



# EFFICACY OF TRIPHALA CHOORNA AND TRYUSHANA CHOORNA IN MANAGING STHAULYA: A FOCUS ON OBESITY

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## ABSTRACT

Sthaulya (obesity) is a growing health concern globally, leading to various metabolic, cardiovascular, and lifestyle disorders. In Ayurveda, obesity is primarily linked to an imbalance in Kapha Dosha and impaired Agni (digestive fire), resulting in excessive accumulation of Meda Dhatu (fat tissue). This article explores the efficacy of Triphala Choorna and Tryushana Choorna, two classical Ayurvedic formulations, in managing Sthaulya. Triphala, a combination of Haritaki, Amalaki, and Bibhitaki, is known for its detoxifying, digestive, and rejuvenating properties, promoting fat metabolism and elimination of toxins. Tryushana, made from Pippali, Shunthi, and Maricha, acts as a potent metabolic stimulant, enhancing digestion and fat-burning processes through its thermogenic effects. The synergy of these formulations offers a comprehensive approach to weight management by regulating Agni, reducing Ama (toxins), and balancing fat metabolism. This review provides an in-depth analysis of the pharmacological actions, clinical benefits, and combined efficacy of Triphala and Tryushana Choorna in managing obesity. The findings suggest that these formulations, when used alongside dietary modifications and lifestyle changes, can be effective in reducing excess body fat and improving metabolic health. Further clinical studies are recommended to validate their efficacy in large populations.

## KEYWORDS

Sthaulya, Sodhanakarma, Obesity, Lifestyle disorder, Management of Sthaulya

## INTRODUCTION

Obesity has become a global health epidemic, affecting individuals across all age groups and geographical regions. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports a significant increase in obesity rates over the past few decades, with nearly 39% of adults being overweight and 13% classified as obese. This rise has led to an increase in associated health risks such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and metabolic disorders.<sup>1</sup>

In Ayurveda, obesity is referred to as Sthaulya, characterized by an imbalance in the body's metabolic functions. Rather than focusing on caloric intake alone, Ayurveda emphasizes the role of Agni (digestive fire)

<sup>1</sup> Boutari, C., & Mantzoros, C. S. (2022). A 2022 update on the epidemiology of obesity and a call to action: as its twin COVID-19 pandemic appears to be receding, the obesity and dysmetabolism pandemic continues to rage on. *Metabolism: clinical and experimental*, 133, 155217. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.metabol.2022.155217>

and Ama (toxins) in managing weight. According to this ancient system of medicine, impaired digestion leads to the accumulation of undigested food material, which eventually turns into Ama, contributing to fat accumulation. Thus, managing obesity in Ayurveda involves strengthening digestion, reducing excess Kapha (which is responsible for heaviness), and detoxifying the body. Santarpanottha Vikaras, which are diseases caused by over-nutrition, have become increasingly prevalent in the 21st century. Among these conditions, Atisthaulya (obesity) stands out as a significant concern. According to Acharya Charaka, Atisthaulya is classified as one of the eight undesirable and harmful conditions due to its negative impact on health and well-being. This highlights the need to address the rise of over-nutrition and its associated disorders in modern society<sup>2</sup>. An individual who experiences an abnormal buildup of Meda (fat) and Mamsa (muscle tissue), resulting in a loose or flabby appearance around the hips, abdomen, and chest, is classified as Atisthula (obese) in Ayurvedic terminology. This condition is marked by an imbalance in body tissues, leading to physical changes characterized by excessive fat accumulation in these regions.<sup>3</sup>

Among the many remedies offered in Ayurveda, Triphala Choorna and Tryushana Choorna are two potent formulations that are highly regarded for their efficacy in managing Sthaulya. This review aims to explore the composition, pharmacology, and clinical benefits of these formulations in managing obesity.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### Aims

To explore the efficacy of Triphala Choorna and Tryushana Choorna in managing Sthaulya (obesity).

### Objectives

1. To provide an Ayurvedic perspective on Sthaulya (obesity)
2. To analyze the composition and pharmacology of Triphala Choorna
3. To explore the pharmacological properties of Tryushana Choorna
4. To compare the efficacy of Triphala and Tryushana Choorna
5. To discuss the synergistic effects of using Triphala and Tryushana Choorn.

## Understanding Sthaulya in Ayurveda

Sthaulya is caused by an excess of **Meda Dhatus** (fat tissue) and **Kapha Dosha**.<sup>4</sup> The imbalance of Kapha Dosha leads to the accumulation of excess body fat, resulting in heaviness, lethargy, and reduced metabolic efficiency. In Ayurveda, the root cause of obesity is linked to **Mandagni** (low digestive fire), which hampers proper digestion and leads to the formation of Ama, which obstructs the body's channels (Srotas) and further slows down metabolism.

Modern perspectives on obesity focus on energy imbalance, where excessive caloric intake coupled with a sedentary lifestyle leads to weight gain. Other contributing factors include genetics, hormonal imbalance, and emotional stress. While modern medicine emphasizes calorie reduction and physical activity, Ayurveda takes a holistic approach, addressing both the mind and body by improving digestion, regulating metabolism, and enhancing detoxification.

<sup>2</sup> Acharya Y. T.; Charaka; Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan Varanasi, 2009; 116.

<sup>3</sup> Acharya Y.T.; Charaka Samhita; Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan; Varanasi, 2009; 117.

<sup>4</sup> Charaka Samhita, Sutra Sthana, Ashtanindiiya Adhyaya, 21/2. Available From: [Http://Niimh.Nic.In/Ebooks/Ecaraka](http://Niimh.Nic.In/Ebooks/Ecaraka).

## Triphala Choorna: Composition and Pharmacology

**Triphala** is a well-known Ayurvedic formulation consisting of three fruits: **Haritaki** (*Terminalia chebula*), **Amalaki** (*Emblica officinalis*), and **Bibhitaki** (*Terminalia bellirica*). These fruits possess complementary therapeutic properties that work together to promote health and balance in the body.

- **Haritaki:** Known for its ability to regulate digestion, Haritaki is a potent digestive stimulant and mild laxative. It helps in detoxifying the body, removing Ama, and improving bowel movements.
- **Amalaki:** Rich in antioxidants, especially Vitamin C, Amalaki is a rejuvenating agent with anti-inflammatory and digestive properties. It boosts metabolism, supports the immune system, and helps in regulating blood sugar and cholesterol levels.
- **Bibhitaki:** A powerful astringent and detoxifier, Bibhitaki helps eliminate excess fat and is often used in managing conditions related to fat metabolism. It acts as a digestive aid and helps in clearing toxins from the digestive tract.

**Pharmacological Actions:** The combination of these three fruits in Triphala provides a balanced approach to weight management. It improves digestion, enhances bowel movements, and helps in the removal of toxins, while simultaneously promoting fat metabolism. It is particularly effective for individuals with sluggish digestion and poor elimination.

**Clinical Evidence:** Studies have demonstrated the efficacy of Triphala in weight management. A study published in the "Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine" found that individuals who used Triphala experienced significant reductions in weight, waist circumference, and lipid profiles after 12 weeks of treatment.

### Mode of Action in Sthaulya:

Triphala helps in managing obesity through its Deepana (digestive stimulant), Pachana (digestive), and Virechana (purgative) effects. It helps in breaking down excess fat deposits and regulates bowel movements, ensuring proper elimination of waste and fat molecules.

#### Clinical Benefits of Triphala in Managing Obesity:

- Promotes fat metabolism by balancing Agni and reducing Ama.
- Enhances digestion and absorption of nutrients, ensuring efficient body functioning.
- Acts as a mild laxative, helping in the elimination of toxins and reducing excessive fat storage.
- Regulates blood sugar levels, thus reducing cravings and overeating.

## Tryushana Choorna: Composition and Pharmacology

Trikatu Choorna is a traditional Ayurvedic formulation described in classical texts. Tryushana is a combination of three pungent drugs. It consists of three key ingredients in equal proportions: Shunthi (the rhizome of *Zingiber officinale*), Maricha (the fruit of *Piper nigrum*), and Pippali (the fruit of *Piper longum*). In Ayurveda, Trikatu is recommended for treating a variety of conditions, including loss of taste (Arochaka), impaired digestion (Agnimandya) and the accumulation of toxins (Amadosa). It is also prescribed for ailments affecting the nose (Pinasa), upper respiratory tract disorders such as throat and breathing problems (Gala roga, Swasaroga), and cough (Kasa). Additionally, it is used in managing frequent urination (Meha), Gulma, obesity (Sthaulya), filariasis (Slipada), and skin diseases (Tvakroga).<sup>5</sup> These herbs are traditionally known for their stimulant and thermogenic properties, which help in boosting metabolism and burning fat. In addition to its well-established traditional health benefits, Trikatu Choorna has been studied for various other activities,

<sup>5</sup> Gupta A.; Ashtang Hridayam, Chaukhamba Prakashan; Varanasi, 2012; 87.

including antioxidant,<sup>6</sup> antihyperlipidemic,<sup>7</sup> and antianorexic properties.<sup>8</sup> Research has also explored its antitumor,<sup>9</sup> hepatoprotective,<sup>10</sup> antifungal,<sup>11</sup> and antimicrobial effects.<sup>12</sup> Further investigations have demonstrated anthelmintic,<sup>13</sup> analgesic,<sup>14</sup> immunomodulatory,<sup>15</sup> antiallergic,<sup>16</sup> antiarthritic,<sup>17</sup> and anti-inflammatory activities,<sup>18</sup> highlighting its broad therapeutic potential.

- **Pippali:** Known for its ability to increase the bioavailability of nutrients, it stimulates metabolism and aids in the digestion of fat. It also works as a Kapha-reducing agent.
- **Shunthi (dried ginger):** A digestive stimulant, Shunthi is highly effective in burning excess calories and has anti-inflammatory properties that reduce swelling and water retention.
- **Maricha (black pepper):** A thermogenic herb, Maricha enhances fat metabolism by stimulating digestive enzymes and improving circulation, which helps in the reduction of body fat.

### Mode of Action in Sthaulya

Tryushana Choorna acts on the digestive system to stimulate Agni (digestive fire), promoting the breakdown of food and fat molecules. It also has a Lekhana (scrapping) effect, which helps in reducing accumulated fat deposits and Kapha from the body.

#### Clinical Benefits of Tryushana in Managing Obesity<sup>19</sup>:

- Stimulates metabolism and enhances fat burning through its thermogenic effects.
- Increases the efficiency of digestive enzymes, which aids in the proper breakdown and absorption of fats.
- Reduces excessive water retention and bloating, common in obesity.
- Regulates lipid profiles and improves the ratio of HDL to LDL cholesterol.

<sup>6</sup> Jain N., Mishra, R.N. Antioxidant activity of Trikatu mega Ext. Int J Res Pharm BioMed Sci, 2011; 2: 624-28.

<sup>7</sup> Sivakumar V, Sivakumar S. Effect of an indigenous herbal compound preparation 'Trikatu' on the lipid profiles of atherogenic diet and standard diet fed Rattus norvegicus. Phytother Res, 2004; 8: 976-81.

<sup>8</sup> . Kulkarni VS, Surana SJ. Reversal of CRF- and stress-induced anorexia by an ayurvedic formulation; Brazi J Pharm, 2011; 22: 404-11.

<sup>9</sup> D'souza PF et al; Anti-tumor activity of mercaptopurine in combination with Trikatu and gomutra on 20-methylcholantrene induced carcinogenesis; App Pharm Sci, 2013; 3: 20- 24.

<sup>10</sup> Kumar SV, Mishra SH. Hepatoprotective activity of the Trikatu Choorna: An ayurvedic formulation. Ind J Pharma Sci, 2004; 66: 356-67.

<sup>11</sup> Tambekar DH, Dahikar, S.B. Antibacterial potential of some herbal preparation: An alternative Medicine in treatment of enteric bacterial infection. Int J Pharm Pharm Sci, 2010; 2: 176-9.

<sup>12</sup> Dahikar SB, Bhutada SA, Vibhute SK, Sonvale VC, Tambekar DH, Kasture SB. Evaluation of antibacterial potential of Trikatu Choorna and its ingredients: An in vitro study. Int J PhytoMed, 2010; 2: 412-7.

<sup>13</sup> Reddy BU, Seetharam YN. Antimicrobial and analgesic activities of Trikatu Choorna and its ingredients. Pharmacol Online, 2009; 3: 489-95.

<sup>14</sup> Reddy NL et al; Anthelmintic activity of aqueous and ethanolic extract of Trikatu Choorna.; J Pharm Sci, 2011; 1: 140-2.

<sup>15</sup> Jain N, Mishra RN.; Immunomodulator activity of Trikatu mega ext.; Int J Res Pharm BioMed Sci, 2011; 2: 160-64.

<sup>16</sup> Murunikkar V, Rasool MK; Trikatu, an herbal compound as immunomodulatory and anti inflammatory agent in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis – An experimental study.; Cell Immunol, 2014; 287: 62-8.

<sup>17</sup> Maenthaisong R et al; Efficacy and safety of topical Trikatu preparation in, relieving mosquito bite reactions: A randomized controlled trial; Complement Ther Med, 2014; 22: 34-9.

<sup>18</sup> Shree NagindasChaganlal Shah Rasavaidya Bharat Choornaratnakar . B. Jain publishers, New Delhi, 1921; 1-5.

<sup>19</sup> Ashtanga Hrudaya, Sutrasthana, Anna swaroopa Vinjaniya Adhyaya, 6/153-159, Available From; E-Vagbhata - Institute Of Ayurveda And Integrative ... - Ayurveda. [Http://Ayurveda.Net](http://Ayurveda.Net) › Shastra › Sangraha.

## Comparative Efficacy in Managing Obesity

### **Tripala Choorna:**

- Focuses on detoxification and bowel regulation, making it effective in treating sluggish digestion and the accumulation of Ama, a major cause of obesity in Ayurveda.
- It is mild and suitable for long-term use, ensuring sustained weight management through gradual fat reduction and improved digestion.

### **Tryushana Choorna**

- Has a more aggressive fat-burning effect due to its thermogenic properties, making it suitable for individuals with excessive Kapha-related obesity.
- It is particularly effective in cases where metabolic slowdown is the primary concern, as it rapidly boosts digestive fire and fat metabolism.

### **Combination Therapy and Dosage**

Combining Triphala and Tryushana can provide a comprehensive approach to managing Sthaulya. Triphala works on eliminating toxins and enhancing bowel movements, while Tryushana boosts metabolism and directly burns fat.

### **Sadhyasadhyawata**

- Sadhyasadhyata (prognosis) of Sthaulya (obesity) indicates that it is a Kricchrasadhy Vyadhi (difficult-to-treat condition), with Sahaja Sthaulya (congenital obesity) being regarded as incurable. Acharya Charaka emphasized that managing obesity is more challenging than treating Karshya (underweight).<sup>20</sup>
- If obesity is not properly addressed, the individual is at risk of life-threatening conditions due to excessive hunger, thirst, and other complications.<sup>21</sup>

## **TREATMENT OF STAULYA (OBESITY)**

It primarily involves **Sanshodhana** (detoxification) and **Samshamana Chikitsa** (pacification therapy), along with avoiding the causative factors. The key therapeutic approaches for managing obesity include:

- Regulating the overactive **Jatharagni** (digestive fire)
- Enhancing the function of **Bhutagni** (metabolic fire related to the elements)
- Correcting the imbalance in **Dhatvagni** (tissue metabolism)
- Utilizing treatments that reduce **Medo-hara** (fat), **Kapha-hara** (balancing Kapha), and **Vatahara** (balancing Vata).

<sup>20</sup> Singh R. H, Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji, Ayurveda dipikatika, Charaka Samhita, Sutra sthan 21/4, Chaukhamba Surbharati prakashan, Varanasi 2016, Page no.116.

<sup>21</sup> Singh R. H, Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji, Ayurveda dipikatika, Charaka Samhita, Sutra sthan 21/8, Chaukhamba Surbharati prakashan, Varanasi 2016, Page no.116.

## Sthaulya Chikitsa

The primary approach for managing Sthaulya (obesity) is Nidan Parivarjana, which involves eliminating the root causes. Regular Langhana therapy (fasting or lightening treatments), particularly during Shishir Ritu (the winter season), is recommended as a key intervention.<sup>22</sup> Various forms of Langhana therapy, such as Vamana (emesis) and Virechana (purgation), are recommended based on the severity of the disease (Vyadhibala) and the strength of the individual (Dehabala).<sup>23</sup> Among the Shadavidha Upakramas (six therapeutic approaches), Langhana (lightening) and Rukshana (drying therapies) are particularly effective. Langhana, as a treatment strategy for Sthaulya (obesity), is further categorized into Samsodhana (purification) and Samshamana (pacification) therapies.<sup>24</sup>

### Samsodhana therapy

It is recommended for individuals with an excess of Doshas and strong physical constitution (Adhika Bala). This includes treatments like Vamana (therapeutic emesis), Virechana (purgation), Niruha (enema), Raktamokshana (bloodletting), and Sirovirechana (nasal cleansing).<sup>25</sup> Additionally, Ruksha (dry), Ushna (hot), and Tikshna Basti (strong enemas) are advised.<sup>26</sup> Ruksha Udvartana (dry powder massage) is an external cleansing method beneficial for Sthaulya.<sup>27</sup> Snehana Karma (oleation therapy) should generally be avoided in obesity, but in specific cases, the use of Taila (oil) may be permitted if necessary.<sup>28</sup>

### Dosage and Administration

Aushadha-Sevana Kala (timing of medicine administration) for Sthaulya (obesity) suggests taking medication before meals (Pragbhakta).<sup>29</sup> According to Sharangdhara Samhita, Lekhana (fat-reducing) drugs should be consumed on an empty stomach early in the morning and prior to meals.<sup>30</sup>

- **Triphala Choorna:** Typically, 3-5 grams is taken at bedtime with warm water, aiding in detoxification and bowel movement regulation.
- **Tryushana Choorna:** 1-2 grams is recommended before meals, typically with warm water or honey, to enhance digestion and boost metabolism.

Precautions should be taken for individuals with extreme Pitta dominance, as Tryushana's heating properties may aggravate Pitta-related disorders

<sup>22</sup> Pt. Hari Sadasiva Sastri Paradakara Bhisagacarya, Sarvanga sundara-Arunadatta and Ayurveda rasayana-Hemadri Commentary, Astanga Hrdaya, Sutra Sthana 14/11, Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi 2016, Page no. 224.

<sup>23</sup> Singh R.H, Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji, Ayurveda dipikatika, Charaka Samhita, Sutra sthan 22/18, Chaukhamba Surbharati prakashan, Varanasi 2016, Page no.121.

<sup>24</sup> Pt. Hari Sadasiva Sastri Paradakara Bhisagacarya, Sarvanga sundara-Arunadatta and Ayurveda rasayana-Hemadri Commentary, Astanga Hrdaya, SutraSthana 14/4, Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi 2016, Page no. 223.

<sup>25</sup> . Pt. Hari Sadasiva Sastri Paradakara Bhisagacarya, Sarvanga sundara-Arunadatta and Ayurveda rasayana- Hemadri Commentary, Astanga Hrdaya, SutraSthana 14/12, Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi 2016, Page no. 224

<sup>26</sup> Singh R.H, Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji, Ayurveda dipikatika, Charaka Samhita, Sutra sthan 21/21, Chaukhamba Surbharatiprakashan, Varanasi 2016, Page no.117.

<sup>27</sup> Ashtanga Samgraha with Hindi Commentary, by Kaviraj Atrideva Gupta, Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy, Reprint 2005, Vol. 1, Ashtanga Samgraha Su. 25/65-66.

<sup>28</sup> Singh R.H, Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji, Ayurveda dipikatika, Charaka Samhita, Sutra sthan 21/21, Chaukhamba Surbharatiprakashan, Varanasi 2016, Page no.117.

<sup>29</sup> Pt. Hari Sadasiva Sastri Paradakara Bhisagacarya, Sarvanga sundara-Arunadatta and Ayurveda rasayana-Hemadri Commentary, Astanga Sangrah, Sutra Sthana 64/14, Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi 2016, Page no. 224.

<sup>30</sup> Sharangadhara, prathamakhanda, Sharangadhara 2/2, samhita, Ptparashuramshastri editor, 1st edition. Chaukhambasur bharati prakashana, Varanasi, 2006; 16.

## Lifestyle and Dietary Modifications

For optimal results, these formulations should be complemented by a **Kapha-reducing diet**, which includes light, dry, and warm foods. Foods like barley, green leafy vegetables, and spices like cumin, black pepper, and ginger can enhance the effects of Triphala and Tryushana. Additionally, regular physical activity, yoga, and pranayama (breathing exercises) are recommended to support the weight-loss process.

## Challenges and Future Directions

One of the main challenges in assessing the efficacy of these formulations is the lack of large-scale, randomized clinical trials. While there is significant anecdotal and preliminary research supporting their use, further studies are required to establish standardized dosages and evaluate their long-term efficacy. Future research could also explore combining these formulations with other Ayurvedic therapies like Panchakarma for more comprehensive obesity management.

## CONCLUSION

Both Triphala Choorna and Tryushana Choorna offer effective, natural approaches to managing Sthaulya (obesity). Triphala works by detoxifying the body and promoting digestion, while Tryushana stimulates metabolism and burns fat more aggressively. The combination of these two formulations provides a holistic solution for weight management, especially when paired with dietary modifications and lifestyle changes. Further clinical studies are necessary to validate their use in modern obesity management protocols, but their potential is promising for those seeking a natural, Ayurvedic approach to weight loss.