

# A Critical Review on *Basti* – An *Ardha Chikitsa*

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** In *Ayurveda*, *Chikitsa* does not mean simply the relief from ailment or absence of symptoms; it is bringing back the normalcy specific to that person. The word *Shodhana* means cleansing and purifying. *Basti* holds a distinct position in contrast to other *Panchakarma* measures due to its wide spectrum and competent benefits. **Observation:** *Basti Karma* controls *Vata* at its *Moolasthan* *Pakwashaya*, and thus, all metabolic processes under the control of *Vata* are automatically regulated as, if the root of the diseased tree is destroyed; its branches, leaves, and flowers are automatically destroyed. *Veerya* of the *Basti Dravyas* transmitted all over the body. It sucks out *Doshas* from head to toe as, the sun though miles away with its rays, sucks the water from the plants on the earth. No other *Chikitsa* is as capable as *Basti* to tolerate and regulate the force of *Vata*. All these actions of *Basti* can be well explained on the basis of known physiological and pharmacological actions. Thus, *Basti* has promotive, curative, preventive, and rejuvenative effect. **Conclusion:** It can be concluded that *Basti* is a highly complex, sophisticated, and systemic therapy having a wider range of therapeutic actions and indications. It has been considered as the prime treatment modality of *Vata Dosh*. Innumerable *Basti* can be formulated using various drugs in different proportions for various diseases and for different patients.

**Keywords:** *Ardha Chikitsa*, *Basti*, Enteric Nervous System, *Shodhana*  
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## INTRODUCTION

*Shodhana* is the elimination of *Dosha* from the body and is an important part of treatment as it does not allow the disease to recur in the body.<sup>[1]</sup> In *Ayurveda*, *Chikitsa* does not mean simply the relief from ailment or absence of symptoms; it is bringing back the normalcy specific to that person. The word *Shodhana* means cleansing and purifying. The word "*Parimarjanam*" is a synonym for *Shodhana*. Among the five major *Shodhana* therapy, *Basti* holds a distinct position in contrast to other *Panchakarma* measures due to its wide spectrum and competent benefits.

*Basti* is mainly indicated in *Vata* predominant diseases.<sup>[2]</sup> *Basti* is glorified as *Ardhachikitsa* by Acharya Charaka and Complete *Chikitsa* by some other *Acharayas*.<sup>[3]</sup> *Basti* is primarily acting on *Vata*, still it is equally helpful to alleviate *Pitta*, *Kapha*, *RaktaDosh*, *Samsarga*, and *Sannipata Doshas*.

Two types of abnormalities of *Vata*, namely, *Avarana* and *Dhatukshaya* can be treated by *Basti Karma*. Direct application of this kind of treatment to *Pakwashaya* helps not only in regulating and coordinating *Vata Dosh* in site but also other *Doshas* involved in the pathogenesis of the diseases.<sup>[4]</sup> *Basti Karma* controls *Vata* at its *Moolasthan* *Pakwashaya*, and thus, all metabolic processes under the control of *Vata* are automatically regulated as, if the root of the diseased tree is destroyed; its branches, leaves, and flowers are automatically destroyed.

Although *Basti* stays in *Pakwashaya*, pelvis and organs below umbilicus get the actions through *Veerya* of the *Basti Dravyas* transmitted all over the body. It sucks out *Doshas* from head to toe as, the sun though miles away with its rays, sucks the water from the plants on the earth. No other *Chikitsa* is as capable as *Basti* to tolerate and regulate the force of *Vata*.<sup>[5]</sup>

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Etymology of *Basti*

The word "*Basti*" is derived from the root "*Vas*" by adding "*Tich*" *Pratyaya* and it belongs to masculine gender.

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- वसिर्वसे-to reside, to stay
- वस्आच्छादने-to cover, to coat
- औषधदानार्थद्रव्यभेदे-It denotes an instrument used for the administration of the medicine.

### 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.

### Definition of *Basti*

Acharya Charaka has defined the *Basti* as the procedure, in which the drug prepared according to classical reference is administered through anal canal, reaches up to the *Nabhi*, *Kati*, *Parshva*, and *Kukshipradesha* and churns the accumulated *Purisha* and *Dosha*;<sup>[6]</sup> spreads the unctuousness (potency of the drugs) all over the body; and easily comes out along with the churned *Purisha* and *Doshas*.<sup>[7]</sup>

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*.<sup>[8]</sup>

## CLASSIFICATION OF *BASTI*

*Basti* can be classified as follows:

### According to the Action

#### *Anuvasana Basti*<sup>[9]</sup>

In this type of *Basti*, only *Sneha* is used. According to the quantity of *Sneha* given, it is subdivided as follows:

- *Sneha Basti*: 1/4 of the quantity of *Niruha Basti*, that is, 6 Pala
- *Anuvasana Basti*: The quantity of *Sneha* is half of the *Sneha Basti*, that is, 3 Pala
- *Matra Basti*: This is the minimum quantity of *Sneha Basti* (1/2 of *Anuvasana Basti*), that is, 1½ Pala.

#### *Niruha Basti*<sup>[10]</sup>

The *Basti* which eliminates the vitiated *Dosha* from the body and increase the strength of the body due to its potency is called "*Niruha Basti*."

Synonyms-*Asthapana*, *Kashaya* etc.

In *Niruha Basti*, *Kwatha* prepared with various *Dravyas* is used with additions of *Sneha*, *Madhu*, *Saindhava*, *Kalka*, etc.

### Depending On Drugs and Preparations used in *Basti*, it May be Classified as Follows: (Su. Chi. 35/18)

- *Madhutaailika Basti*
- *Piccha Basti*
- *Siddha Basti*
- *Vaitarana Basti*
- *Yuktaratha Basti*
- *Picchila Basti*
- *Yapana Basti*

### On the Basis of Chief Drugs

- *Kshira Basti*
- *Mamsarasa Basti*
- *Amla Kanjika Basti*
- *Gomutra Basti*
- *Rakta Basti*
- *Asavakrita Basti*
- *Kshara Basti*
- *Dadhi Majja Basti*

### According to Anatomical Classification

- Internal Application
  - *Pakwashayagata Basti*
  - *Uttara Basti*: *Yonimarga* and *Mutramarga*.
- External Application
  - *Vranagata Basti*
  - *Kati Basti*
  - *Shiro Basti*
  - *Netra Basti*.

### According to the Number of *Basti* to be used

1. *Karma Basti* ---- 30 *Basti* 18 *Anuvasana* and 12 *Niruha Basti*
2. *Kala Basti* ---- 16 *Basti* 10 *Anuvasana* and 06 *Niruha Basti*
3. *Yoga Basti* ---- 08 *Basti* 05 *Anuvasana* and 03 *Niruha Basti*.

In the above types, fixed sequence of *Anuvasana* and *Niruha Basti* is followed.

### According to Pharmacological Actions

- According to (Su. Chi.35/19)
  - a. *Shodhana Basti*
  - b. *Lekhana Basti*
  - c. *Snehana Basti*
  - d. *Brimhana Basti*.
- According to (A.S.19/61)
  - a. *Utkleshana Basti*
  - b. *Doshahara Basti*
  - c. *Shamana Basti*.
- According to (Sh. U. 6/17-23)
  - a. *Utkleshana Basti*
  - b. *Doshahara Basti*
  - c. *Shodhana Basti*
  - d. *Shamana Basti*
  - e. *Lekhana Basti*
  - f. *Brimhana Basti*
  - g. *Picchila Basti*.

### According to Potency and Property

- a. *Ushna Basti*
- b. *Sheeta Basti*
- c. *Ruksha Basti*
- d. *Snigdha Basti*
- e. *Laghu Basti*
- f. *Guru Basti*.

### According to Intensity

- a. *Mridu Basti*
- b. *Madhyama Basti*
- c. *Tikshna Basti*
- d. *Picchila Basti*.

### According to Specific Indication

- a. *Pramehahara Basti*
- b. *Visarpahara Basti*
- c. *Raktapittahara Basti*
- d. *Kusthahara Basti*
- e. *Vataraktahara Basti*
- f. *Gulmahara Basti*
- g. *Krimihara Basti*
- h. *Parikartikahara Basti*
- i. *Mutrakrichhrahara Basti*
- j. *Dahaghna Basti*.

### 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*.

### 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*.

In general, approximately 216 kinds of *Basti* are mentioned by *Archarya Charaka* in various chapters of *Siddhithana*.

#### *Basti Yantra*

The instrument used for *Basti Karma* is known as "*Basti yanta*." It consists two parts.

1. *Basti Netra* (Nozzle)
2. *Basti Putaka*(Can or Bag)

#### *Basti Netra: (Nozzle)*

It is usually made up of brass, having a tapering end and a wider base (which resembles like cow's tail). The instrument is tubular in shape with blunt end a very smooth surface. According to the age of the patients, the size of *Basti netra* differs.<sup>[11]</sup>

#### *Karnika*

*Karnika* denotes the ring present in the nozzle. In general, there are three rings in the nozzle. The *Netra* is inserted into the *Gudam*(anus) up to the first ring. The last two rings at the bottom are used to tie the enema bag with nozzle.

#### *Basti Putaka*

*Basti Putaka* is a soft and flexible bag which is attached to the base of *Bastinetra* to hold *Bastidravaya*. In olden days, this was prepared from processed urinary bladder of animals like cow. As this is not available, leather bags can be used. Nowadays, polythene or rubber bags are used widely.<sup>[12]</sup>

### Significance of Left lateral Position<sup>[13]</sup>

There are three rectal valves superior, middle, and inferior. Anatomically, functionally, and developmentally, the middle one is important. The middle rectal valve is situated on the right side of the rectum. It plays an important role in the defecation process. The presence of fecal matter below the valve initiates defecation reflex, which means normally the part below this valve is devoid any fecal matter. In left lateral position, this valve is protected and any other position may injure this valve which can cause fecal incontinence. Lying on the left side keeping the sphincters (*Valayas*) submerged into the surrounding musculature.

This position also helps in the gravity due to the anatomical slope which facilitates passing of *Basti Draya* across the rectum to

another area. If done in the right lateral position, the *Dravya* has to go against gravity. If we know that the patients has congenital defects like Dextrocardiatotallis or situs inverses giving *Basti* in right lateral position can be considered. The absorptive area of mucosa is also more on left side.

### MODE OF ACTION OF **BASTI DRUGS**<sup>[13]</sup>

*Niruha Basti* has a unique method of its preparation called as *Sammelana*. Its uniqueness is that many things which are basically not easily miscible and having different densities are mixed so as to make a homogenous liquid. The basic ingredients to prepare a *Niruha Basti* is *Saindhava*, *Madhu*, *Sneha*, *Kalka*, and *Kashaya*. In some *Bastis*, *Dravyas* like milk, *Mansarasa* are mixed, the quantity of which is summed up in the quantity of *Kashaya* taken.

*Sammelana Viddhi*: First, the honey is mixed with rock salt and grinded in a mortar until they mix up properly. Later, the oil or ghee or both is added to the mixture and thoroughly mixed. Later *Kalka* is added and mixed, and finally, *Kashaya* is added to the mixture and grinded well until they form a homogenous mixture. The contents should not get settled in different layers. This is the test for homogeneity.

#### **Saindhava**

Due to its *Ushna*, *Tikshna*, and properties, it is easily mixed with honey and forms homogenous mixture. It destroys the *Pichchhila*, *Bahula*, and *Kashaya* properties of honey. It is useful in regulating acid, alkaline balance, maintaining osmosis, and activation of ATP phase. Salt has property of stimulating ionic action potential which may be one of the causative factors for the mode of action of *Basti*.

#### **Madhu (Honey)**

Honey is sweet and astringent in taste, *Chedana* and *Ruksha* in *Guna* and *Ushna* in *Veerya*. It is *Kaphahara* and *VranaSodhana* in nature. The most important properties of *Madhu* in the context of *Bastikarma* are the *Yogavahitvam* and *Suksmamargaanusaritvam*. *Yogavahi* means catalyst in action. *Suksmamargaanusaritvam* is the potency to penetrate into the minute capillaries of the body via *Srotas* (increasing osmotic permeability).

#### **Sneha (Oil)**

The medicine administered to the seat of *Vata* should contain some *Snehadravaya* in it. The *Sneha* will lubricate the colon, soften the *Mala*, and help to eliminate it without strain. It counterparts some of irritating properties of both *Madhu* and *Saindhava*.

Among the 4 *Snehadravaya*, *Taila* and *Ghrita* are widely used for *Basti karma*. *Taila* is used for *Vata Kapha* condition and *Ghrita* for *vataPitta* conditions.

#### **Kalka (Paste)**

*Kalka* gives thickness to the *Basti Dravya*. *Kalka* is the main drug, which gives potency to the whole combination. If the quantity of *Kalka* is increased, dehydration will occur. *Kalka* helps to disintegrate the *Malas* by increasing the osmotic permeability of the solution. *Kalka* is prepared by grinding prescribed drugs.

### **Kwatha (Decoction)**

*Kwatha* helps in maintain the volume of the fluid, which helps in spreading and cleaning. Besides that, the herbs added are *Vatahara* in nature which provides *Anulomana* and *Nirharana* of *Doshas*. The decoction is made as per *Yoga's* mentioned in the classical texts or with rationally selected drugs according to the diseases and condition of the patients.

*Vayu* is the responsible element to spread *Doshas* in the *Shakha*, *Koshthadi Rogamargas*. *Samhanana* (Collection) and *Samvahana* (Transportation) of *Pitta*, *Kapha*, *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Sveda*, *Mala*, *Mutra*, etc., are also under the control of *Vata*. (*Sh. Pu.5/25*). Thus, from the treatment point of view, the *Chalaguna* of *Vata* is an important aspect in alleviation of aggravated *Vayu*.

### **Qualities of prepared Basti Dravya**

1. A prepared *Basti Dravya* should be homogenous.
2. *Basti Dravya* should be of body temperature at the time of administration.
3. No oil drops should be floating on the surface of *Basti Dravya*.
4. Consistency of *Basti* should be not so thick and not so liquid.

### **MODE OF ACTION OF BASTI**

*Basti* is administered in the *Pakwashaya*, it has action throughout the body. According to *Acharya Sushrut*, a properly given *Basti* remain in the *Pakwashaya*, *Sroni*, and below *Nabhi* and through the *Srotas*, the *Veerya* of *Basti Dravya* is spread to the entire body. Similarly, though *Basti* remains in the body only for short time and it is excreted along with *Mala* by the action of *ApanaVayu*, due to the *Veerya*, the *Doshas*/morbid factors situated from the head to foot are also forcibly thrown out of the body. In the words of *Suhsruta*, it is like the sun which though situated light years away, due to its *Ushna*, *Tikshna Prabhava* absorbs the *rasa* of *Prithavi*.

*Basti* is having two actions, expelling the *Doshas*, and nourishing the body. First potency of *Basti* drugs gets absorbed to have its systemic action. Its second major action is related with the facilitation of excretion of morbid substances responsible for the disease process into the colon, from where they are evacuated.

All these actions of *Basti* can be well explained on the basis of known physiological and pharmacological actions.

The gastrointestinal tract has a nervous system all of its own called the "Enteric Nervous System." It lies entirely in the wall of the gut, beginning in the esophagus and extending all the way to the anus. The number of neurons in the enteric system is about 10 crores almost exactly equal to the number in the entire spinal cord. It especially controls gastrointestinal movements and secretion. The two plexuses in enteric system are Myentric plexus and submucosal plexus. The sigmoidal, rectal, and anal regions of the large intestine are considerably better supplied with parasympathetic fibers than other portions. They are mainly stimulatory in action and function, especially in the defecation reflexes.<sup>[13]</sup>

Most of the absorption in the large intestine occurs in the proximal half of the colon, giving this portion the name absorbing colon. Absorption through the gastrointestinal mucosa occurs by active transport and by diffusion. Water is transported through the intestinal membrane entirely by the process of diffusion. Furthermore, this diffusion obeys the usual law of osmosis. Therefore, when the chime is dilute, water is absorbed through the intestinal mucosa into the blood of the villi by osmosis. On the other hand, water can also be transported

in the opposite direction from the plasma into the chime. This occurs especially when hyperosmotic solution is discharged from the stomach.

The rectum has rich blood and lymph supply and the drug can cross the rectal mucosa like another lipid membrane. Thus, unionized and lipid-soluble substances are readily absorbed from the rectal mucosa. Small quantities of short-chain fatty acids, such as those from butterfat are absorbed directly into portal blood rather than being converted into triglycerides. This is due to short-chain fatty acids which are more water-soluble and allows direct diffusion from the epithelial cells into the capillary blood of the villi.

The active principles of *Basti* drugs may also be absorbed, because they are mainly water-soluble. It may be considered that *Niruha Basti* is hyperosmotic and facilitates absorption of morbid factors into the solution, whereas the *Sneha Basti* and other nourishing *Basties* contain hypo-osmotic solution facilitating absorption into the blood.

A volume of about 1000 cc of gas is estimated to be present in GI tract, which can be readily expelled by *Basti*.

### **EFFECT OF BASTI<sup>[14]</sup>**

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.

### **Rejuvenative Aspect**

Increases the quantity and quality of sperm, effective in restoring the normal functions of blood and other *Dhatu* and it provides strength by increasing muscle power and is beneficial in geriatrics.

## Effect on Brain and Psychology

Improves intellectual power, provides clarity of mind, improves clarity of sense organs, induces sound sleep, lightness in the body, exhilaration, and invigorates eyesight and spright lightness of mind.

## Effective at any Age and in any Season

*Basti* is non-antagonistic to healthy, diseased and old person. Applicable in all seasons and can be administered in child and older person too.

## MEDICATION BY RECTUM

### Rectal Administration

Substances may be introduced into the rectum for exciting evacuation or for medication which later may be intended for effect in three different locations.

1. For effects on the contents of the colon for which the term "**Endocolonic**" might be suggested to differentiate it from others.
2. Effect to be exerted on the tissue of the colon, for which the term "**Encolonic**" might be a suitable designation.
3. For administration by the way rectal medication intended for systemic action for which the term "Diacolonic" might be employed.

### Why Rectal Administration?

1. When it is desired to spare the stomach and intestine from the action of the drug or to protect the drug from the action of the digestive ferments and the first pass metabolism.
2. With children, who will not take disagreeable testing medicaments or with the insane, which refuse to swallow, rectal administration may become an important recourse.
3. Bitter substance, such as strychnine can best be given to children in suppository form.

### Retention Time

For *Niruha Basti*, the maximum time of retention is one *Muhurta* (48 min), while for *Anuvasana Basti* retention time is 12 h.

## CONCLUSION

"*Basti Vatavikaranam*" is one of the important quotations mentioned by Acharya Vagbhata in *Agrya Dravyas*.<sup>[15]</sup> Furthermore, when either *Kapha* or *Pitta* gets liquefied by *Sneha* and *Sweda* (oleation and sudation therapy) exhibit their symptoms in *Pakwashaya*, then, they should be eliminated by *Basti*.<sup>[16]</sup> These Classical condition clearly indicates that *Basti* therapy helps in elimination of all the three *Doshas*.

Thus, it can be concluded that, *Basti* is a highly complex, sophisticated, and systemic therapy having a wider range of

therapeutic actions and indications. It has been considered as prime treatment modality of *Vata Dosha*. Innumerable *Basti* can be formulated using various drugs in different proportions for various diseases and for different patients. Specific rules and regulations are indicated for the administration of *Basti* which must be followed to obtain the desirable result.

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