



Title of Article

Conceptual review on *balagraha*Deshmukh Devyanee Shashikant¹, Gadkari Rohit A.²

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ABSTRACT: *Kauarbhritya* is a branch of *Ashtanga Ayurveda* that defines a unique concept regarding disease caused by unidentified vectors known as *Balagraha*. Unfortunately it is abandoned in today's era due to its mythological explanation which kept evidences far away from scientific justification. Therefore an effort has been done with an aim to understand *Bala graha* on modern parameters as well as its clinical application in day to day practice. Material for the present review was collected from *Ayurvedic* textbooks. After thorough study of the concept of *balagraha* it is concluded that these unidentified vectors are thought to be microbes which cannot be seen by naked eyes but produce group of diseases of multi systemic-origin and syndromes.

KEYWORD: *Kaumarbhritya, Balagraha, Graharoga*

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INTRODUCTION:

The *Graha* rogas have separate entity from other general disorders. Their aetiopathogenesis, clinical features, severity, complications and management is entirely different to routine disorder of children. Their progress in human body is very rapid with high morbidity and mortality rate. Therefore, such types of disorders are categorized under the heading of *Bala graha*. Disease caused by unidentified factors are termed as idiopathic in modern science but *Balagraha*, *Jataharnis*, *Matrikas*, *Adibal* *privritta* and *Janam bal privritta* etc. disorders in our classics are attributed to goddess, sins of previous birth and a result of bad deeds in our daily life.

Balagraha is a combination of two words *bala* + *graha*. *Bala* is pertaining to children while '*Graha*' means to seize or grasp.

CHARACTERISTICS OF BALAGRAHAS :-

In *Revati kalpadhyaya*, *Acharya Kashyapa* has described morphology, habitat and characters of *grahas*¹

- *Grahas* are visible only to divine vision i.e. *divyachakshu* (microscope).

- They are fond of *rakta*, *mamsa* and *ojas*.
- These dwell at water-tanks (*Shitaputana*), ruined houses (*Putana*), cow-sheds (*Mukhamandika*) and bases of the trees (*Pitrigraha*).
- *Jataharini* which attacks pregnant and *foetii* is highly contagious.
- These vitiate the breast milk of *dhatri* too.
- *Sushruta* cautioned that wounds are to be protected *fromgrahas* and a neonate shall be nursed like a wounded person.

This description of microscopic morphology, innumerable in number, survival in unhygienic atmosphere and blood medium as positive culture, more sustenance in darkness exactly indicates that *grahas* are no other than, the microorganisms like virus, bacteria etc.

TYPES OF BALAGRAHAS:-

1. Charaka-

According to *Charaka Samhita* *grahas* were *innumerable* in number²

2. Sushruta –

Shusharata has given much importance of *bala grahas* and given elaborative account on this aspect, These are nine in number, and named

as – *Skanda, Skandapasmara, Shakuni, Revati, Putana, Andhaputana, Shitaputana, Mukhamandika and Naigamesa*.³

3. Vagbhata –

Vagbhata has added three more *grahas* (Swagraha, Pitrigraha and Shushka Revati) with slight variation in nomenclature thus the total numbers become twelve which have been classified as male and female *grahas* (Gram + ve and Gram –ve microbes) male *grahas* are five – *Skanda, Vishakha, Mesha, Swagraha, Pitrigraha*, while female are seven – *Shakuni, Putana, Shitaputana, Andha Putana, Mukhamandika, Revati and Shushka Revati*.⁴

4. Kashyapa –

In *Kashyapa samhita* references of *bala grahas* are scattered at many places viz:

First reference is in *sutra sthana* where monk described vitiation of breast milk of wet nurse by graha like *Shakuni, Skanda, Shashthi and Putana* which is the only contribution of *Kasyapa* however description is incomplete due to extinction of manuscript⁵.

Second reference of *balagraha* is in *Indriya sthan* where saint describe

symptoms of affected child with various *graha* like *Skanda, Skandapasmara, Pitrigraha, Pundarika, Revati, Shushkarevati, Shakuni, Mukhamandika, Putana and Naigamesa*.⁶

Third or final reference has seen in Chikitsa sthana about treatment of child affected by *Revati, Putana, Andhaputana, Shitaputana, Kataputana and Mukharika (Mukhamandika) grahas*.⁷

AETIOPATHOGENESIS OF BALA – GRAHA

The disorders produced by influence of *Grahas* are not primarily due to vitiation of *doshas* but are external in nature. Children are mostly affected by *grahas*, because they are dependent on other, therefore, are unable to maintain proper hygiene by themselves. Secondly, children are deficient in immunity thus more susceptible for various influences including *bala grahas*. *Sushruta* has imagined very intelligently that how these *Grahas*, enter in the body. He opines that *grahas* enter the body unperceived. *Sushruta* illustrate number of different causative factor into two major categories.⁸ One relayed to unhygienic condition in which he told about violation of rule and regulation of lifestyle of child

or mothers such as feeding in unclean and broken vessel with unhealthy condition of surrounding environment. These sound the susceptibility for the precipitation of unhygienic environment together with less immunity of the child which can easily invite the infliction of microbes.

On the other hand second category is related to psychological aspect of child such as showing misconduct in front of priest, teachers and guests and their movement to lonely and inauspicious places. This refers to bipolar mood disorder wherein immunological break down is possible besides consciousness being lost with regard to hygiene directly of child or wet nurse.

ETIOLOGY OF BALAGRAHAS –

Vagbhatta has clarified that the colonies of *grahas* are innumerable which wander around the world in various shapes to attack the people for threefold purpose viz.⁹

1. Himsa-First purpose illustrates its pathogenic nature and creates a disease e. g. Bleeding disorders
2. Rati -second purpose illustrate microbes enter in the body to complete their life cycle and create a disease e. g. Malaria.
3. Bali -Third purpose explain using host by microbes to get their

nutrition and non pathogenic, may contribute for anabolism e. g. Worm.

Thus the scope of *grahas* encroaches to minute virus, bacteria, fungi, parasites to the extent of mites etc. Hence hygiene in terms of *shuhci* and *shuddhi* (asepsis and antisepsis) plays a major role both to prevent and cure *graha rogas*.

PRODROMAL SYMPTOMS-

Weeping and fever are only two symptoms which are defined in various textbook of Ayurveda.¹⁰

GENERAL SYMPTOMS-

The symptoms appearing in a child due to affection of *balagraha* may depend upon the infliction of that particular *graha*. Following symptoms of *Bala grahas* are:

Graha and its modern correlation –

1. Skandagraha- Polio, facial palsy, hemiplegia;
2. Skandapasmara/Vishakha- convulsion, epilepsy;
3. Meshagraha-meningitis;
4. Shwagraha-Hydrophobia/Rabies;
5. Pitrigraha- Diarrhea with dehydration;
6. Shakuni-Impetigo, Stomatitis;

7. Putana -Diarrhea with Hypokalemia and paralytic ileus;
8. Shitaputana- diarrhea with hypocalcemia with hypomagnesemia;
9. Andhaputana- diarrhea with vit A deficiency with secondary infection;
10. Revati-Diarrhea with anemia;
11. Mukhamandika-Childhood cirrhosis,Nephrotic syndrome;
12. Shushkarevati-marasmus,Abd TB

MANAGEMENT OF BALA GRAHAS

The general line of management as mentioned earlier holds good for all graha rogas by giving priority to absolute hygiene and immunity besides symptomatic management.¹¹

External use

- Parisheka (washing) - It should be done with decoction prepared from Agnimantha, Varuna, Haridra, Chitraka, Putika, Rohisha, Paribhadra and Kurabaka etc.
- Abhyanga (oleation) - It should be done with oil prepared from Priyangu, Lochana, Tagara, Jatamamsi,

Sariva, Madhuka, Ela and Bhunimba etc.

- Bali and Snanam (Oblation and bath): Oblation and bathing is being administered by Tila, Tandula, Mudga, Mamsa, Matsya etc.
- Dhupana (fumigation): Fumigation has been advocated by Sarpa-Kubusa, Gridhra-Mala, Gaja-Nakha, Ushtra-Roma etc.

Internal use

- Kwatha (decoction) - It should be prepared from Bimbi, Gambhari, Madhuka, Kulattha, Badari, Yava, Laghu- Panchamula.
- Churna (powder) - It should be prepared From Kharjura, Mustaka, Narikela, Kasha, Mridvika, Madhuka etc.
- Ras ausadhies – Kumar Kalayana Rasa, Jayamangalarasa, Rajamriganka Rasa etc.
- Oil- Mahamasha Oil, Kshirabala Oil, Prasarini Oil, Jyotishmati Oil etc.
- Ghrita- Balgrahanasaka ghrita, Balahitakari ghrita,Astamangala ghritaetc¹²
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DISCUSSION

One of the important portion of Ayurvedic texts which is Bala Grahas, their impact on all states of children need proper explanation but have comparative clinical importance. In ancient period there was no advanced technology for the diagnosis, equipments for treatment and multispecialty setup of hospitals, Although ancient people described details and accurate description of multiple syndromes and group of diseases of multi systemic origin. Now modern terminologies are more specific and specified causative organism of diseases.

Modern lab techniques are more useful to visualize microbes and nomenclate that microbes (virus, bacteria) etc.

CONCLUSION:

On the basis of above description it is clear that Bala graha are now compared with various microbial infections which can be treated with a combined approach of therapeutic and psychiatric management. Thus, this arise the importance of cleanliness and hygienic measures to adopt in routine practice. Hence hygiene in terms of Shuchi and Shuddhi (asepsis and Antisepsis) plays a major role to prevent and cure Graharogas.

Pregnant woman and child is to be kept clean, well fumigated by various protective measures prescribed for child and puerperal woman are actually measures to prevent infection.

Balagraha may require further modification in future.

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