

Ayurved Concepts of *koshta* and Its Applied Physiology in *chikitsa*

Dr. Khushbu Singhal¹, Prof. Ashok Kumar Sharma², Dr. Kishori Lal Sharma³

¹PG Scholar, Kriya Sharir Department, Madan Mohan Malviya Govt Ayurved College Udaipur (Raj.)

²Professor and HOD, Kriya Sharir Department, Madan Mohan Malviya Govt Ayurved College Udaipur (Raj.)

³Associate Professor, Kriya Sharir Department, Madan Mohan Malviya Govt Ayurved College Udaipur (Raj.)

Corresponding Author: Dr. Khushbu Singhal

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijhsr.20250945>

ABSTRACT

Koshta is a fundamental concept in Ayurveda that describes the functional nature of an individual's gastrointestinal tract, particularly in relation to digestion and elimination. It is classified into three types—*Mridu* (soft), *Madhyama* (moderate), and *Krura* (hard)—based on the dominance of the *Doshas* Pitta, Kapha, and Vata respectively. This classification helps in understanding a person's digestive capacity, bowel habits, and response to therapies, especially *Panchakarma* procedures. The study aims to explore the classical Ayurvedic understanding of *Koshta*, correlate it with modern gastrointestinal physiology, and highlight its clinical applications. A literary review of Ayurvedic texts was conducted along with a comparative analysis of modern digestive physiology. The findings reveal that *Koshta* plays a vital role in diagnosis, treatment planning, drug administration, and personalized healthcare in Ayurveda. Integrating this traditional concept with modern physiological knowledge can enhance the effectiveness of treatment and support the principles of holistic and individualized medicine.

Keywords: *Koshta*, *Agni*, *Dosha*, *prakriti*, *vikrati*.

INTRODUCTION:

Ayurveda, the ancient science of life, emphasizes the importance of understanding individual constitution (*Prakriti*) and functional states (*Doshas*) for maintaining health and treating disease. One such critical physiological concept in Ayurveda is *Koshta*, which refers to the functional nature of the gastrointestinal tract, particularly in terms of digestion and bowel habits. *Koshta* is not merely about anatomical structure but focuses on the physiological behavior of the gut, influenced by the dominant *Dosha* in an individual—*Vata*, *Pitta*, or *Kapha*. It is broadly classified into three types: *Mridu Koshta* (soft), *Madhyama Koshta*

(moderate), and *Krura Koshta* (hard), each corresponding to specific patterns of digestion and elimination.

The concept of *Koshta* holds significant value in clinical practice, especially in the planning and administration of Ayurvedic treatments such as *Panchakarma*, where the strength and type of purificatory therapies are selected based on a patient's *Koshta*. It also helps in deciding the diet, medication, and therapeutic procedures suited to an individual. Despite its ancient origins, the concept of *Koshta* finds relevance in modern gastrointestinal physiology, particularly in understanding variations in

gut motility, bowel regularity, and metabolic response among individuals.

Need of the Study

Understanding individual variability is central to Ayurvedic diagnosis and treatment. *Koshta*, a key concept related to digestive and excretory function, helps assess digestive strength and guides therapeutic procedures like *Vamana*, *Virechana*, and drug administration. While modern medicine studies gut physiology in detail, it lacks personalized approaches to digestive behavior. Ayurveda, through *Koshta*, offers a traditional yet relevant framework that aligns with personalized and predictive medicine. Studying *Koshta* in light of modern physiology can promote integrative, evidence-based care and enhance the development of personalized treatment models.

Aims and Objectives

Aim:

To explore the concept of *Koshta* as described in classical Ayurvedic literature and to understand its relevance and application in the context of modern physiology and clinical practice.

Objectives:

- To study the physiological basis of *Koshta* and correlate it with contemporary knowledge of gastrointestinal function and motility.
- To assess the clinical significance of *Koshta* in designing personalized Ayurvedic treatment protocols based on digestive and metabolic behavior.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

A thorough review of classical Ayurvedic texts was carried out, including references from the Brihatrayi (Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya) and the Laghutrayi (Sharngadhara Samhita, Bhavaprakasha, Madhava Nidana). To bridge the gap between traditional and modern perspectives, a detailed literature review was also conducted using standard textbooks of modern physiology.

LITERARY REVIEW

Defining Koshta

The term *Koshta* is derived from the root "*Kush n nishkarshe*,"¹ referring to internal spaces or cavities within the body². It is most commonly associated with the gastrointestinal tract but varies contextually: *Charaka* equates *Koshta* with *Mahasrotas*, the principal internal pathway of digestion. *Dalhanacharya*³ refers to it as the abdomen (*Udara*), while *Nibhandha Sangraha*⁴ and *Nyaya Chandrikakara*⁵ associate it with the digestive fire (*Agni*) and food transformation processes in *Grahani*.

Thus, *Koshta* is interpreted as:

- A cavity or internal space
- The site of digestion (*Ahara Paaka*)
- A channel for Dosha movement and elimination
- An indicator of gastrointestinal responsiveness

• *Trividha Koshta*

The Three Types *Koshta* is classified into three main types based on Dosha predominance in the *Grahani Nadi*: These types influence not only bowel consistency and frequency but also dictate therapeutic approaches.

<i>Koshta type</i>	<i>Charaka</i>	<i>Sushruta</i> ⁶	<i>Vagbhata</i> ⁷	<i>Sharangadhara</i> ⁸
Mridu (Soft)	Pitta>Kapha, Manda Vata	Bahu Pitta	Bahu Pitta	Bahu Pitta
Madhyama (Moderate)	Sama Dosha	Sama Dosha	Bahu Sleshma /Sama Dosha	Bahu Sleshma
Krura (Hard)	Atyulbna Vata	Bahu Vata, Sleshma	Prabhuta Maruta	Bahu Vata

Role of Koshtha and Agni in bowel function

Sr. No.	Koshtha	Dosha	Description of bowel function
1	Krura	Vata	<i>Krura Koshta</i> manifests as constipation, with hard, dry stools and slow, infrequent bowel movements.
2	Madhyam	Kapha	<i>Madhyama Koshta</i> , where stool consistency is normal, but the evacuation may be accompanied by occasional color changes and moderate urgency.
3	Mridu	Pitta	<i>Pitta</i> functions quickly and effortlessly. In individuals with <i>Mridu Koshta</i> , bowel movements tend to be soft and are passed easily.

Tridosha in imbalance State:

Sr. No.	Koshtha	Agni	Dosha imbalance	Description
1	Krura	Vishamagni	Vata imbalance	Marked by sensitivity to cold and dryness, accompanied by symptoms such as anxiety, tremors, spasms, weight loss, and insomnia.
2	Mridu	Tikshnagni	Pitta imbalance	Presents with excess heat, causing inflammatory conditions like skin rashes, acid reflux, and heartburn, along with emotional irritability and anger.
3	Madhyam	Mandagni	Kapha imbalance	Leads to sluggishness, emotional overeating, oversleeping, and conditions like obesity, asthma, and cardiovascular disease.

Tridosha in balanced State:

When the three *Doshas*—*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*—are in balance, both the digestive system (*Agni*) and the gut (*Koshta*) work smoothly. The digestive fire, known as *Samagni*, burns steadily, allowing food to be digested efficiently. This leads to regular and comfortable bowel movements, a state called *Sama Koshta*. In such harmony, the body absorbs nutrients properly and eliminates waste effectively, supporting good health and a sense of well-being.

Clinical Assessment of Koshta

Assessment of *Koshta* cannot be performed by visual inspection alone. It relies on *Anumana* (inference) through trial with mild laxatives (*Mridu Anulomana Dravyas*)⁹. Substances like milk, ghee, grape juice, sugarcane juice, or curd water help determine the *Koshta* type:

- *Mrudu Koshta*: Responds to mild laxatives with easy purgation.
- *Kroora Koshta*: Requires strong purgatives like Shyama or Eranda Taila.
- *Madhyama Koshta*: Shows moderate response to medium-strength agents.

Acharyas have also provided guidelines regarding duration: *Mridu Koshta* requires shorter purgation time (3 days), while *Kroora* may take up to 7 days.

DISCUSSION

Krura Koshta (Hard Bowel):

In *Krura Koshta*, *Vata* is the dominant *Dosha*. An increase in *Vata* leads to dry, hard stools that are difficult to pass or may not pass at all. This type of bowel is influenced by the *Ruksha* (dry) and *Khara* (rough) qualities of *Vata*, which overpower the *Sara* (fluidity) quality of *Pitta*. As a result, *Krura Koshta* tends to have poor secretory and absorptive functions.

Mridu Koshta (Soft Bowel):

In *Mridu Koshta*, *Pitta* is the predominant *Dosha*. When *Pitta* increases, it causes loose or semi-liquid stools that are passed frequently, often more than once or twice a day. This type of bowel is marked by the *Sara* (mobility), *Drava* (fluidity), *Snigdha* (unctuousness), and *Laghu* (lightness) qualities of *Pitta*. Consequently, the intestines are well-lubricated and smooth,

with increased secretion but relatively low absorption.

Madhyama Koshta (Moderate Bowel):

In *Madhyama Koshta*, Kapha is the dominant Dosha. An increase in Kapha results in soft, well-formed stools that are passed easily. This bowel type is influenced by *Snigdha* (unctuous), *Guru* (heavy), and *Sthira* (stable) qualities of Kapha. Although secretion is adequate and the intestines are well-lubricated, the stool is less slippery due to the heavy and stable nature of Kapha. In a balanced state, where all three Doshas are in harmony, *Madhyama Koshta* supports optimal secretion and absorption.

CONCLUSION

The Ayurvedic concept of *Koshta* provides a foundational understanding of individual digestive patterns and their relationship to Dosha dominance. Classically described as *Krura* (hard), *Mridu* (soft), and *Madhyama* (moderate), the nature of one's *Koshta* is directly linked to the predominance of Vata, Pitta, or Kapha. Each type influences bowel consistency, digestive strength, and response to therapeutic interventions, especially in procedures like *Panchakarma*. Now a days we saw the everyone immunity and personal health in hampered because of covid-19. So personalized ayurvedic diagnosis, treatment protocol is necessary for remain healthy. Thus, Evaluating *Koshta* plays a crucial role in this context by enabling:

- Personalized immunity-boosting strategies
- Precision in detoxification therapies (*Shodhana*)
- A deeper understanding of the gut-brain connection, central to both physical and mental health.

Thus, evaluating *Koshta* not only refines Ayurvedic diagnosis and treatment protocols but also bridges traditional wisdom with contemporary clinical approaches. It is a vital step toward holistic, individualized, and integrative care in today's evolving medical landscape.

Declaration by Authors

Acknowledgement: None

Source of Funding: None

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

1. Agnivesa's Charak Samhita elaborated by Charaka and redacted by Dradhabala, with the Ayurveda-Dipika commentary of Chakrapanidatta, Edited by Vaidya Jadavaji Trikamji Acharya, Chaukambha Orientalia, Varanasi, Reprint edition: 2021, Sutra sthana -11/48, P-77.
2. Agnivesa's Charak Samhita elaborated by Charaka and redacted by Dradhabala, with the Ayurveda-Dipika commentary of Chakrapanidatta, Edited by Vaidya Jadavaji Trikamji Acharya, Chaukambha Orientalia, Varanasi, Reprint edition: 2021, Shareera sthana - 7/10, P-338.
3. Sushruta. Sushruta Samhita with Nibandha Sangraha Teeka of Shri Dalhanacharya, and Nyaya Chandrika Panjika of Shri Gayadasacharya on Nidanastana, edited by Yadavji Trikamji Acharya 4th edition Varanasi: Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan Uttarasthana chapter 42 shioka no. 1980, 70
4. Sushruta. Sushruta Samhita with Nibandha Sangraha Teeka of Shri Dalhanacharya, and Nyaya Chandrika Panjika of Shri Gayadasacharya on Nidanastana, edited by Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. 4th edition. Varanasi: Sanskrit Chaukampha Sansthan. Nidanasthana chapter shloka no. 1980; 6: 295.
5. Sushruta. Sushruta Samhita with Nibandha Sangraha Teeka of Shri Dalhanacharya, and Nyaya Chandrika Panjika of Shri Gayadasacharya on Nidanastana. edited by Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. 4th edition. Varanasi: Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan Nidanasthana chapter 7th shloka no. 1980: 6: 295, ngraha andrika astana. edition. ansthan. 48 yurveda Yadavji
6. Sushruta. Sushruta Samhita with Nibandha Sangraha Teeka of Shri Dalhanacharya, and Nyaya Chandrika Panjika of Shri Gayadasacharya on Nidanastana, edited by Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. 4th edition. Varanasi: Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan. Chikitsasthana chapter 33td shloka no. 1980: 21: 518.

7. Vagbhata. Astanga Hrudaya with Sarvanga Sundara Teeka of Arunadatta and Ayurveda Rasayana Teeka of Hemadri. Edited by Pt. Hari Sadashiva Shastri Paradakara. Varanasi: Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan. Sutrasthana chapter 18th shloka, 2010: 34: 266.
8. Sharangadhara Samhita of Pt. Sharangadhara. Annotated with Dipika Hini commentary by Dr. Brahmananda tripathi. Chaukhambha Sanskrita prakashana Orientalia publishers Varanasi. Reprint edition. Uttara Khanda Chapter 1". shloka no. 2004;
9. Agnivesha. Charaka Samhita with Ayurveda Deepika Teeka of Cakrapanidatta, edited by Yadavja Trikamji Acharya. Varanasi: Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan. Sutrasthana chapter 13th shloka no, 2004;65-69:85.

How to cite this article: Khushbu Singhal, Ashok Kumar Sharma, Kishori Lal Sharma. *Ayurved concepts of kostha and its applied physiology in chikitsa. Int J Health Sci Res.* 2025; 15(9):403-407. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijhsr.20250945>
