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Significance of knowledge regarding *Koshtha* in *Panchakarma*

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ABSTRACT

The *Koshtha* is very important matter in study of Ayurveda especially in *Panchakarma*. *Koshtha* is of three types, *Mridu*, *Madhya* and *Krura* on the bases of dominant *Dosha* in person and effect of some specific *Ahara* and *Vihara* after consuming it. After *Koshtha* examination, physician gets knowledge about predominant *Dosha* and makes judgement for line of treatment, advice regarding do and don'ts. Appropriate diet can be decided as diet is supposed to be one of the lines of treatment. Since 5 cleaning procedures are inevitable in case of vitiation of *Dosha* and *Snehana* is inevitable preoperative procedure before performing cleaning ones. For *Snehana* which unctuous material should be used is decided by *Koshtha* examination. Also dose and drug of choice of emetics and purgatives can be decided by it.

Key words: *Koshtha*, *Panchakarma*, *Ayurveda*.

INTRODUCTION

The word *Koshtha* is used for vast vacant place where things can be kept in a lot. In our body thoracic and abdominal cavities are such where a lot of vacant place is present and all thoracic and abdominal organs are arranged in the vacant place. According to *Susruta Samhita*, entire abdomen should be considered as *Koshtha*.^[1] Also includes lungs as organ located in *Koshtha*. This indicates that he also include thoracic cavity in *Koshtha*. Since *Susruta Samhita* considers thoraco-abdominal cavity, he states that the body cavity concerning the sites of undigested food, *Agni*, digested food, urine, blood, heart, *Unduka* and *Fuffusa* is called as *Koshtha*.^[2]

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Charaka Samhita takes gastro-intestinal tract as *Koshtha*.^[3] *Mahasrotas* is GI tract. This compendium suggested three routes of invasion of the diseases in the body. Their names are- outer route (*Bahya Roga Marga*), middle route (*Madhyam Roga Marga*), and inner route (*Aabhyantar Rog Marga*). GI tract is inner route of invasion of diseases.^[4] This means that thoraco-abdominal cavity should be taken as *Koshtha*. Organs placed in this vacant place are called *Koshthagani*.^[5]

Acharya Gayi, the commentator of *Susruta Samhita*, states that digestive organ '*Grahani*' which is place for *Rasa*, urine and stool should be considered for word *Koshtha*.^[6]

Types

According to *Astanga Hridaya*, there are three types of *Koshtha*, *Krura*, *Madhya* and *Mridu*. *Vata* dominant person has *Krura Koshtha*, *Pitta* dominant person has *Mridu Koshtha*, *Kapha* dominant person has *Madhya Koshtha* and the person having *Samadosha* is also endowed with *Madhya Koshtha*.^[7] Regarding the types of *Koshtha*, *Acharya Sushruta* has slight different opinion regarding dominant *Dosha* in different type of *Koshtha*. He mentioned that the persons who have predominancy of *Vata* and *Kapha*

Dosha is considered as *Krura Koshtha* and *Madhyam Koshtha* is observed in those who have equal proportion of all three *Dosha* (*Sama Dosha*). This is also called as *Sadharana*.^[8]

Characteristic features

Acharya Vagbhata says that the nature of *Koshtha* will be *Mridu* with the predominance of *Pitta* and even milk causes purgation; it will be *Krura* with the predominance of *Marut* and even with *Shyama* etc. drugs, purgation occur with difficulty.^[9] While *Acharya Charaka* mentioned that, one with *Mridu Koshtha* gets purgation after taking jaggery, cane juice, curd water, milk, butter, curd, *Paayas*, *Krushara*, ghee, juice of *Gambhari*, *Trifala*, grapes, *Pilu*, hot water and fresh wine. But above all materials do not have purgative effect in those having *Krura Koshtha* because in them the *Grahani* contains aggravated *Vata*. The *Grahani* of that with *Mridu Koshtha* have excessive *Pitta*, scanty *Kapha* and *Manda Maruta* and that's why he is purgated easily.^[10]

Significance of Koshtha

For *Snehan Karma*, *Acharya Charaka* says that one having *Mridu Koshtha* is uncted by the use of single uncting substance in three nights while that have *Krura Koshtah* is uncted in seven nights.^[11]

For *Virechana Karma*, *Acharya Susruta*, advises to prescribe strong purgative in case of *Krura Koshtha* as more amount of *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha* exist. Whereas in *Mridu Koshtha* where more amount of *Pitta* exists, very small dose of mild purgative be sufficient. In case of *Sama* or *Madhya Koshtha* average dose with moderate purgative is prescribed.^[12]

DISCUSSION

The discussion is incomplete without the opinion of *Acharya Arundatta* and *Acharya Hemadri*. Among the three types of *Koshtha*, *Acharya Arundatta* explained in his commentary about the difference between *Kapha* dominant *Madhya Kashtha* and *Samadoshaja Madhya Koshtha*. When *Vata* is predominant, *Koshtha* becomes *Krura*. With *Pitta* predominant in *Koshtha* it becomes *Mridu*. With *Kapha*, *Koshtha* becomes

Madhya. When three *Dosha* are in equal proportion, it is also *Madhya*. Somehow distinction between these two can be confirmed with the help of purgation or be induction of vomiting. In *Samadoshaja Madhya Koshtha*, the amount of *Kapha* is less than *Kapha* dominant *Madhya Koshtha*.^[13] The amount of *Kapha Dosha* decides the nature of *Shuddhi* in these two types of *Koshtha*. For *Virechana Karma*, if *Kapha* is more than purgation does not take place so smoothly and when *Kapha* is less, than purgation takes place smoothly. For *Vamana Karma*, if *Kapha* is less, than *Vamana* does not take place so smoothly and if *Kapha* is more, than *Vamana* takes place smoothly.

Acharya Hemadri set one unique concept regarding the role of *Kapha Dosha* in concept of *Koshtha*. He says that *Kapha Dosha* is *Yogavahi*. In *Sansarga* and *Sannipataja Avastha*, when *Kapha Dosha* is with *Vata*, then *Krura Koshtha* is seen and when it is with *Pitta*, *Mridu Koshtha* is seen.^[14]

Other classical references also support above opinion, like among the 4 *Sneha Dravyas*, *Taila* is indicated in *Krura Koshta* in *Charak Samhita*,^[15] because it alleviates *Vata* but at the same time, does not aggravate *Kapha*.^[16] This thing indirectly fevers the *Yogavahitva* of *Kapha*.

Acharya Vagbhata says that, when a person having *Mandagni* with *Krura Koshtha*, than *Deepana Karma* should be done with *Kshara*, *Lavana* and *Ghrta*. Combination of this *Yoga*, augment his digestive capacity and vanquish *Kapha* and *Vata*.^[17] Means it's also support the chief role of *Kapha Dosha* in concept of *Koshtha*.

In *Siddhi Sthana*, *Acharya Charaka* says that, the person having predominance of *Kapha*, vomits easily and that deficient in same is purged properly.^[18]

CONCLUSION

Koshtha is not merely an anatomical part, but we can say that it's a functional unit of our body which is defined as nature of bowel habit since from birth and originates as an entity of *Prakriti* at the time of conception. If type of *Koshtha* is known, predominant

Dosha operating in GI tract is realized which help for *Snehan Karma* as which unctuous material is used, for how long and in which dose. Knowledge of *Koshtha* helps in differential diagnosis for *Panchakarma* procedures, like in *Kapha* dominant *Madhya Koshtha*, *Vamana* takes place smoothly and in *Sama Doshaja Madhya Koshtha Virechana* takes place smoothly. Thus knowledge of *Koshtha* plays very essential role in successful *Panchakarma* practice.

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