

DEEPANIYA MAHAKASHAYA: A NATURAL BOOST FOR METABOLISM

Dr. Jannatun Rehan^{1*}, Prof. Dr. Rakesh Sharma²

¹P.G. Scholar, ²Head,

Department of Kaumarbhritya, R.G.G.P.G. Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Paprola. (HOD Department of Kaumarbhritya).

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*Corresponding Author

Dr Jannatun Rehan

P.G. Scholar, Department of
Kaumarbhritya, R.G.G.P.G.
Ayurvedic College and Hospital,
Paprola. (HOD Department of
Kaumarbhritya).



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ABSTRACT

Deepaniya Mahakashaya is a classical group of ten herbal drugs described by *Acharya Charaka: Pippali, Pippalimoola, Chavya, Chitraka, Shringavera, Amlavetas, Marich, Ajmoda, Bhallatak, Hingu Niryas*. He had explained 500 herbs in *Shadvirechanshatashriya* Chapter of *Bhesajchatushka*.^[1] The term “*Deepaniya*” denotes substances that stimulates *Jatharagni* and *Dhatvagni* thereby playing a crucial role in maintaining metabolic balance. These *Dravayas* helps to ignite metabolism and promote appetite. *Deepana*, the appetizer component stimulates *Agnimahabhuta* and does not digest the *Ama* (undigested metabolic waste). *Acharya Charaka* had given the concept of *Tryoupasthamba* among which *Ahara* is considered as one of the fundamental pillar of life^[2] and is crucial for sustenance, strength, complexion, vitality and preventing disease, acting as a primary source for nourishing *Dhatus*, balancing *Tridoshas* and building *Ojas*. A sedentary

lifestyle characterized by prolonged sitting, minimal physical activity, irregular food habits and psychological stress has become a major contributor to metabolic disorder in the present era. Such a lifestyle leads to *Agnimandhya* and *Kapha-Vata Prakopa*, resulting in improper digestion, accumulation of *Ama* and obstruction of *Srotas*. Impairment of *Agni* is considered as a root cause of many disorders. The drugs included in this group possess predominantly *Katu-Tikta Rasa, Laghu-Ruksha Guna* and *Usna Virya* which helps in stimulating appetite, promotes gut motility and facilitate proper nutrient assimilation. It acts as a natural metabolic

stimulant by enhancing enzyme activity supporting hepatic metabolism. It serves as an effective and safe, natural and holistic *Ayurvedic* approach to restore metabolic balance and maintaining overall health in individuals.

KEYWORDS: *Deepaniya Mahakashaya, Jatharagni, Agnimandhya, Appetizers.*

INTRODUCTION

Agni is the *Tejo-Mahabhuta* dominant functional entity that is responsible for transformation, digestion, metabolism and assimilation within each cell and acts on *Annavaha Srotas*. The whole process of biological conversion and utilization of energy is symbolized by the term *Agni*. *Acharya Charaka* had described 50 *Mahakashaya* in *Charaka Samhita*. *Deepaniya Mahakashaya* is among one of them. He had given the concept of 13 types of *Agni*.^[3] There are 7 types of *Dhatvagni* (responsible for the metabolism and transformation of seven *Dhatu*s), 5 types of *Bhutagni* (molecular metabolism of five elements) and the most important one is *Jatharagni* (responsible for breaking down food, absorbing nutrients) and is assimilated by our body. There are different qualities of digestive fire: *Sama Agni* (Balanced), *Manda Agni* (Slow), *Teekshna Agni* (Sharp), *Vishama Agni* (Irregular).

शान्तेऽनौ म्रियतेयुक्ते चिरं जीवत्यनामयः ।

रोगी स्याद्विकृतेमूलमग्निस्तस्मान्निरुच्यते: ॥ (च.चि.15/4)^[4]

When *Agni* is in a balanced state, the body remains healthy, strong, and free from disease, contributing to longevity. When becomes disturbed, acts as a primary causative factor for various disorders, and in its complete absence, survival is not possible. The term *Deepana* refers to the process of kindling or enhancing the digestive fire. It primarily stimulates *Jatharagni*, thereby promoting efficient digestion at the gastrointestinal level and improves appetite (*Kshudha vardhana*) and last but not the least increases the secretion of digestive enzymes and gastric juices. *Deepana* also supports the activation of *Dhatvagni* (tissue-level metabolic processes), which facilitates proper assimilation and utilization of nutrients. This results in adequate nourishment of the *Dhatu*s and promotes optimal cellular metabolism and systemic vitality. By strengthening *Agni*, it ensures complete digestion and helps to prevent the formation and accumulation of *Ama*.

अग्निगुण भूयिष्ठ (सु.सू.42/10)^[5]

Acharya Sushruta had quoted *Panchmabhautika* composition in *Rasvisheshvigyaniya Adhyaya* that *Deepaniya Dravya* are *Agni Guna Pradhan*. He also emphasized that these *Dravya* are

used for *Panchkarma* modalities are *Agni* and *Vayu Mahabhuta Pradhan* and predominantly applicable in *Vamana karma*. Before the commencement of any *Shodhan Karma Deepana* and *Pachana* is done. He had mentioned the concept of *Pittadhrakala* in *Sharir Sthan*.^[6] This *Pitta* comprises of *Agni* and it is directly enhanced by *Deepaniya Dravya*.

पचेन्नामं वह्निकृच्च दीपनं तद्यथा मिशिः| पचत्यामं न वह्निं च कुर्याद्य तत् विद्ध पाचनम्:॥१॥^[7]

Acharya Sharangdhar had mentioned in *Poorva Khanda* in *Deepana Pachana Adikathitham Adhyaya* that *Deepaniya Dravya* do not digest the *Ama* but stimulate the *Agni*. He also explained that *Pachana Dravya* are those which do not ignite the *Agni* but digest the *Ama*. E.g *Foeniculum vulgare* (*Saunf*) is *Deepana Dravya* while *Nagkeshar* (*Mesua ferrea*) is *Pachana Dravya*.

Ahara is one of the three pillars of life. *Acharya Sushruta* had given the concept of *Duadas Asana Pravicharna* which is totally governed on proper digestive fire and metabolism.^[8] Metabolism encompasses the integrated network of biochemical and cellular processes responsible for the conversion of nutrients into energy and structural components necessary for maintenance, growth, and repair. It includes two coordinated arms: Catabolism, involving oxidative breakdown of macronutrients to generate ATP and metabolic intermediates, and Anabolism, involving biosynthetic pathways that utilize these intermediates for tissue formation and biomolecule synthesis.^[9] Systemic metabolic efficiency depends on gastrointestinal digestion, enzymatic hydrolysis, nutrient absorption, hepatic biotransformation, mitochondrial oxidative phosphorylation, and endocrine regulation (particularly insulin, glucagon, and thyroid hormones). Gastrointestinal secretions, gastric motility, pancreatic enzyme output, bile flow, and gut–brain hormonal signaling (ghrelin, gastrin, cholecystokinin) form the upstream regulatory axis of metabolic readiness.^[10]

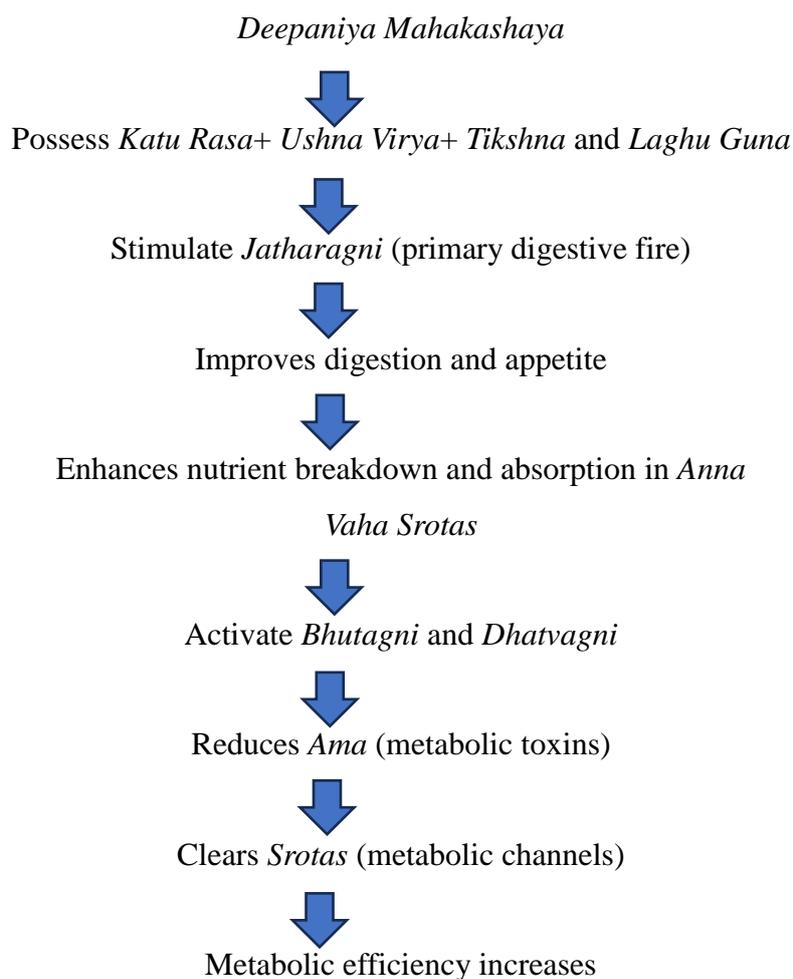
Appetizers are pharmacologically active substances that stimulate appetite and prime digestive physiology by enhancing orexigenic signaling, gastric secretory activity, and gastrointestinal motility. In modern physiology, appetite stimulation is mediated through central hypothalamic pathways (NPY/AgRP neurons) and peripheral signals such as ghrelin. Bitter and pungent tastants have been shown to activate cephalic phase digestive responses, increasing salivary, gastric acid, and pancreatic secretions via vagal pathways. This preparatory activation improves digestive kinetics and downstream metabolic substrate availability.

In *Ayurveda*, appetizers correspond functionally to *Deepana Dravyas*, which enhance *Agni* the functional principle governing digestive and metabolic transformation which is described at three operational levels: *Jatharagni* (primary digestion), *Bhutagni* (elemental conversion), and *Dhatvagni* (tissue metabolism). *Deepana* agents increase *Agni Bala* (digestive-metabolic capacity), thereby improving *Ahara Paka* (nutrient breakdown), *Rasa* formation (primary nutrient pool), and sequential *Dhatu Poshana* (tissue nourishment). Unlike simple hunger stimulants, *Deepana* substances improve qualitative digestive efficiency and metabolic output, often combined with *Pachana* action (metabolic toxin reduction).

Phytochemically, many classical appetizer and *Deepana* agents contain pungent alkaloids, volatile oils, and phenolic compounds that exert pro-digestive and metabolic effects. For example, piperine (*Piper longum*, *Piper nigrum*) enhances nutrient and drug bioavailability by modulating intestinal epithelial permeability and inhibiting drug-metabolizing enzymes (CYP3A4, P-glycoprotein).^[11] Gingerols and shogaols (*Zingiber officinale*) demonstrate prokinetic, enzyme-stimulatory, and thermogenic effects, contributing to improved gastric emptying and metabolic activation.^[12] Bitter principles are also known to stimulate enteroendocrine responses and bile secretion, facilitating lipid metabolism.

Experimental and clinical studies indicate that digestive stimulants can improve gastric secretory response, pancreatic enzyme output, gut motility, and post-prandial metabolic handling, thereby indirectly enhancing metabolic efficiency. Thermogenic spices have additionally been associated with modest increases in energy expenditure and improved glycemic handling. These findings parallel the *Ayurvedic* assertions that *Deepana* agents counter *Mandagni* (hypometabolic digestive state) and prevent *Ama* formation — a construct comparable to incompletely metabolized, pro-inflammatory intermediates.

From a translational perspective, appetizer and *Deepana* interventions may be relevant in functional dyspepsia, anorexia, malabsorption syndromes, early metabolic dysregulation, and hypometabolic states, provided they are selected according to individual tolerance and metabolic status. Their multi-target actions secretory, motility-enhancing, enzyme-modulating, and bioavailability-promoting position them as upstream metabolic modulators rather than mere appetite stimulants.

*Mode of Action of *Deepaniya MahaKashaya*Table 1: List of *Charakokta Deepaniya Mahakashya*.

S.No.	Ingredients	Botanical Name	Family	English Name
1	<i>Pippali</i> ^[13]	<i>Piper Longum</i> Linn	Piperaceae	Long pepper
2	<i>Pippalimoola</i>	<i>Piper longum</i> Linn	Piperaceae	Roots of Long pepper
3	<i>Chavya</i> ^[14]	<i>Piper retrofractum</i> Vahl	Piperaceae	Java long pepper
4	<i>Chitraka</i> ^[15]	<i>Plumbago Zeylanica</i> Linn	Plumbaginaceae	White Leadwort
5	<i>Shringavera</i> ^[16]	<i>Zingiber officinale</i> Rosc	Zingiberaceae	Ginger
6	<i>Amlavetas</i> ^[17]	<i>Garcinia pedunculata</i> Roxb	Guttiferae	Common Sorel
7	<i>Maricha</i> ^[18]	<i>Piper nigrum</i> Linn	Piperaceae	Black pepper
8	<i>Ajmoda</i> ^[19]	<i>Apium graveolens</i> Linn	Apiaceae	Wild celery
9	<i>Bhallatak Asthi</i> ^[20]	<i>Semecarpus anacardium</i> Linn	Anacardiaceae	Marking nut seeds
10	<i>Hingu Niryas</i> ^[21]	<i>Ferula narthex</i> Bioss	Apiaceae	Asafoetida

Table no. 2. Properties of *Deepaniya Mahakashaya (Ras Panchak)* According to *Acharya Priyavrat Sharma*.

Ingredients	Rasa	Vipaka	Vriya	Guna	Doshakarma
<i>Pippali</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Anushnashita</i>	<i>Laghu, Snigdha, Tikshana</i>	v-k ↓ P ↑
<i>Pippalimoola</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Ushana</i>	<i>Laghu, Rukhsha</i>	v-k ↓
<i>Chavya</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Ushana</i>	<i>Laghu, Rukhsha</i>	v-k ↓ P ↑
<i>Chitraka</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Ushana</i>	<i>Laghu, Rukhsha, Tikshana</i>	v-k ↓ P ↑
<i>Shringavera</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Madhur</i>	<i>Ushana</i>	<i>Laghu, Snigdha</i>	v-k ↓
<i>Amlavetas</i>	<i>Amla</i>	<i>Amla</i>	<i>Ushana</i>	<i>Laghu, Rukhsha, Tikshana</i>	v-k ↓ P ↑
<i>Maricha</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Ushana</i>	<i>Ushana</i>	v-k ↓
<i>Ajmoda</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Katu, Tikta</i>	<i>Ushana</i>	<i>Laghu, Rukhsha, Tikshana</i>	v-k ↓ P ↑
<i>Bhallatak Asthi</i>	<i>Madhur Kashaya</i>	<i>Katu, Tikta, Kashaya</i>	<i>Ushana</i>	<i>Laghu, Snigdha, Tikshana</i>	v-k ↓ P ↑
<i>Hingu niryas</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Ushana</i>	<i>Laghu, Snigdha, Tikshana</i>	v-k ↓ P ↑

Table no. 3: Chemical Composition, Active Ingredients and Parts Used.

Ingredients	Chemical Composition	Active Ingredients	Parts used
<i>Pippali</i>	Piperine, Piplartine, Piperlonguminine, Caryophyllene, etc	Piperine	Fruits, roots
<i>Pippalimoola</i>	Piperine, Piplartine, Piperlonguminine, Sesamin etc	Piperine	Roots
<i>Chavya</i>	Piperine, Piplartine, Piperlonguminine, Retrofractamide etc	Piperine	Fruits, roots
<i>Chitraka</i>	Plumbagin, Chloroplumbagin, Chitranone, Zeylanone etc	Plumbagin	Roots bark
<i>Shringavera</i>	Gingerols, Shogaols, Paradols, Zingerone	Gingerol	Rhizomes
<i>Amlavetas</i>	Phenolic acids, Flavonoids and minerals having significant amount of ascorbic acid.	Hydroxycitric acid	Fruit
<i>Maricha</i>	Piperine, Piperidine, Volatile oils, Chavicine	Piperine	Fruit
<i>Ajmoda</i>	Essential oils	Phthalides	Fruit
<i>Bhallatak Asthi</i>	Phenolic compounds, Bhilawanols, Biflavonoids	Bhilawanol	Fruit
<i>Hingu Niryas</i>	Resins, gums, volatile oils	Organosulphur compounds	Niryas

DISCUSSION

Deepaniya Mahakashya constitutes a pharmacologically significant group indicated for *Agni Deepana*, i.e. potentiation of digestive and metabolic fire. In *Ayurvedic* Physiology, *Agni* represents the collective functional principle governing gastrointestinal digestion (*Jatharagni*), intermediary biotransformation (*Bhutagni*), and tissue level metabolic conversion (*Dhatvagni*). Impairment of *Agni* (*Agnimandya*) is considered as the primary etiopathogenic factor leading to *Ama* formation, *Srotorodhan* (micro-channel) obstruction and downstream metabolic dysregulation. *Deepaniya Mahakashya* is therapeutically positioned to reverse this pathological cascade at its root. The constituent drug of this group predominantly *Katu Rasa*, *Ushna Virya*, *Laghu- Tikshna Guna* and *Katu Vipaka* conferring strong stimulatory, channel bearing pharmacodynamic properties. These attributes facilitates enhanced gastric secretory response, improved enzyme activation and acceleration of gastrointestinal transit. The *Ushna-Tikshna* profile increases *Agni Bala* and promotes efficient substrate transformation, thereby optimizing *Ahara Rasa* formation and subsequent *Dhatu Poshana*.

Contemporary pharmacological data partially substantiates these classical claims. Key phytoconstituents such as piperine (*Pippali*, *Maricha*) and gingerols/shogaols (*Shunthi*) demonstrate documented effects on digestive enzyme upregulation, thermogenesis, intestinal permeability modulation, and bioavailability enhancement via inhibition of hepatic and intestinal drug-metabolizing enzymes and transporters. These mechanisms align with the *Ayurvedic* concepts of *Deepana* (metabolic activation) and *Pachana* (metabolic detoxification). Thermogenic and carminative actions further indicate a role in energy expenditure modulation and gut functional optimization.

From a clinical metabolism perspective, *Deepaniya Mahakashya* is particularly relevant in hypometabolic states, functional dyspepsia, *Ama*-associated disorders, early-stage metabolic syndrome correlations, and *Kapha-Vata* predominant digestive dysfunctions. Its application, however, requires careful calibration based on *Agni* status, *Deha Prakriti*, *Rogabala*, and patient tolerance due to its *Tikshna and Ushna* dominance.

Thus, *Deepaniya Mahakashya* represents a multi-target metabolic regulatory model integrating digestive stimulation, metabolic biotransformation enhancement, and toxin load reduction, offering a robust conceptual and therapeutic framework for integrative metabolic management.

CONCLUSION

Deepaniya Mahakashaya represents a scientifically coherent and clinically group of herbal drugs aimed at enhancing *Agni*- the central regulator of digestion and metabolism in *Ayurveda*. Since *Agni* governs the transformation of *Ahara* in bioavailable nutrients and supports sequential *Dhatu* nourishment, its proper functioning is directly linked with metabolic efficiency, vitality and disease prevention. Thus, the classical concept of *Deepana* closely correlates with modern understandings of metabolic activation, enzyme induction, and improved biochemical utilization of nutrients.

In the current era of widespread metabolic disturbances linked to sedentary habits and improper diet, *Deepaniya Mahakashaya* offers a safe, natural, and multi targeted metabolic support strategy. Further pharmacological and clinical research can help validate and integrate these classical formulations into evidence based metabolic care. Thus, *Deepaniya Mahakashaya* stands as a robust *Ayurvedic* model for naturally boosting metabolism through *Agni* optimization.

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