CLINICAL APPLICATION OF THE CONCEPT OF BALAGRAHA – A REVIEW ARTICLE

Nandeshwar Kiran Prakash 1
Prashant L. Patil 2
Minakshi C. Choudhari 3

1P.G. Scholar, Department of Kaumarbhritiya, Government Ayurved College, Nanded/MUHS Nashik, Maharashtra, India
2Professor, Department of Kaumarbhritiya, Government Ayurved College, Nanded /MUHS Nashik, Maharashtra, India.
3P. G.Scholar, Department of Kaumarbhritiya, Government Ayurved College, Nanded/MUHS Nashik, Maharashtra, India.

ABSTRACT
A unique concept regarding disease caused by unidentified vectors known as Balagraha. It is described in kaumarbhritiya which is a branch of Astanga Ayurveda. In today’s era, unfortunately balagraha is abandoned, due to its mythological explanation which kept evidences far away from scientific justification. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to understand balagraha on modern parameters as well as its clinical application in day to day practice. After complete 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.

Keywords: Kaumarbhritiya, Astanga Ayurveda, Balagrahas, Infectious diseases.

INTRODUCTION: Balgraaha affects a large number of neonate and paediatric age group. They have separate entity from other general disorders. Their aetiopathogenesis, clinical features, complications and treatment is entirely different to routine diseases of children and progress in human body is very rapid with high morbidity rate. Grahas are most dangerous and alter the life of affected children. Diseases caused by unidentified factors are termed as idiopathic in modern science but balagraha, jataharinis, adibalpravritta, and janmabalpravritta etc disorders. Balagraha is a result of sins of previous birth and a result of bad deeds, in our daily life. Vedas and Samhitas are our oldest sources of knowledge or oldest literature available in world and diseases caused by grahas mentioned there. First reference is seen in Rig-veda as bhutas menacing foetus and neonate. Balagrahas are described to be created long back by lord shiva for the protection of Kartikeya, five of masculine form and seven of feminine form. Skanda, Vishakha, Meshakhya, Svagraha, pitrugraha, Shakuni, Putana, Sheetaputana, Adrishtaputana, Mukhamandika, Revati and Sushkarevati are the names of grahas. The first five are males and remaining are females. Acharya Vagbhata describes the general features of these balgrahas, the clinical features of individual grahas, etiology and treatment in details. Agnipurana which explains 38 grahas attacking in foetal life, infancy and paediatric age group are explained. Jataharini mentioned by Kashyapa might have been derived from the above source. Balagraha is a combination of two words bala + graha. Bala means children while ‘graha’ means to grasp or seize. Grahas – a class of evil demons supposed to capture or affect the children and produced various clinical
features. Skandagraha produced by lord Shiva, SkandaApasmara by agni, Naigamesa by Parvati and Mukhamandika and Putana by Kartikeya.\(^4\) Grahas are invisible and correlate microbes. Their contact result into sporadic diseases of infective in origin. Therefore the entire world of microbes damaging or being helpful to the human being on contact is considered as grahas. AcharyaKashyapa has described morphology, habitat and characters of grahas in RevatiKalpadhyaya.\(^5\) Grahas are visible only to divine vision i.e. microscope. Their leaders are fond of rakta, mamsa and ojas. These are night wanderers. They dwell at water tanks(heetputana), ruined houses(putana), cow-sheds(Mukhamandika) and bases of the trees(pitrigraha). Jataharini described by Kashyapa attacks pregnant women and foetus is highly contagious. They affect breast milk of dhatri too.

**AYURVEDIC REVIEW:** Sushruta mentioned in his samhita that wounds are to be protected from grahas and a neonate should be protected like a wounded person. Microscopic morphology, survival in unhygienic atmosphere, indefinite in numbers, more sustenance in darkness and low temperature when person’s BMR also remains low ,blood medium as positive culture all these descriptions of virus and bacteria indicates that grahas are not other than these micro-organisms. CharakSamhita has described only one graha i.e. Deva which cause various disorders, appear with indifferent etiology with typical clinical features without any doshadushti.\(^6\) Sushruta had given detail description of different aspect of grahas , including its predisposing factors, mode of action, manifestation and management of grahas. These are nine in number, and named as – Skanda, Skanda-apasmara, Shakuni, Revati, Putana, Andhputana, Shitputana, Mukhamandika, and Naigmesa.\(^7\) Vagbhatta has described twelve grahas above nine as Sushruta + Swagraha, Pitrigraha and Sushkarevati. These are classified as five male and seven female grahas.(gram +ve gram –ve microbes). Male- Skanda, Vishakha, Mesha, Swagraha, Pitrigraha. Female- Shakuni, Putana, Shitputana, Andhaputana, Mukhamandika, Revati, ShushkaRevati.\(^8\) References of balagramas are scattered at many places in KashyapaSamhita. First is in Sutrasthana where vitiation of breast milk of dhatri done by grahas e.g. Shakuni, Skanda, Shasthi and Putana(which is speciality of Kashyapa). Children can suffer from various diseases by consumption of such affected milk. Description is incomplete due to vanishing of manuscript.\(^9\) Second is in Indriyasthana where acharya mention symptoms of children affected by various grahas like Skanda, Skandapasmara, Pitrigraha, Pundarika, Revati, Shushkarevati, Shakuni, Mukhamandika, Putana and Naigmesa.\(^10\) Last reference is seen in Chikitsa sthana where treatment of children affected by Revati, Putana, Andhaputana, Shitputana, Kataputana, Mukhamandik grahas.\(^11\) AcharyaKashyapa described twenty names of Revati and five names Putanagraha.\(^12\) Jataharini described in KashyapaSamhita came from Vedas- Rigveda and Atharvaveda here various krimis and demons described who affects foetus and neonate.\(^13\) Twelve balagramas mentioned in Kumara-Tantra written by Ravana.\(^14\) Harita has described only one graham Strigraha i.e. Putana, with its eight types, Lohita, Revati, Vyasi, Kumari, Shakuni, Siva, Urdhvakesi and Sena.\(^15\)
AETIOPATHOGENESIS OF BALAGRAHA: The diseases produced by grahas are not due to imbalance of doshas but are external in nature. The grahas are the disorders caused by evils and demons which may be infectious in origin. Acharya Kashyapa clearly mentioned in his Samhita that grahas can be seen by divine eyes only i.e. microscope, thus these grahas are resembles to micro-organisms like virus, bacteria, etc. Children are dependent on others; they are unable to maintain proper hygiene by themselves. Children are immunodeficient therefore more susceptible to infections thus they are mostly affected by grahas. Sushruta has described entry of grahas in the body of children. He said that grahas enter in the body unobserved like an image in a mirror or heat of sunrays by a lens or like the soul entering in the body. [16] Sushruta described that the reason of grahas are disobeying of rules and regulation of lifestyles of child and mothers such as feeding in unclean and broken vessel with unhealthy conditions of surrounding environment. These cause decrease in immunity of child which can easily invite the infection of microbes. Excessive satisfaction of child’s dhatri (wet nurse) or mother in eating, sleep, exercise, sex, harmful activities and unreligious conducts can cause symptoms of grahas. Psychological aspect of children i.e. misbehaving in front of priest, disrespect of saints, teachers, and guest also cause bala-grahas. Acharya Vagbhatta has described that the colonies of grahas are innumerable which wander around the world in various shapes and sizes to attack people for three purposes viz abuse, to battle sexual urges and worship. [17] First purpose illustrate its pathogenic nature and creates a disease, second microbes enter in the body to complete their life cycle and create a disease, third one explain using host by microbes to get their nutrition and non-pathogenic may contribute for anabolism. Therefore the scope of grahas resembles to virus, bacteria, fungi, parasites to the extent of mites etc. Hence hygiene in terms of shuchi and shuddhi (asepsis and antisepsis) plays important role to prevent and cure balagrahas.

PRODROMAL SYMPTOMS: In various text books of Ayurveda, weeping and fever are only two prodromal symptoms of grahas are mentioned. [18]

GENERAL SYMPTOMS: Children affecting of balagrahas has symptoms may depend upon the infliction of particular grahas, they classified as follows. [19,20]

- General Symptoms: Fever, yawning, excessive crying, irritability, excessive lacrimation, rub his eyes, clench teeth, clench fist, eyes become red, ears and nose miserable look, injures himself and mother with nails and teeth refusal to take feed.
- Respiratory system: Grunting respiration, hiccup, cough etc.
- Gastro-intestinal system: Vomiting, diarrhoea, distension, constipation, stomatitis.
- Central nervous system:
  (a) Psychological: Laugh without any reason, fear, pulls his hairs.
  (b) Organic: Jerky movement of head, tremors, defective posture, twitching of eyelids and face muscles, drowsiness, giddiness, unconsciousness, vacant stares, dribbling of saliva (due to facial palsy) incontinence in urine and stool, fainting, hypotonia, rolling of eyes etc.
- Skin: Blister, urticaria, prominent vein over abdomen, change of colour of skin, etc.
- Smell of body: The may emit fishy, bed bug like, fleshy or bloody like etc, smell
according to influence of particular grahas.

**MANAGEMENT OF BALA GRAHAS:**

As it is universally proved that “Prevention is better than cure “ the general line of management as mentioned earlier holds good for all balagrahas by giving first priority to absolute hygiene and immunity instead of symptomatic management. Various herbal combinations and ancient classic karmas like Pradeha, Parisecana, Abhyanga, Bali, Snana, Dhupana and Dharana are using for treatment of balagrahas now a days. Some physicians also applying their own strategies from out of generalised drugs. Some oral and topical medicines also used. Pure herbal medicines or pure mineral medicines (rasa aushadies) and even herb-mineral combination can be used judiciously as per clinical picture, i.e. system involved, site of lesion, severity of pathology and complications occur etc.

Skandagraha–
vatashamakdravya, gayatrimantra
Skandapasmar–
kaphashamakdravya, dashamul,
Swagraha – shatavari, sariva siddha taila
Pitrugraha – bath with kshirvruksha mula
kashaya – Shakuni
kashyaraspradhandravya – Putna –
kakolyadimadhuraushadha, bali, ghrita pana

Mukhamandika – vatashamak chikitsa
Shushkarevati – same as skandagraha

Some essential medicines are mentioned below for various balagrahas.

**External use:**

- **Abhyanga (oleation):** It should be done with oil prepared from Lochana, Tagara, Jatamas, Priyangu, Savira, Madhuka, Ela and Bhunimbha etc.
- **Parisheka (washing):** It should be done with decoction prepared from Varuna, Haridra, Agnimantha, Chitraka, Rohisha, Putika, Paribhadra, and Kurubhaka etc.
- **Dhupana (fumigation):** Fumigation has been advocated by Sarpa-Kubusa, Gaja-Naka, Gridhra-Mala, Ushtra-Roma etc.
- **Bali and Snanam (oblation and bath):** Oblation and bathing being administered by Tandula, Mudga, Tila, Mamsa, Matsya etc.

**Internal use:**

- **Churna (powder):** It should be prepared from Kasha, Mridvika, Madhuka, Kharjura, Mushika, Narikela etc.
- **Kwatha (decoction):** It should be prepared from Badhari, Yava, Laghu-Panchamula, Bimbi, Gambhari, Kulattha.
- **Oil:** Kshirbhala Oil, Mahamasha Oil, Prasarini Oil, Jyotishmati Oil etc.
- **Ghrita:** Balgrahanasakaghrita, Balahitakarighrita, Ashamangalaghrita etc.
- **Rasaushadhis:** Jayamangalarasa, Rajamriganka Rasa, Kumar Kalyana Rasa etc.

**DISCUSSION:**

One of the most controversial but important portion of Ayurveda is Bala-grahas. It is a matter of pride that our heritage knowledge has been now-a-days accepted and supported by modern team because after discussing all these to modern paediatrician it is observed that they are surprised to see so detailed and accurate description of various disorders of multiple systemic origin, further they appreciated the views, symptomatology, treatment before 15 B.C. when there was no equipment for diagnosis, advanced technology of management, multispeciality hospitals. Bala-grahas impact on all over nation of children need proper explanation but have
comparative clinical importance. Though aetiopathogenesis, general symptoms of balagrahas has now been felt as fake among scholars but really they are explained in an applied clinical manner. The treatment explained here is still of broad spectrum and may be effective with certain mythological approaches.

**CONCLUSION:** On the basis of all above description of bala-grahas it is clear that balagrahas are now resemble to various microbial infection e.g. virus, bacteria, fungus, etc. which can treated with both therapeutic and psychiatric approach. As balagrahas caused by uncleanliness and unhygienic atmosphere, it is important to adopt cleanliness and hygienic measures in routine practice. The place of pregnant women, mother and child is to be kept clean. Fumigated by various protective measures. Prevent child and mother from various infections. Some small effort done here to correlate balagrahas clinically but it may require further modification in future life.

**REFERENCES:**
11. Kashyapa Samhita, edited by Sri StayapalaBhishagacharya with Hindi commentary Vidhotini, 10th edition, Chikitsasthana, Balgrahachikitsa-adhaya,
Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, 2005 p. 102.

Corresponding Author: Dr. Nandeshwar Kiran Prakash, P.G. Scholar, Department of Kaumarbhritya, Government Ayurved College, Nanded/MUHS Nashik, Maharashtra, India
Email: kirannandeshwar12@gmail.com

Source of support: Nil
Conflict of interest: None Declared

Cite this Article as: [Nandeshwar Kiran prakash et al : Clinical Application of the Concept of Balagraha – A Review Article] www.ijaar.in : IJAAR VOLUME III ISSUE IV SEP-OCT 2017 Page No:726-731