



Exploring *Nagavalli Patra* (*Piper betle* Linn) through the Lens of Classical Ayurvedic Texts: A Literature-Based Review

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Received: 25 January 2026

Revised: 10 February 2026

Accepted: 26 February 2026

ABSTRACT

Nagavalli patra (*Piper betle* Linn) has many medicinal uses and has been recommended in the ancient scriptures of *Ayurveda*. The betel leaf is known for its acrid, antiseptic, aphrodisiac, aromatic, astringent, bitter, carminative, hot and stimulant properties. Betel leaf is in use from ancient times as a digestive edible. *Tambula* is very closely linked with Indian civilization and traditions. Ayurvedic classics mentioned chewing betel leaves in the context of *Dinacharya* (daily regimen) for the maintenance of perfect oral hygiene, for good taste and as a prevention of diseases of the oral cavity and throat

Keywords ; *Nagavalli patra*, *Piper betle* Linn., *Ayurveda*

INTRODUCTION

Mythological story

In *Skandhapuran Nagarkhanda*^[1]

The origin of *Nagavalli patra* is said to be in *Indras* garden. After consumption of *Amrit* (nectar), which was derived from *Samudra Manthan*, the *Amrit Kalash* (nectar pot) was placed at *Indras* garden just near the post of *Airavat* (*Indara's* elephant). *Airavat* in its own joy spills the pot of *Amrit* from which small amount of *Amrit* was dropped on ground. From this *Amrit* drop a green climber emerged which started growing on the post of *Airawat*. As *Airawat* is also named as *Nagendra* and origin of this climber was due to, so it was named as *Nagavalli*. *Indra* used to consume this *Nagavalli* with accompanying his wife. Later king named as *Vanivatsak*, who was devotee of *Indra* visited him and became fond of *Nagavalli*. He asked *Indra* for it. *Indra* gave him one leaf of *Nagavalli* of which *Vanivatsak* cultivated on earth. Later it become famous as *tambul patra*.

In *Mahabharata*^[2]

It is believed that Arjun was asked to acquire a betel leaf after his victory over evil powers in *Rajaugya Yagya* by the priests that was needed to start the *Yagya*. As none were available in the region, Arjun journeyed to the Kingdom of Serpents—*Nag Lok*—where he sought the betel leaf from the serpent queen. Hence, the betel leaf came to be known as *Nagavalli* or *Nagarbel*, signifying its association with the *Nagas*.

VERNACULAR NAMES OF NAGAVALLI (*Piper betle* Linn)^[3]

Sanskrit	Tambuli
Marathi	Paan, Nagvel, Vidyachepaan
Hindi	Pan
English	Betel Leaf
Assam	Pan
Bengali	Pan
Punjabi	Pan
Gujarati	Pan
Kannada	Veelyadele Ele



Tamil	Vettilai
Telugu	Tamalapaku, Tamulapaku
Malayalama	Vettila
Urdu	Pan

Classical referances :

In Charak Samhita tambul is described in daily regimen.^[4]

Ingredients like betel leaf, cloves, cardamom, and camphor are considered auspicious and beneficial, especially for oral hygiene and freshness.

Sushruta Samhita^[5] - Tambula considered among aphrodisiac substances enhancing sensuality and vigor. After meals, aromatic substances like puga, karpura, lavanga, and sumana, or fruits with bitter and astringent taste, or tambula leaf with such herbs should be used by wise individuals to maintain oral clarity and health.

Ashtang samgraha^[6] - To improve taste, oral fragrance, and clarity of voice, one should chew tambula leaf mixed with jati, lavanga, karpura, kankola, and kaṭuka. This is beneficial except in cases of bleeding disorders, eye disorders, ulcers, poisoning, exhaustion, and emaciation.

Ashtanghridaya^[7]

After anjana vidhi, navana karma (nasya or nasal administration), gandusa (mouth gargles), dhumapana (inhalation of medicated fumes) and tambula-sevana (pana chewing) are to be conducted.

The following persons are contraindicated for tambul chewing.

- * Kṣata (urahkṣata/injury to the chest)
- * Pittasra (raktapitta/bleeding disorders)
- * Ruksha (dryness in the body)
- * Kupita chakshu (eye diseases)
- * Visha dushta (poisonous conditions)
- * Murccha (syncope/epilepsy)
- * Madarta (alcoholic toxication)
- * Shoṣha (dryness of mouth and tuberculosis) etc.

Sharangdhr Samhita

It is indicated to consume tambul after taking virechan medicine.

After undergoing virechana (purgation therapy), a person should wash their eyes with cold water, then inhale a mild fragrance, and consume betel leaf (Tambula) thereafter as part of post-therapy care.^[8]

Nagavalli patra rasa is used in *maran* of lead. By repeatedly coating the lead (Naga) with a paste made from the juice of *Tambula* leaves (betel leaf) and triturating it on a stone, and subjecting it to thirty-two successive incinerations (*Putas*), the lead gets completely incinerated and is converted into fine ash (*Bhasma*).^[9]

Sidhmahar lep^[10]

Take *Darvi* (*Berberis aristata*), radish seeds (*Moolaka beeja*), *Taalaka* (yellow orpiment), *Suradaru* (*Cedrus deodara*), and betel



leaves (*Tambula patra*)—each in the quantity of one *Karsha* (approximately 12 grams), separately. To this, add conch shell powder (*Shankha churna*) in the amount of one *Shana* (approx. 3 grams), and combine all ingredients together. This mixture, when ground well with water and used as a paste for external application, is highly effective in the treatment of *Sidhma* (a type of skin disorder similar to Pityriasis or leucoderma) mainly came in references to skin diseases as external application form.

Pamadi lep^[11]

Take *Hemakshiri* (possibly *Euphorbia neriifolia*), *Vidanga* (*Embelia ribes*), *Darada* (realgar), *Gandhaka* (sulfur), *Dadrughna* (antifungal agents), and *Kushthasindura* (a medicated preparation for skin diseases), and grind all these ingredients thoroughly together. Use the fresh juice (swarasa) of *Dhattura*, *Neem*, and *Tambula* leaves (betel leaves) separately to triturate this mixture. When this paste is applied externally, it effectively alleviates eczema (*pama*), tinea (*dadru*), psoriasis-like eruptions (*vicharchika*), as well as itching (*kandu*) and skin rashes (*rakas*) quickly.

Gatradurgandhahar lep^[12]

The powder of betel leaves (*Tambula patra churna*), when combined with the powder of herbs beneficial in skin diseases (*Kushtha*) and made into a paste with water, can be applied externally to effectively eliminate foul body odour (*gatra daurgandhya*).

Kashyapa Samhita

Indication of *tambul* after consumption of garlic as per *lashun kalpadhyay*.^[13]

When a person experiences thirst at the appropriate time, the consumption of betel leaf (*Tambula*), areca nut (*Puga*), and other such mouth-refreshing substances is considered beneficial. For such individuals, cool water is regarded as wholesome and suitable (*pathya*) to drink.^[14]

Bhavprakash Samhita

Nagavalli patara mentioned as aphrodisiac and even indicated in *netrabhishyanda* (conjunctivitis).^[15]

A moonlit night, a beautiful youthful woman, sweet melodious music, betel leaf, wine, and fragrant garlands, these are all pleasing to the senses and act as aphrodisiacs, stimulating desire and delighting the mind.^[16]

The fresh juices of *Tambula* (betel leaf), *Shigru* (Moringa), *Karaveera* (*Nerium indicum*), *Shirisha* (*Albizia lebbek*), and *Danti* (*Baliospermum montanum*), when mixed individually with honey and used as an eye application (*Anjana*), immediately pacify inflammation and irritation of the eyes (*netra kopa*).^[17]

Yogaratanakar

Detailed *tambul* sevan *vidhi* along with its indications and contraindications had given in it. Many of the oral diseases along with *arbuda* are mentioned in the indications.

When food is digested, *Vata* increases; if food is improperly digested, *Pitta* aggravates; and immediately after eating, *Kapha* increases — this is the natural order after meals.

To counteract this, a wise person should perform fumigation (*dhumapana*) or use fragrant and pleasing substances with pungent, bitter, and astringent tastes.

Such as areca nut, camphor, musk, clove, and aromatic fruits or flowers.

Alternatively, fruits or substances having astringent and pungent properties that purify the mouth may be used, ideally accompanied by betel leaves and pleasant fragrances.^[18]

Betel leaf is considered highly beneficial in conditions like laziness (*alasya*), glandular swellings (*vidradhi*), restricted tongue movement (*upajivhika*), palatal and dental diseases, tumors (*arbuda*), as well as disorders of the throat (*gala*), mouth (*asya*), cheeks (*ganḍa*), and dryness of the palate (*talushoṣha*), and all diseases caused by *Kapha*.

However, expert physicians forbid its use in cases of eye inflammation (*netrakopa*), bleeding disorders (*raktapitta*), wounds (*kṣata*),



burning sensations (*daha*), poisoning (*viṣa*), emaciation (*Shoṣha*), intoxication (*madatyaya*), unconsciousness (*moha*), fainting (*murccha*), and dyspnea (*Svasa*).^[19]

Harita Samhita

Tambul patra swarasadi nasya mentioned in bhrushankhadosa.

The juice of betel leaf (Tambula Patra), combined with Vidanga (*Embelia ribes*), Saindhava (rock salt), Hingu (*asafoetida*), and jaggery, and triturated well with water. When administered as nasal drops (*nasya*), effectively eliminates severe disorders of the head and parasitic infestations (*krimi*).^[20]

Gadanigraha

Tambula use in *shlipada* and *tambuladi swarasa anjana* for *nava netra kopa*.

A paste made from seven betel leaves mixed with hot water and a pinch of salt, when consumed, effectively alleviates *Slipada* (elephantiasis).^[21]

The fresh juice of each of the following: *Tambula*, *Shigru*, *Karavira*, *Shiriṣha*, *Danti*, *Shyama*, *Dadhittha*, *Surasa*, *Sumana*, and *Arjaka* when mixed individually with honey and used as a collyrium (*anjana*), quickly cures acute eye inflammations (*netra kopa*).^[22]

Vaidya Manorama

Today's burning topic is obesity, *tambula* is useful in obesity. For two months, one should chew a single *Tambula* leaf combined with ten *Maricha* (black pepper). After chewing, drink cool water. An excessively obese person becomes lean through this regimen.^[23]

GANA & VARGA OF NAGAVALLI^{[24][25][26][27][28][29][30][31][32][33][34][35][36][37][38]}

	Nighantu/Samhita	Gana/Varga
1	<i>Amarkosh</i>	<i>Vanoushadhi varga</i>
2	<i>Abhidhanratnamala</i>	<i>Kashaya skandha</i>
3	<i>Bhavaprakash Nighantu</i>	<i>Guduchyadi varga</i>
4	<i>Dravyaguna sangraha Nighantu</i>	<i>Aharavidhi varga</i>
5	<i>Madanpala Nighantu</i>	<i>Phaladi varga</i>
6	<i>Kaiyadeva Nighantu</i>	<i>Aushadhi varga</i>
7	<i>Shaligrama Nighantu</i>	<i>Guduchyadi varga</i>
8	<i>Shodhala Nighantu</i>	<i>Chandanadi varga</i>
9	<i>Raj Nighantu</i>	<i>Amradi varga</i>
11	<i>Abhidhanamanjari</i>	<i>Sankirna varga</i>
12	<i>Priya Nighantu</i>	<i>Pippalyadi varga</i>
13	<i>Sarsvati nighantu</i>	<i>Lata varga</i>
14	<i>shabdachandrika</i>	<i>Vrikshadi</i>
15	<i>Sidhamantra Nighantu</i>	<i>Kaphavataghna varga</i>
16	<i>Madhav dravyaguna</i>	<i>Prakirna varga</i>

I. DIFFERENT SPECIES OR TYPES OF NAGAVALLI

TYPES OF NAGAVALLI

Raj Nighantu 7 types^[32]

1. *Shrivati*
2. *Amlavati*
3. *Satsa*



4. Saptasira

5. Amlasara

6. Patulika

7. Hresniya

Shaligram Nighantu 6 types^[30]

1. Shrivati

2. Amlavati

3. Satasi

4. Malvodbhava angar parna

5. Andhrapatulika

6. Hresniya

RASA VEERYA VIPAKA OF NAGAVALLI AS PER AYURVEDIC TEXTS

RASA MIMANSA

	C	S	A	KN	BN	MN	M	RN	RV	shon	PN	SN
M	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
C	-	√	-	-	√	-	√	√	√	√	√	√
T	-	√	-	√	√	√	-	√	-	-	√	√
K	-	√	-	√	√	√	-	-	-	-	-	-

M-Madhura, A-Amla, L-Laghu, C-Katu, T-Tikta, K-Kashaya

According to Acharya, Nagavalli has-Katu, Tikta, and Kashaya rasa .

VIPAKA MIMANSA

	C	S	A	BN	KN	M	RN	RV	MN	ShoN	PN	AN	SN
M	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
C	-	√	-	√	-	√	√	√	-	√	-	-	-

M-Madhura, A-Amla, C-Katu

VEERYA MIMANSA

	C	S	A	BN	RJ	DN	RN	RV	MN	ShoN	PN	AN	SN
U	√	√	√	√	√	√	-	√	√	√	√	√	√
S	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Nagavalli patra has Ushna veerya.



GUNA

	C	S	A	KN	BN	MN	M	RN	RV	ShoN	Pn	AN	SN
<i>Tikshana</i>	-	√	-	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	-	√
<i>Vishada</i>	-	√	√	√	√	√	-	-	-	-	-	-	√
<i>Sugandhi</i>	√	√	√	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Sara</i>	-	-	-	√	√	√	-	-	-	-	√	-	√
<i>Ushna</i>	-	-	-	√	√	√	-	-	√	√	-	-	√
<i>Kshara</i>	-	-	-	√	√	√	-	-	-	-	-	-	√
<i>Laghu</i>	-	-	-	-	√	√	-	-	-	-	-	-	√
<i>Ruksha</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	√	-	-	-	-	-	-

NAGAVALLI KARMA

RASAPANCHAKA

Thus an overall assessment of *Rasapanchaka* of *Nagavalli* can be stated as follows

- **Rasa:** *katu, tikta, kashaya*
- **Vipaka :** *katu*
- **Veerya:** *Ushna*
- **Guna:** *tikshana, sara, sugandhi, ushna*

I. ACTION ON DOSHA

- It alleviates *kapha* and *vata* by *ushna veerya*
- Increases *pitta*

II. ACTION ON STROTAS

Sr.no.	Strotasa	Action	Indication
1	<i>Pranavaha</i>	<i>Kaphaghna</i>	<i>Kasa</i>
2	<i>Annavaha</i>	<i>Dipana, krimighna</i>	<i>Agnimandya, Amlapitta, krimi</i>
3	<i>Rasavaha</i>	<i>Shramahara, Ruchira</i>	<i>Arochaka</i>
4	<i>Raktavaha</i>	<i>Hrudya</i>	<i>Hrudroga</i>
5	<i>Shukravaha</i>	<i>Vajikaran</i>	<i>Kleibya</i>
6	<i>Mutravaha</i>	<i>Basti shodhan</i>	<i>Mutra vikar</i>
7	<i>Purishvaha</i>	<i>Sarak, Stransan</i>	<i>Malabadhata</i>



KALPAS OF NAGAVALLI ^{[39][40][41][42][18]}

Tambulasava useful in *arsha* and *ashmari*^[20].

Nagavalli is mostly used as *bhavna dravya* and as *anupan*.

As *Bhavana dravya*

Sr.No.	KALPA	ADHIKAR
1	<i>Kalakuta Rasa</i>	<i>Jwara</i>
2	<i>Shwasakasachintamani Rasa</i>	<i>Hikka Shwasa</i>
3	<i>Pushpadhanva Rasa</i>	<i>Vajikarana</i>
4	<i>Laghu Sutshehara Rasa</i>	<i>Amlapitta</i>
5	<i>Brihat Vishamajvarantaka Lauha</i>	<i>Jvaradhikra</i>
6	<i>Brihat Sarvajvarahara Lauha</i>	<i>Jvaradhikara</i>
7	<i>Lakshamililasa Rasa (Naradiya)</i>	<i>Rasayanadhikara</i>
8	<i>Brihat Chandrodaya Makaradhvaja</i>	<i>Vajikarana</i>
9	<i>Nagavallabha Rasa</i>	<i>Kasachikitsa</i>
10	<i>Raudra rasa</i>	<i>Arbuda</i>
11	<i>Arbudahara rasa</i>	<i>Arbuda</i>

As *Anupan*

	KALPA	ADHIKAR
1	<i>Brihat Purnachandra Rasa</i>	<i>Rasayana</i>
2	<i>Shringar Abhrarasa</i>	<i>Rajayaksham</i>
3	<i>Jvarakusha Rasa</i>	<i>Jwara</i>
4	<i>Svacchandabhairava Rasa</i>	<i>Jwara</i>
5	<i>Hemagarbha Pottali Rasa</i>	<i>Kasa</i>
6	<i>Lakshminarayana Rasa</i>	<i>Vatavyadhi</i>
7	<i>Laghvananda Rasa</i>	<i>Pandukamala</i>
8	<i>Makara Dhvaja</i>	<i>Vajikarana</i>
9	<i>Swasakuthar Rasa</i>	<i>Shwasachikitsa</i>
10	<i>Samirapannaga Rasa</i>	<i>Vatavyadhi</i>
11	<i>Purna Chandrodaya Rasa</i>	<i>Vajikarana</i>
12	<i>Nagavallabha Rasa</i>	<i>Kasachikitsa</i>

Conclusion

Review Of Literature of the drug *Nagavalli* from *Bruhatrayess* and *Nighantus* also from the other ayurvedic literatures like *Sharangdhar Samhita*, *Bhavprakash Samhita*, *Kashyap Samhita* and *shabdakoshas*. Vernacular names of *Nagavalli*, *Dravya Vargikaran*, *Gana* and *Varga* also explained. The detailed review of *Nagavalli* synonyms, types, *rasa*, *guna*, *vipaka*, *veerya*, *karma* according to various *nighantus*. Use of *Nagavalli* in the preparations of formulations as a whole drug and *bhavna dravyas* and as *anupana*. This reflects use of *nagavalli patra* since ancient era.

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Abbreviations

KN – *Kaiyadev Nighantu*

BN – *Bhavprakash Nighantu*

MN – *Madanapal Nighantu*

RN – *Raj Nighantu*

PN – *Priya Nighantu*

SN - *Shaligram nighantu*



ShoN - *shodhal Nighantu*

C- *Charak Samhita*

S - *Sushruta Samhita*

A - *Ashtang Samgraha*

M – *Madhav Dravyagun*

DN – *Dryaguna Sangraha Nighantu*

RV – *Raj Vallabh Nighantu*

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How to cite this article:

Dr. Kalyani Dilip Sakpal *Ijppr.Human*, 2026; Vol. 32 (3): 441-449.

Conflict of Interest Statement: All authors have nothing else to disclose.

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