



## Review Article

### BASTI AS ARDHA CHIKITSA: A REVIEW

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#### ABSTRACT

*Basti Chikitsa* is a prime treatment modality among the *Panchakarma*. It has not only curative aspects but also preventive and promotive aspects. *Basti* is the prime treatment for *vata dosha* but is also useful for the diseases caused by *pitta dosha*, *kapha dosha* as well as *rakta* and their combinations. Different permutations and combinations of *basti dravyas* give the wide option for the physician to treat all categories of diseases in all the age groups. Unlike *Vamana* and *Virechana*, *Basti* can be administered in all the age groups & can be administered in all the stages & variety of diseases. According to the pharmacokinetics it is also proven that rectal drugs administration might exceed the oral value due to partial avoidance of hepatic first pass metabolism. More than 500 million neurons are present in the ENS (Enteric Nervous System) and hence it is called “second brain”. *Basti* may act over the receptors of the ENS to stimulate the CNS causing secretion of required hormones or other chemicals. This article evaluates the validity and importance of *Basti* being termed as *Ardha chikitsa* or *Sampoorna chikitsa*.

**Keywords:** *Basti Chikitsa*, *Dosha*, *Ardha Chikitsa*, Enteric Nervous System.

#### INTRODUCTION

The word *basti* is derived from the root word ‘*Vas Nivase*’. With its various meanings it denotes the retention action of the therapy. *Basti* is so called because this therapy was administered using the Urinary Bladder of different animals in ancient times.<sup>1</sup> *Basti Chikitsa* is a prime treatment modality among the *Panchakarma*. The therapy which while moving in the *Nabhi*, *Kati*, *Parshva* & *Kukshi Pradesha* does the churning of *shakrut* & *doshas* located there & then evacuate them in proper manner & provides nourishment to the body.<sup>2</sup> It has not only curative aspects but also has preventive and promotive aspects. An extensive search pertaining to *Basti* was carried out with reference to *Ardha Chikitsa* upon the classical literature of *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Ashtanga Sangraha* and various articles from reputed journals. The citation lists from the included references were subsequently examined and a hand search was also performed in an attempt to identify additional points.

#### BASTI DESIGNATED AS ARDHA CHIKITSA

In all ayurvedic texts, the importance of *basti* is highlighted as much as to call it as *Ardha Chikitsa* or even *Sampoorna chikitsa* by scholars.<sup>3</sup> *Basti* administered in accordance with disease, person, time and with proper medicines can treat any diseases and will make a person healthy. It can be a big question mark that why *basti* is considered as *ardha* or *sampoorna chikitsa*. Hence, the importance of *basti* is highlighted under the following headings.

#### Role of Vata in the Manifestation of Diseases

There are three *doshas*, which govern the entire physiology of the body and when they are out of equilibrium, the same become responsible for the manifestation of diseases. *Basti* is the only treatment which is useful in treating the pathological state of all the *tridoshas*. Among these three *doshas*, *vata* is considered as the most important and powerful, because of the following reasons:

*Pitta* & *kapha doshas*, *saptadhatu*s and *malas* are considered as lame. These are like that of clouds, which are carried by the influence of wind. Similarly in the body, *vata dosha* is responsible for the movement / actions of *Pitta* and *kapha doshas*, *saptadhatu*s and *malas*.<sup>4</sup> If *vata* is controlled then it is as good as maintaining the rest of the components of the body.

*Vata* has the capacity to spread all over the body, it is quick in its action, it is capable of vitiating the other two *doshas*, it can produce diseases independently and it produces more number of diseases compared to *pitta* and *kapha*.<sup>5</sup> There are 80 *vata nanatmajavyadhis*, whereas for *pitta* and *kapha dosha*, only 40 and 20 *nanatmajavyadhis* are mentioned respectively.<sup>6</sup> As there are more number of diseases caused by *vata* and it also plays a very important role in the manifestation of the diseases caused by other *doshas*. Hence, majority of the diseases can be treated by *basti* as it is the main therapy for *Vata dosha*.

The *vata* in its normal state of functioning sustains the whole body. It is responsible for all the actions. It controls the *manas* and all its functions. It is responsible for the coordination of all

*indriyas* with their *arthas*. It brings about compactness in all the *dhatu*s and it is *sandhanakara*. It prompts speech. It is also the root cause for *sparsha* as well as *shravana*. It is the causative factor of joy and courage. It stimulates the *agni*. It expels the *malas* from the *shareera*. It creates the *sthula* and *sukshmasrotas*. It moulds the shape of an embryo and is indicative of the continuity of the span of life.<sup>7</sup>

The root cause for disease is *vata dosha* which causes diseases in *shaka*, *koshta*, *marma pradesha*, *urdhwanga*, for that matter *sarva ayayava* or all parts of the body are afflicted by *vata*. *Vata* is responsible for dislodgement or combination of *vit*, *mutra*, *pitta* and *kapha*. When *vata* gets aggravated, there is no remedy other than *basti* for its *shamana*. Hence *Basti* is considered as *Ardha Chikitsa* or *Sampoorna Chikitsa*.<sup>3</sup>

By seeing all the above-mentioned reasons, *acharyas* have given due importance to *vata* and as *basti* is the main treatment modality for *vata*, *basti chikitsa* is considered as *Ardha Chikitsa* or *Sampoorna Chikitsa*.

### **Basti is useful in the treatment of Tridoshas and Rakta**

*Acharya Sushruta* says, *basti* is useful in the diseases caused by *vata*, *pitta*, *kapha* as well as *rakta*. *Basti* is the prime treatment for *vata* but is also useful for the diseases caused by *pitta*, *kapha* as well as *rakta* and their combinations.<sup>8</sup> In this reference *rakta* is also described, because *Sushruta* considers *rakta* as *chaturtha dosha*.<sup>9</sup> But apart from its doshic nature, *rakta* plays a very important role in the manifestation of the diseases. According to *Acharya Vagbhata*, *rakta* is also considered as the *adhishthana* of all the diseases and is considered as the very important *dushya*.<sup>10</sup>

We can see the concept of composing the *bastis* for *tridoshas* in the following manner. In *vatapradhana vyadhis*, *basti* should be given with *madhura*, *amla*, *lavana rasa dravyas* with *vatahara snehas*. In case of *pitta pradhana vyadhis*, *basti* should be formulated by using *kashaya*, *madhura* and *tikta rasa dravyas*. In case of *kapha pradhana rogas*, *basti* should be given with *katu*, *tikta* and *kashaya rasa dravyas*. In case of *raktakshaya*, *rakta bastis* can be given.<sup>11</sup> Otherwise, in *raktapradoshaja vyadhis*, *basti* can be given with *raktaprasadaka dravyas* like *manjishtha*, *sariva*, *panchavalkala*, etc. We can give *guduchyadi basti*, *panchamoola basti* & *dashamooladi basti* for *vata*, *pitta* & *kapha* respectively.

### **Basti is effective all over the Body**

*Basti dravyas* which is in the *Pakvashaya*, by its *Virya* draws & eliminates morbid *doshas* located in the whole body right from foot to head, similarly as the sun in the sky absorbs all the moisture from the earth though it is far away.<sup>12</sup> *Guda* is considered as the *moola* of *shareera* and through the *siras* located there, the entire body up to the head gets nourishment.<sup>13</sup> Like the tree, the roots of which are sprinkled with water and which nourishes the whole tree, similarly *basti* administered through *guda* nourishes the person. When *Basti* is administered in the *Pakvashaya*, its *Virya* is taken up by *Samana Vayu* with the help of *Apana Vayu*. Then it reaches other *Vayus* also and affects them by its action. It also keeps *Pitta* and *Kapha* in their proper places.<sup>14</sup> The transport of *Bastivirya* is by *Kedarakulya Nyaya* which makes it spread all over the body by virtue of different *Vayus*. As the cloth absorbs the dye from the water mixed with *kusumbha* plant, in the same way *basti* eliminates only the *malas* from the body which have undergone liquefaction due to *snehana* and *swedana*.<sup>15</sup>

### **Effect of Basti on Varieties of Rogas**

The main concept in *chikitsa* is *roganidanapratikara* which means we should ascertain the *nidana* for the *vyadhi* and then use the drugs and the therapies which are opposite to *nidana*. For instance, if the disease is caused by *ushmanidana* use *sheetadravyas* for *chikitsa* and vice versa.<sup>16</sup> Apart from *sheetaguna*, other attributes like *snigdha*, *ruksha*, *laghu*, *guru* etc. of *vyadhinidana* should be determined and appropriate *basti* having ingredients of opposite *gunas* should be given to patients.<sup>17</sup> In *vataja* conditions *snigdha*, *ushnadravys* can be used for *basti* along with *mamsarasa* and *taila*. In *pittaja vyadhis*, *sheetagunayuktadravyas* can be used along with *ksheera* and *ghrita*. In *kaphaja vyadhis* *ushna* and *teekshnagunayuktadravyas* can be used along with *gomutra* and *kshara*.<sup>18</sup>

This concept gives a wide scope for treating a large variety of diseases and this makes the *Basti* treatment a superior one with respect to the other treatments.

### **Varied or Multifaceted action of Basti**

The varied or multifaceted action of *basti* can be ascribed to the permutation and combination of the drugs used for preparing *basti dravya*. *Basti* can exhibit many actions like *doshasamshodhana*, *doshashamana*, *doshasangrahana*, *vajikarana*, *brimhana*, *karshana*, *vayahsthapana*, etc.<sup>19</sup> When we go through the drugs which are useful for *vamana*, *virechana* or *nasya* or for other therapies like *brimhana*, *stambhana*, *rookshana*, *pachana*, *deepana*, etc. there is a limit in the number of drugs which are useful for the particular purpose. But in *basti*, there is no limitation for the drugs. All the *dravyas* belonging to *madhura skanda*, *amla skandha*, *lavana skandha*, *katu skandha*, *tikta skandha*, *kashaya skandha*, *vamanopaga* and *virechanopaga dravyas*, all *snehas*, *mutravarga*, *ksheeravarga*, *kshara*, *mamsa rasa*, etc. can be utilized for *bastikalpana*.<sup>20</sup> This shows that there is a wide scope for the selection of *dravyas* in the *basti* treatment depending upon the necessity, availability and required result. As all the drugs are not available throughout the year, for *Basti* treatment there is no dearth as wide range of drugs are mentioned for usage in *basti* treatment.

By selection of the appropriate drugs, it causes *apatarpana* and *tarpana* instantaneously and is free from any adverse side effects. No doubt other measures are available for *apatarpana* and *tarpana*. But these effects are obtained quickly by *basti* when compared to other *karmas*.<sup>21</sup>

### **Basti - A Superior line of Treatment**

*Nasya* can do *brimhana*, *langhana*, *snehana*, *stambhana* and *rookshana*. Its action is limited to *urdhva jatrugata rogas* and has very limited role in the management of systemic diseases. *Basti* eliminates the vitiated *doshas* located in the body from head to foot. The drugs used in *vamana* are impalatable and may produce abdominal discomforts. It cannot be performed in *durbala*, *vridhdha*, *ksheena* and *sukumara*.<sup>22</sup> *Virechana* cause the elimination of the *doshas*, but it is inferior to *basti* because it involves the intake of the drugs which is impalatable and may produce *dukha udghara*, *utklesa*, *ahridya*, *kostharuja*, etc. So, most patients show intolerance and unwillingness. *Virechana* is contra indicated in *bala* and *vridhdha*, because of immaturity and diminution of tissues.<sup>23</sup> Unlike *Vamana* and *Virechana*, *Basti* can be administered in all the age groups (including childhood and old age) & can be administered in all the stages & variety of diseases and capable of curing all the diseases.

### Indication in all Age groups

Various other *shodhana* therapies are contraindicated in various age groups, but *basti* is an exception. In fact, there is no age limit as such. It is just like nectar for *shishu* and other than *shishu* also.<sup>24</sup>

### Basti on Promotion of Health and Prevention of Diseases

To maintain the Healthy state of a person, the regimen like *Rutucharya* and *Dinacharya* must be followed. The various climatic changes taking place in various *Rutus*, changes equilibrium among *Tridoshas*. *Varsha Rutu* is said to be *Vata Prokopa kala*, thus, to prevent the complications arising due to *Vata Prakopa* and promote health, *Basti* therapy is indicated.<sup>25</sup>

### Importance of Basti in Astanga Ayurveda

The therapy of *basti* is beneficial to patients with less sexual calibre as it enhances sexual powers.<sup>26</sup> *Basti* has the capacity to prevent abortions and it enhances the chances of conception.<sup>27</sup> Particularly *basti* prepared with *vajikarana* drugs like *ksira*, *mamsarasa*, *ghrita*, etc in the form of *yapanabasti* is indicated. This also acts as *rasayana*. It can be used from paediatrics to geriatrics. It is considered as the main treatment in *vatarakta*, *gulma*, *vatavyadhis*, etc. *Sushruta*, *Vagbhata* and *Yogaratanakara* had advocated *Basti* treatment in *Timira Roga*.<sup>28</sup> *Basti* is also indicated in *arshas*, *parisrava*, *parikartika*, *yoni vyapad*, *visha*, etc.

### Basti and its relation to Marmas

*Marmas* are seats of *chetana* in our body. Any injury to *marmas*, lead to different diseases. Thus, we must protect the *marmas* from *abhighata* & *vatadidoshas*.<sup>29</sup> *Marmas* need to be protected from aggravated *vata*, because it is responsible for the excitation of *pitta* & *kapha*. It is widely established that for *vata* there is no other treatment than *basti*. Therefore, it is *basti* therapy alone which can safeguard *marmas*.<sup>30</sup>

### Basti and its action on Sadathuras

In *sadathuras*, due to *vega dharana*, the *rukshata guna* of the *vata* will increase. If *vamana* or *virechana* is done in them, the *vata* gets vitiated resulting in different complications. In them, *shodhana* can be done through *basti*. Example: *baladi niruha basti*.<sup>31</sup>

Apart from the above said reasons, following strict regimen is necessary for other *panchakarma* treatments. Whereas in *basti* for those who cannot adhere to the strict regimen *Yuktharatha basti*, *yapana basti* & *matra bastis* are explained.<sup>32</sup> The *basti dravya* do not undergo *paka* & vitiate the *jatharagni*. As there is no hampering of *agni* we do not need *peyadikarma*.

### DISCUSSION

According to the Modern Science, probable mode of action of *basti* can be understood in the following ways:

#### By Absorption Mechanism

Drugs can be absorbed well from intestine than from stomach because of large surface area. When *niruha basti* was given using *bastiputaka*, *basti dravyas* reached upto ileo-caecal junction.<sup>33</sup> Thus, absorption of the drugs takes place in any area between rectum and illeo- cecal junction. Increased vascularity can

increase absorption. The portion absorbed from the upper rectal mucosa is carried by the superior haemorrhoidal vein into the portal circulation, whereas that absorbed from the lower rectum enters directly into systemic circulation via the middle and inferior haemorrhoidal veins. According to the pharmacokinetics it is also proven that rectal drug administration might exceed the oral value due to partial avoidance of hepatic first pass metabolism. It is often more convenient to use drugs rectally in long time in case of gastric and terminally ill patients. Moreover, the other substances used in *basti* might be act upon by the colonic bacteria producing short chain fatty acids like butyric, propionic, ethanoic and valeric acids.<sup>34</sup>

#### By Chemical & Mechanical Stimulation

*Niruha basti* is a hyperosmotic solution which causes movement of solvent from cells of colon to the lumen. Thus, it facilitates the cleansing of colon & influences the normal bacterial flora in promoting optimal colon health. *Kalka* used in *basti* has got an irritant property along with other ingredients which may induce colonic distension. The distension stimulates pressure which produces evacuatory reflex. The sigmoidal, rectal, and anal regions of large intestine are considerably better supplied with parasympathetic fibres than other part of intestine. They are mainly stimulatory in action and function especially in defecation reflexes.<sup>35</sup>

#### By Nervous Stimulation Mechanism/ Influence through Enteric Nervous System (ENS)

The enteric nervous system or intrinsic nervous system is one of the main divisions of the Autonomic nervous system and consists of a mesh like system of neurons that governs the function of the gastrointestinal tract. There are so many similarities between CNS and ENS regarding cellular structure, neuropeptide secretion and specific functions. Recent studies have shown that there is a great influence of CNS and ENS on each other. More than 500 million neurons are present in the ENS and hence it is called "second brain". *Basti* may act over the receptors of the ENS to stimulate the CNS causing secretion of required hormones or other chemicals. Hence the effect of *Basti* may also be associated with "Touch & Go Theory" causing activation of ENS receptors.<sup>36</sup> It is recognised that the enteric nervous system has a unique ability to mediate reflex activity independently of input from the brain or spinal cord. ENS includes sensory receptors, primary afferent neurons, interneurons, and motor neurons. The events that are controlled, at least in part, by the ENS are multiple and include motor activity, secretion, absorption, defense reactions, blood flow and interaction with other organs such as the gallbladder or pancreas. The enteric nervous system is embedded in the lining of the GIT system, beginning at the oesophagus and extending down to the anus. Morphological, electrophysiological, and pharmacological studies have revealed a substantial diversity of neurons within the ENS. It produces a wide range of hormones and around 40 neurotransmitters (serotonin, dopamine, glutamate, norepinephrine, nitric oxide, etc) of the same classes as those found in the brain. The Gastrointestinal tract contains approximately 90% of the body's serotonin. Deficiencies or decrease in the levels of serotonin is directly responsible for symptoms of depression, aggressive behavior, anxiety and increased sensitivity to pain.<sup>37</sup>

### CONCLUSION

By going through all the classical references, it is very much clear that *basti* has a wide scope in the treatment of several diseases. Multi-dimensional aspect of *basti* makes it a unique one. In

clinical practice we see minimum complications arising from *basti chikitsa*. Different permutations and combinations of *basti dravyas* give the wide option for the physician to treat all categories of diseases in all age groups. Hence, there is no second thought in considering *basti* as *ardha* or *sampoorna chikitsa*.

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