



Review Article

MULTIDIMENSIONAL CONCEPT OF *BALA* ACCORDING TO AYURVEDA AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN TREATMENT - A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda always provides the study of any concept from various dimensions. The physiological and anatomical entities explained in Ayurveda have many facets leading to deeper understanding of concepts. The entity of *Bala* according to Ayurveda is also multidimensional. *Bala* as described in Ayurveda is quite similar to concept of immunity. It can be correlated with the entities like *Ojas*, *Vyadhi Kshamatava*, *Kapha Prakrita Karma*. *Bala* plays a key role in diagnosis and treatment of diseases in Ayurveda. Its functioning depends on the equilibrium of various physiological characteristics like *Agni*, *Aahara*, *Dosha*, *Prakriti*, *Sarata* etc. Immunity is the main component in determining the prognosis, progression and waning of diseases. Thus, *Bala* and immunity are inter-related and go hand in hand. While looking into Ayurveda literature it is evident that the *Bala* entity is involved in *Sadhya- Asadhyatwa*, *Arishta Lakshana*, *Nidan Panchaka Ghataka* like *Hetu*, *Poorvaroopa*, *Rupa*, *Samprapti* etc. Thus, *Bala Parikshana* is pivotal in the diagnosis. Similarly, *Bala* also determines the treatment modality to be used in any kind of *Vyadhi*. It is also important in determining the line of treatment. Choice of treatment for that matter is largely dependent on *Bala*. Hence it can be concluded that the *Bala* entity is multifaceted and is definitely pivotal for the diagnosis and treatment in Ayurvedic point of view.

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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda always provides the study of any concept from various dimensions. The Physiological and Anatomical entities explained in *Ayurveda* have many facets leading to deeper understanding of concepts. The entity of *Bala* according to *Ayurveda* also has multidimensional approach and cannot be categorised into one specific entity. *Bala* is not only a physiological entity but also it is pivotal in understanding the disease Diagnosis, Progression, waning and spread. *Bala* entity is quite similar to concept of immunity. Merriam Webster Dictionary defines Immunity as "A condition of being able to resist a particular disease especially through preventing development of a pathogenic microorganism or by counteracting the effects of its

products"^[1]. Thus the concept of immunity is directly related to combating the diseases and preventing its occurrence as well. Similarly, the concept of *Bala* is important in understanding the physiology of health and pathology of Diseases. Hence it is evident that there is significant relation between the *Bala Parikshan* or *Bala* concept in Diagnosis and Treatment of Diseases.

Meaning and Aspects of *Bala* according to Ayurveda

According to *Charaka Prakrita Kapha* is termed as *Bala*, the same has again been termed as *Ojas* which is the *Saara* of the body^[2] (Ultimate product of digestion and metamorphosis or the nectar of all *Dhatu*s). When there is *Vikriti* in the

same it is termed as *Mala* or *Papma*. This indicates the *Dushti* of *Kapha Dosha* results in the accumulation of toxins in the body and decreased immune function as the *Malinikarana* of *Dhatu*s occur. Also, *Daurbalya* or lack of *Bala* is *Lakshana* of *Oja Kshaya*^[3]. Similarly, *Udana Vayu* (A Subtype of *Vata Dosha*) is termed as *Bala*^[4]. Also, one of the important *Karma* of *Udana* is *Bala*^[5]. *Sthana* of

Kapha Dosha and *Udana Vayu* are similar indicating the close relationship between the two. In *Jwara Chikitsa Adhyaya*, *Aarogya* is termed as *Adhithana* of *Bala*. This refers that *Aarogya* or health in general depends on the *Bala*^[6]. According to *Yogratnakar*, *Agni* is considered as *Moola* (Origin) of *Bala* of any *Vyakti*^[7]. *Agni* is responsible for the Generation and Maintenance of *Bala* in the Body^[8].

Classification of Bala^[9]

Table 1: Type of Bala and their correlation with conventional medical science

Type of Bala	Explanation as per Ayurveda		Correlation with conventional medical science	
Sahaja (It is <i>Prakrita</i> type of <i>Bala</i> which is naturally predominant in the body.)	• Sahaja Shareera Bala-		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be compared to Innate Immunity. • Innate immunity refers to nonspecific defence mechanisms that occur immediately or within hours of an antigen's appearance in the body^[10]. • According to modern research Genes play an important role in maintaining immunity. • Moreover, Epigenetic changes or environmental influences also affect the immune status since birth^[11]. 	
	• <i>Uttama</i>	<i>Kapha Prakriti</i> <i>Mansa, Majja Dhatu</i> <i>Shukra Sarata</i> <i>Sattva Sarata</i> <i>Sarva Sara</i> <i>Guru Vyadhita</i>		
	• <i>Madhyama</i>	<i>Pitta Prakriti</i> <i>Rakta Sarata</i>		
	<i>Heena</i>	<i>Vata Prakriti</i> <i>Laghu Vyadhita</i>		
Kalaja (It depends on the Factors like Age and Climatic Conditions.)	<i>Kaalatah Bala</i> (<i>Bala</i> differing as per seasons or climate)	<i>Uttama</i>	<i>Hemanta Shishira</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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^[12]. • Researches prove that Physiological ageing is accompanied by decline in immune system function^[13] • Elderly are reportedly more prone to various chronic and infectious disease as compared with youth.
		<i>Madhyama</i>	<i>Vasanta Sharada</i>	
		<i>Heena</i>	<i>Grishma Varsha</i>	
	<i>Vayatah Bala</i> (<i>Bala</i> with reference to Age groups)	<i>Uttama</i>	<i>Youvana</i> (30-60 Years)	
		<i>Madhyama</i>	-----	
		<i>Heena</i>	<i>Vruddha</i> (Over 60 years)	
Yuktikruta (It depends on <i>Aahara</i> , <i>Vihara</i> and <i>Aushadha</i> <i>Sevana</i> done by the Individual)	<i>Aahara</i> (Diet)	<i>Ghritha Sevana</i> <i>Dughda Sevana</i>		
	<i>Vihara</i> (Lifestyle)	<i>Abhyanga</i> <i>Vyayama</i>		
	<i>Aushadha Sevana</i> (Medication)	<i>Balya Aushadhi</i> like <i>Bala</i> , <i>Ashwagandha</i> , <i>Sthira</i>		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This can be compared to Adaptive Immunity. • Physical activity and nutrition are important in a healthy lifestyle with potential benefits to immunity^[14]. • There is evidence that meeting requirements of high intakes in carbohydrate and protein and avoiding deficiencies in nutrients such as vitamin D and antioxidants is integral for optimal immune health^[15]. • It is observed that there is compromised immune function both in Malnutrition like conditions (E.g. Scurvy) and Over nutrition (Obesity) ^[16,17]. 	

• **Bala Vriddhikara Bhava**^[18]

In *Shareera Sthana*, Acharya Charaka has described *Balavridhikara Bhava* which can again be correlated to methods defining and enhancing immunity.

• **Bala as a result of Agni Prakrita Kriya**^[19]

Agni is responsible for *Bala* in Humans. It is responsible for the metabolism, assimilation and excretion processes in the body. Formation of *Dhatus*, *Mala* and even functioning of *Doshas* is dependent on *Agni*. All the *Rogas* result from the *Vikriti* of *Agni*. Hence it can be derived that Proper Immunity is incomplete without proper *Agni*. This *Agni* is of four type 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 ^[20].

• **Bala as a result of Aahara Prakrita Karma**^[21]

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*.

• **Bala and Dosha Sambandha**^[22]

The Three *Doshas* are the main pillars of the body. All the body functions are directly dependant on the *Doshas*. *Bala* is outcome of balance and homeostasis of the *Doshas*. The role of *Doshas* and its subtypes with reference to *Bala* can be summarized in the table given below.

Table 2: Relation with Bala and DoshaKarma

Dosha	Karma
Kapha	<i>Bala</i> – It is one of the main <i>Karma</i> of <i>Kapha</i> . Hence the name <i>Balasa</i> ^[23] . 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> ^[24] .
Vata	Imbalanced <i>Vata Dosha</i> destroys <i>Bala</i> ^[25] . <i>Udana Vayu</i> is responsible for the function of <i>Bala</i> in the body also while praising the <i>Vata Dosha</i> , Acharya Charak has termed it as <i>Bala</i> ^[26] .

Bala and Prakriti Sambandha

The *Prakriti* of individual is of prime importance to determine the overall body constitution and response to disease pathology. Different individuals of different *Prakriti* react to stimuli in various ways. It is observed that the *Bala* entity is directly dependant on the *Prakriti* inherited naturally.

Table 3: Bala and Prakriti Relation^[27]

Type of Prakriti	Relation with Bala
Kapha	<i>Kapha Prakriti</i> individuals are considered as most <i>Balavana</i> amongst the <i>Ekala Prakriti</i> . According to <i>Vagbhat</i> it is considered as <i>Uttama Prakriti</i> ^[28] .
Pitta	<i>Pitta Prakriti</i> individuals have <i>MadhyamaBala</i> and suffer from heat related disorders more as compared to other <i>Prakriti</i> ^[29] .
Vata	<i>Vata Prakriti</i> individuals have least <i>Bala</i> . They are most prone to falling ill with the change in climate or surroundings ^[30] .

• **Bala as Aarogya Lakshana**

In the 8th Chapter of *Vimanasthana* Acharya have mentioned *Balavridhi* as *Lakshana* of *Karya* or *Dhatu Samya*. *Balavana Vyakti* is considered to physically and mentally healthy^[31].

• **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^[32].

Nidana Panchaka, *Shatkriya Kaala*. *Trividha* or *Chaturvidha Pramana*, *Dashavidha Pariksha Bhava* are essential for authentic understanding of *Vyadhi*. *Balaparikshana* comprises a major part of all the above. As mentioned earlier *Dashavidha Pariksha Bhava* are themselves considered as standards for determining the *Dosha Pramana* and *Bala Pramana*. *Daurbalya* or lack of *Bala* is mentioned as important symptom in many diseases and plays a key role in prognosis of diseases.

Table 4: Relation between VyadhiNidana and or Bala (Daurbalya)

Disease Name	Daubarlya as a Symptom
Jwara ^[33]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daurbalya is present as Poorvaroopo and Samya Lakshana in following conditions as mentioned in Jwara. • Pourvahnik Jwara with Shushka Kaasa associated with Bala Kshaya is considered as Arishta Lakshana^[34] • Sannipataja Jwara Lakshana^[33] • Jeerna Jwara- Daurbalya Pramukha Hetu^[35] • Purnavartita Jwara – Daurbalya Hetu, Lakshana Swarupa^[36]
Prameha ^[37]	• Upadrava Rupa Daurbalya
Shotha ^[38]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daurbalya results asa Upadrava. • Presence of Daurbalya makes Vyadhi Asadhya. • Sukha Sadhya in Balavana patient.
Kshataksheena ^[39]	• Kramasha Balahani (Profound and progressive loss of Bala)
Udara ^[40]	• Samanya Lakshana-Loss of Agni Bala, Aahara

Bala Parikshan and Vyadhi Chikitsa

If the treatment of various diseases is taken into consideration it observed that *Durbala* or *Ksheena Bala Vyakti* is as *Dushchikitsya* or difficult to treat^[41]. Therefore, before initiating the treatment of any disease, it is mandatory to understand the gross lifespan of the individual. Also it is not advisable to treat the patient who is suffering from *Asadhya Vyadhi* or is about to die^[42]. Frequently, Treatment Protocol of *Vyadhi* may differ in *Balavana* and *Durbala* Individuals. For instance, in *Raktapitta Vyadhi Stambhana* is not advised in primary stage to facilitate the expulsion of *Dushta Rakta* however in *Ksheena BalaRogi* the *Stambhana* becomes essential to support the life of the patient^[43].

Table 5: Relation between Vyadhi and line of treatment

Vyadhi	Chikitsa Tatwa – Line of Treatment
Balavana Vyakti ^[44]	• Shodhana Swarupa Langhana Chikitsa Yogya
Prameha ^[45]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanshodhana is advised in Balavana Patient. • Bruhana is advised in Krishna Patient with diminished Bala or in Durbala
Pandu ^[46]	• Use of Ghrita or Avaleha Kalpana in Shushka Kaasa condition is advised to improve the overall Bala of the patient.

DISCUSSION

Bala is considered as the seat of *Aarogya* or state of being disease free. Various aspects like *Dosha*, *Agni*, *Aahara* are important in maintenance of *Bala* and Immunity. All the *Dashavidha Pariksha Bhava* are gold standards for *Bala Parikshan*. *Prakriti Parikshana* is at the heart of the same as it is the phenotype of human being. It is that *Bhava* which is present naturally since birth. It is directly related to genetic makeup of the individual. It is mentioned in *Samhitas* as *Vataladya Sadaatura* meaning that humans having *Prakriti* other than *Sama Prakriti* are always unwell or always suffer from some or the other kind of ailment. This can be directly compared to the immune status of the individuals. It is also observed that specific *Prakriti* is involved in causation of specific types of diseases in Individuals for instance *Pitta Prakriti Rugna* is more prone to *Khalitya*, *Palitya*, *Rakta Pitta Kapha Prakriti* to *Sthoulya Prameha* etc. Thus *Vata Prakriti* individuals being *Alpa Shareera* or *Krishna* are

expected to be immune from diseases like *Sthoulya*. *Saara* is termed as *Vishuddhatara Dhatu* it can be used to determine the quality of the particular *Dhatu* in the body^[47]. *Dhatu* are the important functional units of body and their equilibrium is vital for the body. Hence *Sarata* helps in protection of the body from particular ailments related to *Dhatu*. If the person is *Rakta Dhatu Saara* then he or she is less likely to suffer from diseases resulting from vitiation of *Rakta Dosha*. *Aahara Shakti* is again indicative of *Agribala*, which as mentioned earlier is pivotal for immunity. *Gramya Aahara* also results in *Daurbalya*^[48]. *Vyayamashakti* or *Vyayama* is clear indicative of *Bala Pramana*^[49]. Similarly, *Sattva* which is the important pillar of *Ayu* is important in maintaining the Psychoneuro immunological Homeostasis. Coming to determining the life span of *Aatura*, *Acharya* always emphasizes on the *Sadhya Sadhyatwa*. It mentioned that one should not treat a patient who is suffering

from *Asadhya Vyadhi* as it can lead to *Artha Vidya-Yash Haani* hence the *Ayu Maana Parikshana* plays a key role in treatment. While looking into *Indriyasthan* it is observed that *Bala Hani* is a *Lakshana* of *Arishta* in most of the *Vyadhi* indicating importance of *Bala* in prognosis of any disease. For instance, *Aanaha* and *Atisara* in *Durbala Vyakti* is considered as *Arishta Swarupa* making the *Vyadhi Asadhya*, similarly when *Daurbalya* is associated with *Karshya* or when it results from *Jwara - Atisara* and *Shopha* it is *Arishta-Swarupa*^[50]. *Bala - Hrasa*, *Ksheena Mansa Bala* are often used to denote *Asadhyatwa* or *Kashta Sadhyatwa* of *Vyadhi*. It is observed that there is *Bala Kshaya* or *Daurbalya* as a part of *Poorvaroop* even *Hetu* of diseases. It is present as *Upadrava* or *Arishta Swarupa* in most of diseases worsening their prognosis. Almost always any *Vyadhi* is *Sadhya* in *Balavana* Patient and *Asadhya* in *Durbala* patient. In diseases like *Kshataksheena* or *Pandu* it is also an important *Samprapti Ghataka*. Thus it can be observed that those having compromised or lowered immune status are more likely to fall ill. They are more susceptible to occurrence of disease progression in the body. Immunity can definitely affect the prognosis of disease. For instance, in Immuno-compromised patients like Diabetics or AIDS Fungal infection or Urinary Tract infection can lead to severe complications. On the Flip side those having strong immunity i.e. those patients who are *Balavana* are less susceptible to be combated by diseases. For example, Influenza is more dangerous in Immunosuppressed rather than those who are strong and healthy at the moment.

While looking into the mode of treatment of diseases, it is seen that the modality is different in different *Bala* of *Vyadhi* and the patient. In *Balavana Rugna*, *Kshara Karma*, *Shashtra Karma*, *Agni Karma* even *Panchakarma* are more advisable than *Durbala Vyakti*. In *Durbala Rugna* these are often contraindicated. In case of *Durbala Rugna* it is indicated to not perform the *Upeksha* of the patient i.e. if the patient is suffering from *Raktapitta* or *Atisaara*, *Stambhana* or *Sangrahana* should be practiced to avoid the further *Bala Kshaya* of the patient. In *Rajyakshma* the *Purisha* or *Mala* is the only repository of the *Bala* of the patient^[51]. Hence *Shodhana* should not be performed in such conditions. Main indication for the *Shodhana* therapy itself is *Bahudosh* *Awastha* and *Balavana Rogi* as *Shodhana* leads to some or other type of *Daurbalya* hence *Sansarjana Krama* is indicated after *Shodhana* therapy. Similarly, *Bala Prapti* is considered as an important milestone in treatment modality of the disease as *Bala Kshaya* is the

important *Samprapti Ghataka*. It can thus be observed that in almost in all the *Vyadhi* the choice of drug for example *Ghrita* or *Dugdha* is dependent on the *Bala* Modality itself. Thus immunity or *Bala* in this case plays a key role in treatment as it is the determinant of the *Dravya* and *Karma* even the *Guna* of the *Aushadha* used.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the literature review and even the modern research support the importance of *Bala* in context of Immunity not only in the Diagnosis but also in the treatment of diseases. *Bala* being outcome of one of the ten most important *Pariksha Bhavas* its *Parikshana* can help in smooth diagnosis and treatment of disease. The correlation between *Bala* and Immunity are described in the review of literature underlining their similarities. It is evident that *Bala* is multidimensional entity having wide applicability in therapeutics. Thus, it can be concluded that Immunity can definitely compared with *Bala* of the Patient and its role in Diagnosis and treatment of various diseases can be well described. Thus, every Ayurvedic physician must always keep in mind the importance of *Bala* entity in diagnosis and treatment of diseases.

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