



## Review Article

### BASTI THERAPY IN THE MANAGEMENT OF FEMALE INFERTILITY: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW ON AYURVEDA CLASSICAL FORMULATIONS

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#### Article info

##### Article History:

Received: 19-05-2026

Accepted: 10-06-2026

Published: 08-07-2026

##### KEYWORDS:

*Vandhyatwa, Basti karma, Infertility, Yapana basti.*

#### ABSTRACT

Infertility, defined as the failure to achieve pregnancy after 12 months of unprotected intercourse. In Ayurveda, this condition is correlated with *Vandhyatwa*, primarily due to the vitiation of *Vata Dosha*. Ayurveda offers *Basti* (medicated enema) as a premier therapy (*Ardha Chikitsa*) to address the root cause of the disorder. **Aim:** This study aims to explore and compile various *Vandhyatwahara basti* formulations described in Ayurvedic texts having indications as *Vandhyatwa* (infertility), *Putrada* (desire for a son), and *Garbhada* (promoting conception). **Materials and Methods:** A comprehensive review was conducted on Ayurvedic texts, including the *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Sangraha*, *Sharangadhara Samhita*, *Kashyapa Samhita*, and *Bhela Samhita* for *Basti* formulation having indications as *vandhyatwa Putrada Garbhada Garbharthi* and *Apatya kamana*. **Results:** *Acharya charaka* emphasizes *Yapana basti* like *Erandamuladi* and *Sahacharadi* for those desiring progeny. *Acharya Sushruta* and *Sharangadhara* highlight *Bala Taila* and *Narayana Taila* for uterine nourishment. *Acharya Kashyapa* suggests *Shatapushpa Taila* and *Lashuna Taila* as potent *Garbha janana* agents. These preparations utilize *Vata* pacifying drugs, *Rasayana* drugs, milk and ghee to target the four essential factors of fertility-*Ritu* (season/ovulation), *Kshetra* (uterus), *Ambu* (nutrition), and *Beeja* (gametes). **Conclusion:** *Basti* therapy acts as a systemic intervention that modulates the gut-brain-ovarian axis, potentially regulating the hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian (HPO) axis and parasympathetic pathways. By restoring *Apana Vayu*, *Basti* facilitates hormonal balance and enhances uterine receptivity. *Basti* offers a cost-effective, holistic alternative or adjunct to modern assisted reproductive techniques.

#### INTRODUCTION

Infertility is a disease of the male or female reproductive system defined by the failure to achieve pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse.<sup>[1]</sup> The male partner is directly responsible in about 30–40% of cases, the female partner in about 40–55% and both partners contribute in approximately 10% of infertility cases.<sup>[2]</sup>

In the female reproductive system, infertility may be caused by abnormalities of the ovaries, uterus,

fallopian tubes, endocrine system, or their functional coordination. Infertility may be primary or secondary. Primary infertility refers to a condition in which pregnancy has never been achieved, whereas secondary infertility refers to difficulty in conceiving after at least one prior pregnancy.

Fertility care encompasses the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of infertility; however, equal and equitable access to fertility care remains a challenge, and fertility services are rarely prioritised within national universal health coverage benefit packages.

In Ayurveda, *Vandhyatwa* is defined as the destruction or impairment of *Artava* (ovum).<sup>[3]</sup> A woman in whom there is any hindrance in the process of conception is termed *Vandhya*.<sup>[4]</sup> The classification

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| Quick Response Code                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                             |
|                                                                                         | <a href="https://doi.org/10.47070/ayushdhara.v13i3.2721">https://doi.org/10.47070/ayushdhara.v13i3.2721</a> |
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of *Vandhyatwa* is described in *Harita Samhita*, *Rasa Ratna Samuccaya*, and *Vandhya Kalpadruma*. *Acharya Harita* has described six types of *Vandhya*.<sup>[5]</sup>

*Acharya Charaka* classifies *Vandhya* as *Apraja* and *Sapraja*.<sup>[6]</sup> *Apraja* refers to women who have never conceived, whereas *Sapraja* denotes women who have conceived previously but experience difficulty in subsequent pregnancies.

*Acharya Sushruta* has described four essential factors for healthy progeny, namely *Ritu* (appropriate fertile period, including *Ruthumathi* and *Ritukala*), *Kshetra* (healthy *Garbhashaya*), *Ambu* (adequate nutritional and hormonal support), and *Beeja* (unvitiated *Shukra* and *Shonita*).<sup>[7]</sup> This explanation highlights the multifactorial causation of *Vandhyatwa*.

In Ayurveda, *Vata dosha* is considered the primary factor responsible for disorders of the female reproductive system, including infertility.<sup>[8]</sup> *Vandhyatwa* is described among the eighty types of *Vatavyadhi*, indicating the predominance of *Vata* in its pathogenesis.<sup>[9]</sup>

### Importance of Basti in Vandhyatwa

The *Garbhashaya* (uterus) is one of the principal sites of *Apana vayu*,<sup>[10]</sup> and *Beejotsarga* (ovulation) is regulated by *Vata dosha*, particularly *Apana vayu*. *Acharya Charaka* has described *Basti* as the best therapy for pacifying *Vata dosha*.<sup>[11]</sup> He further refers to *Basti* as *Ardha chikitsa* in *Siddhi sthana*, highlighting its paramount therapeutic importance.<sup>[12]</sup>

Aggravation of *Vata dosha* can lead to disturbances in *Shakha*, *Kostha*, *Marma*, *Urdhva bhaga*, and the entire body due to its ability to derange *Vit* (stool), *Mutra* (urine), *Pitta*, and other *Malas* within the *Malashayas*.<sup>[13]</sup> In such conditions, *Basti* acts effectively at *Nabhi*, *Kati*, *Parshwa* and *Kukshi*, the regions where

vitiated *Doshas* and *Malas* accumulate.<sup>[14]</sup>

Administration of *Basti* cleanses these sites, restores *Dosha samya*, and promotes overall health, highlighting its central role in the management of *Vata* related disorders.

Several *Basti* formulations described in classical Ayurvedic texts are specifically indicated for the management of infertility. This study aims to evaluate the role of *Basti* in infertility management, focusing on preparations traditionally indicated for *Vandhyatwa*, *Apatya kamana* (desire for progeny), *Garbhada*, and *Garbharthi*, as documented in Ayurvedic classics and supported by previous research. These formulations demonstrate the potential of *Basti* as a targeted therapeutic approach for promoting reproductive health.

### AIM

The aim of this study is to explore *Vandhyatwahara Basti* formulations described by different *Acharyas* for conditions such as *Vandhyatwa*, *Putrada*, *Garbhada*, *Garbharthi*, and *Apatya Kamana*.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials for this review were collected from classical Ayurvedic texts, including *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Sangraha*, *Sharangadhara Samhita*, *Kashyapa Samhita*, *Vanga Sena*, and *Bhela Samhita*. In addition, published research articles related to *Basti* therapy in female infertility were compiled, reviewed, and analysed to identify traditional formulations, therapeutic indications, and reported clinical outcomes.

### RESULT

The *Basti* formulations mentioned in the classical texts are presented below.

**Table 1: Basti formulations mentioned in Charaka Samhita**

| S.No | Name of Basti                                                                             | Contents                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Indication                             |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 1    | <i>Eradamuladi yapana basti</i> <sup>[15]</sup>                                           | <i>Eradamula</i> , <i>Palasha</i> , <i>Shaliparni</i> , <i>Prishnaparni</i> , <i>Brihati</i> , <i>Kanatakari</i> , <i>Gokshura</i> , <i>Rasna</i> , <i>Ashwagandha</i> , <i>Guduchi</i> , <i>Varshabhu</i> , <i>Aragvadhadevadaru</i> , <i>Madanaphala</i> , <i>Ksheera</i> , <i>Shatapushpa</i> , <i>Kushta</i> , <i>Musta</i> , <i>Pippali</i> , <i>Hapusha</i> , <i>Bilva</i> , <i>Vacha</i> , <i>Vatsakaphala</i> , <i>Rasanjana</i> , <i>Priyangu</i> , <i>Yavani</i> , <i>Madhu</i> , <i>Ghrita</i> , <i>Taila</i> , <i>Saindava</i> | <i>Apatyakamana</i>                    |
| 2    | <i>Sahacharadi yapana basti</i> <sup>[16]</sup>                                           | <i>Sahachara</i> , <i>Bala</i> , <i>Darbhamula</i> , <i>Sariva</i> , <i>Ksheera</i> , <i>Madhuka</i> , <i>Madanaphala</i> , <i>Pippali</i> , <i>Madhu</i> , <i>Ghrita</i> , <i>Taila</i> , <i>Saindhava</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <i>Apatyakamana</i>                    |
| 3    | <i>Brihatyadi yapana basti</i> <sup>[17]</sup>                                            | <i>Brihati</i> , <i>Kantakari</i> , <i>Shatavari</i> , <i>Guduchi</i> , <i>Madhuka</i> , <i>Madanaphala</i> , <i>Pippali</i> , <i>Madhu</i> , <i>Ghrita</i> , <i>Taila</i> , <i>Saindhava</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <i>Apatyakamana</i>                    |
| 4    | <i>Chatusneha anuvasana basti</i> ( <i>Shatavaryadi anuvasana basti</i> ) <sup>[18]</sup> | <i>Shatavari</i> , <i>Guduchi</i> , <i>Ikshu</i> , <i>Vidari</i> , <i>Amalaki</i> , <i>Draksha</i> , <i>Kharjura</i> , <i>Ghrita</i> , <i>Taila</i> , <i>Goksheera</i> , <i>Mahisha Ksheera</i> , <i>Aja Ksheera</i> , <i>Jeevaka</i> , <i>Vrishabhaka</i> , <i>Meda</i> , <i>Mahameda</i> , <i>Twak Kshiri</i> , <i>Shringhataka</i> , <i>Madhulika</i> , <i>Madhuka</i> , <i>Pippali</i> , <i>Pushkara Beeja</i> , <i>Neelotpala</i> , <i>Kadamba Pushpa</i> , <i>Pundarika</i> , <i>Mamsa rasa</i>                                      | <i>Vandhya Apatyanam Vyapanna yoni</i> |

|   |                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                         |                                |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 5 | <i>Jeevantyadi anuvasana yamaka</i> <sup>[19]</sup> | <i>Jeevanti, Madana, Meda, Shravani, Madhuka, Bala, Shatahwa, Rshabhaka, Krshna, Kakanasa, Shatavari, Swagupta, Ksheera kakoli, Karkati, Shati, Vacha, Ghrita taila</i> | <i>Putryam Reto rajo dosha</i> |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|

**Table 2: Basti formulations mentioned in Sushruta Samhita**

| S.No | Name of Basti                                          | Contents                                                                                                                                                                                                | Indication                            |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1    | <i>Shatapaka bala taila basti</i> <sup>[20]</sup>      | <i>Maha Panchamula, Vidarigandhadi Gana, milk, Bhadradarvadi Gana, Mamsa Rasa, Kanji Kasturi, Shati, Kushta, Amsa, Sarala, Suradaru, Shatapushpa, Misi</i>                                              | <i>Vandhya</i>                        |
| 2    | <i>Shatapaka Trivruttha bala taila</i> <sup>[21]</sup> | <i>Bhadradarvadi gana, Yava, Kola, Kulattha, Mamsa Varga, Kanji, Ksheera, Kakolyadi Gana, Sarpi, Taila, Vasa</i>                                                                                        | <i>Vandhya</i>                        |
| 3    | <i>Bala taila</i> <sup>[22]</sup>                      | <i>Bala, Dashamula, Yava, Kola, Kulattha, Aguru, Sarjarasa, Sarala, Devadaru, Manjishta, Kushta, Ela, Jatamamsi, Tagara, Teja Patra, Sariva, Vacha, Sahatavari, Ashwagandha, Shatapushpa, Punarnava</i> | <i>Garbharthini, Vataroga, Sutika</i> |

**Table 3: Basti formulations mentioned in Ashtanga Sangraha**

| S.No | Name of Basti                                  | Contents of Basti                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Indication                            |
|------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1    | <i>Raja yapana basti</i> <sup>[23]</sup>       | <i>Musta, Patha, Amruta, Eranda, Bala, Rasna, Punarnava, Manjistha, Aragvadha, Usira, Trayamana, Aksha, Rohini, Laghu Panchamula, Madana, Ksheera, Jangala Rasa, ghee, honey, Saindava, Yashtimadhu, Mishi, Shyama, Kalingaka, Rasanjana</i>                                                                                                                                        | <i>Putrada Shukra Vivardhana</i>      |
| 2    | <i>Sahacharadi taila basti</i> <sup>[24]</sup> | <i>Sahachara, Abhiru, Bala, Rasna, Gokshura, Bisa, Draksha, Tavakshiri, Nidigdhika, Mahasaha, Kshudrasaha, Yashtimadhu, Madhulika, Jivaka, Rsabhaka, Udicya, Mrinala, Utpala, Chandana, Kharjura, Taalmajja, Atmagupta, Tamalaki, Kana, Patola, Meda, Twak, Patra, Sitapaki</i><br>Juice of flesh of the scrotum of boar, buffaloes, goat<br><i>Dhatri, Vidari Swarasa, Ksheera</i> | <i>Putrada, Rasayana</i>              |
| 3    | <i>Jeevantyadi anuvasamna</i> <sup>[25]</sup>  | <i>Jeevanti, Madana, Meda, Shravana Madhuka, Bala, Shatavha, Vrishabhaka Krishna, Kakanasa Shatavari, Svagupta, Ksheera Kakoli, Karkataka Shati, Vacha Taila, Ghrita, Ksheera</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <i>Putreeya, Raja Shukramaya hara</i> |

**Table 4: Basti formulations mentioned in Sharangadhara**

| S.No | Name of Basti                               | Contents                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Indication     |
|------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1    | <i>Narayana taila basti</i> <sup>[26]</sup> | <i>Ashwagandha, Bala, Bilva Patala, Brihati Dwaya Gokshura, Atibala, Nimba, Shyonaka, Punarnava, Prasari, Agnimantha Tila, Shatavari, Goksheera, Kushta, Ela, Chandana, Murva, Vacha, Mamsi, Saindhava Rasna, Shatapushpa, Indradaru, Parni Chatushtaya, Tagara</i> | <i>Vandhya</i> |

**Table 5: Basti formulations mentioned in Kashyapa Samhita**

| S.No | Name of Basti                                  | Contents           | Indication          |
|------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1    | <i>Shatapushpa taila basti</i> <sup>[27]</sup> | <i>Shatapushpa</i> | <i>Vandhyatwa</i>   |
| 2    | <i>Shatavari ghrita basti</i> <sup>[28]</sup>  | <i>Shatavari</i>   | <i>Vandhyatwa</i>   |
| 3    | <i>Lashuna taila basti</i> <sup>[29]</sup>     | <i>Lashuna</i>     | <i>Garbhajanana</i> |



**Table 6: Basti formulations mentioned in Bhela Samhita**

| S.No | Name of Basti                                     | Contents                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Indication                                                                     |
|------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | <i>Shatavaryadi rasayan basti</i> <sup>[30]</sup> | <i>Shatavari Sahachara Rasna Gokshura Bala</i> Meat of peacock, cock and swan Lards of buffalo, pig, goat <i>Amalaki Draksha Madhuka Chandana Madhulika Patola Kapikacchu Kharjura Sitapaki Odanapaki Nidhigdhika Jivaka Rishabhak Meda Pippali</i> | <i>Vandhyatwa, Vrushya, Balakara, Ayurvedhana, Visham jwara, Shukra kshaya</i> |
| 2    | <i>Rasayanik basti</i> <sup>[31]</sup>            | <i>Guduchi Shatavari Sahachara Vidari Amalaki Ikshu Draksha Kharjura Madhuka Pippali Sringataka Jivaka Rishabhak Meda Bala</i>                                                                                                                      | <i>Nashta shukra, Kshata kshina, Visham jwara, Vandhyatwa, Rakta gulm</i>      |

## DISCUSSION

Female infertility is a multifactorial condition influenced by anatomical, hormonal, metabolic, and psychosomatic factors. In Ayurveda, *Vandhyatwa* is primarily attributed to the vitiation of *Vata Dosha*, especially *Apana Vayu*, which governs ovulation (*Beejotsarga*), menstruation, and reproductive functions. Classical texts describe *Vandhyatwa* under *Vatavyadhi*, emphasizing the central role of *Vata* in female reproductive disorders. Disruption of *Apana Vayu* affects the physiological coordination between the ovaries, uterus, and hormonal axis, ultimately leading to impaired fertility.

### Role of Basti in Vandhyatwa

*Acharya Charaka* has described *Basti* as *Ardha Chikitsa*, highlighting its prime importance in the management of *Vata*-dominant disorders. Since *Garbhashaya* (uterus) is one of the principal sites of *Apana Vayu*, *Basti* therapy assumes a central role in correcting reproductive dysfunctions. *Basti* acts at *Nabhi*, *Kati*, *Parshwa*, and *Kukshi*, the regions where vitiated *Doshas* and *Malas* accumulate. By cleansing these sites and restoring the normal course of *Apana Vayu*, *Basti* facilitates *Vatanulomana* and re-establishes the physiological functioning of the reproductive system.

### Classical Basti Formulations for Female Infertility

The present review highlights numerous *Vandhyatwahara* and *Putrada Basti* formulations described across classical texts such as *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Sangraha*, *Sharangadhara Samhita*, *Kashyapa Samhita*, and *Bhela Samhita*. These formulations are indicated for conditions including *Vandhyatwa*, *Apatya Kamana*, *Garbhada*, *Garbharthi*, and *Putrada*, reflecting a comprehensive approach toward fertility enhancement. Ingredients commonly include *Vata*-pacifying drugs, *Rasayana Dravyas*, milk, ghee, and meat soups, which together support uterine health, ovarian function, hormonal balance, and tissue nourishment. The repeated emphasis on these formulations across different *Acharyas* reinforces the

therapeutic significance of *Basti* in infertility management.

### Probable mode of action

*Basti* therapy administered via the rectal route reaches the distal and proximal colon, which plays a crucial role not only in fluid and electrolyte absorption but also in neuroendocrine regulation. The proximal colon contains *interstitial cells of Cajal* (ICCs), which act as pacemakers for intestinal motility.<sup>[32]</sup> It is hypothesized that the homogenous emulsion of *Basti dravya* reaches these regions, stimulating ICC activity and enhancing peristalsis. This stimulation aids in the absorption of active principles from the formulation and facilitates systemic circulation, allowing the therapeutic compounds to exert effects beyond the local site of administration.<sup>[33]</sup>

Furthermore, the enteric nervous system (ENS) communicates with the central nervous system (CNS) through the gut brain axis.<sup>[34]</sup> *Basti* may modulate endogenous opioid peptides such as  $\beta$  endorphins, which influence the hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian (HPO) axis.<sup>[35]</sup> By affecting gonadotropin-releasing hormone secretion and subsequently the release of follicle-stimulating hormone and luteinizing hormone, *Basti* therapy may support follicular development, ovulation, and maintenance of hormonal balance necessary for conception. Additionally, the parasympathetic innervation supplied via the S2–S4 spinal segments is known to regulate *Apana vayu* activity.<sup>[36]</sup> Rectal administration of *Basti* is believed to stimulate this parasympathetic pathway, facilitating ovum release from the ovarian follicle and promoting reproductive function.

### Limitations and future scope

Despite extensive classical references, contemporary clinical evidence on *Basti* in female infertility remains limited. Variations in formulations, dosage, duration, and outcome measures restrict reproducibility and comparison across studies. Future research should focus on well-designed randomized controlled trials, standardization of *Basti* protocols, and incorporation of objective biomarkers such as

hormonal profiles and ovulatory parameters. Integrating Ayurvedic principles with modern reproductive assessment tools may help establish *Basti* therapy as a scientifically validated option in fertility care.

## CONCLUSION

The Ayurvedic texts collectively position *Basti* therapy not merely as a localized treatment, but as a comprehensive systemic intervention that addresses the root cause of female infertility. By utilizing a diverse array of formulations such as *Eranda muladi Yapana Basti*, *Shatavari Ghrita*, and *Bala Taila*, this therapy targets the fundamental components of fertility (*Ritu*, *Kshetra*, *Ambu*, and *Beeja*) to restore hormonal equilibrium and enhance reproductive tissue nourishment. The therapeutic efficacy of *Basti* likely stems from its ability to modulate the gut-brain-ovarian axis, stimulating the enteric nervous system and the parasympathetic pathways to regulate ovulation and uterine receptivity. Consequently, *Basti* stands as a pivotal, evidence based traditional approach that offers a holistic alternative or complement to modern fertility treatments, though its full potential warrants further validation through standardized clinical trials and objective hormonal profiling.

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**Cite this article as:**

Soumya T Sheenappanavar, Meenakshi Pandey, Sujata Kadam. Basti Therapy in the Management of Female Infertility: A Comprehensive Review on Ayurveda Classical Formulations. AYUSHDHARA, 2026;13(3):452-457.

<https://doi.org/10.47070/ayushdhara.v13i3.2721>

**Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared**

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