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A conceptual study of anatomy and pathophysiology of *Koshtha* with its clinical importance in Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

According to Ayurveda *Tridosha* and *Panchamahabhuta* are the functional and structural entity of body so the anatomy, physiology, pathology and treatment are based upon the principle of *Tridosha* and *Panchamahabhut Siddhanta* and these principles are formulating the concept of *Aayu*, *Bala*, *Prakriti* and *Koshtha*. The line of treatment, drug selection, dose determination as well as indication and contraindication of *Aahar* and *Vihar* are based upon the above concept. So, a huge study is needed to explore the above concept by the anatomical, physiological, pathological and clinical approach. Out of them the concept of *Koshtha* can be explore by the study of *Koshtha* and its anatomical determination, physiology of *Koshtha*, *Koshtha Pariksha* and utility of *Koshtha* in *Sodhana* and *shaman Chikitsa*.

Key words: *Tridosha*, *Panchamahabhuta*, *Koshtha*, *Prakriti*, *Sodhana*, *Shamana*.

INTRODUCTION

“*Purusham Purusham Vikshaya*” is an approach of Ayurveda as unique to thoroughly analyze the total condition of a person to find out the underlying symptoms instead of finding methods to suppress the symptoms.^[1] There are many concepts in Ayurveda for the examination of *Roga* and *Rogi Bala* like *Trividha Pariksha*,^[2] *Panchavidha Pariksha*,^[3] *Shadvidha Pariksha*,^[4] *Ashtavidha Pariksha*^[5] and *Dasvidha Pariksha*^[6] are explained by different *Acharyas*. The main motive of these *Roga* and *Rogi Pariksha* is to analyze the total condition of a person and

pathophysiology of the disease. In Ayurveda the condition of person is said to “*Dehprakriti*” and *Dehprakriti* is decided by the dominance of *Doshas*.^[7] According to the dominance of *Doshas* “*Purush*” (a person) has different *Agnibala*, *Dehbala* and *Koshtha*. The term *Koshtha* refers to the nature of digestive tract which usually represents the motility of intestine, movement of food and fecal material in the alimentary canal with elimination of stool. According to dominance of *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha Dosh* the person is said to *Krura*, *Mrudu*, and *Madhyam Koshtha* respectively.^[8] In Ayurveda *Koshtha* is anatomically a cavity formed from *Aavarna* which is consisting of *Dhatus* (solid structure).^[9] *Dhatu* and *Doshas* are interchange between *Koshtha* to *Shakha* by *Nidansevana*.^[10] *Koshtha* to *Shakha* and *Shakha* to *Koshtha Gaman* of *Dosha* has a great pathophysiology and clinical importance. Although *Koshtha Pariksha* is also important to understood the pharmacokinetics.

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MATERIAL AND METHODS

Materials

Literary material, i.e., Ayurvedic classical texts (*Charak Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita* *Asthang Hridaya*, *Bhav*

Prakash, and Yoga Ratnakar) and commentaries along with Modern Ayurvedic texts and books were reviewed to collect the data during work.

Methods

Literary data collected were compared and analyzed on classical background to find similarities, dissimilarities and its clinical approach in accordance to modern science.

Anatomical study of Koshtha

Koshtha is a cavity formed from *Avarana* which is consisting of *Dhatus* (solid structure). *Koshtha* is known as *Mahasrotasa*, which is extended from mouth to the anus i.e., complete digestive system and as *Abhyantara Roga Marga*.^[11] This means that thoraco-abdominal cavity should be taken as *Koshtha*. Organs placed in this vacant place are called *Koshthanga*.

Charakacharya states the fifteen *Koshthangas* - *Nabhi* (umbilicus), *Hrudya* (heart), *Kloma* (pancreas), *Yakruta* (liver), *Pleeha* (spleen), *Vrukka* (kidneys) *Basti* (bladder) *Purishadhana* (caecum), *Aamashaya* (stomach), *Pakvashaya* (small and large intestine), *Uttarguda* (rectum), *Adharguda* (anus).^[12]

Sushrutacharya states that *Koshtha* is a cavity containing *Hrudaya* (heart), *Rudhira* (blood), *Phuphusa* (lungs), *Amashaya* (stomach), *Pakvashaya* (intestine), *Unduka* (appendix), *Mutrashaya* (bladder).^[13] *Sushrutacharya* also states that entire abdomen (*Sarvam Udaram*) should be considered as *Koshtha*.^[14]

Physiological study of Koshtha

Physiologically the term *Koshtha* refers to the nature of digestive tract. According to predominance of *Doshas* there are three types of *Koshtha*;

- *Krura Koshtha* - In *Krura Koshtha Vata Dosh* is dominant; it causes hard feces with difficulty of elimination or even non-elimination. *Ruksha and Khara Guna* of *Vata* is dominant in *Krura Koshtha*. Hence *Koshtha* will be poorly secretive and absorptive.

- *Mrudu Koshtha* - In *Mrudu Koshtha Pitta Dosh* is dominant, causes watery or semisolid feces, moving out more than once or twice in a day. *Sara, Drava, Snigdha* and *Laghu Guna* of *Pitta* is dominant in *Mrudu Koshtha*. Hence *Koshtha* will be smoothing lubricated and slippery. Secretion will be more, but it will be poor in absorption.
- *Madhyam Koshtha* - Predominance of *Kapha Dosh* causes soft, solid feces moving out smoothly. *Snigdha, Guru, and Sthira Guna* of *Kapha* are dominant in *Madhyam Koshtha*. Hence there will be optimum secretion and absorption.

Pathological importance of Koshtha along with Dosh Sancharan

In Ayurveda *Koshtha* is pathologically very important as an *Abhyantara Roga Marga*. *Charakaacharya* denoted the 3 routes of invasion of disease in the body their names are, 1) *Bahayaroga Marga* (*Shakhaanushari*) 2) *Madhyam Roga Marga* (*Mamsaasthi-Sandhi*) 3) *Aabhyantararoga Marga* (*Koshthaanushari*).^[15]

Koshthanusari Roga

Jwara, Atisaar, Vaman, Alsak, Visuchika, Kasa, Shwasa, Hikka, Anaha, Udarrog, Pliha are *Utapanaa* from *Anatamarga*, while *Visarpa* (herpis), *Shwapthu* (odema), *Gulma* (tumor), *Arsha* (piles), *Vidradhi* (Abscess) are disease of *Koshthamargaanusarak*.^[16]

Dosha sancharan from the *Koshth* to *Shakha* and from *Shakha* to *Koshth*. In Ayurveda, is the transfer of nutrients, the exchange of body fluid is fascinated by the mechanism of *Koshtha-Shakha* interaction. *Vata* play a key role in this interaction.^[17] In any disease when *Dosha* goes to *Shakha* from *Koshtha* the disease being hard to cure and also, we cannot get the desirable effect of *Shodhana* and *Shamana Chikitsa*, in this condition the main motive of treatment is to get back of *Doshas* in *Koshtha* in their original place. If *Doshas* rest in *Shakha* than the *Raktamokshana Chikitsa* is more effective than *Vamana, Virechana, Basti* and *Shamana Chikitsa*.^[18]

Clinical significance of Koshtha and Koshttha

Koshtha and Prakriti - Prakriti Pariksha is first step in clinical practice of Ayurveda and we can observe the Prakriti by the Koshtha Pariksha because Vata Prakriti Purusha has Krura Koshtha, Pitta Prakriti Purush has Mrudu Koshtha and Kapha Prakriti Purusha has Madhyam Koshtha.

Koshtha and Shaman Chikitsa - In Shaman Chikitsa assessment of Koshtha is important to decide Aushadhi Dravyas and Aushadhi Matra. E.g., Mrudu Koshthi require Manda Virya Aushadhi and minimum dose while Krura Koshthi require Teekshna Aushadhi and large dose.

Koshtha and Shodhana Chikitsa - Basti, Virechan and Vamana are main Sodhana Chikitsa in Ayurved for Dosha Nirharna. So that there is indication of Basti, Virechan and Vaman Karma subsequently for Krura, Mridu and Madhyam Koshtha because of Vata, Pitta and Kapha dominance.^[19]

Relationship between Koshtha, Dosha, Agni, drug with dose and their common complications in Shodhana Chikitsa

Koshtha	Dosha	Agni	Shodhana Chikitsa and Shamana Dravya	Virechaka Dravya ^[25]	Drug and dose	Common complication in Shodhana Chikitsa
Krura	Vata	Vishama	Basti Karma and Taila-Pana	Eranda Taila, Haritaki, Triphala,	Uttam Matra and Teekshna Virya Dravya(Maximal dose with high potency)	Parishtrava Roga
Madhyam	Kapha	Manda	Vamana Karma and Madhu	Ksheera, Aragvadha, Ikshu, Takra, Mastu, Guda, Krushara, Nava Madya, Ushnodaka, Draksha	standard dose	
Mrudu	Pitta	Teekshana	Virechana Karma and Ghrita Pana	Requires Kashaya and Tikta Laxatives	Alpa Matra and Alpa Virya Dravya(Minimum dose with minimal potency)	Jeevadaan and Parikartika

DISCUSSION

Anatomically Koshtha is discussed as a cavity (thoraco-abdominal cavity) Mahastrotasa, Sharira

Koshtha and Aushadhapaan-Snehapaan - In unknown Koshthi the Sneha is given in Hasyasi Matra (testing dose) as well as in Krura Koshtha Sneha is given in Uttam Matra for 7 days, while in Madhyam Koshtha we give Madhyam Matra of Sneha for 5 days and in Mrudu Koshtha Sneha is given in Mrudu Matra for 3 days.^[20]

Charakacharya states that 5 Pal Erand Tail is essential for purgation to relief of Udavarta in Krura Koshta whereas in Mrudu Koshtha Eranda Taila should be taken with meal for same purpose.^[21]

Koshtha and complication of Shodhana Chikitsa - If Krura Koshthi have taken Mrudu Aushadha in minimum dose, it causes the complication like Parishtrava Roga,^[22] as well as if Mrudu Koshthi have taken Teekshna Aushadha in maximum dose than it causes the complication like Jeevadaan^[23] and Parikartika.^[24]

Madhya, Amashya, Pakwashaya are synonyms of Koshta. Physiologically Koshtha is divided according the dominance of Doshas Krura, Madhyam and Mridu

Koshtha. Pathologically *Kostha* is *Abhyantarrogmarg* and total 15 diseases are described as *Kosthanushari Roga*. *Arsha, Shotha, Gulma, Visarpa* and *Vidradhi* are described in *Shakanusari Roga* as well as *Koshthanusaari Roga*. *Kostha* to *Shakha Gaman* of *Dosha* disturbed the curability of disease and *Koshtha Pariksha* has an important role for drugs selection and dose determination.

CONCLUSION

The concept of *Kostha* has an important role on selection of drug, selection of dose of drug and selection of treatment modalities of disease. *Kostha* to *Shakha* and *Shakha* to *Kostha Gamana* of *Dosha* is important to understand the prognosis of disease. *Kostha Pariksha* is important before *Purvakarma* i.e., *Snehan Karma* and *Snehanan*, and also in *Pradhan Karma* i.e., *Virechan* and *Shodhana Karma* as well as *Kostha Pariksha* is equally important before the *Shamana Chikitsa*.

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