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ABSTRACT

In Ayurveda, Chikitsa is not limited to symptom relief but aims to restore the individual's natural state of balance and health. Shodhana refers to purification therapies, among which Basti holds a unique and important place due to its wide therapeutic benefits. Basti mainly acts on Vata Dosha at its primary site, the Pakwashaya (large intestine). Since Vata regulates most bodily and metabolic functions, balancing it helps normalize various physiological processes. The medicinal properties of Basti spread throughout the body and aid in eliminating aggravated Doshas. Ayurveda considers Basti the most effective therapy for controlling Vata disorders. Thus, Basti is regarded as a comprehensive therapy with preventive, curative, promotive, and rejuvenating effects. Different types of Basti can be formulated using various drugs according to the

patient's condition and disease.

KEYWORDS: Ardha Chikitsa, Basti, Enteric Nervous System, Shodhana.

INTRODUCTION

Shodhana therapy in Ayurveda refers to the elimination of aggravated Doshas from the body, helping not only in treatment but also in preventing recurrence of disease.^[1] Ayurveda considers Chikitsa as the restoration of an individual's natural balance rather than mere symptom relief. Among the Panchakarma procedures, Basti holds a special place because of its wide therapeutic benefits, especially in Vata predominant disorders.

Acharya Charaka described Basti as "Ardha Chikitsa"^[2] due to its powerful action in

managing Vata Dosha. By acting on Pakwashaya, the main seat of Vata^[3], Basti helps regulate various physiological and metabolic functions of the body. Although primarily indicated for Vata disorders, it is also effective in balancing Pitta, Kapha, and other associated Doshas.^[4]

The medicinal properties of Basti spread throughout the body and aid in removing Doshas from head to toe. Thus, Basti is regarded as one of the most effective and comprehensive therapies in Ayurveda for maintaining health and treating disease.^[5]

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Etymology of Basti

The term “Basti” is derived from the Sanskrit root word “Vas” with the addition of the suffix “Tich” (Pratyaya).

2. Meanings of Basti

1. A procedure, in which the drugs are administered through the anal canal, stay in large intestine for a certain period of time, and draw the waste substances from all over the body into the colon and eliminates them out of the body by producing movements in the colon.
2. An organ for the reservoir of urine, that is, urinary bladder.
3. An instrument used for the administration of drugs through anal route.

4. Definition of basti

Acharya Charaka described Basti as a therapeutic procedure in which medicated formulations prepared according to classical guidelines are administered through the anal route. The medicine reaches areas such as the Nabhi (umbilical region), Kati (lower back), Parshva (flanks), and Kukshi (abdomen), where it helps loosen and eliminate accumulated waste materials and aggravated Doshas.^[6] The therapeutic potency of the Basti spreads throughout the body, providing systemic benefits, and is eventually expelled along with the toxins and fecal matter.^[7] The procedure in which the medicaments are introduced inside the body through the rectum with the help of animal urinary bladder is termed as Basti.^[8]

5. Classification of basti

Basti can be classify according to various aspects. These

Sr. no.	Various aspects	Types
1.	As per action	<p>1. Anuvasana Basti^[9] mainly uses medicated oil or ghee (Sneha) and is classified according to the quantity administered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sneha Basti – ¼ quantity of Niruha Basti • Anuvasana Basti – half the quantity of Sneha Basti • Matra Basti – the smallest dose of Sneha, suitable for daily use and weaker patients <p>2. Niruha Basti^[10] (also known as Asthapana or Kashaya Basti) is primarily used for eliminating aggravated Doshas and improving body strength. It is prepared mainly with herbal decoctions (Kwatha) along with ingredients such as Sneha, honey, Saindhava Lavana, and herbal paste (Kalka).</p>
2.	Depending On Drugs and Preparations used in Basti(Su.Chi.35/18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Madhutailika Basti •Siddha Basti •Yuktaratha Basti •Yapana Basti <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Piccha Basti •Vaitarana Basti •Picchila Basti
3.	According to Anatomical Classification	<p>1.Internal Application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pakwashayagata Basti • Uttara Basti: Yonimarga and Mutramarga. <p>2.External Application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vranagata Basti • Shiro Basti <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kati Basti • Netra Basti.
4.	According to the Number of Basti to be used	<p>1. Karma Basti ---- 30 Basti 18 Anuvasana and 12 Niruha Basti</p> <p>2. Kala Basti ---- 16 Basti 10 Anuvasana and 06 Niruha Basti</p> <p>3. Yoga Basti ---- 08 Basti 05 Anuvasana and 03 Niruha Basti.</p>
5.	According to Pharmacological Actions	<p>1.According to (Su. Chi.35/19)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Shodhana Basti b. Lekhana Basti c. Snehana Basti d. Brimhana Basti. <p>2.According to (A.S.19/61)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Utkleshana Basti b. Doshahara Basti c. Shamana Basti. <p>3.According to (Sh. U. 6/17-23)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Utkleshana Basti b. Doshahara Basti c. Shodhana Basti d. Shamana Basti

		e. Lekhana Basti f. Brimhana Basti g. Picchila Basti.
6.	According to Potency and Property	a. Ushna Basti b. Sheeta Basti c. Ruksha Basti d. Snigdha Basti e. Laghu Basti f. Guru Basti
7.	According to Intensity	a. Mridu Basti b. Madhyama Basti c. Tikshna Basti d. Picchila Basti
8.	On the Basis of Predominant Rasa in Basti Dravya: (Ch. Vi. 8/137)	a. Madhura Rasa Skandha Dravya Basti b. Amla Rasa Skandha Dravya Basti c. Lavana Rasa Skandha Dravya Basti d. Katu Rasa Skandha Dravya Basti e. Tikta Rasa Skandha Dravya Basti f. Kashaya Rasa Skandha Dravya Basti.
9.	According to Dose: (Ch.Si.8)	a. Dvadasha Prasritaki Basti b. Ekadasha Prasritaki Basti c. Nava Prasritaki Basti d. Pancha Prasritaki Basti e. Chaturtha Prasritaki Basti f. Padahina Prasritaki Basti.

Basti Yantra

The instrument used for administering Basti Karma is called the Basti Yantra. It mainly consists of two parts:

1. Basti Netra (Nozzle)
2. Basti Putaka (Bag or Container)

1. Basti Netra^[11] is a tubular nozzle, traditionally made of metal such as brass, with a smooth surface and a tapered shape resembling a cow's tail. Its size varies according to the age and condition of the patient. The nozzle contains rings called Karnika, which help in proper insertion and secure attachment of the bag.

2. Basti Putaka^[12] is a soft and flexible bag attached to the nozzle to hold the medicated liquid. In ancient times, it was prepared from processed animal bladder or leather. Nowadays, rubber or polythene bags are commonly used for convenience and hygiene.

Significance of Left lateral Position^[13]

The rectum contains three transverse rectal folds—superior, middle, and inferior—of which the middle rectal valve is considered the most important anatomically and functionally. It is

located on the right side of the rectum and plays a key role in the process of defecation. Normally, the area below this valve remains empty, and the presence of fecal matter in this region triggers the defecation reflex.

During Basti administration, the left lateral position is preferred as it protects the middle rectal valve and reduces the risk of injury that may otherwise lead to fecal incontinence. This position also supports the natural anatomical slope of the rectum and colon, allowing the Basti Dravya to move easily with gravity. In addition, the absorptive capacity of the rectal mucosa is considered greater on the left side. However, in rare anatomical variations such as situs inversus, the right lateral position may be considered.

Mode of action^[14]

Niruha Basti is prepared using a special method known as **Sammelana**, in which ingredients with different properties and densities are blended together to form a uniform mixture. The main components used in Niruha Basti are Saindhava (rock salt), Madhu (honey), Sneha (oil or ghee), Kalka (herbal paste), and Kashaya (herbal decoction). In some formulations, substances like milk or meat soup are also added as part of the decoction quantity.

In the preparation process, honey is first mixed thoroughly with rock salt. Then oil or ghee is added and blended properly. After this, the herbal paste is mixed in, followed by the gradual addition of the herbal decoction. The mixture is stirred continuously until it becomes smooth and homogeneous without separating into different layers, which indicates proper preparation of the Basti.

Saindhava (Rock Salt)

Saindhava helps in forming a uniform mixture with honey due to its sharp and penetrating properties. It supports proper osmotic balance, stimulates physiological activity, and enhances the action of Basti.

Madhu (Honey)

Honey acts as a catalyst in Basti preparation. Its subtle and penetrating nature helps the medicine spread through minute body channels, improving absorption and therapeutic action.

Sneha (Oil/Ghee)

Sneha lubricates the colon, softens stools, and facilitates easy elimination of waste. It also reduces irritation caused by other ingredients. Taila (oil) is mainly used in Vata-Kapha

conditions, while Ghrita (ghee) is preferred in Vata-Pitta disorders.

Kalka (Herbal Paste)

Kalka provides consistency to the Basti formulation and carries the main medicinal potency. It helps break down accumulated waste and enhances the effectiveness of the preparation.

Kwatha (Herbal Decoction)

Kwatha is the main liquid component of Niruha Basti that helps in cleansing and spreading the medicine throughout the body. The herbs used are mainly Vatahara, which aid in the proper movement and elimination of Doshas. Since Vata controls the transport of Doshas and body substances, regulating its Chala Guna is important in maintaining balance and treating disease.

Mode of action

Although Basti is administered through the Pakwashaya (large intestine), its effects are observed throughout the body. Acharya Sushruta explained that when Basti is properly administered, it remains in the Pakwashaya, pelvic region, and area below the Nabhi, from where the potency of the medicine spreads through various Srotas. Even though the Basti is retained for a short duration and later expelled along with waste materials by the action of Apana Vayu, it helps remove aggravated Doshas located throughout the body. Sushruta compared this action to the sun, which, despite being far away, absorbs moisture from the earth through its heat and energy.

Basti performs two major functions: elimination of morbid Doshas and nourishment of the body. The active principles of Basti Dravya are absorbed and produce systemic effects, while also facilitating the movement of toxins and waste products into the colon for elimination. These actions can be correlated with physiological and pharmacological mechanisms.

Modern science explains this through the enteric nervous system, an independent neural network present throughout the gastrointestinal tract that controls intestinal movements and secretions. The rectum and sigmoid colon are richly supplied with parasympathetic nerves, which play an important role in bowel evacuation reflexes.

The large intestine also has significant absorptive capacity. Water and medicinal substances are absorbed through diffusion and osmotic mechanisms. Since the rectum has a rich blood and lymphatic supply, both water-soluble and lipid-soluble components of Basti formulations

can be effectively absorbed through the rectal mucosa. Niruha Basti mainly promotes cleansing and elimination of toxins, whereas Sneha Basti supports nourishment and lubrication of the body. Basti also aids in expelling accumulated intestinal gas and regulating bowel function.

Effect of basti

1. It purifies all the systems and makes a clear passage up to micro channel level.
2. It acts on various disorders due to the selection of the drug according to disease.
3. Curative.
4. Uncomplicated.
5. Basti can be administered at any age and at any stage of disorder after proper examination. It can also be given in normal persons too.

Promotive Aspects

Sustains age, provides better life, improves strength, digestive power, voice and complexion, performs all functions normally, provides firmness, corpulence quality, and brings lightness in viscera/systems due to removal of morbid matter from all over the body and restores normalcy.

Curative Aspects

Relieves Stiffness, relieves contractions and adhesions, effective in paralytic conditions, effective in dislocation, and fracture conditions, effective in those conditions, where Vata aggravated in Shakha/extremities, relieves pain, effective in disorders of GI tract, effective in diseases of Shakha and Koshtha, effective in the diseases of vital parts, upper extremities and localized or general parts, beneficial to debilitated and weak persons, and arrests premature old age and the progress of white hair.

Preventive Aspects

It is beneficial in constipation and effective in purification of various systems of the body.

CONCLUSION

Acharya Vagbhata described Basti as the most effective therapy for managing Vata disorders. Ayurveda also explains that after Sneha and Sweda therapies, aggravated Kapha and Pitta reaching the Pakwashaya can be eliminated through Basti, showing its action on all three Doshas.^[15]

Thus, Basti is considered a comprehensive and systemic therapy with wide therapeutic applications. It is regarded as the prime treatment for Vata Dosha, and different formulations can be prepared according to the disease condition and patient requirements. Proper administration following classical guidelines is essential for achieving effective results.

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