



“FINGER MILLET (RAGI/ NACHANI/ ELEUSINE CORACANA L. GAERTN) : A REVIEW”

Ayurveda

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KEYWORDS

INTRODUCTION:

Millet are “Minor Cereals” of the grass family, **Poaceae**. They are small seeded, annual cereal grasses, many of which are adapted to tropical, arid climates and are characterized by their ability to survive in less fertile soil also referred as “**Poor Men's Cereal's**”. It is one of the “**Common Millets**” in several regions of India.

Millet are known in India from Vedic times, have their own position at religious functions and **Consumed In Fasting**. As small millet is highly nutritious now called as “**Nutria Millet**” even superior to rice and wheat in certain constituents like **Calcium** (0.38%), **Fiber** (18%), **Phenolic Compounds** (0.3-3%), and **Sulphur** containing **Amino Acids**. In view of this Millet, diet is advocated to Children's, Pregnant Women's, Patients recovered from prolonged illness and Anemic cases. “**Small Millet**” formed a group of six minor coarse cereals among “**Finger Millet**” (**Eleusine Coracana L.**) is one.

Research evidence suggests that, whole grains and cereal fiber's consumption are inversely associated with BMI (Body Mass Index), Waist Circumference, Total Cholesterol, Metabolic Syndrome, Mortality From Cardiovascular Disorder, Insulin Resistance, and Incidences Of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus, etc.

Description In Ayurvedic Classical Texts

The Ayurvedic tradition, deeply rooted in Ancient Indian Wisdom, places immense importance on dietary choices tailored to individual constitutions or Doshas. Ragi seamlessly fit into this philosophy, offering a harmonious balance. For individuals with a predominance of Pitta Dosha, Ragi's cooling nature helps mitigate excess Dahi (can be correlated with Hyperacidity), aligning perfectly with Ayurvedic principles of Pitta and Dahaprashaman maintaining balance.

For those with a Vata Prakruti (Vata constitution), Ragi's grounding and nourishing qualities provide much-needed stability and energy. Even for Kapha Prakruti Ragi can benefit in moderation, as it is relatively Laghu (Easy to Digest) and can help prevent excess mucus production when incorporated thoughtfully into their diets.

“Ayurvedic Classical Texts, including the Charaka Samhita” have extolled the virtues of Ragi for Centuries, which emphasize Ragi's role in promoting Vitality and Longevity when integrated into a balanced diet further validating its significance in “Nutrition.”

Properties:

Botanical Name - Eleusine Coracana L. Gaertn.

Family – Poaceae

Vernacular Names

English- Finger Millet

Sanskrit- Nartaki

Hindi - Ragi, Marwah, Mandika

Marathi - Nagli, Nachni

Kannada - Ragi

Characteristics As Per Ayurveda

Rasa: Madhura, Tikta, Kashaya

Virya: Sheeta

Vipaka: Madhura

Gunas: Snigdha (Unctuousness), Balya (Promotes Strength), Vrushya (Aphrodisiac).

Actions On Doshas: Balances Kapha, and increases Vata-Pitta.

NUTRITIONAL PROPERTIES:

Nutritional value per 100 gm

Energy	1,283 Kj (307 Kcal)
Carbohydrates	53.5 gm
Dietary fiber	22.6 gm
Fat	1.9 gm
Protein	7.4 gm

MINERALS	QUANTITY	%DV(dietary value)
Calcium	344mg	34
Iron	11.3 mg	87
Magnesium	154mg	43
Phosphorus	183mg	26
potassium	538mg	18
sodium	2 mg	0
zinc	1.7mg	18

Being Non-Glutinous, Finger Millet is safe for people suffering from gluten-allergy and celiac disease. It is non-acid forming and hence easy to digest. Finger millet is rich in Amino Acids (Tryptophan, Threonine, Valine, Isoleucine and Methionine).

Potential Uses/ Indications Of Ragi (nachani):

1.Improved Digestion-

Ragi's impressive fiber content promotes healthy digestion by adding bulk to the stool and facilitating **Regular Bowel Movement**. This not only prevents constipation but also aids in maintaining a **Healthy Gut Environment**.

2. Weight Management-

The high fiber content in Ragi contributes to a sense of fullness, reducing overall calorie consumption. This makes it an excellent addition to weight management plans, helping individuals control their food intake and curb unhealthy snacking habits.

3. Diabetes Management-

Emerging research suggests that Ragi may play a role in regulating blood sugar levels. Its “**Low Glycemic Index**”, coupled with the presence of beneficial compounds like “**Polyphenols**” could potentially benefit individuals with Diabetes Mellitus or those at risk.

4. Cardiovascular Health-

Ragi's Magnesium content is pivotal in maintaining a healthy heart. “**Magnesium**” helps regulate blood pressure and reduce the risk of Cardiovascular Disorders, making Ragi an essential component of a **Heart-Healthy Diet**.

5. Bone Health-

“**Calcium**” is a key player in maintaining strong and healthy bones, and Ragi delivers this vital mineral in abundance. Regular consumption of Ragi can contribute to improved **Bone Density And Overall Skeletal Health**.

These health benefits are not only supported by scientific research, but also align perfectly with Ayurvedic principles of controlling imbalances that can lead to disease and promoting holistic well-being.

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