

# Jirnashan - A definite way to overcome the Obesity (*Sthaulya*)

Amol Kadu, Nitesh Shambharkar, Punam Mohokar



## Abstract:

*Sthaulya* (obesity) is major increasing problem all over the world which is very prevalent in younger generation too. Drugs such as serotonergic & catecholaminergic are used in modern medicine in spite of their side effects. Bariatric surgery, sauna bath which reduces the size of abdomen but it is all transitional. *Sthaulya Chikitsa* (obesity treatment) is elaborated in ancient text, under the context of *Shodhan Chikitsa* (body purificatory procedure) and *Shaman Chikitsa* (Palliative treatment). *Shodhan* therapy, *Vaman/Virechan/Lekhan Basti* and *Shaman Chikitsa* including various *Medoghna Aushadhis* (Lipid pacifying medicines) are also proven to be effective. All these treatment are considered under *Apatarpan Chikitsa* (reduction therapy) which has its own importance in reducing obesity. But still the problem persists because of sedentary life style and wrong food habits. If the management of obesity is carried out with *Apatarpan Chikitsa* along with adopting healthy eating habits such as *Jirna-ashan* (After digestion of previously consumed food). The result would be much more encouraging with minimal relapse. Charaka emphasizes on *Jirnashana* as a line of treatment in *Santarpanjanya Vyadhi* (diseases due to over consumption of food and sedentary life style) including *Sthaulya* indirectly suggesting that *Ajirnashana* is one of the important but most neglected cause for the same.

**Key words-** *Sthaulya*, Obesity, Ayurveda, *Jirnashan*

## Introduction:

Obesity is a major health threat. People with obesity are at high risk for so many diseases such as osteoarthritis, coronary heart disease, dyslipidemia, hypertension, diabetes mellitus etc. [1] More ever the report shows that obesity is killing about 2, 20,000 men and women a year in the United States of America and Canada alone, and about 3,20,000 in 20 countries of Western Europe.[2] There are two major reasons causing obesity which have been globally accepted, one is an increased intake of energy-dense foods that are high in fat, salt and sugars but low in vitamins, minerals and other micronutrients; and, another one is decrease in physical activity due to the increasingly sedentary nature of many forms of work, changing modes of transportation, and increasing urbanization[3]

In Ayurveda, *Sthaulya* (Obesity) has been described since very early days in various Samhitas, Sangraha Granthas etc. Charaka has described *Sthaulya* among the eight undesirable physical constitutions. [4] It has also been described as *Santarpanjanita Roga* as well as a *Kaphaj*

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*Nanatmaj Vikara* (disease due to vitiation of *Kapha*). [5][6] Although various drugs & management have been suggested for obesity. Besides dietary restrictions & exercise, use of drug has been considered to provide an answer to this grave problem. Now a day, in modern medicine, drugs prescribed for weight reduction includes anorectics, oral hypoglycemic agents, metabolic stimulators, laxatives, diuretics & few hormones. Though these drugs have beneficial effect up to limited extent but they are liable to produce side effects such as nervousness, restlessness, insomnia, dizziness, palpitation & gastric irritation etc which restrict their use. [7] In Ayurveda, *Sthaulya* is treated by *Shodhana Chikitsa* such as *Vaman* (therapeutic emesis), *Virechana* (Therapeutic purgation), *Lekhan Basti* (Lipid pacifying medicated enema) & *Shaman Chikitsa* including various *Medoghna Aushadhis*. It is clear that all these treatment modalities are coming under *Apatarpan Chikitsa* which has its own importance in reducing obesity. But if such line of treatment would be done along with *Jirna-ashan* may produce encouraging results & chance of relapse may be minimized. Hence the present review is carried out to understand the concept of *Jirnashan* which may be helpful while treating the *Sthaulya*.

#### **Material and Methods:**

Classical texts of Ayurveda were studied for references regarding *Sthaulya*. These references were compiled, analyzed, and discussed for a thorough and in-depth understanding of role of *Jirnashan* in treating *Sthaulya*.

#### **Observations:**

#### **Etiological factors:**

*Sthaulya* is caused by over saturation of food; intake of heavy, sweet, cold & fatty diet, excessive consumption of new cereals, fresh wine, meat of marshy and aquatic animals, milk and its products, jaggery and flour preparations. At the same time abstains from physical movements including day sleep, comfortable beds and seats, abstinence from sexual intercourse, cheerfulness, lack of mental exercise, heredity, etc all these are responsible for provocation of *Kapha* (End product of water metabolism)-*Meda* (Lipid) [8][9]

#### ***Ajirnashan* underestimated cause in *Sthaulya*:**

According to *Acharya* Sushruta, *Sthulata*

*Karshyata* (under weight), & *Madhyasharirtvam* (healthy built) should be ascribed to changes in the condition of *Samyak Rasa Dhatu* (Proper formation of first bodily tissue after food metabolism) [10] which depends on *Aharavidhi Viheshatayana* (Food consumed by observing the rules and the procedures of taking food). [11] *Adhyashana* (Overconsumption) is one of the cause for *Sthaulya* mentioned by Sushruta on which Dalhana has commented that, *Adhyashana* is habit of pampering one's belly before digestion of previous meal i.e. *Ajirnabhojana Abhyas*. [12] Continuous *Ajirnabhojana Abhyas* leads to *Grahani Dushti* (duodenum derangement) [13] after which not only *Kaphamedovardhak* (heavy diet) but also *Laghu Bhojana* (light diet) cannot be digested resulting in *Aama Rasa* (undigested material in the body) which is overall end cause of *Sthaulya*. Hence *Adhyashan* means *Ajirna-bhojanabhyas* which is the most important cause of obesity and is always neglected.

#### **Concept of *Adhyashan*:**

Word *Adhyashana* is made of two words *Adhi* and *Ashana*. The collective meaning of both the terms is to eat after eating. The definition of the word *Adhyashana* is given by various classics of Ayurveda, which in a nut shell means eating before the digestion of previous food.

According to the principles of Ayurveda, one should take food only after complete digestion of previous food. [14-16] *Adhyashana* therefore is described as a wrong habit of eating and also mentioned as the causative factor of many diseases including *Sthaulya*. There is no direct reference available that show how *Adhyashana* produces a hazardous effect. But it can be understood on the basis of *Aamavisha Samprapti*. (Pathogenesis of formation of undigested material in the body which acts as poison) [18] Charaka in the description of *Aaharavidhi Visheshha Aayatana* stated that *Adhyashan* immediately provokes all the three *Doshas* (humors) which ultimately cause acute as well as chronic diseases.[19]

By considering all references, it can be stated that, *Adhyashan* is not only excessive eating of food or taking food after completing lunch or dinner but beyond this *Ajirnabhojanabhyas* is also

one form of *Adhyashan* which is also a definite but always neglected cause in many obese people. If person taking *Kaph-Medovardhak Ahar* without doing any exercise continuously, will be responsible for *Agnidushti* (vitiating of digestive power) as *Kaph Medovardhak Aahar* (diet) is predominantly with *Prithvi & Jala Mahabhuta* (basic element i.e. earth and water) which is against of *Tejomahabhut* (basic element i.e. fire) of *Jatharagni* (digestive power). If this process is going on continuously it is manifested as *Grahanidushti* (vitiating of duodenum which is place of *Jatharagni* i.e. bioenergy) which induce assimilation disorders. [20] Vitiating *Jatharagni* cannot digest even small amount of food, which ultimately produce *Aam ras* (undigested material) having poisonous like property: [21] *Dushta Ras* which is produced due to *Adhyashan* is responsible for the *Sthaulya* pathogenesis as *Sthaulya* is “*Rasanimitameva cha*”.

#### ***Jirnashan* underestimated treatment in *Sthaulya*:**

The first line of treatment in any disease is *Nidan Pariwarjan* (Avoiding causative factors). As previously observed that, *Ajirnashan* and *Adhyashan* are underestimated causes for *Sthaulya* hence avoiding *Ajirnashan* and adopting *Jirnashan* may be an ideal approach in managing *Sthaulya*. This is substantiated by the Charaka in context of *Sthaulya* treatment emphasizing on *Jirnashan* which is considered as a part of treatment of *Sthaulya* reflecting that *Ajirnashan* is the main cause for all *Santarpanjanya* diseases like *Sthaulya*.

#### **Role of *Jirnashan* in *Sthaulya* as treatment:**

Charaka mentioned “*Vyayamnityo Jirnashi*” in context of *Sthaulya Chikitsa* emphasizing on *Jirnashan* which is considered as part of treatment of *Sthaulya*. As *Ajirnashan* is main cause for all *Santarpanjanya* diseases like in *Sthaulya*.

#### **Exact time for taking food:**

If *Jirnashan* treatment has to be implemented into *Sthaulya chikitsa*. It is prime importance to understand the symptoms of *Jirna ahar* (digested food) to avoid the *Ajirnashan*. This has been greatly elaborated by Vagbhata. He has mentioned some indicator to demonstrate the ideal time for taking meal. Person consumes the food after the elimination of feaces, and urine, when the mind is clean (devoid

of emotions), when *Doshas* (urine, feaces, sweat) are moving in their natural paths (functioning normally), when belching is pure (without any foul smell or taste), when hunger is well manifest, When flatus is moving downward easily, when digestive activity is keen, when the sense organs are clear (functioning), when the body is light.[25] Food should be consumed observing above said signs and symptoms following the rules and the procedures of taking food which is ideal time.

#### **Discussion**

*Sthaulya*, is prevalent in all the age group and especially in younger population. It is due to changes in life style including wrong dietary habits and sedentary work. As most of the obese people are very conscious about their big shape & do take all the efforts to lose their weight except *Jirnashana*. This may be due to lack of knowledge and its good effects regarding the same among discard community. Sushruta mentioned various causative factors for *Sthaulya* including *Adhyashana*. Term *Adhyashana* has various shades of wrong eating habits like excessive eating of food / further pampering of belly by foodstuff after completing lunch / dinner or taking of food before digestion of prior meal. Such a wrong dietary habits routinely practiced by the obese people. If it would be going on continuously, it disturbs the function of *Grahani* resulting in *Jathargnimandya* (Hypoactivity of digestive power) which ultimately produce *Amarasa. Rasa* which is mixed with *Ama*, root cause of *Sthaulya* resulted due to wrong eating habits, which is always neglected in a clinical practice. Charaka, while describing the treatment of *Sthaulya*, emphasizes on *Jirnashana* along with *Apatarpan Chikitsa* suggesting the importance of healthy eating habits. *Nidan pariwarjan* is the first and supreme treatment which is not adopting these days as it requires detail knowledge about *nidana* (Causative factors) and its role in various diseases. Wrong dietary habits such as *Ajirnashana*, *Adhyashan* etc plays as important role in various disease pathologies which is reflected in various chapters of *samhita*. Hence, by observing the importance of *Jirnahar*; it can be used as an important treatment modality and be successfully implemented to deal *Sthaulya*.

## Conclusion:

While dealing with any *Santarpanjanya Vyadhi* including *Sthaulya*, identification of causative factors is very essential. Obesity is lifestyle disorder where, obese person always neglect to adopt healthy eating habits *Jirnashan*. If it is implicated with other treatment modality it will surely be boon for obese person.

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