



Review Article

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## A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS ON *NITYA VIRECHANA* AND *KOSHTHA SHODHANA*

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### ABSTRACT

Purification of the gastrointestinal tract is considered valuable in the Ayurvedic system for health and disease. Among these various methods of purification, The Nitya Virechana is a gentle and daily purgative treatment used for the constant removal of the vitiated doshas, especially Pitta. Koṣṭha shodhana is the purification of the gastrointestinal tract for proper digestion, absorption, and elimination of the digested food. Both concepts are interrelated and play a vital role in the prevention and treatment of chronic ailments. This article proposes to collect, analyze, and discuss the classical Ayurvedic texts on Nitya Virechana and Koṣṭha shodhana.

**KEYWORDS:** Nitya Virechan, Koṣṭha shodhan, Mild Purgation, Pitta dosha, Ama, Agni, Ayurveda

### INTRODUCTION

According to Ayurveda, the preservation of health, prevention of diseases are based on the concepts of Doṣa, Dhātu, and Mala, and the proper functioning of Agni. An imbalance in Agni causes undigested food and the formation of Ama, which is a major causative factor in systemic diseases. Thus, the Ayurvedic classics emphasize the importance of the regular elimination of accumulated doshas and malas.<sup>1</sup>

The most effective treatments for dosha imbalances are Shodhana therapies. Virechana Karma is particularly indicated for the elimination of excess Pitta dosha and the purification of Rakta Dhatu. But in situations where classical Virechana Karma is not feasible or in chronic conditions, Ayurveda recommends Nitya Virechana, a mild and chronic purgative treatment that facilitates detoxification without physical exertion.<sup>2</sup>

*Koṣṭha Śodhana* is also equally important for maintaining the health of the digestive system by ensuring the regular elimination of malas and preventing their accumulation.<sup>3</sup> Clean and healthy koṣṭha helps in proper digestion, metabolism, and absorption of nutrients, thus increasing the efficacy of treatments. The close association of *Nitya Virechana and Koṣṭha Śodhana* reveals their joint significance in preventing, treating, and controlling chronic diseases.<sup>4</sup>

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### Aim

To analyze and compile Ayurvedic literature on *Nitya Virechana and Koṣṭha Shodhana*.

### Objectives

- To study classical references of *Nitya Virechana and Koṣṭha Shodhana*
- To understand their therapeutic significance in disease management
- To emphasize their clinical relevance in chronic disorders
- To establish the relationship between both concepts

Literature view

## NITYA VIRECHANA IN VARIOUS AYURVEDIC TEXTS.

### Jalodar chikitsa

दोषातिमात्रोपचयात् स्रोतोमार्गनिरोधनात् सम्भवत्युदरं तस्मान्नित्यमेव विरेचयेत्॥६१॥

[Charak Samhita, Chikitsasthan 13/61]

Regular Virechana should be performed because Udara (abdominal disease) is caused by excessive accumulation of doṣas and obstruction of body channels (srotas).

### Tamakshwasa chikitsa

वातश्लेष्महरैर्युक्तं तमके तु विरेचनम् ॥१२१॥ [Charaka samhita, chikitsasthan 17/121]

In *Tāmaka shwasa*, *Virechana* should be performed using drugs that eliminate vata and Kapha.

### **Kustha chikitsa**

वातोत्तरेषु सर्पिर्वमनं श्लेष्मोत्तरेषु कुष्ठेषु । पित्तोत्तरेषु मोक्षो रक्तस्य विरेचनं चाग्रे ॥३९॥

[*Charaka Samhita, Chikitsasthan 7/39*]

In disorders dominated by Vāta, administration of ghritta (medicated ghee) is considered beneficial. Conditions characterized by Kapha predominance, particularly Kuṣṭha, are best managed with Vamana (therapeutic emesis). In diseases where Pitta is predominant, Raktamokṣaṇa (bloodletting) along with Virecana (purgation) constitutes the principal line of treatment.

### **SHODHAN**

“शोधनं शमयेत् दोषान् यथासन्नं यथाबलम्”

[*Ashtanga Hrdaya Sutrasthana 13/30*]

Properly conducted purification therapy removes doshas according to the individual's condition and strength.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Materials**

- Classical Ayurvedic text such as Caraka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga hridayam.
- Commentaries on these texts by Chakrapani and Aruṇadatta.
- Published Ayurvedic journals and review articles.

### **Methods**

- Literary review of classical and modern Ayurvedic texts.
- Conceptual analysis of Nitya Virechana and Koṣṭha Shodhana.
- Correlation and interpretation of classical texts.
- Classical Ayurvedic texts emphasize the importance of periodic removal of detrimental doshas and the importance of koṣṭha shuddhi.

## REFERENCE TO VIRECHANA

“तत्र दोषहरणम् अधोभागं विरेचनसंज्ञकम्” [Charaka Samhita, Kalpasthan ¼]

Virechana is defined as the therapeutic process in which vitiated dosha are expelled from the body through the lower pathway( guda marga)

“पित्तस्य विरेको हि वरौषधम्।” [Ashtanga hrdaya nidanasthana 12/1]

Virechana is the best therapy for treatment of aggravated Pitta dosha,

**Virechana and pitta dosha:** - Virechana treatment is essentially used for the management of Pitta, which is essentially made up of Agni and Jala mahabhoota , has a crucial role to play in the process of digestion and metabolism, as well as all other processes in the body. An excess of Pitta leads to the disruption of the normal physiological processes and results in conditions like Amlapitta, inflammation, skin disorders, and liver problems. Virechana treatment is used to remove the excess Pitta from its primary location.<sup>5</sup>

**Virechana and Kapha Dosha:** - Although Virechana is primarily used for the treatment of aggravated Pitta dosha, also has a secondary effect on Kapha dosha. Kapha, is primarily made up of Pṛthvī and Jala Mahābhūta, gives strength and stability to the body. An excess of Kapha causes an imbalance in the metabolic processes of the body and leads to the Sthaulya (obesity), respiratory problems, and a weak digestive fire. Virechana, which removes the accumulated doshas from the body, also has an indirect effect of reducing the excess of Kapha.<sup>6</sup>

**Virechana and Vata dosha:** - The effect of Virechana on Vāta doṣa is considered indirect in nature. Vāta, which is predominated by vayu and akasha Mahābhūta, is responsible for movement, circulation, and regulation of the nervous system. Although Virechana is mainly indicated for Pitta and Kapha disorders, when performed with appropriate snehana and proper drug selection, it helps in maintaining Vāta balance by maintaining un-obstructed movement of doṣas and normalizing physiological functions.<sup>7</sup>

## Koshtha definition

स्थानान्यामग्निपक्वानां मूत्रस्य रुधिरस्य च || १२||

हृदण्डुकः फुफ्फुसश्च कोष्ठ इत्यभिधीयते | १३ | [Sushruta Samhita, Chikitsasthan 2/12-13]

Koṣṭha is defined as the internal body cavity that holds the heart, lungs, and digestive system. It also encompasses the body spaces where digested and undigested food, urine, and blood are stored.

### ***Koṣṭha To Shakha Gaman***

व्यायामादूर्ध्वगणस्तैक्ष्ण्याद्धितस्यानवचाराणात्। कोष्ठाच्छाखा मला यान्ति द्रुतत्वान्मास्तस्य च ॥३१॥

[Charaka Samhita, Sutrasthana 28/31]

Because of physical exercise, an increase in body heat, the intensity of Agni, the failure to follow proper dietary and lifestyle habits, and the rapid movement of Vāta, the waste products are gets mobilized from koṣṭha to shakha

### **Shakha to koṣṭha gaman**

वृद्ध्या विष्यन्दनात् पाकात् स्रोतोमुखविशोधनात्। शाखा मुक्त्वा मलाः कोष्ठं यान्ति वायोश्च निग्रहात्। ३३॥

[Charaka Samhita, Sutrasthana 28/33]

When the doṣas become aggravated and undergo processes such as liquefaction and digestion (pāka), along with purification and opening of the bodily channels and regulation of Vāta, the accumulated waste products (malas) are gets mobilized from shakha to koṣṭha

**Table no. 1 Koṣṭha**

<b>Koṣṭha</b>	<b>Dosha dominance</b>	<b>Virechana response</b>	<b>Drugs and dosage</b>
<b>Mridu</b>	Pitta	Easy	Mild: sugarcane juice, even milk; Small dose
<b>Madhya</b>	Tridosha	Moderate	Moderate: standard purgative e.g. trivritt; Moderate dose
<b>Krura</b>	Vata	Difficult	Strong: stronger agent as snuhi ksheera; Higher dose

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NITYA VIRECHANA AND KOSHTHA SHODHANA

Nitya Virechana and Koṣṭha Shodhana are very closely related Ayurvedic terms, both of which are intended for maintaining the purity of the digestive system and doṣic balance. Koṣṭha shodhana is the process of cleansing the gastrointestinal tract to eliminate the accumulated mala and āma , thereby establishing normal Agni and proper srotas function. Nitya Virechana is a mild and daily purgative treatment that acts as a very effective means of establishing Koṣṭha *Shodhana* without creating weakness. Nitya Virechana prevents the accumulation of excessive Pitta and other vitiated doṣas in the koṣṭha by encouraging regular evacuation. Regular mild evacuation helps maintain metabolic balance, improves digestion and absorption, and prevents chronic diseases. Therefore, Nitya Virechana can be said to be a maintenance-oriented procedure for *Koṣṭha Shodhana* , which is very effective in Pitta-dominated diseases.

## DISCUSSION

Ayurveda identifies the gastrointestinal tract as the primary site through which various diseases begin and develop. The failure to function properly leads to the creation of Ama which disrupts dosha balance and results in total body health problems. The health benefits of koṣṭha shuddhi maintenance extend beyond general health to support chronic illness management. The therapeutic value of Nitya Virechana and Koṣṭha Shodhana becomes evident through this particular context. Nitya Virechana operates as a purging technique which applies gentle methods to cleanse the body from all accumulated Pitta dosha and waste materials.<sup>8</sup>

The method differs from traditional Virechana Karma because it requires minimal setup work and people can use it for extended times without developing physical weakness.<sup>9</sup> The approach proves useful for treating all metabolic disorders which feature Pitta dominance and their associated symptoms like Amlapitta and Medoroga and Tvak vikara and Prameha. Koṣṭha Śodhana establishes a comprehensive definition which describes how people can achieve digestive system purification through functional methods. The presence of a clean koṣṭha enables effective digestion which leads to proper nutrient absorption and processing while also improving treatment results.<sup>10</sup>

Nitya Virechana functions as an effective method which enables people to maintain their Koṣṭha Shodhana process throughout a long period of time. The combination of Nitya

Virechana and Koṣṭha Shodhana establishes a system which maintains digestive equilibrium while protecting against disease recurrence and aiding Ayurvedic treatment both during prevention and active treatment.<sup>11</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

Nitya Virechana and Koṣṭha Shodhana function as fundamental principles of Ayurveda which maintain that gastrointestinal cleanliness serves as the essential requirement for maintaining health and treating diseases. The study demonstrates that healthcare essential practices require practitioners to conduct regular cleansing of accumulated malas and Ama and vitiated doshas because this process safeguards Agni while preventing other health problems. Nitya Virechana functions as a dosha elimination method which practitioners can implement for extended periods because its controlled application does not lead to body fatigue or strength reduction.

Koṣṭha Śodhana establishes the foundation for multiple digestive processes which include food digestion and nutrient uptake and waste removal functions. The effectiveness of shamana and shodhana treatments increases when a koṣṭha undergoes purification while the risk of disease recurrence decreases. The relationship between Nitya Virechana and Koṣṭha Shodhana demonstrates how Ayurveda develops personalized healthcare methods which work to prevent diseases and provide patients with long-term health benefits.

These clinical principles maintain their importance in today's medical practice because they assist healthcare professionals in treating patients who suffer from metabolic disorders and lifestyle-related diseases. The way healthcare professionals implement these methods will result in improved patient adherence to treatment plans which will produce sustainable therapeutic outcomes. Research studies need to be conducted in clinical and experimental settings to investigate their operational functions and verify their significance in scientifically supported Ayurvedic treatment methods.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST -NIL**

## **SOURCE OF SUPPORT -NONE**

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