

MATRA BASTI THE PANACEA: A NARRATIVE REVIEW**Biswajit Dash¹, Rabindranath Acharya², Gayatri Pattajoshi³**¹Lecturer, Dept. of Panchakarma, Government Ayurvedic College, Balangir, Odisha, India²Ex-Professor, Dept. of Panchakarma, S.S.N Ayurveda College & Research Institute, Paikmal, Odisha, India³Medical Officer AYUSH (Ayurvedic), Govt. of Odisha, India**Corresponding Author:** drbiswajitdash@yahoo.com<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj09p5012020>**(Published online: November 2020)****Open Access**

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Article Received: 30/09/2020 - **Peer Reviewed:** 15/10/2020 - **Accepted for Publication:** 08/10/2020**ABSTRACT**

In Panchakarma, Basti is one of the important therapies. *Basti Chikitsa* (therapeutic enema) is a natural method to detoxify the body and putting the vivacity into the millions of processes proceeding in the body i.e. it has the power to change the biological rhythm of the body and encourages self-healing. The impurities which are entangled with the body are scraped by the Basti Karma and shown the path of egress to them. It is a holistic treatment with natural things to bring the body back into its natural and homoeostatic state. *Basti Chikitsa* is considered to be a prime treatment modality among the Panchakarma in Ayurveda. It has not only curative aspects but also preventive and promotive aspects. This Basti treatment also relieves stress from the body and mind to improve the quality of life. *Matra Basti* is a therapy where least dose of oil/unctuous substance is used. It is preceded by *abhyanga* (therapeutic oil massage) and *Swedana* (sudation). Human is the king of the castle (body) so he has to make the decisions how to convert it into more beautiful and healthy state along with its prevention from the rust of impurities.

Keywords: *Abhyanga, Matra Basti, Swedana*, therapeutic enema

INTRODUCTION

Panchakarma therapy' is a composite and distinctive system of treatment in Ayurveda. The *Basti Chikitsa* or Medicated Enema Therapy is one part of the highly effective Panchakarma treatment. One particular form of Basti is *Matra Basti*. The word 'Basti' or 'Vasti' literally means bladder. In ancient times, bladders of animals were used to perform this procedure. Therefore, the procedure is named as *Basti Karma*. *Basti karma* may simply be understood as therapeutic enema. In this process, Medicated decoctions, ghee and oil are administered in the body through anus with the help of instrument specially made for Basti process. The therapy which while moving in the umbilical region, lumbar region, sides of chest and pelvic region churns up the stool including all other morbid matter located there and appropriately eliminates them with ease after nourishing the body can be known as *Basti*. Truly, Basti means one that holds the urine i.e. urinary bladder.

Action of Basti

The process of administration of herbal medicines with the help of *Basti* (urinary bladder) is known as

the *Basti Chikitsa*. *Matra Basti* is a type of *Sneha Basti* – fat enema. It has been highly praised for its extensive and multi-dimensional use. It doesn't cause any complication and it can be administered at any time to any age of person. The site of action of Basti karma is *Pakwashaya* i.e. lower gastrointestinal tract, which is the main site of *Vata Dosha*. Hence, *Basti* is useful for the treatment of vitiated *Vata*¹. *Vata* is the bio-energy responsible for all voluntary & involuntary activities of the body. In normal or physiological states *Vata Dosha* is responsible for all important functions of the body like heart beats, inspiration and expiration, peristaltic movements, musculo-skeletal movements, urination, defaecation, menstrual discharge, semen ejaculation and even delivery process. So, *basti* is helpful in preventive & curative aspect. For all these conditions especially in case of constipation, lower backache, gout, rheumatism, sciatica, arthritis, nervous disorders, headache, emaciation, muscular atrophy, etc.

Broadly *Basti* is of two types –

Table 1: Showing type of Basti

Sl.no.	Name of Basti	Material Used	Quantity
1.	<i>Niruha Basti</i>	<i>Kashaya Dravyas (Decoctions)</i>	Up to 1200 ml
2.	<i>Anuvasana Basti</i>	<i>Sneha Dravyas (Oils)</i>	Up to 300 ml

Incorrect diet pattern and modernised lifestyle is responsible for many diseases, as the *Vata Dosha* gets vitiated. In this pathological condition the *Basti karma* helps to reset and maintain the balanced state of *Vata Dosha* and it also helps in treatment of such diseases. Thus, *Basti karma* is the most important and powerful treatment procedure among all the five procedures in Panchakarma. *Basti* is said as half of the treatment of Ayurveda². Unlike *Vamana* and *Virechana*, *Basti* is not only cleansing process. It performs various types of functions according to the type of *Basti* implement-

ed e.g. *Shodhana Basti* acts as a cleansing process; *Brimhana Basti* is nutritive in function. It is the best treatment for *Vata Dosha*, as *Vata* is the cardinal factor because pitta and *Kapha* are immobile in nature. It is only the vitiated *Vata Dosha* that carries the *pitta* and *Kapha Doshas* along with it to cause the diseases. If the *Vata Humor* alone is under control, then the chances of gaining ill-health is much reduced. This is why *Basti* is considered as the most proactive therapy of Panchakarma and in Ayurveda it is regarded as the treatment above all or the total treatment.

Indications and Contraindications of Matra Basti:**Table 2:** Showing Indications and Contraindications for *Matra Basti*

Sl. No.	Indications ³	Contraindications
1.	<i>Vyayama karshita</i> – those who have got weak due to excessive exercises	<i>Ajeerna</i> and Day Sleep ⁴
2.	<i>Karma karshita</i> – people who are debilitated due to excessive work, strenuous work	All types of diarrhoeas, dysenteries, per rectal bleeding
3.	<i>Bhara karshita</i> – people who are debilitated due to excessive lifting of weights	Diabetes
4.	<i>Adhwa karshita</i> – people who are debilitated due to excessive walking	Severe anaemia
5.	<i>Yana karshita</i> – people who are debilitated due to excessive travelling	Breathlessness, Pulmonary tuberculosis
6.	<i>Stree karshita</i> – people who are debilitated due to excessive indulgence in sexual intercourse	Hypoproteinemia
7.	<i>Durbala</i> – excessive weakness	Infantile problems
8.	<i>Vatabhagneshu</i> – people who are suffering from diseases caused due to <i>Vata</i> vitiation	Senile debility, etc

Matra Basti Instruments

Syringe of 100cc, Disposable Gloves, Simple rubber catheter of number 10 or 12.

Method of administration of *Matra Basti*, Before the administration of *Matra Basti*, the Patient is asked for a light meal which is neither too oily nor too dry and not more than $\frac{3}{4}$ th of the usual quantity. The patient is done abhyanga with the medicated oil over the abdomen and low back region. After this, hot water fomentation / *Bashpa Swedana* is done. After the completion of this pre requisites, the patient is advised to take left lateral position with left lower extremity straight and right lower extremity flexed on knee and hip joint the patient is asked to keep the left hand below his/her head. A little amount of oil is applied to the anus, then 75ml of lukewarm medicated Oil is taken in enema syringe. Rubber catheter is oiled with oil and is attached to the enema syringe. Then after removing the air from enema syringe, rubber catheter is inserted into the anus of the patient upto 4-5 inches. The patient is asked to take deep breath while introducing the catheter and medicated oil. Complete oil is not admin-

istered, in order to avoid entrance of *Vayu* into the *Pakvashaya* which may produce discomfort. After the administration of Basti, the patient is advised to lie in supine position and patient's buttocks is gently tapped and legs are raised few times so as to raise the waist. After a while patient is advised to get up from the *Droni* and take rest. But if adverse effects like bulging of abdomen, gas in abdomen, pain or discomfort in abdomen appear then the following measures are used:

- Pessary
- Purgation with castor oil is given.
- Fomentation
- Use of *Tikshna Basti*- Cow urine or *Gomutrasava* is used.

Do's and Don'ts:

The *Matrabasti* does not demand any regimen of diet or behaviour. It can be given at all times and in all seasons without any restriction. Whereas, *Acharya Vriddha Vagbhata* has restricted the day sleep after being treated with *Matrabasti*.⁵

Some commonly used Sneha Yogas in Matra Basti⁶:**Table 3:** Showing Some commonly used *Sneha Yogas* in *Matra Basti*

Sl No.	Condition	Name of Sneha Yogas
1.	Vataja	Mahanarayana Taila, Bala Taila, Shuddhabala Taila, Ksheerabala Taila, Dhanwantaram Taila, Dashamoola Taila, Swadamstradi Taila, Ketakyadi Taila, Sahacharadi Taila, Balashwagandhadi Taila And Indukantam Ghrita Etc.
2.	Pittaja	Murchita Goghrita, Chatussneham, Madhuyashtyadi Taila, Sukumara Ghrita Etc
3.	Kaphaja	Triphaladi Taila, Saindhavadi Taila, Pippalyadi Taila, Etc
4.	Raktaja	Chandanabaladi Taila, Changeri Ghrita, Etc

DISCUSSION

The Classical term *Matrabasti* is popular because of its dose only, as the *Sneha* is administered in the least quantity. It can be used effectively in many conditions while all *Acharyas* explained about *Matra Basti*, as most safe and easy wherein the other varieties of *Basti* are contraindicated. Since, it is one of the simplest forms of *Basti* and involves no complications it can be administered without many hassles or prolonged preparations.

a.) Role of the Sneha (Lipids) Dravyas used in Matra Basti:

The *Sneha Dravyas* includes *Ghrita*, *Taila* (oil), *Vasa* and *Majja* (bone marrow) and each one is having its specific properties, and accordingly it yields its beneficial effects. *Sneha* in general is *Vatahara*, *Mridukara* (produces softness in the channels and tissues, in turn helps for easy elimination of waste substances) and removes the obstruction the channels produced by the Mala i.e. *Malanam Vinihanti Sangam*.⁷ As per the *Snigdha Guna*, it produces unctuousness in the body in turn it helps for easy elimination and by *Sukshma Guna* it helps the drug (by its potency) to reach into the *Srotas* (micro channels). Apart from these functions, it protects the mucous membrane from the untoward effect of irritating drugs in the *Basti Dravya*. In colon, production of short-chain fatty acids (SCFA) is produced by abundant bacterial fauna. Colonocytes can take SCFA up efficiently and in part utilize them as nutritional sources. Both squamous stratified mucosa of lumen and columnar simple epithelium of intestine absorb readily SCFA. Passive diffusion of the unionized form across the cell membrane is currently admitted. In the lumen, the necessary pro-

tonation of SCFA anions could come first from the hydration of CO₂.⁸ SCFAs might play a key role in the treatment of the metabolic syndrome, bowel disorders, and certain types of cancer. In clinical studies SCFA administration positively influenced the treatment of ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease and antibiotic-associated diarrhoea.⁹

b.) Probable mode of action of Matra Basti:

The human colon has a nominal mucosal surface area of about 2000 cm² but in reality, the total absorptive area is even greater because colonic crypt cells are capable of absorption as well as secretion¹⁰. Drug absorption is determined by the drug's physicochemical properties, formulation, and route of administration. In rectum, drugs may cross cell membranes by passive diffusion, facilitated passive diffusion, active transport or pinocytosis. Sometimes various globular proteins embedded in the matrix function as receptors and help transport molecules across the membrane.¹¹ *Basti* is the best treatment for *Vata* as said by Acharya Charaka "*Bastih Vataharanam*". *Basti* drug first reaches to the *Pakvashaya* (large intestine). *Pakvashaya* is the chief site of *Vatadosha*. Thus, by its action on the chief site, *Basti* gets control on *Vata* all over the body. *Pakvashaya* is the site of *Purishadharakala*. Commentator *Dalhana* has said *Purishadhara* and *Asthidhara kala* are one and same.¹² *Basti* drugs directly acts on different *kala* also. Acharya *Sushruta* has mentioned that 6th *Basti* nourishes *MamsaDhatu*, 7th *Basti* nourishes *MedaDhatu*, 8th *Basti* nourishes *Asthi Dhatu* and 9th *Basti* nourishes *Majja Dhatu*¹³.

So, it has *Vatasamshamana* and *Rasayana* properties. Hence, it is very good in *Vatavyadhis*. Thus, through Basti, one can achieve *Shamana* of the *Vayu dosha* as well as *Snehana* of *Dhatu*s. According to contemporary medical science, as per Enema concerned, in trans-rectal route, the rectum has a rich blood and lymph supply and drug can cross the rectal mucosa like other lipid membrane. So, by entering in general circulation, the *Basti* drugs acts on whole the body. Basti may act through the nervous system or through the enteric receptors. It may increase the secretion of local enzyme or neurotransmitters. Basti influences the normal bacterial flora, thus it increases the endogenous synthesis of vitamin B₁₂, vitamin K etc. Before the *matra basti*, *abhyanga* (oil massage) - directly acts on muscles and makes them strong. The root of *Mamsavaha Srotas* is *Snayu* (ligaments), *Tvacha* (skin) and *Raktavahini* (blood vessels). Hence, *Abhyanga* is done over *Tvacha* and *Snayu* and also it involves *Raktavahini*. So here, direct benefit is achieved at *Mamsavaha Srotas*. *Abhyanga* nourishes deeper *Dhatu*s too. While *Swedana* (fomentation) is *Srotoshuddhikara* (clears up the micro channels), *Agni Deepaka*, *Kaphavata Nirodhana* (antagonist of *Kapha*). It decreases all *Sthambha* (stiffness) and the heat administration by *Swedana* may produce hypno analgesic effect by diverted stimuli.

c.) Retention of *Matrabasti*:

The normal *Pratyagamana Kala* of *Sneha Basti* is 3 *Yama* i.e. 9 hours¹⁴. Being a type of *Sneha Basti*, the *Pratyagamana Kala* of *Matrabasti* is also 3 *Yama*. There is no harm if *Matrabasti* retains in the body because, while describing *Anuvasana Basti* it has been said that it is not harmful to body even in the event of its being retained in the body for a whole day. Also, the dose of *Sneha* in *Matrabasti* is very small, which can get easily absorbed in the body without coming out. If *basti* material returns much earlier, it cannot produce the desired effect in the body.

d.) Importance of left lateral position¹⁵:

By maintaining the left lateral procedure, during the administration of *Basti*, the *Bastidravya* reaches the *Pakwashaya* which resides in the left side. Charaka

opines by attaining this posture, *Gudavalis* will be relaxed. He also mentions that the *Grahani* is situated in the left side. Gangadhara says; *Agni*, *Grahani* and *Nabhi* are present in the left side. *Jejjata* comments *Agni* is present in left side over the *Nabhi*, *Guda* has got a left sided relation with *Sthoolantra*. So, the *Bastidravya* can reach to the large intestine and *Grahani*, as they are present in the same level.

CONCLUSION

Vata is the 'kinetic' principle that is associated with motion and movement of body. Among the *Panchamahabhutas*, *Vata Dosha* is represented as *vayu*. *Dhatu*s are managed by regulating the *Dosha* associated with them. Basti Karma is a part of the highly effective Panchakarma treatment modality. While one particular form of Basti is *Matra Basti*. It acts in the body in four dimensions i.e. by its action of unique Procedure, Drug, *Sroto Shodhana* and regulation of Gut Brain¹⁶ system. According to pharmacokinetics, drug given in rectal route will have faster absorption and higher bio availability. This Ayurvedic therapeutic enema is just like a diamond in the hand once you give 100 percent trust towards *Basti*, with integrity it will definitely bring revolution in the ill health. It develops an amity in the body by blowing out all the dross hence it keeps the person in healthy state. It gives a new life just like caterpillar's life cycle. Caterpillars experience the gloom, when they are wrapped within the cocoon. whenever the cocoon bursts, they wash away the prune rust. now caterpillar becomes a butterfly, to fly high up in the sky. In the same way, the intestines experience uneasiness when they are covered with impurities, as soon as the vitiated *Doshas* are flushed out by *Basti Chikitsa*, intestines get detoxified and feel refresh, light with rejuvenation. It is a powerful technique which helps to earn infinite potential of healing. This '*Matra Basti*' therapy is a panacea for Paediatric to Geriatrics. This can be easily practised starting from Neurological problems to Sports Medicine. *Basti Therapy* is gleam of light that draws away the darkness of deleterious grime. This study suggests that *Matra Basti* can be an easy mode of treatment. We recommend that good clinical stud-

ies to be done on different disorders in both Preventative and Curative aspect. This therapy needs more research and standardization.

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