



An Ayurvedic review of the concept of *Bala*

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ABSTRACT: According to *Ayurveda*, the *Bala* has a holistic perspective and cannot be classified as one particular entity. *Bala* is seen as a person's overall strength, both physically and mentally. It can be evaluated in both healthy and sick people. *Bala* is quite similar to immunity. In *Ayurveda*, *bala* is crucial for disease diagnosis and treatment. *Agni*, *Aahara*, *Dosha*, *Prakriti*, *Sarata*, and other physiological traits must be in balance for it to function properly. The key factor in influencing the prognosis, progression, and decline of illnesses is immunity. *Bala* and immunity are therefore linked and complementary. Thus, the capacity to perform tasks requiring significant amounts of both physical and mental effort is known as *bala*, or strength. Here, an effort is made to shed light on the idea of *bala*, its types, significance, relationship with various bodily aspects, and their impact on it.

INTRODUCTION: *Ayurveda* always offers the analysis of any idea from many

perspectives. There are several angles to the physiological and anatomical entities described in *Ayurveda*, which help one understand topics more thoroughly. According to *Ayurveda*, the *Bala* being is multifaceted and cannot be divided into any one particular entity. *Bala* is essential to understanding the diagnosis, progression, fading, and propagation of diseases in addition to being a physiological concept. Hence, the concept of immunity is quite similar to the *bala* entity.

KEYWORDS: *Bala*, Immunity, *Bala pariksha*, *vyadhikshamatva*, Strength

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Materials on the physiology of and sleep have been gathered from a variety of periodicals, *Ayurvedic* text books, original literatures, manuscripts, *Sanskrit* dictionaries, reliable websites (Pub Med, for example), reputable magazines, etc.

MEANING OF BALA AS PER AYURVEDA:

Prakritakapha is known as *Bala* according to *Charaka*, however it has since been renamed as *Ojas*(*Shlaishmik oja*), which is the body's *Saara*. Also, *Daurbalya* or lack of *Bala* is *Lakshana of Oja Kshaya*. The subtype of *vaat dosha*, *udana vayu* is also called as *bala* as one of its *karma* is *bala*. According to *Yogratnakar*, *Agni* is considered as *Moola* (Origin) of *Bala* of any *Vyakti*⁽¹⁾. *Agni* is responsible for the Generation and Maintenance of *Bala* in the Body.⁽²⁾

Acharya Charaka mentioned *Dashvidha Pariksha* for the evaluation of *Bala* of the patient and disease. *Bala* is judged on the basis of *Prakriti, Vikruti, Sara, Samhanana, Pramana, Satmyaa, Satva, Aaharshakti, Vyamashakti and Vaya*.⁽³⁾

CLASSIFICATION OF BALA:

A) As per *charakacharya*, Strength is of three types-congenital (*sahaja*), time-effected(*kalaja*)and acquired (*yuktikruta*).

Congenital is that which is natural to the body and mind; time-effected is due to seasonal variations and age factor. Acquired one is produced by proper application of diet and exercise.⁽⁴⁾

SAHAJ BALA (Natural strength): *Sahaja Bala*, which can be thought of as strength acquired by birth, is the *Sharirika* and *Manasika Bala* that is achieved due to *Matruja* and *Pitruja* bhavas like *Rasa, Rakta, Virya, Ojus*, etc. It states that *Sahaja Bala* is natural *Bala* of *Sharira* and *Satva* i.e.

Bala of body and the mind. *Chakrapani* in the commentary of *charak Samhita* stated that *prakrut* is *janmadipravrutta* that is which is inherited since birth for *prakrut dhatu vriddhi*.⁽⁵⁾

Sahaja bala can be compared to Innate Immunity which refers to nonspecific defense mechanisms that occur immediately or within hours of an antigens appearance in the body. Environmental influences or epigenetic changes also affect the immune status since birth.⁽⁶⁾

KAALAJ BALA (Periodic strength) : This kind of *bala* is dependent on the season(climatic changes) and the person's age. Diseases are found to be more common in various seasons because to *kaalaja bala hani*. Due to a shift in the contribution of *kaalaja bala*, people have less *Bala* during childhood and old age and are therefore more susceptible to sickness. *Rutu Sandhi* is the best example of *Kaalaja Bala hani* in *Ayurveda*; as a result, special attention is mentioned in *Rutucharya* for retaining *Bala* during that time. Thus,the purpose of *Rutucharya* is seen in all classics which shows how much importance *Acharyas* have given to *Kaalaja Bala*.

Here *kaalaj bala* which is divided as –

- 1) *Kaalatah Bala* is the *bala* differing as per seasons or climate. It is further classified as per *Uttama, Madhyama* and *Heena bala* in *Hemanta & Shishir, Vasanta & Sharada, Grishma & Varsha Rutu* respectively.
- 2) *Vayatah Bala* is the *bala* with reference to three Age groups. It is further classified as per *Uttama* and

Heena bala in youvana and vriddhavastha resp.

There is a study showing that the activity of almost a quarter of our genes differs according to the time of year, some are more active in winter and others in summer. This seasonality also affects our immune cells and the composition of our blood and adipose tissue.⁽⁷⁾ Researches prove that Physiological ageing is accompanied by decline in immune system function.⁽⁸⁾

YUKTIKRUTA BALA (Acquired strength)

: It depends on what the individual does in terms of *Aahara*, *Vihara*, and *Aushadha Sevana*. This kind of *Bala* is influenced by a person's mindset, eating patterns, exercise routine, and cleanliness practises. A person can have a decent quality of life if they practise *Dinacharyas*, *Rutucharyas*, healthy eating habits, and *Rasayan* therapies, and this is made possible by keeping *Yuktikruta Bala* in good condition. This *Bala* is entirely dependent on the activities of the individual.

One can develop *yuktikrut bala* by keeping good quality of *aahar*, *vihaar* and *aushadha sevan*. *Aaharaj vruddhi* of *bala* can be done by including *ghruta* and *godugdha* in food as *rasayan*. For *viharaj bala vruddhi* people should do daily *abhyanga* and *vyayama* as it increases *bala*. Different kinds of *balya aushadhi* like *ashwagandha*, *shalparni*, *vidarikanda* should be administered.

- This can be compared to Adaptive Immunity.

- Physical activity and nutrition are important in a healthy lifestyle with potential benefits to immunity.⁽⁹⁾

B) Based on capacity to do physical activity it is further classified as :

Pravar Bala, *Madhyam Bala* and *Avara Bala*. On the basis of working capacity of individual this is done.⁽¹⁰⁾

PRAVARA BALA: Here, despite extreme mental stress, the person engages in all manner of physical activity without ever becoming fatigued. An individual with *pravara bala* is both physically and mentally active and has a healthy lifestyle. He is usually stress free.

AVARA BALA : This kind of *bala* makes its owner easily exhausted. This group of individuals lacks the physical stamina to sustain stress or the mental fortitude to handle it. That is, it is opposite to the *Pravara bala*.

MADHYAM BALA: This *bala* is in between that of *Pravara* and *Avara bala*.

CRITERIA FOR ASSESING BALA:

A) *Bala* is presented in two main aspects. 1) *Vyayamshakti*

2) *Vyadhikshamatva*

1) **Vyayamshakti :** *charakacharya* has explained methods to assess *bala* in *vimansthana*.⁽¹¹⁾

Vyayama Shakti evaluates *bala*. In respect to *bala* and *Ojas*, *Dalhanana* made additional comments. According to him, *bala* is determined by a person's capacity to carry and lift heavy objects. *Bala* is *karmashakti*, which is *Sanskrit* for "power to work."

2) **Vyadhikshamatva:** The word "Vyadhikshamathava" refers to resistance against sickness. ⁽¹²⁾. Vyadhikshamatva differs in different personalities as it depends on various factors. Vyadhikshamathava is the term used to describe the body's ability to fend off and prevent sickness. That contains the method used to provide Vyadhi prativandhyakatwa. Chakrapani shares the same perspective, i.e., the capacity for resistance and illness prevention.

B) Assessment of Bala with dashavidha aatur bala pariksha:

1) Examination of the patient is conducted for the knowledge of the span of life or of the degree of strength and morbidity. The amount of drug to be administered to the patient should be based on the bala as it affects the expected effect on the patient. ⁽¹³⁾

Hence the patient should be examined in respect of-

- **Prakriti (constitution):** the constitution of body is based on predominance of doshas. And so the bala differs as the individual has *alpabala* if they have *vata prakriti*, *madhyam bala* if they have *pitta prakriti*, and *balavana* if they have *kapha prakriti*.
- **Vikriti (morbidity):** Here, the *roga* is evaluated using the *dosa*, *dusya*, *kala*, and *bala*.
- **Sara (constitution of dhatus):** *Ashtasaras* are described in order to understand the *bala pramana* of

purusha. Among which *Raktasara purusha* exhibits *lakshana* like *Anatibala*(moderate strength), *Mansa*, *majja* and *shukrasara purusha* are *balavanta* , *sarvasara purusha* is very strong i.e *atibalavana*

- **Samhanana (compactness):** *Samhanana* means well compacted. Those having well-compact body are strong, otherwise weak, and those having moderate compactness have medium strength.
- **Pramana (measurement):** The persons having normal measurement of the body are endowed with longevity, strength, immunity, happiness, supremacy, wealth and other desired qualities. Those having body with less or more measurements have qualities contrary to these.
- **Satmya (suitability):** If the person is *sarvarasa satmya* then he is *balavana*, if the person is *Eka rasa satmya* then he is of *alpabala* and if *madhyam rasa satmya* then *madhyam bala*.
- **Sattva (psyche):** *Sattva* is known as mind. It controls the body by conjunction with the self. Psyche is of three types according to strength- superior, medium and inferior. Accordingly, the persons having superior psyche are, in fact, *sattwasara* (with *sattwa* as essence) and have been described in context of *saras*. Those having medium psyche sustain themselves at the

instance of others or entirely by others. But those possessing inferior mind can sustain neither by themselves nor by others. That is, the person with *pravara sattva*, can tolerate severe pain produced by *nija* and *agantuja vyadhies*. Individuals having *madhyama sattva* tolerate the pain for themselves when they realize that other can also tolerate it. Then they at a times gain strength from others. Those having *avara sattva* neither by themselves nor through others can sustain their mental strength.⁽¹⁴⁾

- **Aaharshakti:** This is examined by the power of ingestion as well as digestion. Strength and life depend on diet.
- **Vyayamshakti(power of exercise):** The power of exercise should be examined by the capacity for work. The three types of strength are inferred from the capacity for work. If the person can perform more physical work then he is of *pravara bala*, if moderately then *madhyam bala* and if less then *avara bala*.⁽¹⁵⁾
- **Vaya (age):** Age is defined as the state of body responding to the length of time. *Balavastha* up to 16 yrs are *alpa bala*, *Madhyamavastha* upto 16 to 60 yrs are *uttama bala* and *Jirnavastha* upto 60 to 100 yrs are *alpa bala*.⁽¹⁶⁾

BALAVRIDDIKAR

Acharya charaka has explained *balavriddhikar bhava* i.e factors which leads to increase *bala*. These factors

BHAVA:

lead to the growth of the body in its entirely such as – observance of time, natural process, excellence of diet and absence of damage.

These factors lead to the increase of strength such as – birth in a place having strong persons, that in a time conducive for strength, favourable time, excellence of seed and soil, excellence of diet, body, suitability and psyche; natural mechanism, youth, physical exercise and cheerfulness.⁽¹⁷⁾

RELATION OF BALA WITH DIFF. ENTITIES -

Bala as a result of Agni Prakrita Kriya -

Normal *agni* is responsible for strength and depends on the *ahar (anna)* that is consumed by us. The food consumed is digested with the help of *jatharagni* to produce good *ahar rasa* which when processed through *rasadi agni* leads to formation of good *rasadi dhatu*. Also, *saman vayu* increases strength of *jatharagni*.⁽¹⁸⁾

This *Agni* is of four types on the basis of *Bala*, Namely *Teekshna*, *Mrudu*, *Vishama* and *Sama*. *Teekshna*, *Mrudu*, *Vishama* is responsible for various pathologies whereas *Sama Agni* is considered as the most optimum amongst all.⁽¹⁹⁾

Bala as a result of Aahara Prakrita Karma

- Food is the basic necessity of life. The immunity is largely dependent on the food we consume as it is the building block of the body. *Aahara* is definitely the prime source for *Bala*. Hence Unbalanced *Aahara* will result in various *Vyadhi*.⁽²⁰⁾

Bala and Dosha Sambandha – All *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*, in normal state, endows the person with unaffected sense organs, strength, complexion and happiness and also with a long life-span as virtue, wealth and enjoyment and wellbeing on the contrary in abnormal state they give rise to severe abnormalities.⁽²¹⁾

Table no-1: Relation with Bala and Dosha Karma⁽²²⁾

Dosha	Karma
Kapha	<i>Bala</i> – It is one of the main <i>Karma</i> of <i>Kapha</i> . Hence the name <i>Bala</i> . It is the seat of <i>Prakrita Ojas</i>
Pitta	It is the <i>Sthana</i> of <i>Agni</i> . Thus, involved in <i>Bala</i> Physiology. <i>Pachaka Pitta</i> is important for the proper functioning of the other types of <i>Pitta</i>
Vata	Imbalanced <i>Vata Dosha</i> destroys <i>Bala</i> . <i>Udana Vayu</i> is responsible for the function of <i>Bala</i> in the body also while praising the <i>Vata Dosha</i> , <i>Acharya Charak</i> has termed it as <i>Bala</i> .

Bala as Aarogya Lakshana: *Balavridhhi* has been referred to by the *Acharya* as *Lakshana* of *Karya* or *Dhatu Samya*. Physically and psychologically, *Balavana Vyakti* is regarded as being in good health.⁽²³⁾

Bala Parikshan and Vyadhi Nidana:

Ayurveda has given equal importance to both *Nidana Parikshan* i.e. Diagnosis and *Chikitsa* i.e., Treatment of Diseases.

Acharya mentions that one who treats the diseases directly without proper diagnosis is likely to be unsuccessful in his task. Hence proper knowledge of attributes of *vyadhi* and *aatur* with previously mentioned *dashavidha parikshya bhav* is must understood before treatment. *Daurbalya* or lack of *Bala* is mentioned as important symptom in many diseases and plays a key role in prognosis of diseases.⁽²⁴⁾

DISCUSSION: *Bala* is seen as a person's overall strength, both physically and mentally. It can be evaluated in both healthy and ill people. When *bala* is evaluated by *vyayamshakti*, it is referred to as *sharirika bala*. *Sattva* is regarded as *manasik bala*. *Vyadhikshamatva* has also been explained as *Bala* in *Ayurved*. *Bala* is important in providing nutrition, immunity, and support for life. *Desh, Kala, Linga, Vaya, Dhatusarata, Agni,* and *Prakruti* are all factors that affect *Bala*.

CONCLUSION:

Strength is a crucial bodily characteristic. It is related to *Mamsa, Asthi, Majja, & Shukra dhatu* as well as *Kapha, Vata, & dosha*. Strength development is *Balya karma*. *Bala* is the functional effect of *Prakrut Kapha, Oja* and *pusta dhatu*. *Bala* is defined as one who forbids *roga*, one who is *Adhistana* of *Arogya*, and one who receives treatment to safeguard it. In many contexts, such as *Ojas* as *Bala* and *Prakruta Kapha* as *Bala*, *Bala* has been described. In *Ayurveda*, *Bala* has also been used to explain *Vyadhikshamatva*. This *Bala* is also directly related to *Vyadhikshamatva*, which is the body's

immune system and power. Due to *Bala Parikshana*, which is one of the ten most significant *Pariksha Bhavas*, disease diagnosis and treatment can be accomplished more quickly. In the review of the literature, the relationship between immunity and *bala* is discussed while highlighting their parallels. *Bala* is clearly a multifaceted being with extensive therapeutic applications.

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