

## A CRITICAL REVIEW ON BASTI KARMA

Vaidya Nisha Rajendra Khairnar\*

Associate Professor, Department of Panchakarma, Swami Vivekanand Ayurvedic Medical College and Research Centre, Pargaon, Shreegonda, Nagar.

**\*Corresponding Author: Vaidya Nisha Rajendra Khairnar**

Associate Professor, Department of Panchakarma, Swami Vivekanand Ayurvedic Medical College and Research Centre, Pargaon, Shreegonda, Nagar.

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## ABSTRACT

Basti Karma is one of the modalities among the five biocleansing/detoxifying procedures (Panchakarma procedures/ Samshodhana Chikitsa) advocated in Ayurveda as i.e. Vamana (Therapeutic Emesis), Virechana (Therapeutic Purgation), Basti (Medicated Enema), Nasya (Infiltration of drugs through nostrils) and Raktamokshana (Bloodletting by different methods). Basti Karma the medicated oil or herbal decoction is administered through the anal route. In modern medicine enemas are most commonly given to clean the lower bowel as a last resort for constipation treatment when, all other method fail. But rather than this, Basti Karma mentioned in Ayurvedic classics is having broader therapeutic action on almost all the tissues of the body and have rejuvenative, curative, preventive and health promotive actions.

**KEYWORDS:** Basti, Karma, Panchakarma, Chikitsardha.

## INTRODUCTION

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 Karma is the major procedure in Panchakarma therapy. Basti is one of the most vital measure described in different texts for the internal purification of the body. 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 Dosha.

As a matter of fact, Basti is the most important Karma among the Samshodhana procedures. Basti enjoys the same significance in Panchakarma therapy. The classical literature attaches a great significance to this form of treatment and points out a vivid scope of its applicability. Basti as one among the Panchakarma signifies its multifaceted actions because the term Karma denotes, "BAHU ITI KARTAVYATA" (Cha. Su. 2/15).

Basti therapy has scope in all kind of ailments implicating different type of Dosha, Dushya and Adhithana. Basti is supposed to be the principle (specific) treatment for Vatika diseases (A.H.Su.1/25). Acharya's 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 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.'

## Etymology of Basti

Etymology: According to Vachaspathyam the word "Basti" is derived from the root "Vas" by adding "Tich" Pratyaya and it belongs to masculine gender. Basti denotes a Karma wherein the drugs administered through the anal canal stays for certain time in the body (NIVASE) that produces the coating of the Sneha in the body (SNEHAACHADANA), and draws the waste substances from all over the body into the colon (GANDHA YACHANE), and eliminates them out of the body by producing the movement in the colon resulting into pleasant (beneficial) effect (SURBHIKARNE).

Basti denotes an organ which is a receptacle or reservoir of urine i.e. "Urine bladder". As it is basically a receptacle having soft and elastic nature, it was used as

an instrument for drug administration with a constant pressure.

### Definition of Basti

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

Charaka 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 upto Nabhi Pradesha, Kati, Parshva, Kukshi (Anatomical Landmarks on the abdomen), Churna the accumulated Dosha and Purisha (Morbid humours and fecal matters), spreads the unctuousness, all over the body and easily comes out along with the churned Purisha and Dosa, is called as Basti". This denotes the Niruha and Anuvasana Basti only, as they eliminate the accumulated Dosha and Purisha.

The other Acharya has described Basti in general on the basis of the instrument used.

### "Bastina Diyate Basti Va Purvamanvetyato Bastih" (A.S.Su. 28/2)

i.e. "The procedure in which either Basti (instrument) is used for the administration of the drugs or the drugs administered first reaches to the Basti.

### Classification of Basti

In Ayurveda, there are many varieties of Basti which are dependent on the amount of the drug, the quality of substance and the expected action of the Basti. So, it can be classified as follows –

#### A. Pharmaceutical Classification (According To Drugs Used)

##### 1. Niruha Basti

Kashaya (Decoction) is the predominant content in Niruha Basti with the Kashaya, Madhu, Saindhava, Sneha and Kalka are the ingredients commonly used. Its synonyms are Asthapana Basti, Kashaya Basti etc.

##### 2. Anuvasana Basti

In Anuvasana Basti only Sneha is used. According to quantity of oil given, this type is subdivided as follows:

- Sneha Basti: 1/4th to the quantity of Niruha i.e. 6 Pala.
- Anuvasana Basti: ½ to the quantity of Sneha Basti i.e. 3 Pala.
- Matra Basti: ½ to the quantity of Anuvasana Basti i.e. 1½ Pala.

#### B. Anatomical Classification

- 1) Pakvashayagata (Rectal)
- 2) Garbhashayagata (Uterine)
- 3) Mutrashayagata (Urethro vesicle)
- 4) Vranagata (Wound/Abscess)

#### C. According to the number of Basti to be used

On the basis of number of Basti administered in a sequence the following terms are applied.

**Karma Basti: 30 Basti** – includes 12 Niruha and 18 Anuvasana Basti. In Karma Basti - twelve Anuvasana and twelve Niruha should be administered, alternatively. Before this, one Anuvasana Basti in the beginning followed by five Anuvasana Basti administered for the purpose of oleation.

**Kala Basti: 16 Basti** – includes 6 Niruha and 10 Anuvasana. In Kala Basti, six Anuvasana and six Niruha Basti should be given, alternatively. Before this, in the beginning one Anuvasana Basti and followed by three Anuvasana Basti for the purpose of oleation.

**Yoga Basti: 8 Basti** – includes 3 Niruha and 5 Anuvasana Basti. In Yoga Basti, three Niruha Basti are to be given. In the beginning, in the middle and at the end, five Anuvasana Basti are administered.

#### D. Pharmacological Classifications

##### According to Sushruta (Su. Chi. 35/19)

Shodhana Basti.

##### According to Charaka

1. Brimhana Basti
2. Lekahana Basti
3. Sangrahi Basti
4. Snehana Basti
5. Shukra Vriddhikara Basti
6. Vataghna Basti
7. Balavarna Krita Basti
8. Snehaniya Basti
9. Krimighna Basti
10. Vrishatva Basti

##### According Vagbhatta

1. Utkleshana Basti
2. Doshahara Basti
3. Shamana Basti

##### According to potency and property

1. Ushna Basti
2. Snigdha Basti
3. Laghu Basti
4. Sheeta Basti
5. Ruksha Basti
6. Guru Basti

##### According to Intensity

1. Mrudu Basti
2. Madhyama Basti
3. Tikshna Basti

##### According To Dose

1. Dwadasha Prasritaki Basti
2. Ekadasha Prasritaki Basti
3. Nava Prasritaki Basti

4. Pancha Prasritaki Basti
5. Chatuha Prasritaki Basti
6. Ekaika Prasritaki Basti
7. Padahina Prasritaki Basti

#### Mode of Action of Basti

Ayurveda is having its unique approach of explaining the complex subjects by giving the similes which are commonly seen in day to day life to understand the subject easily. Similes were used, because the objective parameters were not developed to an extent as they are today. Similies were used to explain complex mechanisms in the physiology, pathology (Symptomatology) and in the therapeutic measures. The same is true in the case of Basti also.

#### A) Eliminative or purificative action of the Basti

Acharya Charaka explained in Siddhi Sthana (7/64) that the Basti administered to the Pakvashaya draws the Dosha/Mala from all over the body from the foot to the head by virtue of its Virya, just as the sun situated in the sky draws the moisture from the earth by virtue of its heat. Why only the waste substance (Mala) is eliminated. This is explained by another simile in Charaka Siddhi (7/65). i.e. As the cloth sucks up the pigment only from the water dyed with flower, similarly Basti eliminates only the Mala (waste substances) from the body.

#### B) Systemic action of the Basti

Acharaya Sushruta explained in Chikitsa Sthana (36/25) that the Virya of the drugs administered through the Basti into the Pakvasaya reaches the whole body through the channels (Srotas), as the active principles in the water when poured at the root of the tree reaches the whole plant.

#### Basti - A Supreme Line Of Treatment

- It is the Best therapy to regulate the Vata Dosha which is the chief governing force behind all the physiological and pathological processes both in the body and the mind. (Cha. Su.12/8, 17/118, 25/40, Cha.Si. 1/38- 39, 10/17, 18).
- It performs both the Upakramas viz. Langhana and Brumhana and can provide the benefit of whole of the Panchakarma by virtue of its specific type and different drugs utilised in it. (Cha.Si.11/16, 3/6 ).
- It acts as both Samsodhana and Samsamana (Su. Ci. 35/3,4) It provides immediate strength; hence it is a supreme line of treatment, particularly in children and aged persons (Cha.Si 11/36).
- It can be used in almost all the diseases by using specific drugs indicated in that disease condition (Ca. Si. 10/4, Su. Ci. 38/111)
- There is no treatment equivalent to Basti in the protection of the Marmasthi and Sandhi in the management of their affliction, which are considered as vital parts in the body (Cha. Si. 9/7).
- It eliminates the Doshas/Mala accumulated in the whole body; in turn alleviates the disease (Cha. Si. 1/28).

#### CONCLUSION

Thus Basti has been extensively and substantially described by all texts of Vedic, Puranic, Yogic and Ayurvedic literatures. A detailed etymology, various definitions and classifications have been described by various texts of Ayurveda. 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.

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