



## Millets in Ayurveda: The Role of *Kudhanya Varga* in *Samhitas* and *Nighantus*

**Dr. Surbhi Gautam<sup>1</sup>, Prof. Sudipta Rath<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Tarun Sharma<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Somya Watts<sup>4</sup>, Dr. Abha Devi<sup>5</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>PG scholar, Dept. of *Dravyaguna*, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur

<sup>2</sup>Professor & HOD, Dept. of *Dravyaguna*, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, Dept. of *Dravyaguna*, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur

<sup>4</sup>PG scholar, Dept. of *Dravyaguna*, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur

<sup>5</sup>PG scholar, Dept. of *Dravyaguna*, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur

### Abstract

Millets, known as *Kudhanya Varga* in Ayurveda, are a class of grains recognized for their light and drying properties. Ayurvedic texts, including the *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, and various *Nighantus*, classify these grains based on their unique qualities, taste, and health benefits. Traditionally, millets are recommended for balancing *Kapha* dosha, supporting digestion, and managing metabolic conditions such as obesity and diabetes. Despite their benefits, their drying nature can aggravate *Vata* dosha, making them less suitable for individuals prone to dryness. This article explores the Ayurvedic perspective on millets, referencing classical texts to highlight their role in health management and dietary applications.

### 1. Introduction: Millets in Ayurveda

Millets are small-seeded, drought-resistant grains that have historically been a staple in various cultures and traditional medicine systems. In Ayurveda, these grains are grouped under *Kudhanya Varga*, a classification of grains that are generally coarser and lighter than staples like wheat and rice. The term *Kudhanya* reflects their nutritional and therapeutic properties, making millets a unique dietary choice for certain health conditions.

Millets are recommended in Ayurveda for their ability to manage *Kapha* dosha due to their light (*laghu*) and drying (*ruksha*) nature. However, their use is moderated for individuals with *Vata* dominance, as millets can increase dryness in the body. This article examines key Ayurvedic texts that describe the properties and benefits of millets, highlighting their role in promoting health.

### 2. Millets in Charaka Samhita

The **Charaka Samhita**, a primary text in Ayurveda, categorizes millets as light to digest and drying. They have an astringent taste (*kashaya rasa*) and cooling potency (*sheetavirya*), qualities that make them ideal for reducing excess *Kapha* and supporting metabolic health (Charaka Samhita, Sutrasthana 27). Charaka also notes specific millets, like *Kodrava* (Kodo millet), for their efficacy in weight management and digestive health. He advises caution for *Vata* imbalances, as the drying quality of millets can increase this dosha.

- **Properties Noted in Charaka Samhita:**

- *Gunas*: Laghu (light), Ruksha (drying)
- *Rasa*: Kashaya (astringent)
- *Virya*: Sheeta (cooling)
- *Doshic Effect*: Reduces *Kapha*, increases *Vata*

### 3. Millets in Sushruta Samhita

The **Sushruta Samhita** also classifies millets under *Kudhanya Varga*, emphasizing their astringent and cooling properties. Sushruta recommends millets for managing *Kapha*-related disorders, such as obesity and high mucus production, due to their low glycemic index and light nature (Sushruta Samhita, Sutrasthana 46). However, he advises caution for those with high *Vata* or *Pitta*, as the rough, dry qualities of millets could aggravate these doshas when consumed in excess.

- **Attributes in Sushruta Samhita:**

- Emphasizes the astringent, light, and rough properties of millets

- Advises moderation for those with *Vata* or *Pitta* imbalances

---

#### 4. Ashtanga Hridaya's Perspective on Millets

The **Ashtanga Hridaya**, authored by Vagbhata, supports the use of millets for specific health purposes, especially for individuals with *Kapha* dominance. Vagbhata places millets under *Kudhanya Varga*, acknowledging their beneficial effect on digestion, weight management, and *Kapha* balance. He stresses caution in millet consumption for *Vata*-dominant individuals, as their drying nature could increase dryness and lead to joint discomfort or digestive issues.

- **Ashtanga Hridaya Recommendations:**
  - Advocates for moderate millet consumption for *Kapha* balance
  - Advises limited use in *Vata* conditions to avoid exacerbating dryness

---

#### 5. Descriptions in Ayurvedic Nighantus

The **Bhavaprakasha Nighantu** and **Raj Nighantu** expand upon the qualities of individual millets, listing specific varieties such as *Kodrava* (Kodo millet) and *Sama* (barnyard millet) in *Dhanya Varga*. According to *Bhavaprakasha*, millets are effective in managing cholesterol, supporting weight loss, and aiding digestion. They are highlighted for their light, low-glycemic qualities, which are beneficial in obesity and certain metabolic conditions.

- **Attributes in Nighantus:**
  - Bhavaprakasha notes the use of millets for cholesterol management, weight loss, and digestive support
  - Raj Nighantu emphasizes their use in metabolic disorders and *Kapha* management

---

#### 6. Therapeutic Applications of Millets in Ayurveda

Millets are often recommended in Ayurveda for individuals needing to balance *Kapha* or those with sluggish digestion and metabolic concerns. Their properties make them suitable for individuals with *Kapha* dominance, as their astringent, light, and low-glycemic qualities aid in reducing mucus and excess weight. However, individuals with *Vata* imbalance or those who need nourishment are advised to consume millets in moderation, as their drying effect can increase dryness and may lead to digestive disturbances or joint issues.

**Summary of Ayurvedic Properties:**

- **Gunas:** Laghu (light), Ruksha (dry)
- **Rasa:** Kashaya (astringent), Madhura (slightly sweet)
- **Virya:** Sheeta (cooling)
- **Vipaka:** Madhura (sweet post-digestive effect)
- **Doshic Impact:** Increases *Vata*, decreases *Kapha*, mild effect on *Pitta*

---

#### 7. Conclusion

Ayurvedic texts collectively describe millets as grains that offer substantial health benefits when used appropriately. Due to their low glycemic index, cooling nature, and light, drying qualities, millets are beneficial for *Kapha*-related disorders, including obesity, high cholesterol, and digestive stagnation. Millets continue to play a valuable role in modern diets, particularly for those seeking alternatives to heavier grains. However, the traditional wisdom of Ayurveda advises personalized millet consumption based on individual doshic needs, thus aligning millet intake with holistic health principles.

---

#### References

1. Charaka Samhita, Sutrasthana. (Translation by Sharma, R.K., Dash, B.). Varanasi: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Series, 1976.
2. Sushruta Samhita, Sutrasthana. (Translation by Bhishagratna, K.L.). Varanasi: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, 2010.
3. Ashtanga Hridaya, Sutrasthana. (Translation by Murthy, K.R.S.). Varanasi: Chaukhamba Krishnadas Academy, 1991.
4. Bhavaprakasha Nighantu (Dhanya Varga), Mishra, B.S. (Ed. & Comm.). Varanasi: Chaukhamba Orientalia, 2006.
5. Raj Nighantu (Dhanya Varga), Commentary by Narahari Pandit. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Krishnadas Academy, 1998.