



## CONCEPT OF BALA (STRENGTH) IN AYURVEDA

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**ABSTRACT** *Bala* (strength) is a broad concept in terms of Ayurveda. Ayurveda has described *trividha bala as sahaj, kalaja and yuktikrut*. *Bala* is characteristic feature of healthy physical and mental state of body. In Ayurveda, *bala* is a property of *kapha, vata dosha* and *mansa, asthi, majja, shukra dhatus*. Even diagnosis and treatment of disease in Ayurveda also depends upon *bala* of various things as *agnibala, shareerbala, manasbala, aturbala etc.* Promotion of *bala* can be obtained by dietary contents and *bala* promoting drugs. These can be prescribed from 1st month of gestation to get superior physical and mental strength.

### KEYWORDS

Strength, *Bala*, Ayurveda, strength promoting factors

### INTRODUCTION

*Bala* i.e. Strength is the ability to do the activities that need lot of physical and mental efforts. Here an attempt is made to throw light on concept of *bala*, its types, importance and its methods of improvement described in Ayurveda thousands of year ago. The study is based on selected references from common classical texts.

History reveals that in the era of different empires, efforts were taken to strengthen people for defense ministry. The people were used to do exercise, physical and mental work, daily intake of cow milk; all these activities were helpful to increase overall strength of body, balanced and proportionate built of body. Now a day's normal physical & mental strength of human is decreasing because of sedentary lifestyle and supplements are becoming essential for maintaining or improving the strength.

An attempt is made to understand scientific and practical approach of *balya karma* with reference to drugs, time to consume these drugs, age to start with, its best combinations, used routes etc. So the scattered concept of *Bala* in Ayurveda can be easily and effectively explained under one roof for enhancement of concept of *Bala*.

### AIM –

This study is designed to enlighten *bala* promoting factors & drugs for improvement of physical & mental strength from the view of Ayurveda.

### MATERIAL & METHODS

A thorough search is done from *CharakSamhita, SushrutaSamhita, AshtangHrudaya* and the available commentary on it.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Ayurveda has described *trividha bala*.<sup>1</sup>

**Sahaj Bala** (natural strength): - *Sahaj Bala* is natural strength of body. It develops at the time of origin of body from mother's *artava* and father's *shukra*.<sup>1</sup> *Sahaj Bala* is defined by dominance of *doshas* of *garbha* constitution.<sup>2</sup> *Sahaj bala* also depends on *Bala* of mother & father at the time of conception and *mansanumasik garbhini paricharya* of mother (monthly regimens in pregnancy).

**Kalaja Bala** (seasonal or age): - physical and mental strength also depends upon and alters with season<sup>3</sup> and age.

**Table no. 1**

<i>Kala / Bala-</i>	Excellent ( <i>uttam bala</i> )	Medium ( <i>madhyam bala</i> )	Minimum ( <i>alpabala</i> )
Age	Childhood	Adulthood	Elderly hood
<i>Doshabala</i> according to age	<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Vata</i>
Seasons	Winter	Spring & Autumn	Summer & Rainy

**Yukyikrut bala** (act of intelligence): - The physical and mental strength that depends on proper diet, physical activities, medicines, *Rasayan* (rejuvenating drugs) and *Vajikaran* (an action that involves nourishment to the *shukra* primarily) is *yuktikrut bala*. It can be improved with the help of these factors.

Charakacharya has described Strength promoting factors as<sup>4</sup>

- *Desha* (birth place) – Place of excellent strength i.e. *Sadharana desha* where animals & plants are with excellence of constitution, complexion & strength. *Sadharan desha* has normal state of environment i.e. no degrade or extreme conditions has to face at this place. Here water of river & air in environment is always fresh. So birth at such place leads to an individuals with excellent strength.
- *Kala* (time) i.e. *visarga kala*, at this time all plants & environmental factors are strong and healthy so birth in *visarga kala* helps to improve strength.
- *Sukhascha Kaalayoga* i.e. favorable conditions in all aspects leading to good strength.
- *Beeja kshetra sampat* - excellence of maternal and paternal endowment.
- Proper and good *ahar sevan*, excellence of nourishment.
- *Shareer Sampaccha*, excellence of bodily constitution.
- *Satmyasampaccha* – being habitual to all conditions related to diet, medicine & environment.
- *Satvasampaccha*, excellence of the mind.
- *Swabhav sampaccha*, excellence of natural endowment.
- *Yuvan* (youth) – in middle age an individual has good strength.
- *Karma* – *karma* are the deeds of an individual regarding health (*panchakarma*), diet, talk and behavior in society.
- *Samharsha* – sexual excitement or being enthusiastic.

According to *Sushrutacharya Bala* is *Rasaj*<sup>5</sup> and *Satmyaj bhav*<sup>6</sup>. *Rasaj bhav* develops from *prakrut ahar rasa* circulating through

pregnant mother to her fetus and *satmyaj bhav* depends on *satmyaj ahar* consumed by mother and also these both *bhav* (factors) can be improved throughout the life of individual.

*Bala* is basic characteristic of prakrut *kapha dosha*<sup>7</sup> and *vaat dosha*<sup>8</sup>. *Bala* is function of *prakrut udan vayu*<sup>8</sup>. An individual with *kapha* dominant constitution has excellent strength<sup>9</sup>. *Bala* is the attribute of excellence of *mamsa* (*mamsasarata*), *asthi* (*asthisarta*), *majja* (*majjasarata*), *shukra* (*shukrasarata*) and *sarvadhatu sarata*<sup>10</sup>. Individual having *Susamhatshareer* (well-knit body where bones are symmetrical and well distributed, the joints are well bound and *rasadi dhatus* are well formed) is called as *Balawant*<sup>11</sup>.

**Constitution regarding primary elements-**

*Kapha dosha* is *Bala* of body & the primary element of *kapha* are *Prithvi* and *Jala*. Regarding *bala*, *prithvi* represents *sthiratva* (stability), *gurutva* (heaviness and bulky) while *Jala* roles to nourishment.

**Relation of Taste & Bala (rasapradhanya):-**

Sweet (*madhur*) itself described as strength promoting property<sup>12-13</sup>. An individual having habit of consuming all *rasa* has excellent strength<sup>14</sup>.

**Agni - Bala relation -**

*Bala* of body depends on excellence of all *dhatus* and they all are produced by the action of *agni* on food. So normal *agni* is responsible for strength & depends on *ahar (anna)* which 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*<sup>15</sup> increases strength of *jatharagni*.

**Dosha – Bala relation**

*Dosha* i.e. *Vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* are in *Sama avastha* gives better strength to body<sup>16</sup>. *Bala* is mentioned as function of *udan vayu* specifically. *Kapha* in normal state is known as *Bala* of body by Charakacharya.

**Dhatu - Bala relation**

*Bala* is property of *sarvasar purush* that means an individual is having all excellent *dhatus*, known as *balwant*. *Bala* depends on *prithvi mahabhut pradhan dhatus* like *mansa*, *asthi*, *majja*, *shukra*. As *Bala* is *rasaj bhav* it also depends on *rasadhatu* because it primarily nourishes all other *dhatus*.

To achieve improvement of strength one can work with following three routes-

- 1) Diet (*Ahar*)
- 2) Code of conduct (*vihar*)
- 3) Medication (*aushadha*)

\* **Diet** - Regular dietary contents affects fundamentals of body having association with strength. Following table represents dietary contents with property to improve strength of body.

**Table no. 2**

Sr. No.	Drugs ( <i>dravya</i> )	Rasa (Taste)	Vipak (property after ripening)	Virya (Potency)
1.	<i>Gaganambu</i> (rain water)			
2.	<i>Ushnodaka</i> (warm water)			
3.	<i>Dugdha</i> (milk)	Sweet	Sweet	Cold
4.	<i>Navaneet</i> (Butter)	Sweet	Sweet	Cold
5.	<i>Grhita</i> (ghee)	Sweet	Sweet	Cold
6.	<i>Tila</i> (sesamum indicum)	Sweet, Astringent, bitter	Sweet	Hot
7.	<i>Tila taila</i> (sesamum indicum)	Sweet, astringent, bitter	Sweet	Hot

8.	<i>Rasona</i> (Alium sativum)	Pungent	Sweet	Hot
9.	<i>Takra</i>		Sweet	Hot
10.	<i>Ksheerapalandu</i> (Alium cepa)	Pungent, sweet	Sweet	Hot
11.	<i>Krushara</i>	Sweet	Sweet	Cold
12.	<i>Ikshu</i> (sugar cane)	Sweet	Sweet	Cold
13.	<i>ksheersantanika</i> (Cream)	Sweet	Sweet	Cold
14.	<i>Matsyamamsa</i> (Fish)	Sweet	Sweet	Hot
15.	<i>Gud</i> (cane sugar)	Sweet	Sour	Cold
16.	<i>Godhuma</i> (wheat)	Sweet	Sweet	Cold
17.	<i>Madya</i> (Alcohol)	Sour	Sour	Hot

**Code of conduct (vihar)** – following factors also results as *Balya*.

- \* To follow proper diet, well sleep and bramhacharya (supreme reality)<sup>17</sup>.
- \* Daily massaging of body with *tila tail*<sup>18</sup>.
- \* Every day bath<sup>18</sup> - as explained in Ayurveda, below neck portion use hot/warm water for bath & head and face should be washed with cold water.
- \* Use of footwear<sup>18</sup>.
- \* Keeping Umbrella with and *Maladharanam*<sup>18</sup>(use of ornaments).
- \* Daily walking.

There are some habits mentioned in Ayurveda to increase strength of specific organs like, application of oil on feet increases strength of feet, pouring few drops of oil in ear, use of Dhumpan improves the *bala* of organs that are situated above neck (hairs, ear etc.)

It is difficult to explain exact efficacy of these habits. These activities may have imprehensible influence towards strength.

**Medication (aushadh)**

In Ayurvedic texts many combinations of drug are mentioned with strength improving results. Some are mentioned under *rasayan adhikar*<sup>19</sup> & *vajikaran adhikar* & other are under the treatment of diseases.

**Strength promoting drugs (Balya dravya)**

*Bala* (*Sida cordifolia*), *Atibala* (*Abutilon indicum*), *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*), *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*), *Guduchi*, *Endri* (*Bacopa monnieri*), *Rushabhi* (*Mucuna prurita*), *Nikochaka Payasya*, *Katuki*, Ripened fruit of mango, *Rushyaprokta*, *Vidarikanda* (*Pueraria tuberosa*), *Vatam* (almond) *Akshotaka*, *nikochaka* (*pista*), *Bhallataka* (*Semicarpus anacardium*), *Guduchi* (*Tinospora cordifolia*), *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula*), *Amalaki* (*Embllica officinalis*), *Bibhitaki*.

Most of these Drugs are having *Madhur rasa* (Sweet taste), *Madhur vipak* (Sweet property After Ripening) & *Sheet Virya* (Cold potency).

**Age to start consumption -**

There is no specified reference of age to begin consumption of strength promoting drugs. According to Charakacharya, *Bala, varna* of fetus promoted naturally in 6th month of gestation<sup>20</sup>. Hence strength promoting drugs or *ahar vihar* can be prescribed since from conception. In *Sushrut Samhita*, there is a reference that if pregnant mother wish (*douhrud*)<sup>21</sup> to eat *gomamsa* & if it is provided to her, she delivers child of excellent strength. Of course drugs with very hot potency like *Semicarpus anacardium* (*bhallatak*) should not be prescribed.

After birth -

Follow *Swasthvritta*, avoid unsuitable things and step by step *asatmyavarjan* results strong individual<sup>22</sup>. *Balya dravya* can be consumed in all stages of life.

**Duration of consumption -**

Maximum strength promoting combinations are expected to get consumed daily e.g. *chyavanprasha*, *kalyanaka ghrita*.

**When to consume -**

*Balya karma* is specifically mentioned as function of *udan vayu*. So we can prescribe *Bala* promoting drugs at *udan kala* i.e. after dinner. The *Bala* promoting combinations that are mentioned under the title of rejuvenating drugs which should be consumed with empty stomach at early morning.

**Form of medicine -**

Maximum strength promoting combinations are in the form of medicated *ghrit* and sweetened semisolid form of concentrated decoction (*avaleha*).

**Vehicle (Anupan)**

As described in Ayurvedic texts, strength promoting combinations should be consumed with easily available food products like milk, ghee, honey. They used to increase strength of given drugs towards results. These co-drugs act as catalyzers, carriers.

**DISCUSSION –**

*Sahaj & kalaj bala* can be improved & maintained with the help of *yukti*.

With the help of above mentioned theory in Ayurveda one can improve strength as-

**Ahar-** Antenatal care with medicated ghee & oil mentioned in *masanumasik garbhini paricharya*. After birth one must think about *agni* and *dhatubala* improving dietary factors mentioned above.

**Vihar-** for birth of child in *visargakala* (winter) conception can be planned in February or March. Place of birth also play major role related to strength, the delivery can be advised at place of excellent strength. Properly planned daily routine of work, exercise etc. in today's lifestyle. Avoid *ati-vata atapsevan* i.e. extreme air and sun exposure.

**Aushadh** – Rasayan like chyavanprash consumption in day to day life. Drugs those having *Madhur rasa*, *madhur vipaka*, *shit virya*, *Guru & snigdha* property helps to enhance strength of body. These drugs can be classified 3 subtypes according to *Balya* action as Drugs which enhance *Agni* by their hot potency and strong penetrating power & improve digestion are – *Ashwagandh*, *chitrakdi ghrit* etc.

Drugs which improves *dhatubala* *Shatavari*, *bala* etc. by their *madhur rasa* and *kadali*(banana), *Amra* (mango) *Draksha*(grapes), Ghee, butter, milk etc. with *madhur vipaka*.

Some drugs increase strength of specific organ as **heart** – *Arjuna*, **Amashaya** – *nimba*, *guduchi*, *methika*, *karvellaka* etc. **peshi** (muscles) – *ashoka*, *lodhra*, *nimbuka*, *matsyamamsa* (fish) etc.

**CONCLUSION**

Strength is important property of body. It is associated with *Kapha*, *Vata dosha* and *Mamsa*, *Asthi*, *Majja* & *Shukra dhatu*. Advancement of Strength is *Balya karma*. *Balya* drugs can be advised from conception of mother to improve natural strength of baby. *Kalaja bala* & *Yuktikrut bala* of an individual can be improved & maintained with the help of above explained *Ahar vihar* & drugs. They should be consumed after dinner.

**Scope-**

Animal experiments & clinical trials of effects of strength improving factors during pregnancy and after birth.

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