iJRASET
International Journal For Research in Applied Science and Engineering Technology



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH

IN APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Volume: 10 **Issue:** VIII **Month of publication:** August 2022

DOI: https://doi.org/10.22214/ijraset.2022.46500

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International Journal for Research in Applied Science & Engineering Technology (IJRASET)
ISSN: 2321-9653; IC Value: 45.98; SJ Impact Factor: 7.538
Volume 10 Issue VIII Aug 2022- Available at www.ijraset.com

Review on Concept of Bala Mentioned in Brihatrayees of Ayurveda

Dr. Shivananda B Karigar[1], Dr. Sampathkumar Bellamma[2], Dr. Shivalinga Bendikai[3]
[1]*Assistant Professor,* [2,3]*Associate Professor, Department of PG Studies in Dravyaguna, Taranath Government Ayurvedic Medical College and Hospital, Ballari,*

Abstract: ***According to Ayurveda, the ultimate goal of human being is to achieve salvation or moksha. "Dharmartha kama mokshanam, Arogyam moolam uttamam". Ayurveda defines Arogya as a state of equilibrium of both body and mind. One can achieve his goal if he has a good physical strength and a healthy mind. Strength or bala is the basis of sound health & is the inborn power to resist both physical and mental stress. If this is altered, then a person will become susceptible to disease. Brihatrayees of ayurveda are three fundamental texts of Ayurveda i.e, Charaka samhita, Susruta samhita and Astanga Hridaya which has dealt whole Ayurvedic medical science.***

For all the physical functions of the human body, bala or the body strength is very essential. This bala may be acquired either innately or artificially. Bala can also be correlated to immunity where the body has the ability to neutralize the effect of pathogenic microorganisms and their toxic effects. This has been assigned to Prakruta Shleshma which nourishes the whole tissues of the body. This can also be called as Ojas. If there are any deficiencies of ojas it can be corrected by consuming strength promoting dravyas. Nowadays, with the advancement of Science & technology, people are becoming more stressed & have become susceptible to many diseases like HIV, causes immunodeficiency leading to malignant conditions or fatal results. So Ayurveda advocates daily regimens and advices what to be done to improve Bala. So this article mainly focuses on the concept of Bala for better understanding.

Keywords: Bala, Vyadhikshamatva, Ojas, Balapareeksha, Ayurveda

I. INTRODUCTION

Brihatrayees are three major texts of Ayurveda, Charaka samhita basically written by Agnivesha, later redacted by Acharya Charaka which mainly focuses on Medicine. Susruta samhita, which is written by Acharya Susruta, which is popularly known for Surgery. Astanga hridaya written by Acharya Vagbhata. The word Bala finds references even in Vedic era, the prayers for seeking Bala as well as the Bala itself being worshiped as God are found in Rig–veda and Chandogyopanishad**.**

Bala literally means the strength and it is being used as a suffix at various contexts as Dehabala (Physical strength), Agnibala (Capability to digest), Indriyabala (Perceiving capacity of sense organs), Satwabala (Mental stamina), Vyadhibala (Degree of severity of disease) etc. The word Bala is derived from the root *"Bala praanane"* which means to vitalize. All the dictionaries give the similar meaning for the term Bala as – strength, defence force, bulkiness, vigor, might, treasure etc. In Ayurveda, Bala is defined as the inborn power of resistance to withstand physical & mental stressful conditions. Bala is capacity of resisting or controlling the vitiation of doshas & resulting diseases.

II. BALA AS DIFFERENT ENTITIES IN AYURVEDIC CLASSICS

The concept of Bala dealt in Ayurvedic classics refers to both the physical strength & that of immunity. According to Charakacharya, Bala means physical strength of an individual which is inferred through physical endurance.[1, 2]

In other context the prakruta, kapha is considered as Bala & further Kapha is considered as synonymous to Ojas.[4] According to Vagbhata, Ojas itself is Bala.[3]

1) Bala refers to the physical strength which is assessed through vyayama i.e physical exercise.[1,2]
2) Bala, when compared to Ojas and Prakruta Kapha, refers to the immunity.
3) In other contexts, mala are also referred as bala.[5]

III. BALA AS VYADHIKSHAMATVA

In Charaka samhita sutra sthana, in context of Hita –Ahita Ahara & manifestation of disease, vyadhikshamatva is dealt. Chakrapani comments Vyadhikshamatva as,

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This definition confines the ideas of both non-specific (natural) & specific (acquired) immunity against the non-microbial or microbial diseases. As Chakrapani says, Vyadhikshamatva is the opposing power of the body against the strength or virulence of the existing disease or it stands against the causation of the disease, Vyadhikshamatva is synonymous for Bala.

A. Relation between Constitution & Bala

1) Resistance to infection varies from individual to individual. Some individual when exposed to infection may develop infection & some individual would escape from it. This is because of individual constitution.

2) The individuals having kapha prakruti, possess optimum strength, while those of Pitta prakruti possess moderate strength and in vata prakruti there will be diminished strength. It is individual immunity.

IV. TYPES OF BALA: [8]

A. Sahaja Bala

It is inherent & natural. This Bala refers to both body & mind. Sahaja Bala,is that which persists from birth & it is characterized by progressive increase in proportion to growth & development of an individual. This can be correlated to innate immunity of an individual

B. Kalaja Bala

It refers to periodic type of Bala, which is influenced by seasonal traits and the age of an individual. Strength and stamina of a body improve in Visarga kala (Dakshinayana) and declines in Adana kala (Uttarayana).

C. Influence of age on Bala

In Balyavastha – immunity will be less due to asampoorna dhatu. So, children are more susceptible to disease.
In Vruddhavastha immunity will be less due to heeyamana dhatu.
In Madhymavastha – all the tissues and organs have attained complete maturity so the strength & immunity will be optimum.

D. Yuktikruta Bala

It is useful acquisition of immunity & it can be achieved through proper Ahara, Vihara & yogas.

1) Ahara: Proper diet has to be taken.

2) Vihara : Proper physical exercise & proper rest " Uchita Vishrama vyayama"

3) Yoga: Gangadhara opines yoga as Vajeekarna yoga i.e aphrodisiac therapy while Chakrapani says that Yoga means Rasayana therapy i.e, rejuvenation therapy.

Table 1. Measurements of Yuktikruta Bala

Before conception	▪ Ritumateecharya (regimes during menstrual period) ▪ Shukra- Artava shuddhi (modulating the bala of the prime factors of conception i.e., shukra (sperm) & artava (ovum). ▪ Garbhadhana (regimes prior to conception)
Fetal life	▪ Garbhinee paricharya (regimes of the pregnant)
Childhood	▪ Mother: Sootikacharya (regimes of the puerperal) ▪ Child: Balaka paricharya (regimes of infant and child.)
Adulthood	▪ Dinacharya (daily regime) ▪ Rutucharya (seasonal regime) ▪ Sadvrutta (social conduct) ▪ Rasayana (rejuvenating therapies)

E. Bala Vruddhikara Bhavas[7]

Following are the augmenting factors of Bala.

1) *Desha:* The habitants of certain geographical area are said to possess optimum strength, while others are susceptible to certain disorders. For example, Persons residing in Sindhu pradesha have optimum bala.
2) *Kala:* Time of conception & development influences bala of a child. Also it can be considered as birth time determines the adoptability of the child to the environment.
3) *Age Factor:* Age of an individual determines susceptibility & non-susceptibility for the disease. If we consider a person's life duration is 100yrs. Upto 30yrs – it is considered as Balya, which is again divided into two, Paripakva dhatu – upto 15 yrs and second Vardhamana dhatu – 15-30yrs, during this period, Bala will be mild. From 30 to 60yrs Bala will be more. After 60yrs, it is considered as Vruddha. Here Bala will be moderate.

F. Causes of Balahani[15]

Vyayama(excessive exercise), fasting, anxiety, ruksha-alpa ahara, bhaya(fear), grief (shoka), dry eatables, prajagara, excess excretion of Kapha, Rakta & Shukra. Bhutopaghatas (i.e., Microbial invasion are the cause for Bala hani.

G. Assessment of Bala[9]

Sushrutacharya mentioned the clear note of Prakruta karma of Bala which helps to assess the Bala of an individual.

1) *Tatra sthiropachita gatrataah gaatratah:* It indicates the well formed & well developed dhatus. Which is observed through the contour muscle bulk and sarvadhatu sara lakshanas are observed.
2) *Sarva chesta swapratighata*: It refers to the activities of body, mind& speech i.e., capability to carry out physical activities, sound mental health and capability to develop good social & behavioral conduct.
3) *Swara varna prasada*: The status of Bala can be reflected on the proper complexion & voice of an individual.
4) *Bahyanamabhyantaranam:* A good functional efficacy of sensory & motor function of an individual. And also excellence in mental functions of an individual reflects the status of the Bala.

Charakacharya has divided the Bala of a patient into three categories as Pravara, Madhyama and Avara bala under Dashavidhaatura pareeksha excluding Vikrutipareeksha.[10]

a) Prakruti Pareeksha: It is indicative of innate immunity i.e.

- ✓ Shleshmala balavanta
- ✓ Pittala madyabala
- ✓ Vatala alpabala

b) Sara Pareeksha: Examination of Sara indicates that the bala of an individual is not only depends on the external contour of the body. Even an individual with weak body contour may have good immunity. It indicates the individual's immunity/resistance.
c) Samhanana Pareeksha: By this bala is assessed mainly on the compactness of the body. It reflects the proper contour of the muscle.
d) Pramana Pareeksha: In this Charakacharya has mentioned regarding proportionate relation of the different organs.
e) Satmya Pareeksha: It is explained on the food habits of an individual, i.e. a person of sarvarasa satmya will be having optimum strength compared to other.
f) Satmya Pareeksha: This investigation mainly reflects/assessed on the mental status of an individual.
g) Ahara Pareeksha: By this bala can be assessed on the intake & digestive capacity of an individual.
h) Vyayama Pareeksha: By this bala can be assessed in the capacity of an individual to carry out physical activities. It mainly reflects on the physical strength of an individual.
i) Vaya Pareeksha: In this assessment of immunity is based on the age factor, ie., children & old person are having lesser immunity & they are more prone to diseases compared to adults.

In Ayurvedic classics, we find many references reagarding balya dravyas which promotes bala. Charaka has explained Balya mahakashayas like Aindri, Vrushabha, Atirasa, Rushyaprokta, Payasya, Arshagandha, Sthira, Rohini. Bala and Atibala.

V. BALA AS OJAS

Some acharyas compared Bala to Ojas. Ojas is the essence of saptadhatu and is considered as "Bala".[11] As ghritha exists in ksheera, which one cannot make out, in the same way the Ojas remains as component of the body. The existence of shareera lies in the existence of oja. Ojas is responsible for proper functioning of sensory and motor functions. Though ojas circulates all over the body, the main seat of ojas is hridaya and it is having colour like ghee, taste like honey[13]. Two types of Ojas has been mentioned in classics.

1) *Para:* The quantity of para ojas is ashta bindu which mainly resides in heart.
2) *Apara:* The quantity of apara ojas is ardha anjali which circulates all over the body.

A. *Importance of Bala:*[6]

Charaka acharya has mentioned the importance of good built while explaining regarding nindita purusha. As persons having proportionate musculature and compactness of the body posses very strong sensory and motor organs and as such they are not overcome by the onslaught of diseases. They can withstand hunger, thirst & physical exercises. They can digest and assimilate properly.

VI. DISCUSSION

Ayurveda has extensively explained in detail about the concept of Bala. The term Bala – refers to both physical strength as well as immunity. Physical strength can be assessed on the muscle contour & on the enhancement in performing physical exercises and immunity is achieved through qualitative & quantitative enhancement of Rasa, Rakta dhatu.Bala refers to mamsa upachaya/mamsa vardhana. The factors have been mentioned in brihatrayees which promotes bala of an individual.

The term Bala is referred as immunity and is compared with prakrita shleshma, whose function is to increase the strength of the body both physically as well as in resistance of body against pathogens. The enhancement of prakruta shleshma brings about enhancement in strength and immunity of an individual. Bala is also it is compared to shukra in some contexts. This concept helps physician in assessment of strength of patients. By the knowledge of concept of Bala, it helps every individual to maintain their health and by following all the regimens mentioned in Ayurveda, one can stay fit and can live long with good health.

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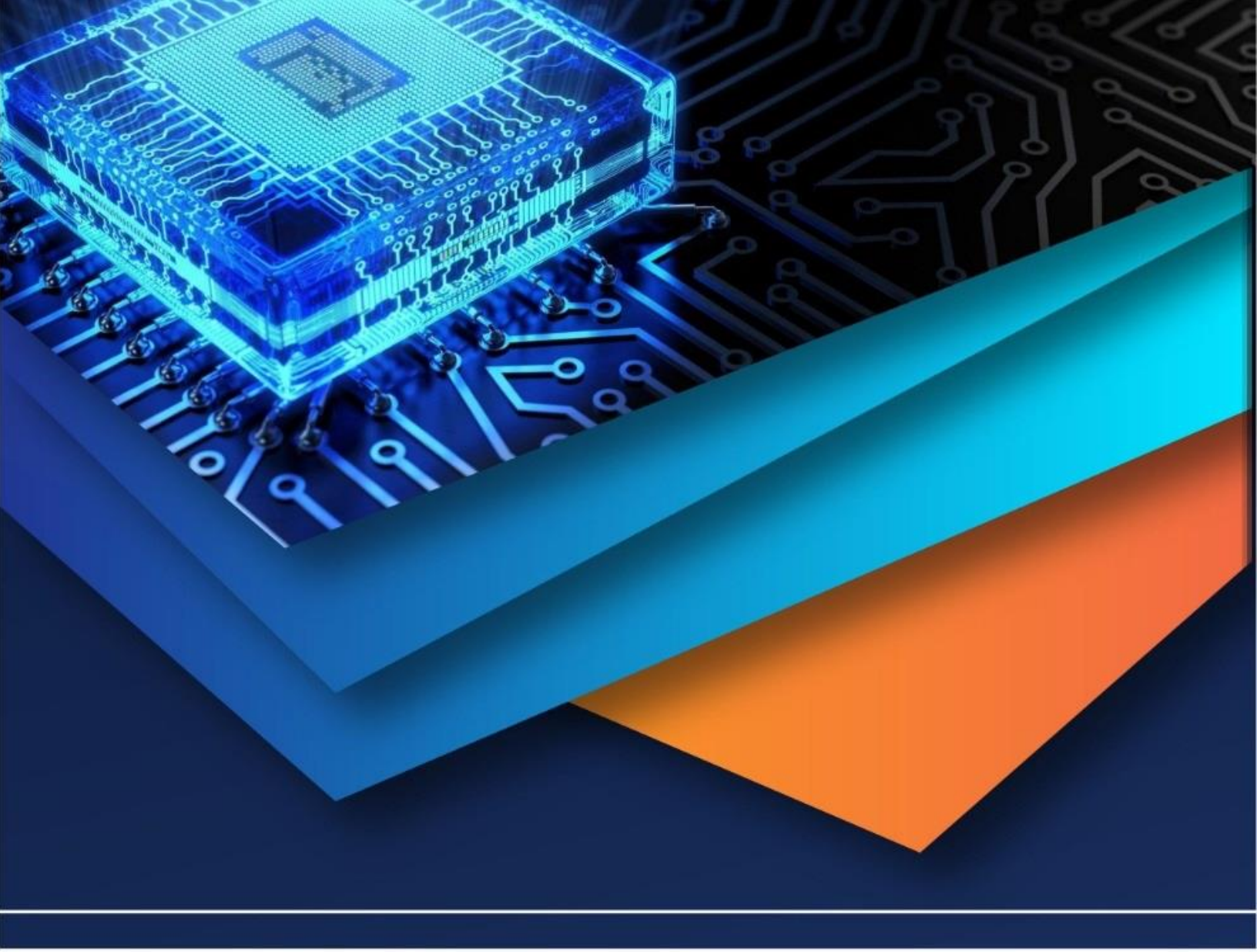
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