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# A Critical Review on *Bala*

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## ABSTRACT

All the activities and movements necessary for the body are conducted by Vata dosha, while the pitta is responsible for transforming all the nutritive products in the body to assimilable form. The *Kapha* dosha is responsible for maintaining stability. Normal *Kapha* contributes body strength. According to *Charaka*, the term *Oja* and *Bala* are the synonyms of *Kapha*. It is necessary to take a note of the fact that the term *Ojus* has been stated in the *Samhitagranta* to stand, not only to *Shleshma*, but also for *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Dhatunam Tejasi*, *Ushma*. Hence the terminology is subjective depending on context and the relevance. Therefore, this article emphasises the elaboration of *bala* in terms of *shleshma* and its related entities.

**Key Words** *Kapha*, *Shleshma*, *Bala*, *Ojus*

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## INTRODUCTION

*Kapha* is also known as *Shleshma*, *Bala*. It is perhaps a concrete and stable substance as compared to other two members of *Dosha* (bodily humours) triad. Its stability is due to *Pancha mahabhauthika* constitution. Substances which belong to the *Apya* and *Parthivya* group among others are stated to play a dominant role in its composition<sup>1</sup>. The synonym *Shleshma* which is used as frequently as the term *Kapha* is derived from the root word “*Shlish*” is to embrace, to cohere or to keep together<sup>2</sup>. According to Acharya Charaka *prakrita kapha is termed as Bala*. It is also called as *Oja*, where in *Prakruta avasta* (normal state) it maintains health and in *Vikrita avasta* (abnormal vitiated state) it causes disease<sup>3</sup>.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To critically review the concept of *Bala*.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This review article is based on literature review of classical information and modern literature. The possible correlation has been made between collected information and has been presented in a systemic way. Objectives of the study critically understand the concept of *Bala*.

## LITREARY STUDY:

### Bala Karya:

*Ojus* confers firm integrity and nourishment to muscle, ability to accomplish all kinds of physical activity, clarity of complexion, and helps in the proper functioning of both the *Bahya* (external) and *abhyantara* (internal) karma<sup>4</sup>. Commenting



## REVIEW ARTICLE

on elucidation of *Bala* definition according to *Sushruta Samhitha sutrasthan*<sup>4</sup>-

### 1. **Sthiropachita mamsa and Svaravarna prasada:**

*Sthiropachita mamsa* (well-nourished compact muscle) is an indicator of appropriate nourishment of all *Dhatu* and maintains the best quality which intern helps in *Bala*. Clarity in voice and complexion represents health of an individual. Thus, both are the indicator of health of a person.

### 2. **Sarvachestasu aprathighata:**

*Sarva chesta aprathighata* refers to all the functions of *Ashaya*, *Dhatu*, *Malakarya Trayodasha Srotas*. *Sarvachesta* probably denotes to autonomic nervous system i.e. *Prana*, *Anna*, *Udaka*. And thus, *Ojas* plays a vital role in their proper functioning.

### 3. **Bahyanam karanam prathipathi**

It represents *Karmendriya*. *Karma* refers to action. The functions of *Bahya Karana- Vak* (*Indriya* responsible for speech), *Pani* (hands), *Pada* (legs), *Payu* (*indriya* responsible for the evacuation of faecal material), *Upastha* (genital organ), which are responsible for *Vachana* (speech), *Adhana* (grasping or the ability to hold), *Gamana* (movement), *Visarga* (excretion) and *anandana* (pleasure). Thus, it represents motor functions of the body.

### 4. **Abhyantara karya prathipathi:**

It represents *Jnanedriya* functions. The functions of *Abhyantara karma* i.e., *Srotra* (*indriya* responsible for perception of the sound), *Twak* (*Indriya* responsible for perception of tactile sensation), *Chakshu* (*Indriya* responsible for

perception of the vision), *Jihva* (*indriya* responsible for perception of taste), *Nasika* (*indriya* responsible for perception of smell), which are responsible for *Shabdha* (sound), *Sparsha* (touch), *Rupa* (vision), *Rasa* (taste), *Gandha* (smell). Both of these functions are carried with aid of *Bala*.

### 5. **Athmakarya prathipathi:**

It represents all the *Karya* (functions) of *Manas* (mind). For the proper coordination of *indriya* (Sense organ), *Indriya dravya* (basic elements), *indriya adhistana* (location), *Indriya buddi* (knowledge), *Indriya arthas* (sense objects), *Ojas* plays prime role.

### **Bala Beda:**

According to *Charaka sutrasthana*, *Bala* is of three types i.e. *Sahaja* (Innate/Natural), *Kalaja* (Seasonal/Age related), *Yuktikruta* (Acquired)<sup>5</sup>. According to *Astanga hridaya*, *Bala* is again divided in to 2 types *Akritrima* (Natural), *Kritrima* (Artificial)<sup>6</sup>.

The factors that govern *Bala* is *Bala vriddhi kara bhava* (factors responsible for strength)<sup>7</sup> and *Shareera vriddhikara bhava* (factors responsible for growth)<sup>7</sup>. It has vital role to maintain *Bala*.

### **Bala as ojus:**

“*Prano hi abhyantara (inner energy)*”<sup>8</sup> is explained as strength which is derived from *Ojus* and is responsible for carrying out all physical activity. So *Ojus* can be considered as *Karana* and *Bala* as *Karya*. Though *Bala* and *Ojus* have *Karya Karana Siddhanta*, some author wrote difference between *Bala* and *Ojus*. It is the ultimate essence of all the *dhatu* which is characterized by



## REVIEW ARTICLE

appropriate nourishment and has physical characters like *Rupa* (form) *Rasa* (taste) & *Virya* (potency)<sup>9</sup>. *Bala* is assessed on the basis of physical strength like ability to carry weight and doesn't have any physical characters like *Rupa*, *Rasa* and *Virya*.

### **Bahya bala:**

*Bahya bala* refers to *Vyayama Shakti* and helps in *Dosha kshaya* (alleviation of bodily humours)<sup>8</sup>. In turn helps in increase in *Abhyantara Bala* that refers to *Ojus*.

### **Ojus:**

*Ojus* is a Sanskrit word which means vigour. Acharya has also cited as describing *Bala* as the factors that destroys *Dosha*<sup>10</sup>. The *Chakrapanidatta* interpretation of term *Vyadhikshamatwa* (resistance of the body against the disease) as *Vyadhibala Virodhitwa* i.e. antagonistic to the strength and virulence of disease, and *Vyadhiutpadhaka Pratibhandatwa* is the capacity to inhibit or to fix or bind the cause factors of disease<sup>11</sup>. It is necessary to take a note of the fact that the term *Ojus* has been stated in the *Samhita* books to stand, not only to *Shleshma* but also for *Rasa* and *Rakta*. Hence the terminology is subjective depending on context and the relevance.

### **Ojus as rasa:**

The *rasa* constantly nourishes and helps in regeneration of tissues, sustains and maintains the body owing dynamical effects<sup>12</sup>.

### **Ojus as rakta:**

The term *Ojus* is also stands for *shuddha rakta* i.e. *Jeeva shonita*<sup>12</sup>. Where its nourishment and

sustenance of the bodily functions depends on *Shonitha*. The blood contains red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets which is the solid portion of blood and the liquid portion known as plasma. By its function, we can correlate *Rasa* to blood plasma excluding clotting factors. Where, it is yellowish component of blood that holds the blood cells of whole blood in suspension. It is liquid part of the blood that carries cell and protein throughout the body. It makes up about 55% of body's total volume.

1. It is the intravascular fluid part of extracellular fluid. It is mostly water and contains important dissolved proteins. Example: serum albumin, globulin, fibrinogen.

2. Blood is the medium for transportation of glucose, electrolytes, hormones, carbon dioxide main medium for excretory product transportation and oxygen.

*Jeevashonita* can be referred to as formed elements along with clotting factors. The formed elements are WBC or erythrocytes, RBC or leukocytes, platelets or thrombocytes. Where red blood cells help transport oxygen from the lungs to the peripheral tissues, WBC, act as a defence mechanism and platelets aid in blood clotting. Coagulation of blood is secondary to haemostasis. The clotting factors are nothing but plasma proteins. Thus, help in clotting process.

### **Ojus as shleshma:**

*Shleshmika ojus* is transported through *Ojovaha Dhamani* (vessels carrying *Ojus*) and is similar in quantity of *Shuddha sheshma*<sup>13</sup>. Mucosal surface represents major interface between host and



## REVIEW ARTICLE

environment. The host has clearly evolved a number of defence mechanism to deal with microbes in general and pathogens in particular. One of the most important of these is mucosal immune system. The compartment of immune system is quantitatively the largest is marked by a number of distinguishing features that are unique to its specialised role. One of these features is the preferential productions transport and secretion of IgA at all mucosal surface. A molecule which has been shown to limit the absorption of protein antigen, inhibit the attachment of bacteria and neutralize a broad-spectrum virus<sup>14</sup>.

### Dhatunam tejas:

The essence of the *dhatu*s commencing from *rasa* and ending with *Shukra* is *Ojas* and that represents *Bala*<sup>15</sup>. It is derived from *Ahara* to form *Vishuddatara Dhatu* i.e. purest, essence form of *dhatu*<sup>16</sup>. Thus, it represents the functioning of *Apara Ojas*.

Nutritional science is the science that studies the physiological process of nutrition, interpreting the nutrients and other substances in food concerning the maintenance, growth, reproduction, health, and disease of an organism<sup>17</sup>. It includes ingestion, absorption, assimilation, biosynthesis, catabolism and excretion.

### Ojas as ushma:

*Dehagni* (all the entities in the body that are responsible for digestion and metabolism) is the fundamental causative agent for maintenance proper health. If *Agni* becomes abnormal; the individual suffers from various diseases<sup>18</sup>. Hence

the *Agni* is said to be the root cause health and longevity where it represents *Apara Ojas*.

The gastric acid, intestinal motility, bile, pancreatic secretion and intestinal flora constitute important line of defense mechanism against invasion of the gut by microorganism.

In disorders like hypochlorhydria and achlorhydria, there is low or no gastric acid in the stomach, potentially leading to problems as the disinfectant properties of the gastric lumen are decreased. In such conditions, there is greater risk of infections of the digestive tract.

## CONCLUSION

The importance of *Ojus*, its production and distribution have a significant contribution in protection of the body against decay, degeneration. The capacity of *Ojus* is to provide the body with an appropriate substance which inhibits, binds, neutralises or destroys virulent factors of disease. *Bala* as preventive aspect, The *Bala* does the *Nigrahaya* (to seize) of the *Dosha* there by balancing it just like to sting in the tail of scorpion<sup>19</sup>. Our *Arogya* (health) depends on the *Bala* and irrespective of the line of treatments i.e. *Shodhana* (purificatory procedures) or *Shamana* (palliative treatment), one has to protect *Bala*<sup>20</sup>.



## REVIEW ARTICLE

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## REVIEW ARTICLE

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