



**Review Article**

**APPLIED ASPECTS OF KOSH TA AND AGNI IN PANCHAKARMA**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Panchakarma* is the elimination of *Bahu dosha* (excessive *Doshas*) in *Bahu ati matra* (excessive amount) through the *Asanna marga* (nearest route), thus all *Panchakarma* can be viewed under *Poorvakarma* (pre-operative), *Pradhana karma* (operative) and *Paschat karma* (post-operative). *Koshta* (bowel) and *Agni* play an important role in these stages. *Koshta* is the basic and important concept in Ayurveda. *Koshta* plays an important role in selection of the line of treatment. *Koshta pariksha* is necessary to evaluate the selection of *Aushadha matra*, *Anupana*, and *Snehapana*. *Agni* has great importance in maintaining good health. In clinical practice, *Agni Pariksha* (assessment of *Agni*) is very important, as only on this *Pariksha*, treatment plan can be decided. "Applied aspects" refer to the practical or real-world applications and implementations of knowledge, theories, principles, or research findings in various fields of study like *Shalya Tantra*, *Shalakyia Tantra*, *Kaumarabritya*, *Panchakarma* and others. In the field of *Panchakarma* which includes anatomy, physiology, pathology, assessment and medicine. The medicinal aspect can be understood with the procedures followed in *Panchakarma* in terms of *Poorva*, *Pradhana* and *Paschat karma*. For *Shodhana* (purification Therapy) and *Shamana* (palliative), assessment and understanding of *Koshta* and *Agni* (fire) plays a major role.

**INTRODUCTION**

*Koshta* is derived from "*Kush n nishkarsh*". *Acharya Charaka* mentioned *Koshta* as *Mahasrotas*. It is said to be an *Abhyanthara rogamarga*<sup>[1]</sup>. *Koshta* is the nature of bowel habit i.e., the movement of digested food in the alimentary canal, ultimately leading to the elimination of stool. These cavities are the spaces or hollow areas within the body that contain organs <sup>[2]</sup>. *Koshta pariksha* is important in *Panchakarma*. It can be understood mainly by two methods.

1) *Anumana* (inference) by giving *Mridu anulomaka dravyas* (mild laxatives) like *Ksheera* (milk), *Juda* (jaggery), *Ikshurasa*<sup>[3]</sup> (sugar cane juice) etc.

2) *Prashna pariksha* (interrogation) by asking directly with the patient about nature of bowel habit, frequency, consistency.

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**Table 1: Showing Koshta According To Different Acharyas**

<i>Koshta</i>	<i>Charaka</i>	<i>Sushruta</i>	<i>Vagbhata</i>	<i>Sharangadhara</i>
<i>Mridu</i>	<i>Udeerna pitta alpa kapha Manda maruta</i>	<i>Bahu pitta</i>	<i>Bahu pitta</i>	<i>Bahu pitta</i>
<i>Madhyama</i>	<i>Sama dosha</i>	<i>Sama dosha</i>	<i>Bahu sleshma Sama dosha</i>	<i>Bahu sleshma</i>
<i>Krura</i>	<i>Atyulbana anila</i>	<i>Bahu vata sleshmana</i>	<i>Prabhuta marutha</i>	<i>Bahu vata</i>

**Agni (fire)**

'Agni' derives from 'Ang Dhatu' and 'Gati pratyaya' meaning - 'Widely spreading'. It has synonyms like Vaishwanara, Sarva paka, Shuchi, Vishwambhar, Rudra, Tejasa, Vanhi etc.

**Table 2: Description of Agni According to Acharyas**

Samhithas	No. of Agni	Name
Charaka	13	Jatharagni - 1 Bhutagni - 5 Dhatvagni - 7
Sushruta	5 (Agni)	Pachakagni, Ranjakagni, Sadhakagni, Bhrajakagni, Alochakagni
Ashtanga hridaya	18	Bhutagni - 5 Dhatvagni - 7 Doshagni - 3 Malagni - 3
Sharangadhara	5 (Pitta)	Pachaka, Ranjaka, Sadhaka, Bhrajaka, Alochaka

**Jatharagni (digestive fire)**

Jatharagni is present in Jathara (stomach and duodenum), the seat of Grahani (duodenum) and helps for Dhatupaka.

It helps for the separation of Prasada (essence) and Kitta bhaga (excretory waste).

**Bhutagni and Dhatvagni**

Partially digested food is exposed to Bhutagni i.e., Parthiva agni digests Parthiva part of food. Likewise, every type of Agni digests its own type of food.

The Agni responsible for nourishment of seven Dhatu is called Dhatvagni. It exists in Dhatu (tissues) itself.

When the digested nutrients reach Dhatu, Dhatvagni acts on it and divides it into Sara (essence) and Kitta bhaga (excretory waste).

Sara nourishes the concerned Dathus and Kitta gets eliminated.

**Agni Pariksha (assessment of digestive fire)**

Agni can be assessed by Abhyavaharana Shakti and Jarana shakti of a subject.

**a) Abhyavaharana Shakti (power of ingestion)**

The amount and quality of food intake determines the Abhyavaharana Shakti.

**b) Jarana Shakti (power of digestion)**

If digestion process is proper, and then at the end of digestion, it will give rise to, Jeerna Ahara Lakshana (signs of complete digestion). Utsaha (enthusiasm), Laghuta (lightness), Udgara Suddhi (clear belching), Kshudha-Trishna Pravritti (hunger and thirst in proper time) and Yathochita Malotsarga (timely evacuation of faeces) are the symptoms of proper digestion.

**Concept of Agni and Pitta**

Pitta inside the body is not the Agni but it refers to the Ushna guna (hotness) of Agni.

The word Pitta is derived from Sanskrit root 'Tapa' and this has three meanings.

तापयति दहति भुक्तमाहारजातामिति पित्तम् ।

तप दाहे: (Generation of heat)

तप सन्तापे: (Burn the substratum)

तप ऐश्वर्ये: (Help for achievement)

1. Pitta is the only form of Agni in the body, because of the properties of fire in Pitta. Pitta performs functions like digestion, metabolism etc. and therefore it is regarded as Antaragni.
2. There are two aspects of Pitta - the digestion of food and its transformation into various functional and structural factors of the body. Thus, when Pitta is in Praakrita Avastha (normal state) it nourishes the body and Vikrita avastha (vitiated) destroys the body.
3. The function of Pitta inside the body is to provide the heat of Agni [4]. (i.e., digestive fire is included with in Agni.)

**Differences between Agni and Pitta**

There are some differences between Pitta and Agni. They are as below:

- 1) Ghrita (ghee) intake is said to cause Pitta shaamana (pacify Pitta) but Agni dipana (increases fire). Matsyadi (fish and other items) does Pitta vridhhi (increases Pitta) but not Agni dipana (not increase Agni)[5]. Also, Agni is responsible for Ushnata (hotness) whereas Pitta has qualities like Drava (liquidity), Snigdha (unctuous) and Adhoga (downward movement).

**Table 3: The Effect of Some Factors over Pitta and Agni**

Factors	Effect on Pitta	Effect on Agni
Ghee	Shamana	Deepana
Goat milk and fish	Prakopa	No effect
Divaswapna (day sleep)	Prakopa	Shamana

3) A healthy person is in a state where *Dosha, Agni, Dhātu, mala* and all the physiological processes are in perfect state and the *Athma* (soul), *Indriya* (organs), *Manas* (mind) are in the state of satisfaction [6].

### Role of Koshta and Agni in Poorvakarma

#### 1) Deepana-Pachana (Digestive and Carminative Drugs)

*Poorvakarma* is the preliminary set of procedures done before the actual procedures. The drugs that increase *Agni* are termed as *Deepana dravyas*. And there by stimulate *Jatharagni* which help the body to accept the drugs.

*Pachana* is one among the *Langhana chikitsa*. It helps in digestion of *Ama* and hence relieves *Ajeerna* (indigestion).

Before the administration of *Sneha*, one must administer mild medicines which increases the *Agni* and brings the *Laghuta* (lightness) in the *Koshta*[7]. If *Shodhana* is administered in *Ama avastha* it will hamper the body just like extracting juice from a unripen fruit [8].

#### 2) Rookshana (Dryness therapy)

There is a direct indication of *Rookshana* in *Vishamagni*[9] and in persons with *Ruksha* (dry), *Bahu-*

*anila* and *Krura koshta*, *Vyayama sheela*, *Deeptagni vishshta poorvakarma* in the form of *Rookshana* can be done. Improper *Rookshana* may lead to *Agnibala nasha* (depletion of digestive fire).

#### 3) Snehana (Oleation Therapy)

*Snehana* refers to administration of oily substance to produce *Vishyandana* (liquefaction), *Mardava* (softness), and *Kledana* (moistness). It may be both internally and externally. In *Abhyanthara snehapana* (administration of ghee internally) *Koshta* helps for deciding number of days of *Snehapana* and *Agni* helps for fixing the dose of *Aushadha* (medicine). Based on *Koshta*, *Snehapana* can be given from 3-7days [10] and based on *Agnibala* (digestive power) *Hraswa* (less), *Madhya* (medium), *Uttama matras* (maximum) can be given for the persons having *Mandagni*, *Madyamagni* and *Uttamagni* respectively. If *Koshta* is unknown *Snehapana* can start with *Hriseeyasi matra* (test dose).

For persons who have *Manda Agni snehapana* can be given with *Kshara* (alkali) and in *Krura Koshta*, with *Lavana* (salt) should be added during *Snehapana* [11] and for Persons with *Theekshna Agni* and predominant *Pitta* in *Grahani*, *Sneha* gets digested quickly by the power of *Agni* [12]. The *Agni* and *Koshta* should be analyse properly for the selection of *Chathu Sneha*.

**Table 4: Selection of Snehadravys and its Anupanas According to Status of Agni and Koshta**

Agni & koshta	Chathu snehas	Anupana
Deepthagni	Ghrita (ghee)	Ushnodaka (hot water)
Krura koshta,	Taila (oil)	Yusha (soup)
Mahan agni bala+ Koshtagata roga	Vasa (fat)	Manda (supernatant watery portion)
Deepthagni + Krura koshta	Majja (bone marrow)	Manda (supernatant watery portion)

#### 4) Swedana (Sudation Therapy)

The *Samanaga swedana* helps for *Agni deepthi*, and *Shodhanaga* helps to bring the *Doshas* from *Shakha* to *Koshta*. The *Ushna teekshna* properties help in *Ama pachana* and thereby increases the *Agni* inside body.

#### Role of Koshta and Agni in Bahirparimarjana chikitsa

According to *Acharya Sushruta* the *Bahirparimarjana chikitsas* like *Parisheka* (pouring of liquid medicines), *Avagaha* (immersion bath) etc help in *Siramukha vivikthyathwa* [13] (dilates the orifices of *Sira* and stimulates *Brajaka Pitta*) increases the *Agni* present in the *Twak* (skin) and thereby help in the absorption of the drug.

### Role of Koshta and Agni in Pradhana Karma In Vamana (Therapeutic Emesis)

**Table 5: Role of Koshta and Agni Before, During and After Vamana**

Before	During	After
सुजीर्णत्र	अपक्वं वमनं दोषान्	वमिते वर्धते वह्निः॥
Optimum level of <i>Agni</i> is needed to administer <i>Vamana aushadha</i>	<i>Vamana aushadha</i> is not undergoing <i>Paka</i>	<i>Samsarjana krama</i> to be followed for the increase in <i>Agni</i>

The *Gunas* (properties) of *Vamana Aushadhi's* are *Ushna* (hot), *Theekshna* (sharp) *Vyavayi* (spread throughout body), etc which suggests that the drug shows *Prabhava* (effect) before digested to *Jatharagni*. *Vamana* is one procedure that can be administered to *Manda Agni* individuals. Determination of dosage of *Vamana aushadhi* depends on *Sharira Bala* (body's strength), *Vyadhi Bala* (disease's strength) and *Agni Bala* (digestive fire's strength). When the amount of *Kapha* is more, medium and minimum in the *Koshta*, it is considered as *Mrudu*, *Madhyama* and *Krura koshta* respectively for *Vamana* [14]. *Shodhana* medicine is decided based on *Koshta* of the patient, for *Mridu koshta* patient (lesser dose), *Madhyama* (medium dose) and *Krura* (high dose) medicines has to be given.

### In *Virechana* (Therapeutic purgation)

The *Samyak lakshana* of *Virechana* leading towards *कायाग्नि दीपनं*.

**Table 6: Role of *Koshta* and *Agni* in *Virechana***

During	After
<p>पच्यमानं विरेचनम् ॥  <i>Virechaka Dravya</i> comes in contact with <i>Agni</i> undergoes <i>Paka</i>.                      As <i>Virechana Dravya</i> has properties like <i>Sara guna</i> (mobility), <i>Adhobhaga</i> (downward movement), <i>Prabhava</i> (effect) and predominance of <i>Jala</i> (water) and <i>Prithvi</i> (earth) <i>Mahabutha</i>, there is a natural tendency to move downwards.</p>	<p>वमितश्च विरिक्तश्च मन्दाग्निश्च विलङ्घितः।                      अग्निप्राणविवृद्धयर्थं क्रमं पेयादिकं भजेत् ॥                      After <i>Vamana</i> and <i>Virechana</i>, <i>Agni</i> is the <i>Manda avastha</i>. This is treated with <i>Langhana</i> and <i>Peyadi samsarjana krama</i> is adopted for <i>Agni deepthi</i> and <i>Prana vivardhana</i>.</p>

*Sharangadhara Samhita* mentions the relations between *Koshta-Virechana aushadha* with *Anupana* (taken along with). For *Krura koshta* individuals *Tikshna matra aushadha* like *Swaraksheeri*, *Jayapala*. For *Mridu koshta mridu matra aushadhas* like *Draksha* (grapes), cow milk, hot water, *Eranda taila*, and for *Madhyama koshta*, *Madhyama matra aushadha* like with *Trivrut* and *Katuki*.

**Table 7: Relationship B/W *Koshta-Virechana Aushadha-Matra-Anupana***

<i>Koshta</i>	<i>Virechana aushadhi</i>	<i>Matra</i>	<i>Anupana</i>
<i>Krura</i>	<i>Swarna ksheeri</i> , <i>Jayapala</i>	<i>Tikshna</i>	<i>Trivrit + Jangala rasa</i> ( <i>Shundi</i> , <i>Saindhava</i> , <i>Amla</i> , <i>Madhya</i> etc.)
<i>Mridu</i>	<i>Draksha</i> , cow milk, hot water, <i>Eranda taila</i>	<i>Mridu</i>	<i>Trivrit + Draksha kwatha</i> ( <i>Ksheera</i> , <i>Ikshurasa</i> etc.)
<i>madhyama</i>	<i>Trivrit</i> , <i>Katuki</i>	<i>Madhyama</i>	<i>Trivrit + Triphala kwatha</i> ( <i>Gomuthra</i> , <i>Trikatu</i> etc.)

### In *Basti* (Therapeutic Enema)

- *Basti dravya* doesn't come in direct contact with *Jatharagni*, but while explaining *Sameekshya bhavas agni* is been mentioned.
- *Niruha Basti* is mentioned as the *Chikista* (treatment) for *Koshtagata rogas* and *Vishmagni*, similarly *Anuvasana basti* is indicated in *Tikshnagni*.
- *Niruha basti* is contraindicated in *Ajeerna* and *Madagni*, similarly *Anuvasana basti* is contraindicated in *Mandagni* and *Guru koshta*. *Basti*, given in this condition, leads to reduction of *Agni*.
- If *Basti* is given for preventive aspects, it leads to *Agni deepthi*. The *Samyak niruha basti lakshana* pointing towards *Agni deepthi* and the proper diet after *Anuvasana basti* helps for *Agni vridhi*.
- If *Thikshna*, *Ushna basti* is given in *Mrudu koshta* person. It will lead to *Atiyoga*, similarly *Ayoga*, *Adhmana* (distention), *Hikka* (hiccups), *Shiro arthi* (pain in head), *Parikarthika* (fissure in ano) are explained so, that gives a hint regarding *Koshta* also plays an important in *Basti karma*
- To remove the *Doshas* which are adhering in *Koshta*, *Antharapana*[15] with *Vyosha*, *Amla*, *lavana* (salt) can be used.

- *Mridu koshta* is considered as one of the reasons for early *Prathyagamana* of *Basti Dravya*.

### In *Nasya* (Instillation of medicine through the Nose)

There is no direct relation of *Koshtha* and *Agni* in *Nasya*. But *Acharya Charaka* mentioned it cannot be performed in *Ajeerna* condition that means optimum *Agni* is needed for the procedure and the absorption of *Nasya aushadhi* takes place because of the *Agni*. [*Abhyanga* (oil massage) and *Sweda* (sudation) done as *Poorvakarma*].

### In *Paschat Karma*

*Shodhana* leads to elimination of *Doshas* from the body resulting in *Agni santhooshana*. Therefore, one has to follow the *Samsarjana krama*. To restore the strength of *Agni* and *Prana*, *Peyadi samsarjana krama* has to be followed [16]. Just as administering dry grass initially, followed by cow dung or pieces of wood in a *Homa*, increases the *Agni*, similarly, *Peyadi Krama* enhances the *Agni*.

When the patient is having good *Agnibala* then *Yusha* (food substance made of legume or pulses (except rice) along with liquids) should be

administered. Because of *Laghu* (lightness) property of *Peya* and *Vilepi*, they undergo early digestion due to good digestive fire. Hence, to prevent the early digestion and destruction of *Dhatu*, *Yushadi samsarjana krama* should be administered.<sup>[17]</sup>

*Mamsa rasa* (meat soup) should be administered by assessing the *Satmyata* (those who are habituated for intake of *Mamsa rasa*) and *Deeptagni* (one who is having good digestive capacity), the person predominant with *Vata dosha*.<sup>[18]</sup> *Mamsa rasa* (meat soup) has *Snigdha* property and thus reduces the *Vata*. Hence, the person who is having good digestion capacity as well as *Vata* predominant in the body, *Mamsa rasa samsarjana* is administered.

## DISCUSSION

*Koshta* and *Agni* are the important concepts which are useful in different treatment aspects which include *Shamana*, *Shodhana*, and *Rasayanartha*. Vaghbata clearly mentioned that the *Matra* (dose) of *Aushadha* <sup>[19]</sup> depend on *Vyadhi* (disease), *Koshta*, *Bala* (strength), *Vaya* (age), *Yukti* (logic), *Desha* (place), *Kala* (time), etc.

*Vamana aushadhi* is not under doing *Paka* as well as *Virechana aushadhi* undergoes *Paka*. The time of contact with *Agni* and the time for complete procedure in *Vamana* is less than *Virechana* and hence *Agni* is less hampered in *Vamana*. Even though *Agni santhushana* occurs after *Shodhana*, the *Samyak shodhana lakshana* and benefits of *Shodhana* directs towards *Agni deepthi*.

The time of administration of *Snehapana*, *Vamana aushadhi*, *Virechana aushadhi* have effects on *Agni* and *Koshta*. *Anuvasana Basti* given before food can cause *Agni Nasha* and therefore has to be given after food. In *Pashchat karma* of *Niruhabasti* different type of *Ahara* and quantity is mentioned based on *Agni*.

*Agni* is an integral part of human body. Whenever *Agni* is of *Alpa bala*, *Rasa dhatu* i.e., *Adhya dhatu* is not formed properly and remains in *Amashaya*, called *Ama* (free radicals). *Acharyas* mentioned that *Mandagni* is the cause for all diseases <sup>[20]</sup> and *Sushruthacharya* states that *Visamagni* gives rise to diseases of *Vata* origin. *Tiksnagni* causes diseases of *Pitta* origin and *Mandagni* for *Kapha* origin <sup>[21]</sup> so, the normal state of *Agni* should be maintained properly. It is to be noted that the *Acharyas* have also mentioned that the emotional state of an individual can affect the *Agni*.

The role of *Koshta* is not mentioned by *Acharya Vagbhata* and *Charaka* while explaining *Dasha vidha pareekshya bava* and *Dashavidha pareekshas*. In *Athuropakramaneeyam adyaya*, twelve-fold examination is mentioned, there as well *Koshta* does not have any role. *Bheshajavacharaneeya adyaya* in *Ashtanga sangraha* mentions the examination of *Athura*. There as well *Koshta* is not assessed. So, from

these references we come to the conclusion that the role of *Koshta* is highly specific. *Koshta* has specific role in specific disease and in specific procedures. It cannot be considered under general consideration.

*Koshta* also represents the movement of faecal matter. Defecation is the elimination of faeces which may be solid or semisolid in consistency from the digestive tract. This happens once or twice in a day, though the frequency can vary from several times a day to three times a week and still be considered normal. The process involves muscular contractions known as peristaltic waves in the walls of the colon, which move faecal matter through the digestive tract to the rectum. It requires integrated and coordinated sensory motor functions, which are managed by central, spinal, peripheral (both somatic and visceral), and enteric neural activities. These neural activities act on a morphologically intact gastrointestinal tract, including the pelvic floor and anal sphincters. There are several factors that influence the evacuation such as psycho-behavioural factors, posture of defecation, the diet, age and gender.<sup>[22]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The concept of *Koshta* and *Agni* has significant role in *Panchakarma* while selection of drug, dose of drug, selection of different treatment modalities for a disease. *Koshta* and *Agni pareeksha* is helpful in *Poorvakarma* (to decide the number of days and dose of *Snehapana*), *Pradhanakarma* (to decide the drug for *Shodhana*), and also in *Shamana chikitsa*. *Koshta pareeksha* reveals the predominance of *Dosha* and helps the physician to judge the line of treatment and can advice what to do and not to do.

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