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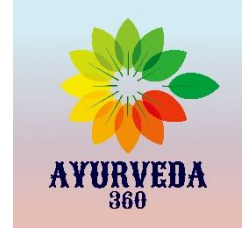
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A Review of *Lekhana Basti*: Ayurvedic Management of Obesity and Metabolic Disorders

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ABSTRACT


Introduction : Ayurveda offers various therapeutic approaches, with Panchakarma being a key treatment modality. Among the Panchakarma treatments, Lekhan Basti, a procedure involving medicated enemas, has shown significant potential in managing obesity, dyslipidemia, and metabolic disorders, especially those related to excess *Kapha* and *Medodhatu*.

Methods : Lekhan Basti, as described by Acharya Sushruta and Acharya Sharangdhara, includes ingredients such as *Triphala Kwatha*, *Gaumutra*, *Madhu*, *Yavakshara*, and *Ushakadigana*. These components are known for their therapeutic properties, including *Kapha nashaka*, *Deepana*, *Tiksna*, and *Agni Deepaka*. The procedure involves the use of an alkaline formulation due to components like *Gaumutra* and *Yavakshara*, facilitating rapid absorption and enhancing gut flora.


Results : The therapeutic effects of *Lekhan Basti* are diverse, addressing metabolic imbalances and eliminating excess *Kapha* and *Medodhatu*. It has been reported to possess properties like *Vata-Kapha Shamaka*, *Deepana*, *Pachana*, *Lekhana*, *Karshana*, and *Srotoshodhaka*, which support fat reduction, enhance digestive fire, and improve detoxification.

Discussion : Lekhan Basti proves to be an effective *Samshodhana* treatment that addresses chronic metabolic conditions. By balancing *Kapha* and reducing excess *Medodhatu*, it offers a promising approach to improving overall metabolic health. The combination of its detoxifying properties and its impact on gut flora makes it a vital intervention for metabolic disorders.

Keywords: *Ayurveda, Lekhan Basti, Medodhatu, Panchakarma*

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Introduction

Ayurveda, an ancient Indian system of medicine, is centered on achieving balance between the body's three doshas—*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*—and eliminating toxins (*Mala*). This holistic approach promotes both the treatment of disease and the maintenance of health. Among its therapeutic techniques, *Panchakarma* plays a pivotal role in cleansing the body and restoring equilibrium. Within *Panchakarma*, *Basti* is regarded as a key treatment modality, especially for *Vata* disorders, and is considered by the *Acharyas* as “*Ardhachikitsa*” (half of all treatments) [1]. It is specifically beneficial for regulating *Vata dosha*, which governs numerous physiological functions, including metabolic processes.

The *Lekhana Basti*, a specialized form of *Basti*, focuses on the reduction of excess fat and the elimination of toxins, particularly in individuals dealing with obesity, hypothyroidism, polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), and other conditions associated with excess *Kapha* and *Meda Dhatu*. The term “*Lekhana*” means “scraping,” reflecting the treatment’s goal to cleanse the body by eliminating undesirable substances. This therapy aids in fat reduction, enhances digestive fire, and supports overall metabolic health. Additionally, it helps restore balance among the doshas,

particularly reducing *Kapha*, which enhances vitality and overall well-being.

In modern times, lifestyle imbalances have led to a rise in conditions like obesity, dyslipidemia, and PCOS, thus renewing the relevance of *Lekhana Basti* as a therapeutic intervention. The increasing prevalence of these metabolic disorders highlights the importance of exploring holistic treatments like *Ayurveda*, which offer potential solutions to manage these conditions more effectively.

Materials and Methods

Lekhana Basti, as described by *Acharya Sushruta* in the *Chikitsa Sthana* [3] and *Acharya Sharangdhara* in the *Uttara Khanda* of the *Sharangdhara Samhita* [4], is composed of a set of core ingredients, including *Triphala Kwatha*, *Gaumutra*, *Madhu*, *Yavakshara*, and *Ushakadigana Prativapa*. These ingredients are chosen for their specific therapeutic properties.

Triphala is known for its ability to balance *Kapha* and *Pitta*, stimulate the digestive fire (*Agnideepaka*), and its *Ruksha* (drying) properties, making it highly effective for treating obesity [5]. *Gaumutra*, or cow urine, has *Katu* (pungent), *Tikshna* (sharp), and *Ushna* (hot) qualities, which enhance its ability to aid in fat reduction and metabolic stimulation. Additionally, its *Laghu* (light) and *Kapha-Vata Nashak* (removal of

Kapha and *Vata*) properties support the overall therapeutic action of the *Lekhana Basti* [6].

Ushakadigana, a collection of herbs and minerals including *Ushaka*, *Saindhav*, *Shilajit*, and *Tuttha*, is described by *Sushruta* for its role in reducing *Kapha* and promoting fat elimination [6]. This combination contributes to the *Shodhana* (cleansing) and *Lekhana* (scraping) properties of *Lekhana Basti*.

Acharya Caraka also mentions the use of *Ushna* and *Tikshna Basti* for treating *Sthaulya* (obesity), with similar mechanisms in action. The scraping action of *Lekhana Basti* aligns with *Acharya Caraka's* observations, helping in fat reduction and the restoration of balance in the body's metabolism [7].

According to *Sharangdhara Lekhaniya Dravya* is the substance that remove the increased *Dhatu* & *Mala* by scraping action.

Table 1: Properties of each ingredient in *lekhanabasti*

Sr.no.	Sanskrit name	Botanical name	Part used	Karma
1	<i>Amalaki</i>	<i>Embelica officinalis</i>	Fruit	<i>Tridosahara</i> [8]
2	<i>Haritaki</i>	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>	Fruit	<i>Tridosahara</i> [9]
3	<i>Vibhitaki</i>	<i>Terminalia bellirica</i>	Fruit	<i>KaphaPittaShamak</i> [10]
4	<i>Shilajatu</i>	<i>Asphaltum</i>	Mineral	<i>Tridosahara</i> [11]
5	<i>Honey</i>			<i>Kapha Pitta Shamak</i> [12]
6	<i>Yavakshara</i>	<i>Hordeum vulgare</i>	Whole plant	<i>Vata Kapha Shamak</i> [13]
7	<i>Saindhava</i>	Rock Salt		<i>Tridosahara</i> [14]
8	<i>Hingu</i>	<i>Asfoetida</i>	<i>Niryasa</i>	<i>Vata-Kapha Shamak</i> [15]
9	<i>Tila taila</i>	Sesame oil	Seed	<i>Vata Kapha Shamak</i> [16]
10	<i>Gomutra</i>	Cow urine		<i>Vata Kapha Shamaka , Pitta prakopaka</i> [17]

Acharya Caraka further introduces the *Lekhaniya Mahakashaya* in the *Sutrasthana* [18], a decoction of which some practitioners use in place of *Triphala Kwatha* in *Lekhana Basti*, yielding positive clinical outcomes.

The recommended dose of *Niruha Basti* is outlined by *Acharya Sushruta* in the *Niruhakramachikitsa* chapter, specifying 12 *Prasruta* (1,152 ml), with precise measurements for each component

[19]. The ingredients include *Madhu* (192 ml), *Saindhava* (12 gm), *Sneha* (288 ml), *Kalka* (96 ml), *Kwatha* (384 ml), and *Avapadrava* (192 ml). *Acharya Caraka* suggests that the dosage should vary based on factors such as *Dosha*, the nature of the medicine (*Ausadha*), location, season (*Kala*), and the patient's strength (*Bala*), among others [20]. In the current era, due to reduced individual strength, *Avara Matra* (reduced dosage) is often employed.

Acharya Sharangdhara's Uttara Khanda provides specific guidance for individuals with lower strength (*Heena Bala*), recommending a smaller dose of 3 *Kudava* (560 ml) [21]

The preparation of *Lekhana Basti* follows classical methods as described by *Acharya Caraka* [22]. The required quantities of *Madhu*, *Saindhava*, *Sneha*, *Kalka*, and *Kwatha* are carefully measured and mixed in a *Khalva Yantra* (grinding vessel) to form a uniform mixture. The temperature of the mixture should be *Sukhoshna*, i.e., slightly above body temperature, for optimal absorption during administration.

For administration, the patient is placed on a special table (*Droni*) in the left lateral position with the right leg flexed. The anal region and *Bastinetra* (enema pipe) are lubricated for smooth insertion. The enema is introduced gradually into the rectum following the direction of the spinal column, up to the first *Karnika* (marker). Once in place, pressure is applied evenly and steadily to release the *Basti* fluid, ensuring it is neither too fast nor too slow. Afterward, some fluid is retained in the *Basti Putaka* to prevent air movement inside the patient. The *Basti* should be expelled within 1 *Muhurata* (48 minutes), as described by *Sushruta* [23].

After the procedure, the patient is advised to refrain from eating until the *Basti* is expelled. A warm bath and a light,

freshly cooked liquid meal are recommended post-procedure.

Discussion

Lekhana Basti possesses multiple therapeutic qualities, including *Vata-Kapha Shamaka*, *Ushna*, *Tikshna*, *Deepana*, *Pachana*, *Lekhana*, *Karshana*, and *Srotoshodhana*, which are essential for managing metabolic disorders. The specific ingredients in *Lekhana Basti*, including *Madhu*, *Saindhava*, *Yavakshara*, *Tila Taila*, *Triphala Kwatha*, *Gaumutra*, and *Ushakadigana*, work synergistically to address conditions related to excess *Kapha* and *Medodhatu*.

Madhu (Honey) is described by *Acharya Sushruta* as *Yogavahi*, meaning it acts as a vehicle for enhancing the therapeutic efficacy of the other ingredients. It functions through its *Lekhan*, *Chhedana*, and *Srotoshodhana* properties, helping to remove blockages and cleanse the channels, making it a vital component of *Basti* therapy [24].

Saindhava (Rock Salt) is known for its *Sukshma* (fine) and *Vyavayi* (penetrating) properties, which allow it to spread into the minute channels of the body, facilitating the movement of drug molecules into circulation. It helps in *Kaphavilayan* (reducing *Kapha*), *Chhedana* (scraping), *Deepana* (stimulating digestion), and *Pachana* (promoting digestion) [25].

Tila Taila (Sesame Oil) is *Kapha* and *Vata Shamak* (balancing) in nature. Due to its *Madhura* (sweet) and *Snigdha* (unctuous) properties, it nourishes and softens the channels. This helps in the removal of toxins and clears blockages, contributing to the detoxification process [26].

Triphala, a well-known *Rasayana* (rejuvenative) formulation, balances the *Tridosha* and performs *Deepana* (enhancing digestive fire). It contains *Katu*, *Amla*, and *Madhura Rasa* (tastes) and *Ushna Veerya* (potent energy), which act as a mild laxative and support lipid metabolism. Its antioxidant properties improve gut motility and support overall digestive health. It also provides rejuvenation and promotes balance in the body's systems.

Gaumutra (Cow Urine) serves as a powerful *Vata-Kapha Shamaka*, *Kriminashaka* (antimicrobial), *Vishagna* (detoxifying), *Deepana*, and *Pachana* (digestive enhancer). Its broad therapeutic actions, such as anti-obesity, bio-enhancement, anti-diabetic, wound healing, anti-inflammatory, and anti-cancer properties, make it an important ingredient in this treatment [27].

Ushakadigana, a group of herbs and minerals described by *Acharya Sushruta*, has *Kapha Shamak* and *Meda Shoshak* (fat-reducing) properties [28].

The pH of *Lekhana Basti* is alkaline, due to the presence of *Gaumutra* (pH = 8.5-9.5) and *Yavakshara* (alkaline substance), which enhances the absorption of the *Basti Dravya* through the colon. This alkaline nature helps in reducing harmful microbiomes in the gut, thereby improving gut health. The antimicrobial activity of components such as *Triphala* and *Gaumutra* aids in maintaining a healthy gut flora, which is essential for digestive health.

Conclusion

Lekhana Basti plays a critical role as a *Samshodhana* (cleansing) therapy, particularly for managing metabolic disorders related to excess *Kapha* and *Medodhatu*, such as obesity, dyslipidemia, PCOS, and other lifestyle diseases. The synergistic action of its ingredients, including *Triphala Kwatha*, *Gaumutra*, *Madhu*, *Yavakshara*, and *Ushakadigana*, provides therapeutic benefits such as *Vata-Kapha Shamana* (balancing), *Deepana* (enhancing digestive fire), *Pachana* (promoting digestion), and *Srotoshodhana* (cleansing channels).

The *Lekhan karma* (scraping action) of the ingredients helps break down excess fat, reducing *srotosanga* (channel blockages) and improving the flow of *Agni* (digestive fire) and *Vata* (energy). The alkaline nature of *Lekhana Basti* enhances absorption and promotes healthy gut flora,

improving digestion and reducing metabolic dysfunction.

In the modern era, where lifestyle disorders are increasingly prevalent, *Lekhana Basti* offers a valuable and sustainable approach to improving metabolic health and overall well-being. By

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adhering to classical preparation and administration protocols, this treatment can yield optimal therapeutic outcomes, making it an essential tool in *Ayurvedic* medicine for managing chronic metabolic conditions.

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