



International Journal of Indian Medicine

www.ijim.co.in

ISSN: 2582-7634

Volume - 4, Issue - 4

April 2023



IJIM

INDEXED



International Journal of Indian Medicine

Access the article online



International Category Code (ICC): ICC-1702

International Journal Address (IJA): IJA.ZONE/258276217634

A literary review on the Concept of Sthaulya with special reference to Panchamahabhoota Siddhanta.

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Abstract:

Sthaulya is one of the *Santarpanjanya vyadhi* primarily of dosha *Kapha* and *dushya Medo dhatu* in which there is *Vikrut Vriddhi* (Abnormal increase) of *Medodhatu* and is caused due to excessive consumption of *Snigdha* (unctuousness), *Guru* (heaviness), *Pischila* (slimy/sticky), and *Madhura rasa* (sweet) *pradhan ahar* that is due to excess consumption of *Prithvi* and *jala mahabhuta constituents*, Hence Drugs having opposing properties, i.e., *Agni*, *Vayu*, and *Aakash* are used for treatment. *Apatarpan* also called *Langhana* (starvation, thinning therapies, and lightening therapies) is the main *chikitsa* for *Sthaulya*. *Langhana* dravyas possess *Akasha*, *Vaayu*, and *Agni mahabhuta* dominancy having *Laghu* (lightness), *Ushna* (hot), *Tikshna* (sharpness), *Vishada* (clear), *Ruksha* (non-unctuousness), *Sukshma* (finesness), *Khara* (roughness), *Sara* (mobility) properties for making the body light i.e. thin. The panchabhautik constitution of *Vyadhi hetus* (basic causative factors) and *Dosh-Dushya* involved in *vyadhi Samprapti* (pathogenesis of disease) is observed. Then the medicines having opposite *panchabhautik* constitutions are administered to restore equilibrium in the body.

KEY-WORDS: *Sthaulya*, *Panchamahabhoota Siddhanta*, *Apatarpan*.

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How to cite this article: Bodkhe P.S., Sawant G. A literary review on the Concept of Sthaulya with special reference to Panchamahabhoota Siddhanta. Int J Ind Med 2023;4(4):29-36

DOI : <http://doi.org/10.55552/IJIM.2023.4405>

Introduction:

Everything in the universe is made up of *Panchamahabhoota* or 5 basic elements of nature.⁽¹⁾ The body is formed of

panchamahabhoota and so is food.⁽²⁾ *Shadrasa* (six types of tastes) and *Panchamahabhoota* (5 elements of nature) predominance:⁽³⁾

Table no.1 Rasa and its Physiological effect on dosha:

Rasa	Mahabhuta	Physiological effect on dosha
<i>Madhura</i> (Sweet)	Prithvi (earth), Jala (water)	Pacification of <i>Vata</i> , <i>Pitta</i>
<i>Amla</i> (Sour)	Prithvi, Teja (fire element)	Pacification of <i>Vata</i>
<i>Lavana</i> (Salty)	Jala, Teja	Pacification of <i>Vata</i>
<i>Katu</i> (Spicy)	Vayu (air), Teja	Pacification of <i>Kapha</i>
<i>Tikta</i> (Bitter)	Vayu, Akasha (sky)	Pacification of <i>Kapha</i> , <i>Pitta</i>
<i>Kashaya</i> (Astringent)	Prithvi, Vayu	Pacification of <i>Kapha</i> , <i>Pitta</i>

The *Panchabhautik Shadrasatmak ahar* nourishes *Dhatu, varna, Bala, varna*, etc. depending on *Agni* because *Rasa*, etc. can't be produced from undigested food.⁽⁴⁾

In the process of digestion and metabolism, the food passes through three levels of action 13 types of *agni*. *Agni* represents *Teja Mahabhoota* in the body. At first, it is acted upon by *jatharagni* for gross digestion. At the second level, five types of *Bhutagni* namely, *parthiva, apya, agneya, vayavya*, and *nabhasa* one of each *mahabhuta* digest the respective fractions of the food and nourishes respective fraction in the body. e.g. The *parthiva agni* digests and transforms/metabolizes

the *Prithvi* component of ingested food into *parthiva* components of the body.⁽⁵⁾

After the first 2 levels of digestion by *Jatharagni* and *Bhutagni*, the ingested food is divided into *Saar bhag* called *Ahara-rasa* (nutritive juices which are formed after the digestion of the food) and *kitta* or *Mala bhag* (excretory material). *Ahara-rasa* is further used for the formation of *Rasadi Saptadhatu* (seven tissue). According to “*Khale-kapota*

nyaya” the nourishment of different *dhatu*s takes place according to the rule of selectivity. *Khale* means treshing floor, *kapota* means pigeon. Like pigeon pecking the grains from the treshing floor and carrying it back to their nests depend on the direction and the time required for them to travel, the nutrition required by the *dharu* is selected from the essence part of food which contains all the nutrients and the order of nutrition depends on the order of the *dhatu*s. Here the field indicates the essence part of the food and the pigeons indicates the body tissue that is *dhatu*s. i.e. the different *dhatu*s, pick up the required nourishment from the common nutrient pool (*Ahara-rasa*).⁽⁶⁾

According to *Acharya Vagbhata*, there is derangement of *Jatharagni* due to *Snigdha-Madhuradi* atisevan of *hetus*, leads to the production of *Ama* (*Apachita rasa dhatu*-indigested food) which disturbs the *Medodhatvagni* (type of metabolic component situated at the level of *Medodhatu* get reduced)) and hampered the proper formation of further *dhatu*s by blocking the *srotasas*.⁽⁷⁾

Aim:

To study the Concept of *Sthaulya* with special reference to *Panchamahabhoota Siddhanta*.

Materials:

- The Literary material related to *Panchamahabhoota siddhanta* and *Sthaulya* has been collected from Ayurvedic texts Charak Samhita, Sushrut Samhita, Ashtang hridaya etc. Various Research Publications, Journals, and internet resources.
- Previous research material related with the subject from articles published in various peer reviewed Journals, books, thesis.

Methodology:

- A thorough review of the literature regarding the concept of *Sthaulya* and *Panchamahabhoota* has been done from Bruhatrayi and their Commentary by various Acharyas.
- The references regarding *Panchamahabhoota siddhanta* given in sharirsthan of charaka Samhita chapter no.1,2,4,7. In Sushruta Samhita Sutrasthan chapter no.1, 46, Sharirsthan chapter no. 1,2,4,5.

- Acharya Charaka has mentioned *Sthaulya* in 21st and 23rd chapters of Sutrasthan.
- Sushruta has mentioned *Sthaulya* vyadhi in Sutrasthan's 15th chapter.
- A detailed description of *Sthaulya* is given in Ashtang Sangraha Sutrasthan 24th Chapter and Ashtang Hridaya 14th chapter Dvidividhopakramaniya.

Results:**Sthaulya:**

Charakacharya has quoted *Sthaulya* under eight varieties of impediments which are referred as *Nindita Purusha*; *Ati Sthaulya-Medoroga* comprises one of them under the heading of *Atisthool Purush*.⁽⁸⁾

The person is considered as *Atisthula* when there is an excessive increase *meda* and *mamsa dhatu* in the regions of *Sphik* (buttocks), *Udar* (abdomen), and *Stana* (breasts), and suffer from deficient metabolism and energy.⁽⁹⁾

Meda and *mamsa* are predominant in *Prithvi* and *Apa Mahabhutas* similar to *Kapha Dosha*.

Table no.2 Hetu (Causative factors) of Sthaulya:⁽¹⁰⁾

Sr. No.	Hetu (causative factors)	Mahabhoota
1.	<i>Atisampuran</i> - over-nourishment	leads to increase <i>Prithvi Mahabhoota</i> .
2.	<i>Madhur, Guru, Shita, Snogdha</i> <i>Atiupayog</i> -excessive intake of a heavy, sweet, cold and fatty diet	having similar properties to that of <i>Prithvi</i> and <i>Jala Mahabhoota</i> .
3.	<i>Avyayama</i> - lack of physical exercise	causes increase in <i>Sthir</i> property of <i>Prithvi Mahabhoota</i> .
4.	<i>Avyavaya</i> - abstinence from sexual intercourse	
5.	<i>Diwaswapa</i> - sleeping during the day	

6.	Harsha Nityatvata- uninterrupted cheerfulness	Prithvi Mahabhoota.
7.	Achintanat- lack of mental activities	Prithvi Mahabhoota.
8.	Bija-swabhavat- hereditary/genetic defects	-

Samprapti of Sthaulya:

Due to over consumption of diet with properties like *Snigdha*, *madhur*, *Guru*, *Picchil* and diet consists of *Navanna*, *Nav Madya*, *Mansa* especially *Aanup* as well as *dugdha vikrutis* (milk products) and *Paishtik* i.e more carbohydrates, etc. there is overload for digestion on *Jatharagni* results into formation of *Ama-pradhan Ahara rasa*. This *guru*, *atimadhura* and *snigdha Ahara rasa* nourishes *Meda dhatu* selectively according to “*Khale-kapota nyay*” and causes accumulation of *medo dhatu* which has similar properties of *Prithvi* and *Apa mahabhoota*. The accumulation of *Medo dhatu* causes *srotorodha* in the body leading to *Vata prakopa in koshta*. The vitiated *vayu in koshta* influenced *jatharagni* and causes *Agni vaishamy*. Thus, *Tikshnagni* in digests the food at a faster rate, further leading to *kshudha vrudhhi*.⁽¹¹⁾ Consumption of *Guru* (heavy to digest), *Sheeta* (cold), *Snigdha* (unctuous), *Madhuradi Kapha-varadhaka* drugs along with lack of exercise and sedentary life style result in excessive nourishment of *Meda*. *Medo-dhatvagni* is responsible for the building of the *Medo-dhatu*. In *Sthaulya*, there is *Medo-dhatvagnimandya* which leads to formation of *apachit meda dhatu* with more *guru*, *snigdha* and *madhura* properties. This *medovrudhhi* leads to *avrodha* (obstruction) of other *strotasas* in body and there is no formation of other *dhatu* rather than *apachita meda dhatu*. Hence there is

more *vrudhhi of medodhatu* leading to the disease *Sthaulya*.⁽¹²⁾

Sthaulya janita Dosh:⁽¹³⁾

Ayu-hrasa (decrease of life span).
Javoparodha (decrease in enthusiasm and activity),
Kruchhavyavayata (difficulty in sexual act)
Atiswedapravritti (Excessive sweating)
Daurgandhya (bad odour)
Daurbalya (Weakness)
Atikshudha (excessive hunger)
Atipipasa (excessive thirst)
Meda dhatu is characterized by *Snighdha* (unctuous), *Guru* (heavy), *Sthula* (space occupying), *Picchila* (slimy), *Mridu* (tender/soft) and *Sandra* (dense) *Guna* (qualities)⁽¹⁸⁾ which are similar to *Prithvi* and *Aap mahabhoota* and are abnormally increased in *Sthaulya* due to *Medovrudhhi* causes ***Javoparodha*** (decrease in enthusiasm and activity), ***Kruchhavyavayata*** (difficulty in sexual act) results into ***Ayuhrasa*** (decrease of life span).

The main function of *Medodhatu* are *Sneha* (oleation), *Sweda* (production of sweat), *Drudhatva* (compactness).⁽¹⁸⁾ *Medovrudhhi* in *Sthaulya* leads to the *sweda* function of *meda dhatu* in excess causes ***Atiswdapravritti*** results into ***Daurgandhya***.

Hetu especially *Madhura Rasatisevan*, *Mamsahara* (meat), *Avyayama* (lack of exercise), *Divaswapna* (day sleep) causes increase of *Medho Dhatu* in our body, which result into *Srotoavaroda* and *Vata* is specially confined to *Kosta* and causes *Jatharagni*

Vridhhi hence symptoms of *Sthulata* i.e, **Atipipasa** (excessive thirst) **Atikshudha** (excessive hunger), *Alasya* (lethargy) occurs.

Sthaulya Chikitsa:

The treatment of *Sthaulya* includes *Guru* and *Apatarpan Chikitsa*.⁽¹⁴⁾ Since *jatharagni* represents *Teja mahabhoota* is vitiated in *Sthaulya* and *Prithvi* and *jala mahabhuta* are increased due to *Madhuradi Kapha-varadhaka hetu* causing *Srotorodha* leads to abnormal *meda dhatu vrudhhi* in *Sthaulya*. *Guru* substances are used to pacify *Tikshna*

Jatharagni and the herbs like *Guduchi*, *Triphala*, *musta*, *shunthi* having dominancy of the *Vayu* and *Akash mahabhoota* are administered in clearing the *srotarodh* which is the main part of *Samprapti* of *Sthaulya*.

Ruksha

dravyas are *Akasha* and *vayu* dominant, which tends towards *Apatarpan* hence, *Triphala*, *Agnimantha*, *Madhu* (honey) are the medicines of *Ruksh* property are also advised for *Sthaulya*. Properties of honey are *ruksha*, *guru*, and *kashaya*.⁽¹⁵⁾

Table no.3 Drug used in Sthaulya:⁽¹⁶⁾

Drugs used in Sthaulya	Guna (Properties)	Rasa	Mahabhoota predominance
<i>Guduchi</i>	<i>Guru</i>	<i>Tikta</i>	<i>Vayu+Akash</i>
<i>Musta</i>	<i>Ruksha,Laghu</i>	<i>Tikta</i>	<i>Vayu+Akash</i>
<i>Amalaki</i>	<i>Ruksha, Guru</i>	<i>Pancharasa, Amlapradhan</i>	<i>Prithvi+Agni</i>
<i>Bibhitak</i>	<i>Ruksha, Laghu</i>	<i>Kashaya</i>	<i>Prithvi+Vayu</i>
<i>Haritaki</i>	<i>Ruksha, Laghu, Yogavahi</i>	<i>Pancharasa, Kashaya-pradhan</i>	<i>Prithvi+Vayu</i>
<i>Vidanga</i>	<i>Ruksha, Tikshna, Laghu</i>	<i>Katu,Kashaya</i>	<i>Teja+Vayu</i>
<i>Madhu</i> (Honey)	<i>Ruksha, Guru</i>	<i>Kashaya</i>	<i>Prithvi+Vayu</i>
<i>Agnimantha</i>	<i>Ruksha, Laghu</i>	<i>Tikta</i>	<i>Vayu+Akash</i>

Discussion:

The normal *Jatharagni* in the person taking proper food maintains the equilibrium of *Dhatus* by regular digestion but if *Jatharagni* gets irregular due to *Abhojana* (fasting), *Atibhojana* (overeating), *Ajirnashan* (eating during indigestion), *Vishamashan* (irregular eating), *Guru-sheeta bhojana*, causes disequilibrium in *dhatu* because of irregular digestion.⁽¹⁷⁾ In *Sthaulya*, *Jatharagni* gets irregular due to excessive intake of *Madhura rasatmaka*, *Snigdha*, and *pischila Aahara*. Similar qualities cause an increase; dissimilar qualities cause a decrease. This concept is known as the *Samanya Vishesha Siddhanta*.

⁽¹⁹⁾ *Dosha* or *Dhatu* gets increased by taking *Saman dravya* (similar to that of *Dosh* or *dhatu*) or *saman gunabhuyistha ahar-vihar* (similar properties of that *dosh* or *dhatu*). On contrary *Dosha* or *Dhatu* get decreased by taking *Viparita dravya* or *Viparita-gunabhuyistha Ahara-vihara* (opposite properties of that *dosh* or *dhatu*).⁽²⁰⁾ This *Siddhanta* is used to balance the disequilibrium of *Panchamahabhoota* in *Sthaulya*. In *Sthaulya*, *Kapha dosh* and *Medo-dhatu* are in increased state because of taking *Saman dravya* and *saman gunabhuyistha ahar-vihar* like *Madhura*, *Snigdha*, *Mamsatisevan*, *Diwaswapa* etc. So, to

decrease them *Viparita Guna* and *Viparita Gunabhuyistha dravyas* should be used. *Kapha* is constituted by *Prithvi* and *Jala Mahabhoota*.⁽²¹⁾ Intake of substances and properties having *Prithvi* and *Jala mahabhoota* dominant will increase the same qualities in the body that is *Kapha dosha* and *Medodhatu*. *Kaphadosh* and *Medodhatu* are the main *samprapti ghatak* of *Sthaulya vyadhi*. So, for *Samprapti-Vighatana*, substances dominant in *Teja* and *Vayu mahabhoota* are used which are having opposite properties to that of *Prithvi* and *Aap Mahabhoota*. *Srotorodh* is a key factor in *Samprapti* of the diseases where *Avyahat Gati of Vata Dosha* is obstructed by the vitiated *Medodhatu* and disease pathogenesis occurs. *Triphala* along with *Guduchi*, *Nimbal*, *Chirayata* and *Vasa* are helpful in getting rid of metabolic waste which blocks the *Srotasas*. The *Akash* property of the *Srotas* which was blocked is cleared and regains normal functioning.

1. *Apatarpan (Langhan)*- *Teja*, *Vayu* and *Akash Mahabhoota* predominance.
2. *Ruksha udvartana*- *Vayu Mahabhoota*.
3. *Guru and Ruksha dravya sevan*- like *Madhu* (Honey).
4. *Vyayam* (Physical exercise)- *Vayu mahabhoota*.
5. *Ruksha, Tikshna, Ushna Basti*.⁽²²⁾

Conclusion:

Panchamahabhoota Siddhanta is applied in the diagnosis and management of diseases. Acharya Charaka has included *Sthaulya in Santarpanajanya Vyadhi*.⁽²³⁾ In the view of *Panchamahabhoota siddhanta*, *Sthaulya* is the result of abnormal and excessive *Prithvi*

and *Jala mahabhoota* properties. According to "*Pindi Te Brahmandi Nyaya*", the etiological factors vitiating *Kapha* and *Meda* are correlated to the properties of *Prithvi* and *Aap Mahabhoot*. The space is reduced and the movements of *Vayu* are obstructed. So, the first principle of treatment is to create space and stimulate the movements of *Vayu* and activation of *Teja mahabhuta*, to digest abnormal *Parthiva* and *Apya* properties.

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Source of Support : None declared

Conflict of interest : Nil

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