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# Basti - A critical review on the basis of historical aspect

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## ABSTRACT

*Basti* is one of the most vital measure described in different texts for the internal purification of the body. *Panchakarma* plays a major role in eradicating the disease and its wide applicability bound *Acharyas* to describe it as '*Chikitsardha*'. Because of its said peculiarities, we decided to search and elaborate its descriptions in various texts starting from the oldest one i.e. Vedas. *Basti* has been described in nearly all texts starting from Veda, Purana upto Yogic and all Ayurvedic Samhitas. Although various *Acharyas* described its various types and applications but most of the Ayurvedic Samhitas mentioned *Basti* especially for pacification of *Vata Dosh*.

**Key words:** *Basti*, *Chikitsardha*, *Samhita*, *Anuvasana*, *Niruha*.

## INTRODUCTION

*Panchakarma* is a very unique therapeutic procedure because of its preventive, promotive and rejuvenative properties as well as providing the radical cure. Among these *Panchakarma*, *Basti Karma* is such a *Chikitsa* which is applicable in all *Tridoshaja Vyadhis* but more effective in *Vataja Vyadhis*. *Acharyas* also mentioned that *Basti* can be used for several other purposes imaginable. Acharya Charaka compares the action of *Basti* with the watering of plants at their roots. If the roots are watered, the whole plant from the roots to the leaves, flowers & fruits gets water. Likewise, the medications introduced through the anus in the rectum and colon reaches the entire body.

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Acharya are of the opinion, the diseases pertaining to extremities, bowels and those arisen in the vital parts, proximal parts of body, in short all the parts of human body are affected by Vayu. *Basti* plays an important role in normalizing the vitiated dosha especially that of vata variation. *Basti* is helpful in pacification of Vayu, when it is aggravated severely. The prasara of doshas is brought by the vata dosha. *Vata* is responsible for the doshas to move from kosha to shakha. As explained by the acharyas that Pitta and kapha are pangu in nature, the vata dosha will move the other doshas from kostha to shakha. So when vata dosha is controlled by the *Basti chikitsa* ultimately the further provocation of the disease can be controlled. When the *basti* is given the half part of the *Samprapti Vighatana* will be over and ultimately *Basti* is half of the whole treatment. Hence *Basti* is said to be half the treatment of all the diseases i.e. '*Chikitsardha*.'

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To search and re-evaluate *Basti* in various texts including Vedas, Puranas, Yogic and Ayurvedic literatures with references.
2. To understand the evolutionary comparative descriptions and importance of *Basti* in various texts.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article is based on a review of Ayurvedic texts. Materials related to *Basti* and other relevant topics have been collected.

The main Ayurvedic texts used in this study are Charak Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Astang Sangraha, Astang Hridaya, Madhav Nidana and available commentaries on these. We have also referred to the modern texts and searched various websites to collect information on the relevant topics.

### Historical aspect of *Basti*

#### *Veda*

In Kaushika Sutra of Atharva Veda, *Basti* is indicated as a substitute for minor operation. (K.S. Davila-25/127)

#### *Purana*

In Agni Purana, *Basti* is quoted as principal treatment in predominance of *Vata* disorder. (A.P. 279/53) It is indicated in fatigue state of Horses, in form of Taila *Basti*. (A.P. 284/14) According to season, different Snehas have been indicated for *Basti*. (A.P. 289/46)

### Yogic Literature

In Gheranda Samhita and Hathayoga Pradipika, *Basti* is included in Shatkarma and categorized into two as-

1. *Jala Basti*
2. *Sthala Basti* (Gh.S.1/49-50 & H.Y. Pra 2/27-29)

### Charaka Samhita

In Charak Samhita, a wider explanation relating to multi-dimensions of *Basti* have been dealt with, though the references are Scattered at many stances, a major account of the therapeutic use of *Basti*, its complications, indications and contraindications are available in the 1st to 10th chapter of Siddhi-sthana. The 11<sup>th</sup> chapter exclusively deals with the various preparations and examples of *Basti*.

### Sushruta Samhita

In Sushruta Samhita, four chapters of Chikitsa-sthana are related with detailed descriptions regarding the

*Basti*. Other numerous references are also available in the text.

### Ashtanga Samgraha

In this classic 19th chapter of Sutra-sthana is related to *Basti* specifically. Also four chapters of Kalpasthana have been contributed to *Basti*. In these chapters every aspect of *Basti* has been dealt.

### Ashtanga Hridaya

In this Samhita 19th chapters of Sutra-sthana, "*Bastividhi*" and 5<sup>th</sup> chapter "*Bastivyapadasidhi*" explains detailed aspect of *Basti*.

### Kashyapa Samhita

In Kashyap Samhita, *Basti* has been explained in detail in 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Siddhisthana* and in one chapter of *Khilasthana*.

### Bhel Samhita

In Bhel Samhita, *Basti* has been described in four chapters of *Siddhisthana* Viz- *Bastimatriya-siddhi*, *Upakalpa-siddhi*, *Phalmatra-siddhi* and *Dosha Vyapadika Basti Siddhi*.

### Harita Samhita

In text only 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Sutrasthana dealt with *Basti*.

### Chakradatta

In this text two chapters named "*Anuvasan-adhikara* and *Niruhan-adhikara*" are dealt with *Anavasana* and *Niruh Basti* respectively.

### Vangasen

In Chikitsa Sar Samgraha, Acharya Vangasena has described *Basti* in "*Bastikarm-adhikara*" chapter.

### Sarangadhara Samhita

Three chapters of Uttara Khanda namely "*Bastikalpana-vidhi*", *Niruha Bastikalpana vidhi*, Uttara *Bastikalpana vidhi*", describes detailed aspect of *Basti*.

### Bhavaprakash

Fifth chapter of Purvakhanda is related with *Basti*, *Vrana Basti*. *Vrana Basti* is a type of *Basti* which has been explained in this text.

**Kalyana Karaka**

In this text *Basti* has been described in "Vatarogadhikara only.

**Todarananda**

In this text *Basti* is described in the chapter "*Basti vidhi*".

**Etymology of Basti**

According to *Vachaspathyam* the word '*Basti*' is derived from the root '*Vas*' by adding '*Tich*' *Pratyaya* and it belongs to masculine gender. Meanings of the root '*Vas*' are to reside, to stay, to dwell or means to cover or to coat or coating of *Sneha* for the elimination.

In "*Vasta gandha ardane*" *gandha* denotes bad smell hence it refers to *Mala* and the verb *Ardane* denotes the movement (in the colon) and to beg (drawing of waste material in the colon from all over the body). So, the literal meaning of *Basti* is to produce the effect of pleasant smell or it denotes an organ which covers the urine or it denotes an organ situated below the umbilicus which holds the urine or it denotes an instrument used for the administration of medicines. From these foregoing descriptions, the following two conclusions can be drawn;

1. *Basti* denotes *Karma* where in the drugs administered through the anal canal stay for certain time in the body, then produces a coating of *Sneha* in the body and draws the waste substances through all over body into colon and eliminates them out of the body by producing the movements in the colon, resulting into pleasant effect.
2. *Basti* denotes an organ which is a receptacle or reservoir of Urine i.e. 'Urinary bladder'. It was used as an instrument for the administration of the drugs with a constant pressure.

**Definition of Basti**

It is defined in two ways i.e. one indicates the *Karma*, as a whole and the other indicates just the instrument used for it.

Charakacharya, defined *Basti* on the basis of the *Karma* similar to that of *Vamana* and *Virechana* i.e. "The *Karma* where in the drugs administered through anal canal reaches up to *Nabhipradesha*, *Kati*, *Parshva*, *Kukshi*, churns the accumulated *Dosha* and *Purisha* (Morbid humours and faecal matter), spreads the effect of medication all over the body and easily comes out along with the churned *Purisha* and *Dosha* is called is *Basti*.

According to Astanga Sangraha, the procedure in which either *Basti* is used for the administration of the drugs or the drugs administered first reaches to the *Basti*.

**Classification of Basti****On the basis of Adhithana**

- a) *Pakvashayagata Basti* - Drugs are administered through the anal canal into the colon. It includes *Niruha* & *Anuvasana Basti*.
- b) *Uttara Basti* - In males it means *Mutrashayagata Basti* - drugs are administered in urinary bladder. In females it means *Mutrashayagata* and *Garbhashayagata Basti* - drugs administered through urethra into the bladder and through vagina into the uterus.
- c) *Vrana Basti* - In this type, the drugs are inserted into the *Vrana* for its *Shodhana* & *Ropana*. It has been mentioned by *Sushrut*.

**On the basis of Basti Dravya**

i. *Snaihiik Basti* - Drug is administered in the form of *Sneha* (i.e. *Ghrita*, *Taila*, *Vasa*, *Majja*) through anal canal into the colon. It is further classified according to dose of *Sneha*.

- a) *Sneha Basti* - In this type, 6 Pala (240ml) of *Sneha* is administered.
- b) *Anuvasana Basti* - In this type 3 Pala (120ml.) of *Sneha* is administered.

ii. *Niruha Basti* - In this type of *Basti*, *Kashaya* is the chief constituent of the *Basti Dravya* along with *Madhu*, *Saindhav*, *Kalka* and *Sneha*. In place of

*Kashaya Kshira, Mamsa-rasa* etc. are also used. It is also called as *Asthapana Basti*.

#### On the basis of total number of basti administered

- Karma Basti* - Total 30 *Basti* administered in which there are 18 *Anuvasana* and 12 *Niruha Basti*.
- Kala Basti* - According to Charakacharya it is the half of *Karma Basti*. Chakrapani opines that it includes sixteen *Basti* out of which 10 *Anuvasana* and 6 are *Niruha*. According to Acharya Vagbhat it includes 15 *Basti*, out of which 6 are *Niruha* and 9 are *Anuvasana*. According to Kashyap 12 *Anuvasana* and 3 *Niruha*, alternate in beginning 1 *Niruha* & 3 *Anuvasana* and at last 3 *Anuvasana*.
- Yoga Basti* - Total 8 *Basti* - 5 *Anuvasana* and 3 *Niruha*.

#### CONCLUSION

Thus *Basti* has been extensively and substantially described by all texts of Vedic, Puranic, Yogic and Ayurvedic literatures. Each and every text has described its function in his own ways. However, in Ayurvedic texts *Basti* has been described especially for pacification of *Vata Dosha*. A detailed etymology, various definitions and classifications have been described by various texts of Ayurveda.

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