

## UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF BALYA MAHAKASHAYA WRT IMMUNITY

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## ABSTRACT

Drug is an important part of chikitsa chatushpada, which has been mentioned next to the physician in Charak Samhita. The comprehensive knowledge of the drug is very important to physician because without knowledge of the drug, the patient can't be treated properly. The action Balya is defined as "Balaaya Hitam Balyam" which refers to substances that are beneficial and tend to increase Bala of an individual. The concept of Bala has been well explained by different Acharaya in Ayurveda. Acharya Charak has classified the drugs according to their Karma (pharmacological properties) into 50 groups or Mahakashaya. Each Mahakashaya contains 10 drugs possessing similar properties. Balya Mahakashaya is one of them containing 10 drugs. **Balya mahakashaya** is one of the 50 mahakashaya, which have been mentioned in Charak samhita sutra sthana 4/7.<sup>[1]</sup> Ten important drugs are enumerated under this mahakashaya,<sup>[2]</sup> i.e. Aindri, Rishabhi, Atirasa, Rishyaprokta, Payasya, Ashvagandha, Sthira, Rohini, Bala and Atibala. Dravya which increases vitality or strength of body known as "Balya". Mahakashaya is the term for a group of drugs which are used for similar purpose.

**KEYWORDS:** Balya, Strength, Bala, Mahakashaya.

## INTRODUCTION

The Ayurvedic classical texts have described the pharmacological classification of drugs, broadly and scientifically. Dravya are categorized according to their effect on specific system of human body. The Karmanusara classification of Charaka has been done in 50 groups or mahakashaya. Each group consists of ten drugs. In this method of classification the Acharya has described the drugs of basic importance. Therefore, the descriptions given are neither too exhaustive nor too brief. The dravya which are mentioned is enough for the use of person who are not much intelligence. This will also help person of high intelligence in exercising their own imagination for grasping other drugs. Balya mahakashaya is one of the 50 mahakashaya, which have been mentioned in Charaka samhita sutra sthana 4/7.

Balya mahakashaya contain *ten drugs* which are *Aindri, Rishabhi, Atirasa, Rishyaprokta, Payasya, Ashvagandha, Sthira, Rohini, Bala and Atibala*. Mahakashaya is the term for a group of drugs which are used for similar purpose. The single components of each group are called as Kasaya. Those dravya which increases vitality or

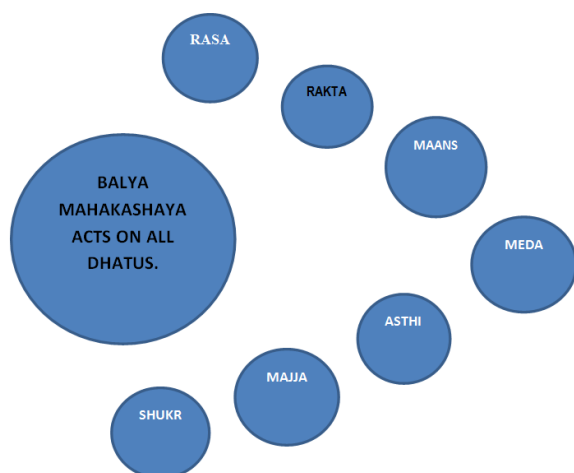
strength of body known as "Balya". In Sushruta Samhita sutra sthana 15/19&20<sup>3</sup>, the word "Bala" refers to "Oja" also which has a function of maintaining the "Bala" of the body. The word "Bala" also denotes the normal "Kapha dosa" as it has the function of providing Bala for the body Sushruta said that according to the concept of our own scripture, ojas is defined as the final and excellent essence of dhatus beginning with rasa and ending with shukra, the same verily is called as 'bala'. Sushruta, describes the function of "Bala" as-nourishment and stability of Mansa dhatu (the muscular tissues of the body), ability to perform various tasks efficiently, clarity and complexion of voice along with clear and efficient working of all the organs either external like Gyanendriya (sense organs) or Karmendriya (organs with motor functions) and internal like Mana (mind), Atma (spirit), etc". Health depends on Bala and for restoring health treatment is done, the final object of treatment being maintaining the Bala in the body. The Balya action with of various substances, either by medicaments or dietary substances is clearly mentioned in Ayurvedic classics.

According to Charak 'bala' is of 3 types (C.Su.11/36)<sup>[4]</sup> i.e. sahaja (constitutional), kalaja (temporal) and yuktikrita (acquired).

A. **Sahaja bala** - It is an inherent characteristic property of an individual present since birth.

B. **Kalaja bala** - It is dependent on season and age.

C. **Yuktikrita** - Acquired strength is dependent on diet, Drugs and exercises etc. Some example of strength promoter in samhita - Majja enhances strength (S.Su.15/7) and it also provides physical strength especially to asthidhatu. Prakrita kapha increases strength (C.Su.18/53), Normal blood increases strength. Meat of cock is strength promoter (C.Su.25/40) ; regular consumption of food having all tastes increases strength (C.Su.25/40); virya (semen) is the best strength promoters (S.Su.15/7). Regular performance of exercise promotes strength. For the purpose to preservation of health in healthy individual and eradication of disease which are curable, we need to know those drugs which are increases the strength and vitality or act as tonic. (C.Su.- Charaka samhita sutrasthana 11/36,18/53, 25/40 & S.Su - Sushruta samhita sutra sthana 15/7).



## MATERIAL AND METHODS

Comprehensive review of drugs under Balya Mahakashaya of Charaka Samhita C.Su.4 was done. Each drug mentioned under Balya Mahakashaya was reviewed from Bhavaprakash nighantus, P.V.Sharma dravyaguna vigyana. Further, scientific research work regarding drug has been collected. All information was then analyzed, discussed and concluded.

**OBSERVATIONS** - Description of dravya of Balya Mahakashaya -

1. **Aindri**- Botanical name: Bacopa monnieri (Linn.) Pennell Family: Scrophulariaceae This Plant is described in Balya, Prajasthapana of Charaka samhita. Dosha Karma – Kapha - Vata shamaka.
2. **Rishabhi** - Botanical name: Mucuna prurita Hook. Family: Fabaceae This Plant is described in Balya mahakashaya of Charaka samhita and

Vidarigandhadi gana of Sushruta samhita. The Synonyms are Atmagupta, Kandura, Markati, and Vrishabhi. Dosha Karma – Vata shamaka

3. **Atirasa** - Botanical name: Asparagus racemosus Willd. Family: Alliaceae This Plant is described in Balya, Shukrajanana and Vayasthapana mahakashaya of Charaka samhita and Vidarigandhadi, Varunadi and Kantakapancamula gana of Sushruta samhita. The Synonyms are Bahusuta, Vari, Shatavirya, Pivari, Adharkantaka, Svadurasa and Phanijihva. Dosha Karma – Vata - Pitta shamaka.
4. **Rishyaprokta**- Botanical name: Teramnus labialis Spreng. Family: Fabaceae This Plant is described in Jivaneeya, Balya and Shukrajanana mahakashaya of Charaka samhita and Vidarigandhadi and Kakolyadi gana of Sushruta samhita. The Synonyms are Shooryaparni, Kamboji, Hayapuchchhika and Mahasaha etc. Dosha Karma – Vata - Pitta shamaka.
5. **Payasya**- Botanical name: Ipomoea digitata Linn Family: Convolvulaceae This Plant is described in Brinhaniya, Balya, Kanthya and Pureeshavirajaniya mahakasaya of Charaka samhita. The Synonyms are Ksheeravalli and Payasvinee etc. Dosha Karma – Vata -Pitta shamaka.
6. **Ashvagandha**- Botanical Name: Withania somnifera Dunal Family: Solanaceae This Plant is described in Brinhaniya and Balya mahakashaya of Charaka samhita. The Synonyms are Ajagandha, Varahakarnee, Vajee, Balada and Kusthagandhaneer etc. Dosha Karma – Kapha - Vata shamaka.
7. **Sthira**- Botanical name: Desmodium gangeticum DC Family: Papilionatae This Plant is described in Balya, Snehopaga, Shvayathuhara, Angamardaprashamana and Vayasthapana mahakashaya of Charaka samhita and Vidarigandhadi, Laghupancamula gana of Sushruta samhita. The Synonyms are Anshumati, Guha, Vidarigandha and Shophghani etc. Dosha Karma – Tridosh shamaka.
8. **Bala**- Botanical Name: Sida cordifolia Linn. Family: Malvaceae This Plant is described in Balya, Brinhaneeya and Prajasthapana mahakashaya of Charaka samhita. The Synonyms are Peetapushpi, Balarhaya, Badraudani, Vinaya, and Sheetapaki etc. Dosha Karma – V ata - Pitta shamaka.
9. **Atibala**- Botanical Name: Abutilon indicum (Linn). Sw Family: Malvaceae This Plant is described in Balya and Brinhaneeya mahakashaya of Charaka samhita and Vidarigandhadi gana of Sushruta samhita. The synonyms are Petarika, Vatyapushpi, Kankatika, Vrishya and Saha etc. Dosha Karma – V ata - Pitta shamaka.
10. **Rohini**- Botanical Name: Soymida febrifuga A.Juss Family: Maliaceae This Plant is described in Balya mahakashaya of Charaka samhita and Nyagrodhadi gana of Sushruta samhita. The synonyms are Atiruha, Vritta, Praharavalli, Charmakasha, Vikasha and Vasa etc . Dosha Karma – Kaph - Pitta shamaka.

**Table of Drug property according to charak - Balya mahakashaya.<sup>[5]</sup>**

S.NO.	DRUGS	RASA	GUNA	VIRYA	VIPAKA
1.	Aindri	Tikta	Laghu	Ushna	Katu
2.	Rishbhi	Tikta , madhur	Guru, snigdha	Ushna	Madhur
3.	Atirasa	Tikta , madhur	Guru, snigdha	sheeta	Madhur
4.	Rishyaprokta	Tikta, madhur	Laghu, snigdha	sheeta	Madhur
5.	Payasya	Madhur	Guru, snigdha	sheeta	Madhur
6.	Ashwagandha	Tikta,katu,madhur	Laghu, snigdha	Ushna	Madhur
7.	Sthira	Tikta, madhur	Guru, snigdha	Ushna	Madhur
8.	Rohini	Tikta,Kashaya	Laghu, ruksha	sheeta	Katu
9.	Bala	Madhur	Laghu, snigdha picchil	sheeta	Madhur
10.	Atibala	Madhur	Laghu, snigdha picchil	sheeta	Madhur

## DICUSSION

Bala (strength) deteriorates day by day in today's fast pace of life where every individual is facing anxiety, stress, insomnia, depression, mental illness etc. All these factors attenuate the individual's both physical and mental strength. For improving the strength of many nutritional supplements, tonics are mentioned in modern medicine. In Ayurveda, Balya Mahakashaya has mentioned for improving Bala. The delineation of Balya Mahakashaya in different Nighantus showed that they are having mainly Madhura Rasa (sweet) then Tikta Rasa (bitter), Kashaya Rasa (astringent), Katu Rasa (pungent), as secondary Rasa, Guru, Snigdha Guna mainly, Shita Virya (potency) Madhura Vipaka and Karma like Balya , Vrishya (aphrodisiac), Ayushyaka (increases life span), Oja Vardhan (increases the immunity against diseases) Rasayana, Deepana (intensifies digestive fire) Vatahara (which attenuates the excess Vata dosha), Pushtikara (nourishes the body). Madhura Rasa helps in the Poshana of all Dhatus viz. Rasa, Rakta, Mamas, Meda, Asthi, Majja, Shukra, Ayushya, Balkaraka (increases strength), Tarpan (nourishes the body), Brhmana (give bulkiness), pranan (nourishes all the parts of the body) (Ch. Su.26/43)<sup>[6]</sup> Shodhana of all channels (Srotas) by Tikta Rasa and its Ushna guna, Deepan (appetizer), Pachana (digestive) Rochana, Sodhana (eliminates unwanted material from body) Guna of both Tikta and Katu Rasa. (S.Su.42/9)<sup>[7]</sup> and its Medhya (promotes intelligence) property of tikta rasa (As.Hr.Su.10/14-16)<sup>[8]</sup> All these properties attribute greatly towards the Balya Karma of Balya Mahakashaya drugs due to their Rasa, Guna Virya, Vipaka.

## CONCLUSION

Medicinal plants are natural source of medicines, now the world is moving towards the plant based medicine or phytomedicines that strengthening bodily systems (especially the immune system or oja, which can then properly fight foreign bodies) and help to destroy against pathogens without toxic side effects. We need to know those drugs which increase the strength and vitality or act as tonic. The drugs of Balya mahakashaya enhance Oja thereby increasing vitality and strength. Because of this beneficial effect, those drugs can be used to fulfill the purpose and objective of Ayurveda to preservation of

health in healthy individual and eradication of disease which are curable. Thus, proper use of drugs of Balya mahakashaya would help to live a healthy life, and to combat the challenges posed by frightening diseases of present and future.

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