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# Value-Added Products from Black Gram

**Harshi Katiyar[1]*, Khan Chand[2], Jasmine Kaur[3], Anil Kumar[4]**

[1]Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Plant Pathology, Chandra Sekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology Kanpur-208002
[2]Professor & Head Department of Agricultural Engineering, School of Agricultural Sciences, Nagaland University, Medziphema Campus-797106, Distt: Chumukedima, Nagaland, India
[3]M.Sc. Agriculture, Department of Seed Science and Technology, V.C.S.G Uttarakhand University of Horticulture and Forestry - 249001
[4]Assistant Professor, Department of Agronomy, School of Agriculture, Eklavya University Damoh, Madhya Pradesh-470661



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## INTRODUCTION

Black gram (Vigna mungo) or urad dal is an important pulse crop grown extensively in South and Southeast Asia. It is rich in protein, fiber, and micronutrients such as iron and potassium. Black gram is an important part of traditional diets, particularly in Indian cuisine. Apart from its nutritional significance, black gram has immense value addition potential. Value addition to raw black gram converts it into a host of value-added products that not only increase its market value but also create employment opportunities, decrease post-harvest losses, and satisfy consumer needs for convenient, healthy, and ready-to-eat food products.

## 2. Significance of Value Addition in Pulses

Value addition entitles processing and converting raw farm commodities into products with higher economic utility and value. In the case of black gram, value addition facilitates:

- Improving farmers' income
- Extension of the shelf life of the produce
- Production of diversified food products
- Improvement in the availability of nutrients
- Minimisation of market gluts during seasons

## 3. Well-known Value-Added Products made of Black Gram

### 3.1 Split and Polished Dal

Split and polished dal is the most widespread processed black gram. Dehusking and splitting enhance its cooking quality as well as digestibility. Polished dal is widely employed in the preparation of dals, soups, and curries.

Source: dreamstime.com

### 3.2 Ready-to-Cook Mixes

Instant idli, dosa, and vada mixes contain powdered or fermented black gram. These items appeal to the urban consumer who is looking for traditional food with little preparation time. The mixes may contain rice and urad flour combined and seasoned for flavor.

### 3.3 Snacks and Savory Goods

Black gram plays a prominent role as an ingredient in Indian snack foods such as papads, murukku, and bhel puri. Black gram flour papads are dried under sunlight and thereafter fried or roasted, with very good demand for domestic as well as export purposes. The commodities are shelf stable and highly consumable.

### 3.4 Fermented Foods

Fermentation of black gram enhances its nutritional value and digestibility. Fermented products include dosa batter, idli batter, and dhokla, commonly sold in refrigerated packs. These ready-to-cook fermented foods meet the demand for convenience and health benefits.

### 3.5 Instant Dal Powders and Soups

Black gram-based dal powders and soups are becoming increasingly popular. These are prepared with dehydrated ingredients and spices, allowing easy reconstitution with water. They are suitable for hectic lifestyles and have long shelf lives.

### 3.6 Extruded Products

Black gram flour is extruded into puffed snacks, noodles, and pasta using extrusion technology. These foods have high protein content and are targeted towards the health-conscious consumer segment. They are also fortified with vitamins and minerals to add value.

### 3.7 Bakery and Confectionery

Products Black gram flour finds application in gluten-free baking for the preparation of cookies, cakes, and biscuits. Its natural binding capability enhances texture and flavor. Such applications create new market opportunities for pulse-based bakery foods.

### 4. Nutraceutical and Functional

Food Products With its high nutritional value, black gram is being researched for use in the formulation of nutraceuticals. Black gram protein isolates and dietary fiber are incorporated into protein bars, supplements, and diabetic foods. They form part of the health and wellness market.

### 5. By-Products and Waste

Utilization Husks and broken grains obtained during processing can be utilized:

- Husks are utilized in animal feed or composted.
- Broken dals for use in snacks and flours.
- Wastewater generated through soaking and fermentation can be utilized for biogas production. Zero-waste culture makes this possible and promotes sustainability.

### 6. Market Potential and Opportunities

Domestic and global demand for pulse-based value-added products is increasing due to increasing health awareness and the preference for plant-based proteins. Small-scale industries and entrepreneurs can avail of this opportunity through:

- Food processing units
- Online marketing and exports
- Association with FPOs and cooperatives
- Branding and packaging innovation

### 7. Value Addition Challenges

In spite of the potential, value addition in black gram encounters some challenges:

- Restricted access to processing technologies
- Farmers' lack of awareness
- Cold storage and supply chains inadequacies
- Quality control and standardization problems These can be dealt with to realize the full potential of the black gram value chain.

## CONCLUSION

Black gram, a centuries-old pulse crop, has great potential for value addition in various sectors. Ranging from plain dal processing to high-value functional foods, its utility makes it a worthwhile input for a variety of products. Encouraging value addition through training, technology, and infrastructure facilities can enhance incomes, increase nutrition, and help in sustainable agricultural development.

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