

REVIEW ARTICLE

Jeevaniya Mahakashaya: Ayurvedic and Pharmacological Insights – A Review

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: *Jeevaniya Mahakashaya* is one of the 10 classical groupings of herbs described by *Acharya Charaka* in the *Charaka Samhita*. This formulation includes ten medicinal plants – *Jeevaka*, *Rishabhaka*, *Meda*, *Mahameda*, *Kakoli*, *Ksheerakakoli*, *Mudgaparni*, *Mashaparni*, *Jeevanti*, and *Madhuka*, known for their rejuvenative, life-promoting, and tissue-nourishing properties. Traditionally, these herbs have been integral to *Rasayana Chikitsa* (rejuvenation therapy) in *Ayurveda*, with indications in chronic illness, convalescence, and degenerative disorders. Their therapeutic effects are attributed to the enhancement of *Ojas* (vital essence), promotion of longevity, and improvement of physical and mental vitality.

Aims and Objective: This review aims to bridge classical Ayurvedic knowledge with modern scientific insights by analyzing the pharmacological actions and therapeutic potential of the *Jeevaniya Mahakashaya* group. It seeks to evaluate their individual and synergistic effects to promote holistic health, especially in the areas of immunity, geriatrics, and tissue regeneration.

Materials and Methods: A comprehensive review of Ayurvedic classical texts and contemporary scientific literature was undertaken. The focus was on identifying the mechanisms of action, including nourishment of *Rasa* and *Mamsa Dhatus*, enhancement of *Shukra Dhatu*, immune modulation, reduction of oxidative stress, and promotion of tissue regeneration. Key pharmacological activities such as adaptogenic, antioxidant, immunomodulatory, anti-inflammatory, and neuroprotective properties were evaluated through modern pharmacological studies.

Discussion: *Jeevaniya Mahakashaya* consists of a group of ten herbs that have been acknowledged in *Ayurveda* for their profound life-promoting, rejuvenative, and nourishing properties.

Conclusion: The therapeutic principles of *Balya* (strengthening), *Brihana* (nourishing), and *Rasayana* (rejuvenating) associated with *Jeevaniya Mahakashaya* find strong support in contemporary research. These herbs demonstrate promising potential for integration into holistic and integrative healthcare approaches.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the ancient science of life, emphasizes the importance of maintaining balance within the body to ensure optimal health and longevity. Among its various therapeutic strategies, *Rasayana Chikitsa* (rejuvenation therapy) holds a central role in promoting vitality, enhancing immunity, and delaying the aging process. Within this framework, the concept of *Mahakashayas* – groups of herbs

categorized by *Acharya Charaka* based on their dominant therapeutic actions – offers a systematic approach to herbal classification and usage. One such significant grouping is *Jeevaniya Mahakashaya*, described in the *Charaka Samhita*, which comprises ten potent herbs known for their life-promoting and tissue-nourishing properties.

The term *Jeevaniya* itself signifies “life-giving” or “vitality-enhancing,” reflecting the fundamental purpose of this formulation. The group includes the following herbs: *Jeevaka*, *Rishabhaka*, *Meda*, *Mahameda*, *Kakoli*, *Ksheerakakoli*, *Mudgaparni*, *Mashaparni*, *Jeevanti*, and *Madhuka*.^[1] These herbs are traditionally recognized

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for their capacity to enhance *Ojas* – the vital essence responsible for immunity and strength and are especially beneficial in conditions involving debility, chronic illness, convalescence, and degenerative diseases. *Acharya Vagbhatta* explains the *Jeevaniya Gana*^[2] while the similar herbs have been mentioned by the *Acharya Charaka* in the *Jeevaniya Mahakashaya*. This closely resembles with the drugs and qualities of the ingredients of *Kakolyadi Gana* of *Sushruta Samhita*^[3] and features of *Madhura Varga*.

Modern pharmacological research supports many of the traditional claims associated with these herbs. Studies highlight their adaptogenic, antioxidant, immunomodulatory, anti-inflammatory, and neuroprotective effects, suggesting their relevance not only in traditional Ayurvedic therapy but also in contemporary integrative medicine. Despite their historical significance, a consolidated understanding of their mechanisms and potential remains underexplored in modern scientific literature.

1.1. Aim and Objective

The aims of this study were as follows:

1. To critically analyze the information available about individual components of *Jeevaniya Mahakashaya* in Ayurvedic literature
2. To explore pharmacological study on individual plants and therapeutic potential of individual components of *Jeevaniya Mahakashaya* in various disorders.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. Classical Ayurvedic Literature Review:

Primary Ayurvedic sources were reviewed to gather detailed references on *Jeevaniya Mahakashaya* and its constituent herbs.

Nighantu –

Bhavprakash Nighantu – C. 1500–1600 A.D

Dhanvantari Nighantu – 10th–13th A.D

Kaiyadeva Nighantu – 15th A.D

Raj Nighantu – 14th– 15th A.D.

Shodhala Nighantu – 12th c.A.D

Madanpal Nighantu – 14th A.D

2. Contemporary Scientific Literature: A systematic search of online scientific databases was conducted
3. Various published studies, full-text papers from Open source.

3. OBSERVATION

Majority of *Dravyas* having *Madhura rasa*, *Guru Guna*, *Sheeta Veerya*, *Madhura Vipaka*, and *Vata pitta Shamaka Doshkarma*.

4. DISCUSSION

Jeevaniya Mahakashaya consists of a group of ten herbs that have been acknowledged in Ayurveda for their profound life-promoting, rejuvenative, and nourishing properties. The significance of these herbs extends beyond traditional Ayurvedic knowledge, as modern research has begun to support their therapeutic potential through biochemical and pharmacological insights. Each herb in the *Jeevaniya Mahakashaya* has distinct yet complementary actions that align with the *Jeevaniya* or life-sustaining properties outlined in the classical texts. According to *Charaka Samhita*, these herbs help restore the *Ojas* (vital essence), which is the cornerstone of vitality and immunity. This is achieved through their ability to nourish the *Rasa*, *Rakta*, and *Mamsa Dhātu*, thereby promoting tissue regeneration and slowing down the

aging process. From a modern pharmacological perspective, these herbs exhibit significant adaptogenic, immunomodulatory, antioxidant, and anti-inflammatory properties. For instance, herbs like *Jeevanti* (*Leptadenia reticulata*) and *Kakoli* (*Roscoeia procera*) have been found to enhance immune responses and stimulate tissue repair in conditions of debility and chronic illness. Similarly, *Mashaparni* (*Teramnus labialis*) and *Madhuka* (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) demonstrate strong antioxidant and anti-fatigue effects, which align with their Ayurvedic roles as *Balya* (strength-promoting) and *Rasayana* (rejuvenative) agents.

Furthermore, modern studies on bioactive compounds like glycyrrhizin (in *Madhuka*) and flavonoids (in *Rishabhaka*) corroborate the cellular protective and anti-inflammatory effects seen in traditional practices. These findings are crucial in bridging the gap between traditional wisdom and contemporary biomedical research, highlighting the relevance of *Jeevaniya Mahakashaya* in modern healthcare, particularly in geriatrics, immune system enhancement, and anti-aging therapies. While the phytochemical properties of these herbs are still being extensively researched, their integration into contemporary integrative medicine can be further explored through clinical trials and experimental studies. The synergistic effect of these herbs as a formulation, rather than isolated usage, is another area that warrants future exploration.

The comparative analysis across various *Nighantus* [Table 1] highlights the consistency of recognition of these ten herbs over centuries, underscoring their established position within Ayurvedic therapeutics. The detailed phytochemical profiles [Table 2] reveal a wide range of bioactive constituents – glycosides, alkaloids, flavonoids, saponins, and amino acids that form the biochemical basis of their *Rasayana* properties. The *Rasapanchaka* data [Table 3] show that the majority of these herbs share *Madhura rasa*, *Guru guna*, *Sheeta veerya*, *Madhura vipaka*, and *Vata pitta shamaka* action, which aligns with their classical indications in conditions of *Dhatu kshaya*, *Raktapitta*, and chronic debility. Herbs such as *Mudgaparni* and *Jeevanti*, with *Tridosha shamaka* properties, provide additional versatility in balancing systemic imbalances. The *Rogagnata* analysis [Table 4] establishes their utility in a wide spectrum of disorders, including *Raktapitta*, *Shvasa-Kasa*, *Shosha*, *Jvara*, *Atisara*, and *Shukrakshaya*, suggesting a broad therapeutic scope extending from respiratory and metabolic diseases to reproductive and degenerative conditions. Their botanical descriptions and identified useful parts [Table 5] further refine their Pharmacognostic understanding, which is essential for correct identification, conservation, and medicinal use. In addition, the identification of *Pratinidhi Dravyas* [Table 6], such as *Shatavari* and *Ashwagandha*, offers practical substitutes in clinical practice where rare herbs like *Jeevaka* or *Kakoli* are difficult to procure, ensuring the therapeutic continuity of *Jeevaniya Mahakashaya*. Modern published studies [Table 7] validate their immunomodulatory, antioxidant, and organ-protective roles in conditions ranging from COVID-19 support to female infertility and ocular disorders. These findings not only strengthen the classical claims but also provide evidence for potential integration into contemporary preventive and therapeutic strategies.

5. CONCLUSION

The study of *Jeevaniya Mahakashaya* serves as a valuable exploration into the intersection of Ayurvedic knowledge and modern pharmacology. The herbs constituting this formulation possess a broad spectrum of rejuvenative and life-enhancing effects, with a solid foundation in both classical Ayurvedic principles and contemporary biomedical research. By promoting tissue regeneration, enhancing vitality, and strengthening immunity, these herbs provide

a comprehensive approach to health preservation and longevity. It embodies the therapeutic principles of *Balya*, *Brihan*, and *Rasayana* while demonstrating relevance in current healthcare challenges such as Immune dysregulation, Metabolic syndrome, Infertility, and Geriatric care. Thus, *Jeevaniya Mahakashaya* not only represents the life-promoting essence of Ayurveda but also holds promise as a bridge between traditional healing and modern biomedical science.

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7. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors have contributed equally to conception, design, data collection, analysis, drafting, and final approval of the manuscript.

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9. ETHICAL APPROVALS

This study does not require ethical clearance as it is a literary research.

10. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

11. DATA AVAILABILITY

This is an original manuscript, and all data are available for only review purposes from the principal investigators.

12. PUBLISHERS NOTE

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Table 1: Comparison of explanation of Jeevaniya Mahakashaya Constituents in various Nighantus

Nighantu	Author	Time period	Explanation of constituents of Jeevaniya Mahakashaya
Bhavprakash Nighantu	Shri Bhavmishra	C. 1500–1600 A.D.	Guduchyadi Varga – Jeevaka, Rishabhaka, Meda, Mahameda, Kakoli, Ksheerkakoli, Mudgaparni, Mashaparni, Jeevanti, Madhuka
Dhanvantari Nighantu	Mahendra Bhogika	10 th –13 th A.D.	Guduchyadi Varga – All 10 constituents of Jeevaniya Mahakashaya explained.
Kaiyadeva Nighantu	Acharya Kaiyadeva	15 th A.D.	Aushadhi Varga – All 10 constituents of Jeevaniya Mahakashaya explained as Jeevaniya Gana.
Raj Nighantu	Pandit Narhari	14 th –15 th A.D.	Parpatadi Varga – Jeevaka, Rishabhaka, Meda, Mahameda. Guduchyadi Varga – Kakoli, Ksheerkakoli, Mudgaparni, Mashaparni, Jeevanti. Pippalyadi Varga – Madhuka
Shodhala Nighantu	Acharya Shodhala	12 th c.A.D.	Guduchyadi Varga – All 10 constituents of Jeevaniya Mahakashaya explained as Raktapittahar Gana
Madanpal Nighantu	Raja Madanpal	14 th A.D.	Abhayadi Varga – All 10 constituents of Jeevaniya Mahakashaya explained as Jeevaniya Gana.

Table 2: Botanical name, family and active constituents of Jeevaniya Mahakashaya herbs^[4-7]

S. No.	Dravya	Botanical name	Family	Active constituents
1.	Jeevaka	<i>Microstylis wallichii</i> Lindl.	Orchidaceae	Its pseudobulbs contain alkaloid, glycoside, flavonoids, and β sitosterol. Also contains piperitone, O-Methylbatatasin, 1,8-cineole, citroenellal, eugenol, glucose, rhamnose, coline, limonene, p-cymene, and ceryl alcohol.
2.	Rishabhaka	<i>Microstylis muscifera</i> Ridley.	Orchideaceae	Mucilage, Polysaccharides, Phenolic compounds, Steroids, Flavonoids, Glycosides, Triterpenoids, Alkaloids.
3.	Meda	<i>Polygonatum verticillatum</i> L.	Liliaceae	Lysine, Serine, Aspartic acid, Threonine, Diosgenin, β - sitosterol.
4.	Mahameda	<i>Polygonatum cirrhifolium</i> (Wall) Rolye.	Liliaceae	Digitalis glucoside, Steroidal Saponins
5.	Kakoli	<i>Roscoea procera</i> Smith.	Zingiberaceae	Kaempferol, Vanillic acid, Protocatechuic acid, Syringic acid, Ferulic acid.
6.	Ksheerakakoli	<i>Lilium polyphyllum</i> D. Don.	Liliaceae	Alkaloids (peimine, peiminine, pemisine), Propeimin, Sterols.
7.	Mudgaparni	<i>Phaseolus trilobus</i> Ait.	Fabaceae	Quercetin, Kaempferol, Friedelin, Stigmasterol, Lysine, Valine, Vit. K and C.
8.	Mashaparni	<i>Teramnus labialis</i> Spreng.	Fabaceae	Essential amino acids Lysine, Leucine, Isoleucine, Arginine, Valine and Histidine
9.	Jeevanti	<i>Leptadenia reticulata</i> W&A.	Asclepiadaceae	Alpha-Beta Amyrin, Stigma sterol, Beta-Sit sterol, and Flavonoids Diosmetin and Luteolin.
10.	Madhuka	<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> Linn.	Fabaceae	Glycyrrhizin, Glycyrrhizin acid, Glycyrrhetinic acid, Sugars, Resin, and Starch.

Table 3: Rasapanchaka of Jeevaniya Mahakashya herbs^[8]

S. No.	Dravya	Rasa	Guna	Veerya	Vipaka	Dosh karma
1.	Jeevaka	Madhura	Guru	Sheeta	Madhura	Vata pitta Shamaka
2.	Rishabhaka	Madhura	Guru	Sheeta	Madhura	Vata pitta Shamaka
3.	Meda	Madhura	Guru	Sheeta	Madhura	Vata pitta Shamaka
4.	Mahameda	Madhura	Guru	Sheeta	Madhura	Vata pitta Shamaka
5.	Kakoli	Madhura	Guru	Sheeta	Madhura	Vata pitta Shamaka
6.	Ksheerakakoli	Madhura	Guru	Sheeta	Madhura	Vata pitta Shamaka
7.	Mudgaparni	Madhura Tikta	Laghu Ruksha	Sheeta	Madhura	Tridosh Shamaka
8.	Mashaparni	Madhura Tikta	Laghu Snigdha	Sheeta	Madhura	Vata pitta Shamaka
9.	Jeevanti	Madhura	Laghu Snigdha	Sheeta	Madhura	Tridosh Shamaka
10.	Madhuka	Madhura	Guru	Sheeta	Madhura	Vata pitta Shamaka

Table 4: Rogagnhata

S. No.	Dravya	Rogagnhata
1.	Jeevaka	Raktapitta, Daha, Kshaya, Raktavikara, Karshya, Shvasa, Kasa, Shosha ^[9]
2.	Rishabhaka	Shukrakshaya, Raktapitta, Atisara, Jvara, Shosha ^[10]
3.	Meda	Balroga, Bhagandara, Gulma, Kamala, Kasa, Naktatandhya, Netrasrava, Rajyakshma, Raktapitta, Shosha, Shvasa, Timira, Visarpa ^[11]
4.	Mahameda	Jwara, Raktavikara, Kshaya, Daha, Raktapitta, Balroga ^[12]
5.	Kakoli	Raktapitta, Shosha, Jvara, Shvasa, Kasa, Kshaya, Daha ^[13]
6.	Ksheerakakoli	Shukravikara, Hridroga, Shwasa, Kasa, Vatarakta, Yonivyapad, Vatavyadhi, Vatapittaja, Kshaya ^[14]
7.	Mudgaparni	Daha, Jvara, Vatarakta, Pittadaha, Mushikavisa, Kshaya, Krimi, Pradara, Kushtha ^[15]
8.	Mashaparni	Shukrakshaya, Daurbalya, Shotha, Vata-pittaja vikara, Kshaya ^[16]
9.	Jeevanti	Atisara, Daha, Jvara, Kshaya, Kasa, Shosha, Mukharoga, Naktandhya, Netraroga, Raktapitta, Trishna, Urahkshata, Vrana ^[17]
10.	Madhuka	Kasa, Svarabheda, Kshaya, Vrana, Vatarakta ^[18]

Table 5: Botanical description^[19-21]

S. No.	Dravya	Botanical Description
1.	Jeevaka	5–25 cm in height, small terrestrial orchid with pseudobulbs. Leaves: 1–2, ovate-lanceolate, delicate, green. Flowers: Small, greenish-yellow, arranged in a slender spike. Prayojya Anga – Pseudo bulb
2.	Rishabhaka	40 cm tall, small herbaceous orchid. Leaves: Typically a single leaf, elliptic-oblong, fleshy. Flowers: Tiny, greenish, borne in terminal racemes. Prayojya Anga – Pseudo bulb
3.	Meda	30–90 cm, erect, perennial herb with leafy stems. Leaves: Alternate, lanceolate, and slightly curved. Flowers: Greenish-white, tubular, drooping singly or in pairs from axils Prayojya Anga – Rhizome

(Contd...)

Table 5: (Continued)

S. No.	Dravya	Botanical Description
4.	Mahameda	45–120 cm, erect or ascending herbaceous plant. Leaves: In whorls around the stem, linear-lanceolate. Flowers: Small, greenish-white, in axillary clusters. Prayojya Anga – Rhizome, Root
5.	Kakoli	35–50 cm tall, Erect, glabrous herb with bulbous roots. Leaves: Narrow, linear, arranged alternately. Flowers: Bell-shaped, nodding, greenish or purplish. Prayojya Anga – Tuberous root
6.	Ksheerakakoli	60–150 cm, Tall, erect, bulbous perennial herb. Leaves: Numerous, in whorls or scattered. Flowers: Large, fragrant, funnel-shaped, white or pinkish. Prayojya Anga – Rhizome
7.	Mudgaparni	30–100 cm long, A trailing or climbing herb. Leaves: Trifoliate with each leaflet lobed or entire. Flowers: Yellow, small, papilionaceous. Prayojya Anga – Whole plant, Root
8.	Mashaparni	60–150 cm long, slender, twining or trailing herb. Leaves: Trifoliate with ovate or lanceolate leaflets. Flowers: Pinkish-purple, papilionaceous. Prayojya Anga – Whole plant, Root
9.	Jeevanti	2–5 m long, twining shrub or liana with milky latex. Leaves: Opposite, ovate-cordate, thick, and reticulated veins. Flowers: Yellowish-green, in umbellate cymes. Prayojya Anga – Root
10.	Madhuka	120 cm medium to large-sized deciduous tree. Leaves: Simple, clustered at the end of branches, elliptical to oblong. Flowers: Creamy-white, highly fragrant, in fascicles. Prayojya Anga – Root, Rhizome

Table 6: Pratinidhi Dravya of Jeevaniya Mahakashaya^[8]

S. No.	Dravya	Pratinidhi dravya
1.	Jeevaka	Vidari (<i>Pueraria tuberosa</i> DC.)
2.	Rishabhaka	Vidari (<i>Pueraria tuberosa</i> DC.)
3.	Meda	Shatavari (<i>Asparagus racemosus</i> Willd.)
4.	Mahameda	Shatavari (<i>Asparagus racemosus</i> Willd.)
5.	Kakoli	Ashwagandha (<i>Withania somnifera</i> Dunal.)
6.	Ksheerakakoli	Ashwagandha (<i>Withania somnifera</i> Dunal.)

Table 7: Published studies

Disease	Study type	Key findings	References
COVID-19/Immune Support	Literary Review	The constituent herbs show anti-viral, immunomodulatory, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, organ-protective activities; may help modulate IL-6, TNF- α , CD4+/CD8+cell function for aiding in COVID-19 prevention/management.	Sunil P, Parvathy S, Rajam R. Pharmaceutical processing and standardization of modified dosage form of Jeevaneeyagana Kashaya as spray-dried powder capsules. Int J Ayurveda Pharma Res. 2024;12 (11):6-12. doi: 10.47070/ijapr.v12i11.3436.
Immunomodulation/ General vitality	Review Article	Review Article <i>Jeevaneeya Mahakashaya</i> described as rejuvenators: exhibit strong antioxidant, free-radical scavenging, and vitality-enhancing properties.	Nagar D, Sharma MK. Jeevaniya Mahakashaya And Its Immunomodulator Effect: A Review Article. irjay [Internet]. 2020 Nov. 30 [cited 2025 Jul. 24];3 (11):75-90. Available from: https://irjay.com/index.php/irjay/article/view/921
Female Infertility	Review Article	Drugs from <i>Jeevaniya</i> , along with other <i>Mahakashaya</i> , used in female Infertility management; proposed to balance <i>doshas</i> in reproductive stages, rejuvenate strength, support conception.	Kumari B, Singh MP, Singh S. Management of female infertility through Mahakashaya. Ayushdhara [Internet]. 2022 Sep 30 [cited 2025Jul 24];9(Suppl 1):76–80. Available from: https://ayushdhara.in/index.php/ayushdhara/article/view/990
<i>Shushkakshipaka</i>	Pilot Clinical Trial	<i>Jeevaniya Ghrita Ashchyotana</i> administered to ~30 patients aged 20–50 using computers ≥ 3 hr/day; trial completed April 2023 looking at relief in eye discomfort from dry eye/computer strain.	A clinical study to see the effect of <i>Jeevaniya Ghrita Ashchyotana</i> in management of <i>Shushkakshipaka</i> (computer vision syndrome).
Taxonomical/ Botanical Review	Descriptive/ Taxonomy review	Descriptive/taxonomy review discussed identification, rarity, and botanical properties of the ten <i>Jeevaniya</i> herbs; highlighted need for correct plant identification and conservation.	Tadvi NS, Dorkhande NK, and Paradkar S. (2018). Dravyaguna Vidhyā – Jivaniya Mahakashaya: Review Article. International Journal of Ayurvedic and Herbal Medicine, 8 (3), 3256–3264. https://doi.org/10.18535/ijahm/v8i3.09
Historical/Classical Review	Review Article	Summarized classical Sanskrit texts (<i>Charaka Samhita</i>) On <i>Jeevaniya Mahakashaya</i> , their role in longevity, energy, immunity; mostly conceptual/philosophical.	Khandelwal P, Archana Sivan A, Singh C, Purviya R.P, Adlakha M “A Review Article – On Jeevaniya Mahakashaya” IRJAY.[online] 2022;5 (2);108-113.