



ISSN 2456-3110

Vol 8 · Issue 2

February 2023

Journal of
**Ayurveda and Integrated
Medical Sciences**

www.jaims.in

JAIMS

An International Journal for Researches in Ayurveda and Allied Sciences



Maharshi Charaka
Ayurveda

Indexed

Concept of *Koshtha* in *Kriya Sharir*

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ABSTRACT

According to *Ayurveda*, the human body is composed of four basics - the *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala* and *Agni*. There is immense significance of all these basics of the body in *Ayurveda*. So, is the *Koshtha*. The term *Koshtha* refers to the digestive tract or the motility of the intestines and movement of food, faecal matter and its expulsion. *Koshtha* is included in *Abhyantara Rogamarga*. It is of three types: *Krura*, *Mridu* and *Madhya* in which dominance of one of the *Dosha* is seen. *Koshtha Pariksha* is important for diagnosis and treatment of diseases. *Koshtha Pariksha* helps in selection of *Aushadhi* and *Aushadhimatra*.

Key words: *Koshtha*, *Ayurveda*, *Digestive tract*, *Dosha*.

INTRODUCTION

The Ayurvedic principles are formulated based upon some concepts, which are structurally as well as functionally specific and their interpretation which could help in generalization as the matter, such concept is the concept of *Koshtha*.

The term "*Koshtha*" is explained in 2 senses in *Ayurveda*. *Koshtha* is a cavity formed from *Avarana* which is consisting of *Dhatus*. Anatomically, *Koshtha* means the space or hollowness of the body for accommodation of organs including stomach, liver, spleen, pancreas intestine etc. and pelvic cavity for accommodation of uterus, urinary bladder lower part of bowel etc. called *Koshtha*. Physiologically, *Koshtha* is defined as bowel movement according to the basic constitutions of the person.

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Submission Date: 14/12/2022 Accepted Date: 22/01/2023

Access this article online

Quick Response Code



Website: www.jaims.in

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CONCEPTUAL STUDY

Acharya Charaka has given its synonyms:

- *Mahasrotas* - is starts from *Grahani* (pharynx) to *Guda* (anus), i.e. whole of the alimentary canal.
- *Sharir Madhya* - the part lies in the *Madhya Bhaga* of *Shareera*.
- *Mahanimana* - the deepest part of the body.
- *Aampakwashya* - major organs of gastrointestinal tract.

According to *Acharya Sushruta*, the eight *Ashayas* are cumulatively called as *Koshtha*. *Hrudaya* (heart), *Rudhira* (blood), *Phuphusa* (lungs), *Aamaashaya* (stomach), *Pakwaashaya* (intestine), *Unduka* (appendix), *Mutrashaya* (bladder).

Types of *Koshtha* based on the predominance of *Dosha*

Koshtha is of three types:

1. *Mridu*
2. *Krura*
3. *Madhyama*

According to *Acharya Sushruta*

1. *Mridu Koshtha* - *Pitta* is dominant.
2. *Krura Koshtha* - *Vata* and *Kapha* is dominant.
3. *Madhyama Koshtha* - *Sama Dosha*.

According to Acharya Charaka

1. *Mridu Koshtha* - Pitta Prabala, Kapha Nyuna and Vata Manda
 2. *Krura Koshtha* - Excessive Vata
 3. *Madhyama Koshtha* - Kapha Pradhana
 4. *Sadharana (Samavastha)*
- **Krura Koshtha:** There is predominant Vata, increase in Vata produces hard faeces with difficulty in emptying of bowel. *Koshtha* is dominated mainly by *Ruksha* Guna of Vata leads to hard bowel. Hence, in *Krura Koshtha*, absorption will be poor.
 - **Mridu Koshtha:** Predominance or increase of Pitta causes watery or semisolid feces, moving out more than once or twice, in a day. The fast movement in bowel is due to *Sara, Drava* and *Tikshna* Guna of Pitta Dosh. Here, also absorption will be poor.
 - **Madhyama Koshtha:** Predominance or increase of Kapha causes soft, solid feces moving out smoothly. In *Madhyama Koshtha*, there will be predominance of *Snigdha, Guru* and *Sthira* Guna. There will be optimum absorption.

Importance of Koshtha

1. We can observe the *Prakriti* by the *Koshtha Pariksha* because *Vata Prakriti Purusha* has *Krura Koshtha*, *Pitta Prakriti Purusha* has *Mrudu Koshtha* and *Kapha Prakriti Purusha* has *Madhyama Koshtha*.
2. According to *Koshtha*, we can decide suitable drug for *Chikitsa*. If patient can get *Virechana* with *Kshira, Aaragwadha, Ikshu, Takra, Mastu, Guda, Krushara, Nava-Madhya, Ushnodak, Draksha*, then we can guess that there is *Pitta-Bahulta* this *Koshtha* will be *Mrudu*. If patient can get *Virechana* with *Shama, Kushtha, Triphala, Sudhathan* we can guess that there is *Vata-Bahulta* then this *Koshtha* will be *Krura*.
3. *Koshtha* is important to decide *Aushadhi Dravyas* and *Aushadhi Matra*. E.g. *Mrudu Koshtha* persons require *Soumya Aushadhi* in minimum dose. *Krura Koshtha* require *Teekshna Aushadhi* in large dose.

4. *Koshtha Pariksha* also helps to understand the *Ahara Vihara*.
5. Before *Shodhana Karma*, *Snehapana* is one of *Purvakarma*. *Snehadravya* and *Sneha Matra* can be decided by *Koshtha Pariksha*.
6. *Koshtha* and *Shodhana Chikitsa: Basti, Virechana* and *Vamana* are main *Shodhana Chikitsa* in *Ayurveda* for *Dosha Nirharana*. So, there is indication of *Basti, Virechana* and *Vamana karma* subsequently for *Krura, Mridu* and *Madhyama Koshtha* because of *Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha* dominance.
7. To find out either disease is *Koshthagata* or *Shakhagata* or *Madhyama*.

CONCLUSION

In *Ayurveda*, all the concepts have its own importance and *Koshtha* has its own importance too. *Koshtha* can be seen both as anatomical as well as physiological entity. *Koshtha* concepts helps to understand find out types of *Vyadhi* and its help for treatments because drug selection depends on *Koshtha*. *Koshtha* is the basic and important concept in *Ayurveda*. *Koshtha* plays an important role in selection the line of treatment of disease. *Koshtha* is unique concept of *Ayurveda*, but there are different opinions of different *Acharyas* about the *Koshtha*. For the treatment of any disease or for the suggestion of *Pathya-Apathya, Koshtha Pareekshana* is important. According to *Koshtha*, we can decide suitable drug and suitable *Aahara-Vihara* for *Chikitsa*. *Koshtha Parikshana* is required before *Shodhana* treatment. For selection of drug *Matra Anupana, Snehapana Koshtha* assessment is necessary. *Koshtha* represents the functional ability of the gastrointestinal system. So, we can say that *Koshtha* is the entity describing expression of bowel. It differs according to the various habits and factors of the person. It changes as per the food habits, bowel habits, age, geographical region, season, etc.

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How to cite this article: Komal Samyal, Sourabh Sharma, Aakriti Jamwal. Concept of Koshtha in Kriya Sharir. J Ayurveda Integr Med Sci 2023;02:83-85.

Source of Support: Nil, **Conflict of Interest:** None declared.
