drying, freeze-drying, and advanced packaging methods, need to be developed. These methods will help extend the shelf life of Karonda while preserving its bioactive compounds, ensuring the fruit can be used in a variety of commercial applications.

Another major challenge lies in the standardization and quality control of Karonda extracts. Due to the variations in phytochemical content, influenced by factors such as cultivation conditions and harvesting practices, it is crucial to develop standardized extraction protocols. This would ensure consistency in the potency and quality of Karonda-based products. Additionally, rigorous quality control measures should be implemented to monitor the levels of key bioactive compounds such as phenolics and flavonoids. Analytical methods such as high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) and mass spectrometry (MS) can be used to quantify these compounds and ensure the purity of the extracts.

While *in vitro* and animal studies have demonstrated the antioxidant and therapeutic potential of Karonda, clinical trials involving human participants are essential to validate these findings. Large-scale clinical studies are required to assess the efficacy of Karonda in managing chronic diseases like diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and neurodegenerative disorders. Furthermore, the optimal dosages, forms, and duration of treatment need to be established through clinical research. These studies will provide the evidence needed to support the commercialization of Karonda-based products and facilitate their acceptance in the global market.

Regulatory approval is another significant hurdle in the commercialization of Karonda as a nutraceutical. Regulatory bodies in different regions have strict guidelines for the approval of plant-based products, and Karonda-based products must undergo rigorous testing to meet safety and efficacy standards. Establishing strong collaborations with regulatory agencies and conducting the necessary preclinical and clinical trials will be essential for navigating the regulatory landscape and ensuring that Karonda-based products comply with safety and quality standards.

Public awareness and market acceptance of Karonda are additional challenges. Despite its health benefits, Karonda remains relatively unknown outside its native regions. Effective marketing strategies, including collaboration with health influencers, nutritionists, and dieticians, can help raise awareness about the fruit's therapeutic potential. Additionally, strategic partnerships with established nutraceutical and cosmetic companies could facilitate the introduction of Karonda into mainstream products, helping to position it as a valuable ingredient in the health and wellness industry.

Sustainability is another key consideration for the future of Karonda cultivation. As demand for Karonda-based products increases, sustainable agricultural practices must be adopted to prevent overexploitation and environmental degradation. Practices such as organic farming, integrated pest management, and agroforestry can help reduce the environmental footprint of Karonda cultivation while ensuring its long-term viability.

Future research on Karonda should also explore the synergistic effects of Karonda with other plant-based ingredients and pharmaceuticals. Investigating the potential of combining Karonda with other bioactive compounds could lead to the development of more effective and targeted therapies for chronic diseases. Moreover, research into the genetic improvement of Karonda for better yield, disease resistance, and adaptation to changing climate conditions will be essential for scaling up its cultivation and meeting the growing demand for Karonda-based products.

5. Conclusion

Carissa carandas (Karonda) is a remarkable tropical fruit with immense potential in the fields of nutraceuticals, pharmaceuticals, and cosmetics. Despite being underutilized, its rich phytochemical composition,

particularly the presence of bioactive compounds such as phenolic acids, flavonoids, anthocyanins, and alkaloids, positions it as a promising candidate for addressing oxidative stress, inflammation, and several chronic diseases. The fruit's potent antioxidant, antimicrobial, and anti-inflammatory properties offer a broad range of therapeutic applications, from functional foods and dietary supplements to pharmaceutical formulations and skincare products.

While *in vitro* and animal studies have demonstrated the beneficial effects of Karonda, further research is needed to establish its clinical efficacy in human trials. The standardization of extracts and the development of preservation methods are crucial for ensuring the consistent quality and availability of Karonda-based products. Additionally, overcoming regulatory challenges and increasing public awareness will play key roles in realizing the fruit's full commercial potential.

By addressing the current challenges related to post-harvest handling, quality control, and clinical validation, Karonda can be positioned as a valuable resource in the growing global market for natural health products. With continued research and innovation, Karonda holds great promise as a sustainable, functional ingredient that can contribute to better health and well-being. Its future in the nutraceutical and cosmetic industries looks bright, offering a natural alternative to synthetic compounds while also promoting environmental sustainability.

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