An Ayurvedic Review On Koshta Parikshan
And Its Significance

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Abstract:
Ayurveda is the science of life, the most comprehensive healing system in the world, deals with many basic concepts which impart knowledge of life. Those concepts educate people on how to take care of their health by themselves and increase their span of healthy life. Ayurveda has some unique entities, Koshta is one of them. Word koshta can be used in two ways koshtha is nature of digestive tract or hollow parts or vacant place having covering, where things can be kept, which represents motility of intestines and movement of food and fecal matter in the alimentary canal and elimination of stool. According to dehaprakruti or predominance of dosha, koshta is divided into 3 types i.e. krura, mrudu and madhyam where predominance of vata, pitta and kapha dosha is seen. Assessment of koshta is important for diagnosis and treatment of diseases. With the help of koshta parikshan we can choose Aushadhi and Aushadhamatya. Koshta parikshan can also be used to advice pathya-apathy and ahar-vihar. Thus, in this article an effort has been made to understand the concept of Koshta.

Keywords: koshta, Tridosha, Koshta parikshan, koshta prakar.

Introduction:
In ayurveda the term koshta is explained in 2 senses. Anatomically koshta means the space or hollowness of the body for accommodation of organs including stomach, liver, spleen, pancreas intestine etc. called koshta. Physiologically the koshta is defined as bowel movement according to the basic constitutions of the person. Koshta is unique entity of Ayurveda. Koshta refers to nature of digestive tract or hollow parts of body which represents motility of intestines and movement of food and fecal matter in the alimentary canal and elimination of the stool. Koshta is included in abhyantar rogamarg.¹ Koshta and shakha are the two things related with each other. There are several koshta and shakha in the body but they can also be taken as single koshta and shakha when systemic pathogenesis is
considered. To know the concept, assessment of the *koshtha* of a person is very important in the diagnosis and treatment of any disease.

**Concept of Koshtha:**

*Nirukti* (etymology of word *koshtha*)

*Koshtha*- *Kush Aavarane*

*Koshtha* is derived from root *Kush + Than* it means *Aavarana*.

*Koshtha* is a cavity formed from *Avarana* (wall) which is consisting of Dhatus (solid structures). Word *koshtha* is used for vacant place having *aavarana* where things can be kept.

**Paryaya (synonyms):**

*Mahastrotasa, Sharirmadhya, Mahanimna* and *Aampakwashay* are the *Paryaya* (synonyms) of the *koshtha*.

1. *Mahastrotas*- according to *aacharya gananath sen*, the part which start from mouth and ends at anus is called *Mahastrotas*.

2. *Sharirmadhya*- according to *Indu* the part which start from *Jatru* (clavicle) up to kati (hip) is called *Sharirmadhya*.

3. *Mahanimna*- according to *Vagbhata*, the place where digestion and absorption occurs.

4. *Aampakwashaya- Aamashay to pakwashay*.

**Koshtha Paribhasha (Definition):**


Aacharya Sushrut states that *Koshtha* is cavity containing *Hrudaya* (heart), *Rudhira* (blood), *phupusa* (lungs), *Aamashaya* (stomach), *Pakwashaya* (intestines) *Unduka* (appendix), *Phupusa* (lungs), *Mutrashaya* (bladder). Aacharya sushrut also states that entire abdomen should be considered as *koshtha*.

Aacharya Dalhan states that the place where food completely digested, separation and holding of *saar, kitta* occurs is called *Koshtha*.
There are three types of Koshtha based on predominance of dosha.

1. **Krura Koshtha**

According to Aacharya Sushrut, Dosha condition in *Krura koshtha* is *Vata – Kapha*. It is called *Durvirechya* because *virechana dravyas* like *Trivrutta, triphala, tilvak* and *niliphala* it hardly gets *virechana* stated by *dalhana* in his tika.

According to Aacharya Charak, Dosha condition in *Krura Koshta* is abundant *Vata in Grahani*. Chakrapani in his tika states that in *Krura koshtha*, *Vata present in Grahani* Prohibit the *Sara Guna* present in *Dravya* like *Gudh* (jaggery) *Ikshuras* (sugarcane juice) etc.\(^9\)

This predominant *vata* dosha produces hard stool with difficulty of elimination or non-elimination, this may be due to *ruksha* and *khara gunas* of *vata* dosha over the *sara guna* of *pitta dosha*.

2. **Mrudu Koshtha**

According to Aacharya Sushrut, Dosha condition in *Mrudu koshtha* is *pitta*, which causes *Virechan even with milk*.\(^10\) Aacharya *dalhan* states that milk is just given for example *mrudu koshtha* people can also causes *virechan* with *dravyas* like *Ikshuras takra mastu gudh ghee ushnodak, draksharas* etc.

According to Aacharya charak, Dosha condition in *Mrudu Koshtha* is predominant *Pitta*, less *Kapha and Vata in Grahani*. Chakrapani states that in *mrudu koshtha Vata and Kapha dosha* which opposes *Sara guna* of *pitta* are less. Therefore, *mrudu koshtha* peoples get easily *virechan* by *dravya* like *gudh* (Jaggery) *ikshuras* (sugarcane juice) etc.\(^11\)

This predominant *Pitta* causes watery or semisolid feces, more than once or twice in a day. Due to *sara, drava, snidha guna* of *pitta dosha mrudu koshtha* will be smooth, lubricated.

3. **Madhyam Koshtha**

According to Aacharya Sushrut, Dosha condition in *Madhyam koshtha* is *Samavastha of tridosha*.\(^12\)

In *Madhyam Koshtha* predominant *kapha* dosha is present which causes soft, solid feces moving out smoothly. In *madhyam koshtha* there will be predominant *snigdha, guru* and *sthira guna* of *kapha dosha*. *Koshtha* will be secretive and will have more lubrication but less slippery due to *guru* and *sthir guna* of *kapha*.

**Koshtha Parikshan (Assessment of Koshtha):**

The word *koshtha* applies to both physiological and anatomical entities. The physiological entity is the nature of bowel habit since from birth and the anatomical entity includes all organs of abdominal and thoracic cavities. Generally, a patient with complaints of constipation is considered as *Krura Koshta* but it is wrong. Because it is the pathology that causes dysfunctioning of Apana Vayu, leading to the constipation. So, we should have to consider *Prakrut* (normal) first. *Koshtha* is the nature of bowel habit,
which depends on general constitution of individual. Constitutional means the nature of bowel habit since from birth.

*Koshtha Parikshan* can be done with three ways

2. *Koshtha Parikshan* by *Snehapana kaal*.

- *Koshtha Parikshan by Nature of bowel habit.*

1. **Krura Koshtha**
   1. Irregular bowel habit, doesn’t pass stool regularly.
   2. Hard and dry stool.
   3. Requires straining during defecation.
   4. Requires long time for defecation.
   5. Unsatisfactory bowel clearance.
   6. seldom encounters diarrhea and more frequent constipation.
   7. requires drastic purgatives for *virechan*.
   8. Due to heavy diet and nonveg constipation occurs.
   9. No change in bowels by test dose of Sneha.

The person fulfilling the above criteria is to be decided as the person having *Krura Koshtha*.

2. **Mrudu Koshtha**
   1. Passes stools daily once or twice regularly.
   2. Semi formed or formed stools.
   3. Easy defecation.
   4. less time required for defecation.
   5. Satisfaction after defecation.
   6. Previous encounters show often watery stools due to hot drinks, tea, milk.
   7. Minor laxatives easily induces diarrhea.
   8. Change in diet, heavy diet causes diarrhea.
   9. After 30 ml test dose of *Ghrita* passes stools slightly loose and frequency may be more.
The person fulfilling the above criteria is to be decided as the person having *Mrudu Koshta*.

3. **Madhyam Koshta**

1. Passes stool daily once regularly.

2. formed stool.

3. requires less straining during defecation.

4. more time required for defecation than *Mrudu koshta*.

5. Satisfaction after defecation.

6. doesn’t often encounter diarrhea or constipation.

7. requires medium dose of purgatives and laxatives. Doesn’t get loose stool by milk or minor laxatives.

8. No change in bowel due to change in diet.

9. After intake of test dose of *Ghrita*, passes semi formed or formed stools once or twice.

The person fulfilling the above criteria is decided to be of *Madhyam Koshta*.

- **Koshtha Parikshan by Snehapana kaal.**

  1. *Krura Kostha* persons require 7 days for *Snehapana*.

  2. *Mrudu Kostha* persons requires 3 days for *Snehapana*.

  3. *Madhyam Kostha* persons requires 5 days for *Snehapana*.

- **Koshtha Parikshan by Virechan Dravya.**

  1. *Krura Kostha* persons requires *Virechan Dravya* like *Eranda Tail*, *Haritaki*, *Triphala*.


  3. Requires *Kashaya* and *Tikta* laxatives.

- **Importance of Koshtha Parikshan:**

  Examination of *Kosha* is necessary for following reasons-

1. **Roga-Nidana**

   - To find predominance of *Doshas* and *Prakruti*.

   - In most of persons, *Vata prakruti* has *Krura Koshta*, *Pitta prakruti* has *Mrudu Koshta* and *Kapha Prakruti* person has *Madhyam Koshta*.

   - If we know the *prakruti* of person, *Roga-Nidana* becomes easy.
2. Chikitsa

- *Koshtha pariksha* helps physician to judge line of treatment i.e *Shodhana* as well as *Shamana chikitsa*.
- Before doing *shodhana karma*, *Snehapana* is one of the *purvakarma*. *Snehadravya* and *Snehamatra* can be decided by using *Koshtha Pariksha*.
- To advice appropriate *Aahar-vihar*
- To advice *pathya-apathya*
- In Shaman *chikitsa* by using *Koshtha Parikshan* we can decide *Aushadhi Dravyas* and *Aushadhi Matra*. e.g. Mrudu Koshtha persons require *Soumya Aushadhi* in minimum dose. Krura Koshtha persons require *Tikshna Aushadhi* in large dose.

**Discussion:**

In *Ayurveda*, the transfer of nutrients, the exchange of body fluids occurred by the mechanism of *Koshtha-Shakha* interaction. *Vata* plays a key role in this interaction. Acharya charak defines *Ulbana anil* and *Udirna pitta Alpa kapha Maaruta* in *Grahani* are responsible for *krura koshtha* and *mrudu koshtha* respectively. So, it is to be known whether the *Udirna doshas* told to be present in *grahani* are related to the *Prakruti*. Effects of ingested material can decide koshtha. Ex. Jaggary, churned curds, mixed rice of sesame and rice grains, rice soup, ghee, juices of grapes etc make mrudu or soft koshtha individual to open the bowel smoothly. With these laxatives, this intestinal texture can poorly respond. This is because whenever koshtha is krura, vata is predominant in case of grahani. When pitta is predominant expulsion of secretory product is smooth. If kapha and vata are not predominant same result are fetched. Not only in *annvaha srotasa* (digestive tract), but also in *pranavaha*, *ras-raktavaha*, *mutravaha srotasa*, we can examine the dryness, moistness or liquidity. In mrudu koshtha there are excessive secretions in *srotasa*. e.g., excessive nasal secretions and excessive saliva in mrudu koshtha child. In krura koshtha, there are very less secretions or dryness e.g., dryness in nasal cavity, dryness in mouth. In madhyam koshtha, medium secretions are seen.

**Conclusion:**

*Koshtha* is unique and important concept of Ayurveda. *Koshtha* plays an important role in selection the line of treatment of disease, but there are different opinions of different aacharyas about the *koshtha*. By this article we can said that vacant place made by *aavarana* i.e. whole alimentary tract from mouth to anus is considered as *koshtha*. *koshtha parikshan* is required before *shodhana karma*. *Koshtha parikshan* plays vital role in *rognidan* and *chikitsa* also. For selection of *snehapana koshtha* assessment is necessary. Hence, for the treatment of any disease or for the suggestion of *Pathya-Apathya*, *koshtha parikshana* is important. According to *koshtha*, we can decide suitable drug and suitable *aahara-vihara* for *chikitsa*.
References:


