

## THE PHYSIOLOGICAL STUDY OF KOSHTHA W.S.R. DIGESTION

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## ABSTRACT

This traditional health system gaining more importance and popularity across the world. Ayurveda encompasses many concepts. It would require extensive study to discuss and understand them all. Dosh, Dhatu, Mala, Agni, koshta are some important concepts. It is essential that we need to know them in order to be able to really comprehend Ayurveda. The term koshta can be described in two ways. Koshta is nature of digestive tract or hollow parts of body which represents motility of the intestines and movement of food and fecal matter in the alimentary canal and elimination of stool.<sup>[5]</sup> Ayurveda is Vast Medicinal Science which focuses on healthy living than treatment of disease. Ayurveda has some unique entities, *Koshtha* is one of them. Word *koshtha* is used for vacant place having covering, where things can be kept in a lot. *Koshtha* is included in *abhyantara rogamarga*. *Koshtha Pariksha* tells us about the liquidity, moistness, roughness of the bowel habits. Assessment of *koshtha* is important for diagnosis and treatment of diseases. *Koshtha Pariksha* helps for choice of *aushadhi* and *aushadhimatra*. *Koshtha Pariksha* also plays an important role for to advice *pathya-apathya* and *aahara-vihara*.<sup>[7]</sup>

**KEYWORDS:** Koshta, Prakriti, Ayurveda, *Tridosha*, *abhyantara rogamarga*, *Pariksha*.

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is art and science of life which deal each and every aspect of human life. Atarva veda is the mother of Ayurveda. Even it is consider that Ayurveda is upveda of athrveda. The Ayurvedic approach toward the human body based on some principles. Ayurvedic approach of diagnosis is very unique and different from conventional medicine. The Ayurvedic principles are formulated based upon some concepts, which are structurally as well as functionally specific & their interpretation which could help in generalization as the matter, such concept is the concept of koshta. 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*. *Koshtha* is the uniqueness of *Ayurveda*.<sup>[3]</sup>

The term *koshtha* is explained in 2 senses in Ayurveda. 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 the *koshtha* is defined as bowel movement according to

the basic constitutions of the person. “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.<sup>[1]</sup> There are many concepts in Ayurveda for the examination of Roga and Rogi Bala like Trividha Pariksha, Panchavidha Pariksha, Shadvidha Pariksha, Ashtavidha Pariksha and Dasvidha Pariksha 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.<sup>[1]</sup> According to the dominance of Doshas “Purush” (a person) has different Agnibala, Dehbala and Koshta. 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.<sup>[2]</sup> In Ayurveda *Koshtha* is anatomically a cavity formed from Aavarna which is consisting of Dhatus (solid structure). Dhatu and Doshas are interchange between *Koshtha* to

Shakha by Nidansevana. Koshtha to Shakha and Shakha to Koshtha Gaman of Dosha has a great pathophysiology and clinical importance.<sup>[3]</sup> Although Koshtha Pariksha is also important to understand the pharmacokinetics. Generally the term *koshtha* means a hollow viscos. To know the concept, assessment of the *koshtha* of a person is very important in the diagnosis and treatment of the any disease.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Literary material, i.e., Ayurvedic classical texts (Charak Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Asthanga Hridaya, Asthanga sanghra) and commentaries along with Modern Ayurvedic texts.

### NIRUKTI (etymology of word *koshtha*)

Koshtha – Kush Aawarane,<sup>[1]</sup> ‘koshta’ word made from kushya dhatu. *Koshtha* is derived from root *Kush+Than*,<sup>[2]</sup> it means Avrana. *Koshtha* is a cavity formed from *Avarana* (wall) which is consisting of *Dhatus* (solid structure).

### Paribhashya (Defination)

1. ‘Koshta’ is defined as the nature of alimentary tract, bowel movements or nature of eliminations of faeces.
2. Charak Acharya states the fifteen *koshthangas-nabhi* (*umbilicus*), *hrudaya* (*heart*), *kloma* (*pancrease*), *yakruta* (*liver*), *pleeha* (*spleen*), *vrukka* (*kidneys*) *basti* (*bladder*), *purishadhana* (*caecum*), *aamashaya* (*stomach*), *pakvashaya* (*small intestine, large intestine*), *uttarguda* (*rectum*), *adharguda* (*anus*). *Pakwashaya* (large intestine including pelvic colon)<sup>[2]</sup>
3. According to Bhavprakasha, Sthana such as Aamashya, Agnayshaya, Pakwashya, Mutrashya, Rudhirashya, Rhudaya, Unduk, Phupusa are called as koshta.
4. *Sushrut acharya* states that *Koshtha* is a cavity containing *Hrudaya* (heart), *Rudhira* (blood), *Phupusa* (lungs), *Aamashaya* (stomach), *Pakvashaya* (intestine), *Unduka* (appendix), *Phupusa* (lungs), *Mutrashaya* (bladder)<sup>[4]</sup> *Sushrutacharya* also states that entire abdomen (*sarvam udaram*) should be considered as *koshtha*.<sup>[4]</sup>
5. Generally the term *koshtameans* a hollow viscos.
6. *Koshtha* is known as *Mahastrotasa* (the great channel) which is from mouth to the anus i.e. complete digestive system and as *Abhyantara Roga Marga* (internal pathway of diseases)<sup>[3]</sup>
7. This means that thoraco-abdominal cavity should be taken as *koshtha*.

### Paryaya (Synonyms)

Mahastrotasa, Sahrirmadya, Aamshya, Pakwashya are paryayawachashabda (Synonyms) of koshta.<sup>[2]</sup>

### *Koshtha Prakara* (types)

There are three types of *koshtha* based on predominance of *doshas*,<sup>[2]</sup> such as

S. N.	Types of <i>koshtha</i>	Dosha
1	Krura (Hard)	Vata
2	Mrudu (Soft)	Pitta
3	Madhya (Moderate)	Kapha

#### 1. Krura Koshtha (Hard)

Predominance or increase of vata produces hard faeces with difficulty of elimination or even non-elimination. *koshtha* is dominated mainly by ruksha and khara gunas (qualities) of vata dosha over the sar guna of pitta dosha. Hence, krura *koshtha* will be poorly secretive and absorptive.<sup>[2]</sup>

#### 2. Mrudu Koshtha (Soft)

Predominance or increase of pitta causes watery or semisolid faeces, moving out more than once or twice, in a day. *Mrudu koshtha* is characterised by *sara* (laxative), *drava* (fluid property), *snigdha* (unctuousness), and *laghu* (lightness) *guna* of *pitta dosha*. Hence the *koshtha* will be smooth, lubricated and slippery. Secretions will be more, but it will be poor in absorption.<sup>[2]</sup>

#### 3. Madhyam Koshtha (Moderate)

Predominance or increase of kapha causes soft, solid faeces moving smoothly. Some Acharya said that, when all the doshas are normal, then the *koshta* will be madhya which is the ideal condition. *Madhyakoshtha*, which is due to the *samavastha* of three *doshas*, there will be optimum secretion and absorption. In madhyam *koshtha*, there will be predominance of *snigdha*, *guru* (heaviness) and *sthira* (stable) *guna*. *Koshtha* will be secretive and will have more lubrication, but less slippery due to *guru* and *sthira* *guna* of *kapha*.<sup>[2]</sup>

### Samakoshtha

Ashtanga-hridaya (Vagbhata) has mention four types of *koshtha*. (4) Along with previous 3 types of *Koshtha*. Sama *Koshtha* having dominance of tridosha having Agni is Samagni which is influenced by perfect balance of tridosha where person will having proper digestion will pass out normal stool.<sup>[8]</sup>

### Koshthanusari Roga

Jwara, Atisaar, Vaman, Alsak, Visuchika, Kasa, Shwasa, Hikka, Anaha, Udarrog, Pliha are Utapanaa from Anatamarga, while Visarpa (herpis), Shwaphthu (odema), Gulma (tumor), Arsha (piles), Vidradhi (Abscess) are disease of *Koshtamargaanusarak*.<sup>[7]</sup>

### Koshtha and Prakriti

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

Kapha Prakriti Purusha has Madhyam Koshta.<sup>[6]</sup>

### Koshta Parikshana

While doing chikitsa (treatment) koshtaparikshana is important. According to koshtawe can decide suitable drug for chikitsa. If patient can get virechana (Purgation) with kshir (milk), Aaragwadha, ekshu, takra, mastu, gudha, krushara, nava-madhyam, ushnodak, draksha than we can guess, there is pitta-bahulyathan this koshta will be Mrudu. If patient can get virechana with Shama, Kushata, Triphala, Sudhathan we can guess that there is Vata-bahulya than this koshta will be Krura.<sup>[7]</sup>

### Importance of Koshta Pariksha in Shodhana Chikitsa

1. We understand the prakriti by koshta parikshana, Example - mrudu koshta person having pitta prakriti.
2. To understand where the diseases is koshta gata or shakhagata or Madhyama.
3. Its help to decide samprapti of disease, either doshas going koshta to shakha or vice versa.
4. In shamana and shodhana chikitsa assessment of koshtais important to decide Aushadhi dravyas and Aushadhi matra. E.g. Mrudu koshtapersons require soumya aushadhi in minimum dose. Krura Koshtarequire Teeksha aushadhi in large dose. Same as krur koshta required tikshna dravya virechana.
5. Before Shodhana Karma, Snehapana is one of Purvakarma. Sneha-dravya and snehamatra (dose) can be decided by Koshta-Pariksha. eg. Duration of snehapan in mrudu koshta is 3 days.
6. After Panchakarma observation of doshas, is doshas going shakha to koshta or not.
7. Koshta pariksha also helps To understand the Ahar-vihar.<sup>[8]</sup>

### Importance of Concept of Koshta Roga-Nidanartha

1. To find out either disease is koshtagata or shakhagata or Madhyama.
2. Its help to decide samprapti of disease, either doshas going koshta to shakha or vice versa.

### Roga-Chikisarth

1. After panchakarma observation of doshas, is doshas going shakha to koshta or not.
2. To find out koshtato shakhagati or shakha to koshtagati and according to that vrudhi, Abhishanadanaupkarma done.
3. Sadhya-sadyavanischiti koshtatgavyadhi are sukhasadhya, Madhyamavyadhi are krucha-sadhya and shakhagatavyadhi are yapyam.<sup>[7]</sup>

### DISCUSSION

In *Ayurveda*, the transfer of nutrients, the exchange of body fluids is fascinated by the mechanism of *koshta-shakha* interaction. *Vata* play a key role in this interaction. *Acharya Charaka* defines *ulbana anila* and

*udeerna pitta alpa kapha maaruta*.<sup>[1,2]</sup> in *Grahini* are responsible for *krura koshta* and *mrudu koshta* respectively. So it is to be known whether the *udeerna doshas* told to be present in the *Grahini* are related to the *prakriti*. Physiologically Koshta is divided according to the dominance of Doshas Krura, Madhyam and Mrudu Koshta. Pathologically Koshta 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 Kosthanusaari Roga.<sup>[1]</sup> Effects of ingested material can decide *koshta*. For Ex. Jaggary, churned curds, mixed rice of sesame and rice grains, rice soup, ghee, juices of grapes etc make *mrudu* or soft *koshta* individual to open the bowel smoothly. With these laxatives, this intestinal texture can poorly respond. This is because whenever *koshta* is *krura*, *vata dosha* is predominant in case of *grahani*. When *pitta* is predominant expulsion of excretory products is smooth. If *kapha* and *vata* are not predominant same results are fetched. Koshta to Shakha Gaman of Dosha disturbed the curability of disease and Koshta Pariksha has an important role for drug selection and dose determination<sup>7</sup>. Not only in *annavaha srotasa* (digestive tract), but in *pranavaha*, *ras-raktavaha*, *mutravaha srotasa*, we can examine the dryness, moistness or liquidity. In *mrudu koshta* there are excessive secretions in *srotasa*. e.g. excessive nasal secretions and excessive saliva in *mrudu koshta* child. In *krura koshta*, there are very less secretions or dryness e.g. dryness in nasal cavity, dryness in mouth. In *madhyam koshta*, medium secretions are to be seen.<sup>[2]</sup>

### CONCLUSION

*Ayurveda* have its own concepts and *sidhantas*. All concepts have its own impotent. Koshta concepts helps to understand find out types of *vhyadhi* and its help for treatments because drug selection depends on koshta. *koshta* is the basic and important concept in *Ayurveda*. *Koshta* plays an important role in selection the line of treatment of disease. *Koshta* is unique concept of *Ayurveda*, but there are different opinions of different *aacharyas* about the *koshta*. By this review we can said that vacant place made by *aavarana* i.e. whole alimentary tract from mouth to anus is considered as *koshta*. *Koshta pareekshana* plays vital role in *rog nidan* and *chikitsa* also.<sup>[7]</sup> Hence, for the treatment of any disease or for the suggestion of *Pathya-Apathya*, *koshta pareekshana* is important. According to *koshta*, we can decide suitable drug and suitable *aahara-vihara* for *chikitsa*. *Koshta* parikshan is required before shodhana treatment. For selection of drug matra anupan, snehapan *koshta* assessment is necessary. The concept of *Koshta* has an important role on selection of drug, selection of dose of drug and selection of treatment modalities of disease. *Koshta* to *Shakha* and *Shakha* to *Koshta* Gaman of *Dosha* is important to understand the prognosis of disease. *Koshta* Pariksha is important before Purvakarma i.e., Snehan Karma and Snehapan, and also in Pradhan Karma i.e., Virechan and Shodhana Karma as well as

Kostha Pariksha are equally important before the Shamana Chikitsa.<sup>[8]</sup>

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