

**TEXTUAL EVOLUTION OF *DUGDHKA* IN AYURVEDIC LITERATURE: A
SYSTEMATIC REVIEW FROM *SAMHITAS* TO *NIGHANTUS*****Ekta Singh^{1*}, Ramakant Marde², S. M. Tripathi³**¹P.G. Scholar, Department of Dravyaguna Vigyana, Patanjali Bhartiya Ayurvedic Evum Anusandhan Sansthan, Haridwar, Uttarakhand.²Professor, Department of Dravyaguna Vigyana, Patanjali Bhartiya Ayurvedic Evum Anusandhan Sansthan, Haridwar, Uttarakhand.³Professor, Department of Dravyaguna Vigyana, Patanjali Bhartiya Ayurvedic Evum Anusandhan Sansthan, Haridwar, Uttarakhand.***Corresponding Author: Ekta Singh**

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ABSTRACT

The plant *Dugdhika* (*Euphorbia hirta* Linn.), also known by synonyms such as *Kshirini*, *Rajashavak*, and *Dudhi*, has been referenced throughout Ayurvedic literature for its therapeutic properties. This study aims to review systematically the presence, synonyms, and medicinal applications of *Dugdhika* in Vedic texts, *Samhitas*, and *Nighantus*. Data were compiled from primary Ayurvedic sources including *Charaka*, *Sushruta*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Bhavaprakasha*, *Kashyapa Samhita*, and subsequent *Nighantu* literature from the 7th century A.D. to modern works. Results reveal that while *Dugdhika* is absent in the Vedas, its first detailed mention occurs in the *Charaka Samhita*, where it is recommended in various formulations for disorders such as *Rajayakshma*, *Arsha*, *Atisara*, and *Palitya*. Later *Samhitas* including *Sushruta*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, and *Ashtanga Sangraha* also provide references, though with varying therapeutic focus. In the *Nighantus*, *Dugdhika* is absent in the earliest lexicons but gains prominence from the 9th century A.D. onward, appearing with numerous synonyms and categorized across diverse Vargas. The review highlights its evolving recognition in Ayurveda, reflecting its enduring therapeutic relevance.

KEYWORDS: *Dugdhika*, *Euphorbia hirta* Linn., Ayurveda, *Samhitas*, *Nighantu*, Dravyaguna, Medicinal plants.**INTRODUCTION**

The Ayurvedic system of medicine is rooted in the Vedic tradition, where the medicinal use of plants was extensively documented. Among the numerous herbs, *Dugdhika* (*Euphorbia hirta* Linn.) occupies a distinct position in later Ayurvedic literature for its diverse therapeutic applications. The plant is referenced across major *Samhitas* and *Nighantus* in varied contexts, with multiple synonyms such as *Kshirini*, *Ksheerika*, *Rajashavak*, *Dudhi*, and *Payasya*.

However, its presence and significance fluctuate across different eras of Ayurvedic texts. The present review systematically analyzes the mention of *Dugdhika* in classical *Samhitas* and later *Nighantu* literature to trace its historical development and medicinal relevance.

METHODOLOGY

A comprehensive textual review was conducted on classical Ayurvedic treatises (*Brihatrayi*, *Laghutrayi*, and other *Samhitas*) and lexicons (*Nighantus*) ranging from the Vedic period to the 20th century A.D. Primary texts including *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Ashtanga Sangraha*, and *Bhavaprakasha Samhita* were studied for direct references to *Dugdhika*. Parallely, more than thirty *Nighantus* were examined chronologically, beginning with Vedic *Nighantu* and extending to modern compilations such as *Priya-Nighantu*. Information on synonyms, therapeutic indications, formulations, and classification of *Dugdhika* was extracted and tabulated for comparative analysis.

General information on Plant *Dugdhika* (*Euphorbia hirta* Linn.)

- **Botanical Name:** *Euphorbia hirta* Linn.
- **Family:** Euphorbiaceae
- **Common Names: Sanskrit:** *Dugdhika*, *Kshirini*, *Ksheerini*, *Payasya*; **Hindi:** *Dudhi*, *Dudhiya*; **English:** Asthma weed, Snake weed, Milk weed; **Other languages:** Tawa- Tawa (Philippines), Amman Pachai (Tamil)
- **Morphology:** Small annual herb, usually growing along roadsides and in open grasslands. Height: 30–60 cm. Stem: Erect or spreading, reddish, covered with fine hairs, exudes a milky latex when broken. Leaves: Opposite, simple, oblong-lanceolate with a serrated margin and often with a purple spot at the center. Flowers: Tiny, yellowish-green, clustered in leaf axils. Fruit: Small, hairy capsules containing minute seeds.
- **Distribution:** Widely found in tropical and subtropical regions of Asia, Africa, and America. In India, it grows abundantly as a common weed in fields, gardens, and roadsides.
- **Properties (Ayurvedic View)**

Rasa (Taste): *Kashaya* (astringent), *Tikta* (bitter) **Guna (Qualities):** *Laghu* (light), *Ruksha* (dry) **Virya (Potency):** *Ushna* (hot)

Vipaka (Post- digestive effect): *Katu* (pungent)

Dosha Action: Pacifies *Kapha* and *Pitta dosha*

- **Therapeutic Uses (Traditionally):** *Atisara* (diarrhea, dysentery), *Shwasa* (asthma, respiratory disorders), *Rajyakshma* (tuberculosis-like conditions), *Arsha* (piles/hemorrhoids), *Krimi* (intestinal worms), Skin diseases, wounds, and eye disorders
- **Modern Pharmacological Activities:** Antibacterial, antifungal, antiviral, Antiasthmatic, antidiarrheal, Anti-inflammatory, analgesic, Antioxidant and immunomodulatory properties.

RESULTS

1. ***Dugdhika* in Vedic Kala** -The *Atharvaveda* and other Vedic texts describe numerous herbs for medicinal purposes, yet *Dugdhika* is not mentioned in the Vedic corpus.

Vedic Nighantu (Yaska): No reference to *Dugdhika*.

2. *Dugdhika* in Samhitas

Charaka Samhita: *Dugdhika* is frequently mentioned under synonyms such as *Kshirini*, *Rajakshavak*, *Ksheerika*, and *Dugdhika*. Indications include *Arsha*, *Rajyakshma*, *Atisara*, *Visarpa*, *Palitya*, and *Basti* disorders.

Sushruta Samhita: Mentions *Dugdhika* as a lepa for skin disorders like *Shvitra*.

Ashtanga Hridaya: Lists *Dugdhika* in several

formulations for *Arsha*, *Atisara*, *Vatarakta*, *Shiroroga*, *Karnikapatana*, and *Palitya*.

Ashtanga Sangraha: Mentions *Dugdhika*/*Dudhi* in contexts of *Atisara*, *Arsha*, *Palitya*, and in *Ghruta* preparations.

Bhavaprakasha Samhita: Records its use in *Jwara* and *Vatavyadhi* formulation.

Kashyapa Samhita: Mentions *Dugdhika* in treatment of *Udavarta*.

Sharangdhar, Bhela, and Harita Samhitas: No reference to *Dugdhika*.

3. *Dugdhika* in Nighantus

- **Early Nighantus (7th–10th Century A.D.):** *Siddhasara*, *Haramekhela*, *Ashtang- Nighantu*, *Chamatkara*, and *Madanadi* – no mention of *Dugdhika*.

Paryayratnamala (9th Century) – records synonyms *Dugdhika* and *Rajshavak*.

- **Medieval Nighantus (11th–16th Century A.D.):** *Dravyaguna Sangraha* – *Rajashavak* as synonym.

Dhanvantari-Nighantu – *Kshirini* in *Guduchyadi Varga*.

Shabdachandrika – mentions synonyms (*Ksheera*, *Ksheeravi*, *Komala*, *Garbhini*).

Sodhala-Nighantu – lists *Nagarjuni* under *Lakshmanadi Varga*.

Madhava Dravyaguna – details *Dugdhika* in *Vividhaushadi Varga*.

Siddhamantra Prakasha – synonym *Kshiravi* identified with *Dugdhika*.

Hridayadipaka Nighantu – five synonyms including *Payasya* and *Arkapushpi*.

Madanapala-Nighantu – places *Dugdhika* under *Abhyaadi Varga*.

Kaiyadeva-Nighantu – *Aushadhi Varga*, indicated in *Krimi* and *Kushtha roga*.

Bhavaprakasha-Nighantu & Gunaratnamala – both include *Dugdhika* in *Guduchyadi Varga*.

- **Later Nighantus (18th–20th Century A.D.):** *Raja-Vallabha*, *Laghu-Nighantu*, *Paryaymuktavali* – no mention.

Shaligrama-Nighantu – records in *Guduchyadi Varga*.

Nighantu-Adarsha – *Aamalyakadi Varga*; indicated in *Dadru, Arsha, Krimi danta*.

Shankara-Nighantu – refers as *Dudhi*; therapeutic uses in *Hridyaroga, Arsha, Krimi, Kustha*, and as *Garbhanashini*.

Abhidhanmanjari – lists synonyms under *Sankeerna*

Varga.

Priya-Nighantu – categorizes under *Shatpushpadi Varga*.

Table No. 1: Master Table: Dugdhika in Ayurvedic Literature.

A. Samhita References

S. No.	Period Indication	Text/ Samhita	Author	Synonyms / Names Used	Preparations & Indications
1.	Vedic Period	Atharvaveda	-----	-----	Absent
2.	2nd c. B.C.	Charaka Samhita	Charaka (rev. Dridhabala)	Kshirini, Rajakshavak, Ksheerika, Dugdhika, Ksheernaya	Used in Brahniya Mahakashaya; for Rajayakshma, Arsha, Atisara, Visarpa, Palitya, Basti etc.
3.	2nd–3rd c. A.D.	Sushruta Samhita	Sushruta (rev. Nagarjuna)	Dugdhika	Lepa in Shvitra
4.	5th c. A.D.	Ashtanga Hridaya	Vagbhata	Kshirini, Dugdhika	For Arsha, Atisara, Vatarakta, Shiroroga, Karnikapatana etc.
5.	5th–6 th c. A.D.	Ashtanga Sangraha	Vagbhata	Dugdhika, Dudhi, Kshirini	For Atisara, Arsha, Palitya
6.	13th c. A.D.	Sharangadhara Samhita	Sharangadhara	-----	Absent
7.	16th c. A.D.	Bhavaprakasha Samhita	Bhavamishra	Kshiri, Dugdhika	Padmakadi Taila (Jwara), Mahanarayana Taila (Vatavyadhi)
8.	Early A.D.	Bhela Samhita	Bhela	-----	Absent
9.	Early A.D.	Harita Samhita	Harit	-----	Absent
10.	6th c. A.D.	Kashyapa Samhita	Vridhha Jivaka	Dugdhika	Udavarta
11.	8th c. A.D.	Siddhasara Samhita	Ravigupta	-----	Absent

B. Nighantu References

S. No.	Century	Text/ Nighantu	Author	Synonyms / Names Used	Therapeutic Notes / Varga
1.	Prehistoric	Vedic Nighantu	Unknown (commentary by Yaska)	-----	Absent
2.	7th c. A.D.	Siddhasara Nighantu	Ravigupta	-----	Absent
3.	8th c. A.D.	Haramekhela Nighantu	Madhuka	-----	Absent
4.	8th c. A.D.	Ashtang Nighantu	Vahatacharya	-----	Absent
5.	9th c. A.D.	Paryayratnamala	Madhava	Dugdhika, Rajshavak	First clear mention
6.	10th c. A.D.	Madanadi Nighantu	Chandra Nandana	-----	Absent
7.	10th c. A.D.	Chamatkara Nighantu	Rangacharya	-----	Absent
8.	11th c. A.D.	Dravyaguna Sangraha	Chakrapani Datta	Rajashavak	Synonym
9.	11th c. A.D.	Dhanvantari Nighantu	Mahendra Bhogika	Kshirini	Guduchyadi Varga
10.	11th c. A.D.	Shabdachandrika	Chakrapani Datta	Ksheera, Ksheeravi, Komala, Garbhini	Synonym
11.	11th c. A.D.	Nighantushesa	Hemachandra Suri	-----	Absent
12.	12th c. A.D.	Sodhala Nighantu	Sodhala	Nagarjuni	Lakshmanadi varga
13.	13th c. A.D.	Madhava Dravyaguna	Madhava Kavi	Dugdhika	Vividhaushadi varga
14.	13th c. A.D.	Siddhamantra Prakasha	Keshava; comm. Bopadeva	Kshiravi (as Dugdhika)	Pittakaphaghna varga
15.	14th c. A.D.	Hridyadipaka Nighantu	Bopadeva	Payasya, Kshirika, Ksheerini, Arkapushpi, Dugdhika	Synonyms
16.	14th c. A.D.	Madanapala Nighantu	King madanpala	Dugdhika	Abhyaadi varga
17.	14th c. A.D.	Ayurveda Mahodadhi	Susena Deva	-----	Absent
18.	14th c. A.D.	Raj Nighantu	Narhari Pandita	-----	Absent
19.	15th c. A.D.	Kaiyadeva Nighantu	Kaiyadeva	Dugdhika	Aushadhi varga
20.	16th c. A.D.	Bhavaprakasha Nighantu	Bhavmishra	Dugdhika, kshirini, swaduparni, ksheera, vishirini	Guduchyadi Varga
21.	16th c. A.D.	Gunaratnamala	Bhavmishra	Dugdhika	Guduchyadi Varga
22.	16th c. A.D.	Saraswati Nighantu	Unknown	-----	Absent
23.	18th c. A.D.	Raja Vallabha Nighantu	Rajavallabha	-----	Absent

24.	18th c. A.D.	Laghu Nighantu	Vyasa Keshav Rama	-----	Absent
25.	1887 A.D.	Paryaymuktavali	Haricaranasena	-----	Absent
26.	19th c. A.D.	Shaligrama Nighantu	Lala Shaligrama Vaisya	Dugdhika	Guduchyadi Varga
27.	1928 A.D.	Nighantu Adarsha	Vaidya Bapalal	Dugdhika	Amalyakadi Varga; for Dadru, Visphotaka, Arsha, Krimi Danta
28.	1935 A.D.	Shankara Nighantu	Shankardutta Gauda	Dudhi	For Hridayaroga, Arsha, Krimi, Kustha, Garbhanashini
29.	1971 A.D.	Mahausadha Nighantu	Indradev Tripathi/ Aryadas Singh	-----	Absent
30.	Modern	Abhidhanamanjari	Bhishag Arya	Dugdhika + 4 synonyms	Sankeerna & Chaturartha Varga
31.	20th c. A.D.	Priya Nighantu	Priya Vrat Sharma	Dugdhika	Shatpushpadi Varga

DISCUSSION

The review shows that *Dugdhika* was absent in Vedic texts, but its first authoritative mention appears in the *Charaka Samhita*, where it is described extensively in multiple therapeutic contexts. Subsequent *Samhitas* reaffirm its role, particularly in gastrointestinal disorders, skin diseases, and hair conditions. In *Nighantus*, *Dugdhika* was initially absent but gained increasing recognition from the 9th century A.D. onwards, being described with multiple synonyms and categorized under different Vargas. Its evolving presence reflects growing therapeutic significance and wider clinical use in later centuries.

CONCLUSION

Dugdhika (*Euphorbia hirta* Linn.) holds a significant place in Ayurvedic literature, though absent in the earliest Vedic texts. Its importance was first recognized in the *Charaka Samhita*, followed by systematic mentions in later *Samhitas* and detailed classifications in *Nighantus*. The increasing number of synonyms and varga classifications across centuries highlights its enduring therapeutic relevance in Ayurveda, particularly in gastrointestinal, dermatological, and systemic disorders.

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