Koṣṭha is known in the scriptures as Mahāsrotas (the great channel), Śārīra Madhya (central portion of the body), Mahānimna (the deepest part of the body) and Āmapakvāśaya (stomach and intestines). Diseases of Koṣṭha are included under internal pathway of diseases.

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) is a functional bowel disorder characterized by abdominal pain or discomfort and altered bowel habits in the absence of detectable structural abnormalities. Population-based studies estimate the prevalence of irritable bowel syndrome at 10-20% and the incidence of irritable bowel syndrome at 1-2% per year. An estimated 20-50% of gastroenterology referrals relate to this symptom complex. The incidence is markedly different among countries.

Indigestion is a nonspecific term that encompasses a variety of upper abdominal complaints including nausea, vomiting, heartburn, regurgitation, and dyspepsia (the presence of symptoms thought to originate in the gastroduodenal region).

Diarrhoea is the condition of having at least three loose or liquid bowel movements each day defined by the World Health Organization. It often lasts for a few days and can result in dehydration due to fluid loss. Diarrhoeal disease is the second leading cause of death in children under five years old. Each year diarrhoea kills around 760000 children under five. A significant proportion of diarrhoeal disease can be prevented through safe drinking-water and adequate sanitation and hygiene. Globally, there are nearly 1.7 billion cases of diarrhoeal disease every year. Diarrhoea is a leading cause of malnutrition in children under five years old.

Acid peptic disorders are very common in the United States, with 4 million individuals (new cases and recurrences) affected per year. Lifetime prevalence of PUD in the United States is ~12% in men and 10% in women.

Āyurveda has described conditions with features similar to irritable bowel syndrome, indigestion, diarrhoea, pain in abdomen and acid peptic disorders by the
name of Grahaṇi Gada, Ajīrṇa, Atisāra, Śūla and Amlapitta. The description about this disease is found in the most of ancient of texts i.e. Vedās. Various aetiological factors, subtypes, treatment modalities and medications have been described for it. But, the drawback Āyurveda suffered in the time of Mughals, Buddhist era (due to non-violence principal) and British invasion period, reduced its practical knowledge among the people. Much of the practical aspects were lost. Hence, studies are being done to revive this science with the help of the most developed science of today i.e. Modern Medical Science.

Hence the present study entitled “CLINICAL ASSESSMENT OF KOŚṬHA AND ITS RELATION WITH PRAKRȚI, ANNAVAHA AND PŪRĪṢAVAHĀ SROTO VIKĀRĀ” was designed with an objective to correlate the diseases entities of Grahaṇi Gada, Ajīrṇa, Atisāra, Śūla and Amlapitta and irritable bowel syndrome, indigestion, diarrhoea, pain in abdomen and acid peptic disorders by studying the clinical features as seen in the patients. The observations of the study will pave the way for further researches on these topics in terms of better management with the help of knowledge of Kośṭha, Prakṛti, Agni and Āma and relation of these with Annavaha and Purīṣavaha Sroto Vikāra.

I have put my best possible efforts in this work and tried to justify it with logical explanations on the basis of the knowledge of both medical sciences. I thank the Almighty Lord for providing me the capacity and opportunity to complete this work. I am extremely thankful to my supervisors and co-supervisors for their guidance and help. To err is human and in spite of the best possible efforts, some mistakes may have crept in inadvertently. I take the sole responsibility for those mistakes and will try to correct them upon receiving the comments from the examination panel.

(Neera Saini)