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A Classical Review on *Sthaulyahar* Effect of *Saptaparna*

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the earliest health system established since the beginning of the civilization and having lots of information for longevity and health. If we ignore these instructions, like living with non expenditure of energy and sedentary lifestyle can create *santarpanajanya vyadhi*. *Sthaulya* is one among them, independently and/or in association with other disease. *Saptaparna* is well known to the present era since *Purana Kala* and it is used in various ailments as quoted by various lexicographic texts. In *Su. Chi. 37/33 Anuvasana Taila* has been mentioned which contains *Saptaparna* and is indicated in the treatment of *Sthaulya*. The drug *Saptaparna* possesses *Tikta* and *Kashaya Rasa* which brings out *Upashoshana* of *Kleda* and *Meda*. Further *Tikta*, *Kashaya Rasa*, *Katu Vipaka* and *Ushna Veerya* reduces *Kapha*. The present work entitled 'A classical review on *Sthaulyahar* effect of *Saptaparna* was taken up with the aim to find a new better remedy which is easily available, cheaper, devoid of any controversy, commonly known and used to give a better cure in patients of *Sthaulya*.

Key Words *Ayurveda*, *Sthaulya*, *Saptaparna*

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INTRODUCTION

Health is the supreme foundation of wealth, enjoyment and salvation. Diseases are the destroyer of health and even life itself. This is a great hindrance in the progress of humanity. Today's life style has completely changed by all the means our diet pattern, life styles and behavioral pattern which has made man the victim of many diseases. *Sthaulya* (obesity) is one among them. *Sthaulya* is one among the most effective disorders which effects social, physical and mental features of the diseased. As per modern view, it is a precursor to coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes mellitus and osteoarthritis which have been

recognized as the leading killer diseases of the millennium¹. In *Ayurveda*, *Sthaulya* (obesity) has been described by *Acharya Charaka* as one among the eight despicable persons (*Ashtaunindita*)².

Herbal medicine has become an important part of standard health care, based on traditional uses and ongoing scientific research. The traditional Indian system of medicine is *Ayurveda*, which means the science of life and this is one of the world's oldest system of medicines. *Ayurveda* is mainly based on the herbal formulas developed through the experiences and experimentation. *Saptaparna* is well known to the present era since *Purana Kala* and it is used in various ailments as

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quoted by various lexicographic texts. The drug *Saptaparna* has *Laghu Guna* and is having *Kaphagna* property which are opposite *Gunas* to that of the *Sthaulya*. Hence the present research work was planned to evaluate the concept of *Sthaulyahara* effect of *Saptaparna* plant.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1. To study the etiopathogenesis of *Sthaulya*.
2. To explore the *Sthaulyahara* effect of *Saptaparna*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Literature regarding *Sthaulya vyadhi* and *Saptaparna* has been reviewed from various classical text books of *Ayurveda (Samhitas)*, research publications, web sites and from modern medical books, data has been collected.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

*Nirukti of Sthaulya*³

A person who is having heaviness and bulkiness in the body due to excessive growth in *Udaradi* region is termed as "*Sthula*" and the condition (*Bhava*) of *Sthula* is called "*Sthaulya*".

Definition (Vyakhya) of Sthaulya⁴

Sthaulya is defined as a disease, "who is enriched with increase of fat and flesh in the body, who is also disfigured with pendulous, buttocks, belly and breasts. Whose increased bulk is not matched by the corresponding increase in energy".

Purvarupa (Premonitory symptoms):
Purvarupa of *Sthaulya* (obesity) has not been

mentioned in any *Ayurvedic* texts. According to *Acharya Charaka*, the *Medovahasrotodusti Lakshanas* which are also described as *Purvarupa* of *Prameha* may also be considered as *Purvarupa* of *Sthaulya*⁵. The symptoms related with *Medovahasrotodusti* are *Atinidra, Tandra, Alasya, Visra Shariragan-dha, Angagaurav, Shaithilya* etc. All these symptoms can be considered as the *Purvarupa* of *Sthaulya*⁶.

Rupa (Symptoms): According to *Acharya Charaka*, the excessive increase in fat and flesh of the body disfigures the pendulous buttocks along with belly and breast area. This leads in the bulkiness of body; this decreases the corresponding energy of the body and makes the person less enthusiasm in his physical activity⁷.

Causative factors

Acharya Charaka has described the causes of obesity analytically which can be classified into four sections⁸.

1. *Aharatmaka Nidana*,
2. *Viharatmaka Nidana*,
3. *ManasNidana*,
4. *Anyanidana*.

Samprapti (Pathogenesis)⁹

In the pathogenesis of *Sthaulya*, all the three *Doshas* viz. *Vata, Pitta & Kapha* are vitiated, especially *Kledaka Kapha, Pachaka Pitta, Samana Vayu* and *Vyana Vayu*. Due to the numerous *Aharatmaka, Viharatmaka, Manasika Nidana Sevana*, results to *Kaphavridhi* and produces *Jatharagnimandhya*.

Jatharagnimandhya results in occurrence of *Ama*, which makes the *Sanga* in *Medovaha*

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Srotas and then *Medo dhatvagni mand*, whereas *Beeja Nidana* directly leads to *Medodhatvagni mand* and this results in *Medovridhhi (Amarupa)*. All these things will together cause the *Medovahasrotodusti*.

Complications of *Sthaulya*¹⁰

1. *Visarap* (Erysepellas)
2. *Bhangandher* (Fistula in Ano)
3. *Jwara* (Fever)
4. *Aatisar* (Diarrhoea)
5. *Prameha* (Diabetes)
6. *Arsha* (Piles)
7. *Shlipada* (Filariasis)
8. *Apachi* (Alands)
9. *Kamla* (Jaundice)

Chikitsa (Treatment)¹¹

General principles of management of any disorder in *Ayurveda* is

1. *Nidan parivarjan*
2. *Sanshodhan*
3. *Sanshaman*

Drug Review

Saptaparna (*Alstonia scholaris*) plant belongs to the family *Apocynaceae*. The tree usually grows throughout India in most of the deciduous and evergreen forests from sea level to about 2000 feet above sea level. It is mostly cultivated as an avenue tree.

Vernacular names of *Alstonia scholaris*¹²

English: Dita bark, White cheese bark

Hindi: Satvin

Sanskrit: Saptaparna

Tamil: Pala

Gujarati: Saptaparni

Bengali: Chattin

• **Synonyms of *Saptaparna*:** *Vishaltwak, Chatraparna, Gucchapushpak, Sharada, Saptacchada, Madaganda* etc.¹²

• **Properties and action mentioned in *Ayurveda***¹²

Rasa - Kashaya, Tikta

Guna - Laghu, Snigdha

Veerya - Ushna

Vipaka - Katu

Dosha Prabhava - Kaphavata shamak

Acc. to *Ayurveda Saptaparna* used in *Kushtha, Visarpa, Gulma, Udarda, Shwas, Jwara*.

• **Morphological Characteristics**¹³

Leaves - Leaves are 3-7 in a whorl, coriaceous, bluntly acuminate, dark green. Leaf stalk is 1-1.5 cm long, the Lamina is elliptical or elliptical-Lanceolate, 10-20cm x 4-5cm in the size, upper surface is dark green and the lower surface is green-white. The tip of the leaf is rounded and tapered towards the base.

Bark - It is rough and grayish brown. Branches are whorled and young branches are lenticellate. When the bark cut, milky latex flow rapidly.

Flower - Flower are greenish white small in umbrellately branched manner. They are 7-10mm long, whitish cream or green. The tube consists of hairy lobes sparsely or densely pubescent, 1.5-4mm long, strongly perfumed.

Fruit - Fruit pendulous dehiscent follicles, two lobed green or brown, dry or wood, spindle shaped, 16-30 cm long, 5-6 mm in diameter

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which contains various flat, oblong and brown seeds.

Phytochemistry¹⁴

Stem bark-It contains echitamine, glucoside triterpenes, amyring acetate, echitamidine, echitenine, Ditamine.

Root- It consists of tubaitowine, akuammigine, Hydroxyl-19.

Leaves- It contains alkaloid- picrinine, botalin, ursolic acid, β -sitosterol, new alkaloid Scholarin.

Flowers- flowers are enriched with Picrinine, strictamine.

Fruits- Fruit is having Akuammidine (rhazine).

Traditional Uses¹⁵

Bark: The bark of *Saptaparna* is extensively useful in malarial fevers, dyspepsia, skin disease and in abdominal disorders. The bark of *Alstonia scholaris* has been reported bitter, astringent, digestive, laxative, antipyretic, stomachic, cardiogenic, and tonic. The bark extract has been reported to possess antiplasmodial, immunostimulant, and it has anticancer effect and is also having hepatoprotective activity. In *Ayurveda*, it has been seen that the bark of the plant, when soaked in water overnight, can reduce the blood glucose level after oral administration. Bark is also effective in leprosy, skin diseases, pruritis, chronic, foul ulcers, asthma, bronchitis and debility. In folklore medicine, milky juice of *Saptaparna* is applied on wounds, ulcers, and rheumatic pains after mixing it with oil and dropped into ear, it is helpful in relieving earache.

Leaves: The leaves have been used traditionally as folk remedies for the treatment of many diseases like diarrhea, dysentery, malaria, and snake bites. Juice of the leaves acts as a powerful galactagogue. Leaves used in beriberi, dropsy, and congested liver. Latex applied to sores, ulcers, tumors, and rheumatic swellings.

Fruits: The ripe fruits of the plant are used for syphilis, epilepsy, antiperiodic and antihelminthic.

DISCUSSION

In *Su. Chi. 37/33 Anuvasana Taila* has been mentioned which contains *Saptaparna* as one of the ingredients and is indicated in the treatment of *Sthaulya*. Various single drug formulations of different *Prayojya Anga* of *Saptaparna* have been mentioned in *Brihatrayi*, which suggest that *Twaka*, *Pushpa* and *Ksheera* are more potent than its other parts as these are used in single drug formulations as compared to others, which are used in form of combinations. Mainly *Tikta*, *Kashaya Rasa* drugs have *Sheeta Veerya* but *Saptaparna* is an exception to this rule. Like *Haritaki* it also has *Ushna Veerya*. But *Haritaki* has *Ruksha guna* and *Madhura Vipaka* whereas *Saptaparna* has *Snigdha guna* and *Katu Vipaka*. Both *Haritaki* and *Saptaparna* have *Sara guna*. As *Saptaparna* has *Tikta Kashaya Rasa* its *Panchabhautic* configuration is predominated with *Vayu*, *Akasha* and *Prithvi Mahabhuta*.

CONCLUSION

Ayurvedic drugs act on the body in various ways. The action on the body is explained and

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understood on the level of *Rasa Panchaka* of the drug. *Alstonia scholaris* R. Br. has been used for treating multiple ailments such as antibacterial, antimicrobial. The plant contains numerous chemical constituents mostly alkaloids that can promote health and reduce illness. The action of *Saptaparna* on the body to cure *Sthaulya* disease can be understood as follows,

- The drug *Saptaparna* possesses *Tikta* and *Kashaya Rasa* bring about
- Upashoshana of *Kleda* and *Meda*.
- Further *Tikta*, *Kashaya Rasa*, *Katu Vipaka* and *Ushna Veerya* reduces *Kapha*. *Tikta*, *Kashaya Rasa* pacifies *Pitta*.
- *Snigdha guna* and *Ushna Veerya* reduces *Vata*.
- *Sthaulya* is a chronic disease in which *Meda Shaitilya* is present.
- *Tikta Kashaya Rasa*, *Katu Vipaka* and *Ushna Veerya* decrease the *Kleda* and *Meda*. *Snigdha* and *Sara Guna* with *Ushna Veerya* perform *Vata Anulomana* thus helping in breaking the *Samprapti*.

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