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## A Critical Review on Balgraha and their clinical significance in perspective of Kaumarbhritya

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**Abstract:** *Kaumarbhritya is special branch among Ashtang Ayurveda which deals with study of the disease, its management of Kaumar(Child). 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. Diseases caused by unidentified factors are termed as idiopathic in modern science but these disorders can be considered as balagraha, jataharinis, adibalpravritta, and janmabalpravritta etc. in ayurveda. It is important to know that symptomatology and the management of disorders are very well explained in our ancient texts before 15 B.C. when there was no advanced technology for the diagnosis, equipment's for treatment and multispecialty setup of hospitals. In the given research paper, the association of these grahas to the various disorders as per modern medical science and their management is explained in contemporary manner.*

**Keywords:** *Balagraha, Jataharinis, Graha, Infection.*

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**Introduction:**

According to Acharya Vagbhata<sup>1</sup>, *Graha* are indicated as a hidden disease in children where both psychic and medical treatment is employed. *Balagraha* is one of the important portions of ayurveda which have their impact over all states of children need proper explanation but have comparative clinical importance. *Balagraha* are now compared with various microbial infections which can be treated with a combined approach of therapeutic and psychiatric management. Diseases caused by unidentified factors are termed as idiopathic in modern science but these disorders can be considered as *balagraha*, *jataharinis*, *adibalpravritta*, and *janmabalpravritta* etc in our ancient texts. In ancient period there was no advanced technology for the diagnosis, equipment's for treatment and multispecialty setup of hospitals, but peoples of that time were describe the details and accurate description of multiple syndromes and group of diseases of multi systemic origin. Now modern terminologies are more specific and specified causative organism of diseases. Current article is an approach toward the ancient aspect of such disorders and their correlations with the modern era.

**Objective of study:**

1. To explore knowledge about the concept of Balagraha.
2. To understand different etiological factors, symptoms and management of grahabadha.

**Mythological Concept:**

These grahas were produced from shiva and parvati for purpose is as a body guards to his son. Narrated by God Shiv himself.<sup>2</sup>

**Ancient Aspect:**

In our ancient texts, the oldest reference of *Balagraha* is present in *Rig-veda* as *bhutas* menacing foetus and neonate.<sup>3</sup> *Balagrahas* are described to be created long back by lord shiva for the protection of Kartikeya, These *balagraha* were *Skanda*, *Vishakha*, *Meshakhya*, *Svagraha*, *pitruagraha*, *Shakuni*, *Putana*, *Sheetaputana*, *Adrishtaputana*, *Mukhamandika*, *Revati* and *Sushkarevati*. Here first five are males and remaining are females. In *Ashtanga*, Acharya Vagbhata describes the general features of these *balagrahas*, the clinical features of individual *grahas*, etiology and treatment in details.<sup>4</sup> In *Aganipurana-2* terms have been explained: *graha* and *grahi* (female *graha*). It also effects baby from first day to 17 years of life such a way 38 *graha* are explained. *Markandeya purana-16* demons appeared from *nirmasti* wife of *dusaha* out of this 8 are males and 8 are females. This may be affecting since womb or after birth

*Skandagraha* produced by lord Shiva, *SkandaApasmara* by *agni*, *Naigamesa* by Parvati and *Mukhamandika* and *Putana* by Kartikeya.<sup>5</sup> *Shatapatha* Brahman depicts *graha* as some mythical power.<sup>6</sup>

In Charak samhita, there is direct reference of *grahas*, according to Charaka Samhita *grahas* were innumerable in number.<sup>7</sup> Acharya Sushruta elaborate *balagrahas* in many aspects, including predisposing factors, mode of seizure, manifestations and management of individual *grahas*. There are 9 *Grahas* are explained by *Sushrutacharya* include 3 *Purusha Graha* and 6 *Stree Graha* are as follows:<sup>8</sup>

*Purusha Graha* (3): 1. *Skanda* 2. *Skandapasmara* 3. *Naigamesha*

*Stree Graha* (6): 1. *Shakuni* 2. *Revati* 3. *Putana* 4. *Andha-putana* 5. *Sheeta-putana* 6. *Mukha-mandika*

Acharya *Vagbhatta* has added three more *grahas* (*Swagraha*, *Pitru-graha* and *Shushka Revati*) with slight variation in nomenclature thus the total numbers become twelve which have been classified as male and female *grahas*<sup>9</sup> (Gram + ve and Gram –ve microbes)

*Purusha Graha* (5) 1. *Skanda* 2. *Vishakha* 3. *Naigmesha* 4. *Pitru* 5. *Shwa Graha*

*Stree Graha* (7) 1. *Shakuni* 2. *Revati* 3. *Shushka Revati* 4. *Putana* 5. *Adrista-putana* 6. *Sheeta-putana* 7. *Mukha-mandika*

In *Kashyapa samhita*, in *sutrasthana* described vitiation of breast milk of wet nurse by *graha* like *Shakuni*, *Skanda*, *Shashthi* and *Putana*. On consumption of such milk child can suffer various features of *graha*.<sup>10</sup> There is also description of *balagraha* is in *Indriyasthana* in *Aushadha Bhesaja Indriya Adhyaya* where the symptoms of affected child with various *graha* like *Skanda*, *Skandapasmara*, *Pitriskanda*, *Pundarika*, *Revati*, *Shushkarevati*, *Shakuni*, *Mukhamandika*, *Putana* and *Naigamesa*.<sup>11</sup> In *Chikitsa sthana*, in *Balagraha chikistha Adhyaya* about treatment of child is given who affected by *Revati*, *Putana*, *Andhaputana*, *Shitaputana*, *Kataputana* and *Mukharika* (*Mukhamandika*) *grahas*. Here Acharya *Kashyapa* given more stress to *Revati* and it has been mentioned with 22 names.<sup>12</sup>

### Causes<sup>13</sup>

There are several reasons by which *graha* affects on child health's which includes not following the *sadvritta* and *swasthavritta*, vitiated milk of mother, fearful conditions for

child, disrespect to saints teachers, improper indulgence in eating, sex, sleep, exercise-by mother and *dhatri*, taking food in broken *kasya patra*, child carried to lonely and inauspicious places and psychologically unwell child etc.

### Etiopathogenesis of Graha:<sup>14</sup>

Generally, these *graha* attain shapes of different animals like cat, bear, and owl and frighten the person. They attack on specific days like full moon, no-moon, eclipses, etc. and may even attacks during sleep, awake and during time of committing sin. Disorders produced primarily due to *grahas* will not show the vitiation of *doshas* and causes are invisible and *Agantuja* in nature. Who do not worship guests or not worship gods, ancestors, even on special days or not follow *Dharma* and indulged in *Adharma* or not offer oblations to god or eat in broken bronze vessels or among the persons with anger, who are frightened, cruel minded or the person who roam in forbidden places (burial ground, haunted house etc.) or eat the food left by others or wear the garland, dress, ornaments of others or Child or mother who are dirty, and who weeps in both morning and evening, etc.

### Microscopic nature of Balagraha:

*Grahas* are invisible and can be correlated with microbes. These *grahas* are visible only to divine vision i.e. microscope. These are night wanderers. They dwell at water tanks (*sheetputana*), 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.

**Table no.1 Correlation between Graha Rogas and Micro-organism**

S. N.	Nature	Graha Rogas	Micro-organism
1	Living	Living ( as they move and attack)	Living

2	Prone time of movement	Night hours	Dark area/ low temperature & humidity
3	Method of invasion	Hold the body, attack and cause <i>Prachhana Vyadhi</i>	Entry will be identified only after the first symptom
4	Intubation period	Can't be identified like entry of <i>Atma</i> inside the body, image inside a mirror	Period after invasion to the production of first symptom
5	Size & shape	Change as per demand	Pass through different stages of life cycle like larva, egg, sore etc.
6	Presence of Fever	Causes as a <i>Purva Rupa</i>	Usually causes as the first symptom
7	Generalized	Causes Generalized affliction of body requiring both <i>yukti</i> & <i>Daiva Vypashraya Chikitsa</i>	Causes generalized involvement (both mind & body)
8	Visibility	Invisible & visible only through special vision power ( <i>Gyana Chkshu</i> )	Invisible by naked eye & visible by Microscope
9	Entry inside the body	Enters the human body who follows <i>Adharma</i>	Enters the human body in search of definite & indefinite host in an immune deficient person
10	Diagnosis	Difficult due to rapid onset, progression and severity	Diagnosis of an individual organism is Impossible without culture study
11	Treatment	<i>Apta Vakya</i> should be followed suggesting need of an expert's opinion	Previous experiences, prevalence rate of infection in a given area and empirical treatment will be followed
12	Intension of entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Himsa</i> ( tissue injury),</li> <li>• <i>Rati</i> (sexual thrust to complete life cycle)</li> <li>• <i>Archana</i> (nourishment)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In search of host</li> <li>• To get nourishment</li> <li>• To complete reproductive cycle</li> </ul>
13	Outcome of invasion	Raksha of the body	Infections leave back certain immunity

### Prodromal Symptoms (*Purva Rupa*):

1. **Continuous crying:** Newborns always face the paucity of symptoms due to limitations in language development. It uses the same

symptom to indicate many diseases. Septicemia, hypothermia, fear, hunger or even wet napkin, otitis media like conditions will be presented with a common symptom of crying. In *Graha Rogas* also, similar presentation will

be observed, but the major difference is, it is continuously crying. Vigorous inconsolable, fearful continuous cry is a characteristic symptom to infer *Graha Rogas*.

**2. Fever :-** We know fever is the most common symptom in almost all the infective cases with some rare exceptions. *Graha Rogas* are also presented with fever as a preliminary symptom. This helps us to understand the antigenicity and infective nature of the *Graha Rogas*.

**Table no.2 Various symptoms of *balagrahas***

S. No.	Particulars	Symptoms
1	General Symptoms	Fever , irritability, excessive crying, yawning, shouts, bites lips, clenches teeth , clenches fists, injures himself or the mother with the nails or teeth, refusal to take feeds, emaciation, excessive lacrimation, rubs his eyes, ears and nose miserable look, eyes become red etc,
2.	Central Nervous System	
	(a) Psychological	Fear, pulls his hairs, laughs alone without any reason and becomes cruel.
	(b) Organic	Vacant stare, unconsciousness, drowsiness, giddiness, irritability, hypotonia, rolling of eye-balls, jerky movements of head, twitching of eyelids and facial muscles, tremors, defective posture , dribbling of saliva (due to facial palsy), change in voice and speech , incontinence of urine and stool , fainting , etc.
3.	Gastro-intestinal symptoms	Diarrhea, distension, vomiting thirst, constipation, stomatitis etc.
4.	Respiratory Symptoms	Cough , hiccup , grunting respiration, etc.
5.	Skin	Change in colour of skin, blisters urticaria, prominent veins over skin of abdomen, etc.
6.	Smell of body	The child may emit fishy, bed bug like, fleshy or bloody, etc smell according to influence of particular grahas.

**Prognosis:** Child which has rigidity of the body, aversion to the breast, becomes

**General Symptoms (*Samanya Rupa*):<sup>15,16,17</sup>**

All these symptoms point toward seizures after an attack of fever. That is acute infection cause high fever or some neurological sequelae ending up into a seizure attack. The symptoms appearing in a child due to affection of *balagraha* may depend upon the infliction of that graha.

unconscious often and the graha exhibiting all its features kills the child soon; that with opposite features and seizure being recent, it is

curable and so should be treated. All the Graha Rogas are fast progressive & difficult for diagnosis treatment. Skandagraha finally leads to residual physical disability or death.<sup>18</sup> If there is abdomen surrounded with cysts, fecal matter with different colours, depressed tongue and blackish colouration of palate, then such patients should be avoided.<sup>19</sup>

#### Treatment:<sup>20,21</sup>

As “Prevention is better than cure “ the general line of management as mentioned earlier holds good for all *balagrahas* by giving priority to absolute hygiene and immunity instead of symptomatic management. Principle followed in Graha Rogas is almost similar to anti- infective treatment followed by modern science.

General treatment principles of Graha Rogas includes Daiva Vyapashraya and Yukti Vyapasraya chikitsa. Mantra Prayoga, Swasti Vachana, Bali, Mangala Homa are the part of Daiva Vyapashraya chikitsa while Aushadhi Dharana, Snana, Ghrita Prayoga, Parisheka, Lepas, Avagaha , Dhupana , Dhoomapana, Snapana and Agni danda are specific measures under Yukti Vyapasraya chikitsa.

Some specific treatment measures according to types of graha roga are as follows-

1. Skandagraha: vatashamakdravya, gayatri-mantra
2. Skandapasmar: kaphashamakdravya, dashamula,
3. Swagraha:shatavari, sariva siddha taila
4. Pitruagraha – bath with kshirvruksha mula kashaya
5. Shakuni – Kashaya ras Pradhan dravya
6. Putna – kakolyadi madhur aushadha, bali, ghrita pana
7. Mukhamandika – vatashamak chikitsa

#### 8. Shushkarevati – same as skandagraha

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.

#### External use:<sup>22</sup>

1. **Abhyanga:** Oleation done with oil prepared from *Lochana, Tagara, Jatamasi, Priyangu, Savira, Madhuka, Ela and Bhunimbha* etc
2. **Parisheka:** Steam pouring done with decoction prepared from *Varuna, Haridra, Agnimantha , Chitraka, Rohisha, Putika, Paribhadra, Kurubhaka* etc.
3. **Dhupana:** Fumigation has been done with *Sarpa-Kubusa, Gaja-Naka, Gridhra-Mala, Ushtra-Roma* etc.
4. **Bali and Snanam:** Oblation and bathing by *Tandula, Mudga, Tila, Mamsa, Matsya* etc.

#### Internal use:<sup>23</sup>

1. **Churna:** Powder prepared from *Kasha, Mridvika , Madhuka , Kharjura , Mushtka, Narikela* etc.
2. **Kwatha:** Decoction prepared from *Badhari, Yava, Laghu-Panchamula , Bimbi, Gambhari, Kulattha .*
3. **Taila:** *Kshirbhala Oil, Mahamasha Oil, Prasarinini Oil, Jyotishmati Oil* etc.
4. **Ghrita:** *Balgrahanasaka ghrita, Balahitakari ghrita, Ashamangala ghrita* etc.

5. **Rasaushadhies:** *Jayamangala Rasa, Rajamriganka Rasa, Kumar Kalyana Rasa* etc.

### Discussion:

*Bala-grahas* impact on all over nation of children need proper explanation but have comparative clinical importance. Though etiopathogenesis, general symptoms of *balagrahas* has now been felt as fake among scholars but really they are explained in an applied clinical manner. This research paper is an approach towards the concept of Balagraha by considering ancient conceptual aspect and critical analysis done with applying the modern medicine concepts. The concept of microorganism do also well with relating all graha with viral etiology unless earlier some are thought to be noninfectious. On average, enteroviruses cause about four infections per child per year during the first several years of a child's life. Once a child has had an infection with a specific enterovirus, the child is typically immune to that virus for life. So, these are truly "pediatric viruses" primarily affecting children. This is why a child may become ill with a certain enterovirus and the parent usually will not become ill with that virus. The younger the infected person, the more severe the disease. Some very young infants infected with an enterovirus may have the appearance of sepsis (a severe bacterial infection of the blood) with high fever and lethargy, requiring tests to investigate what is causing the illness. Newborns who become infected with an enterovirus may rarely develop an overwhelming infection of many organs, including liver and heart, and die from the infection. Along with this as *balagrahas* caused by uncleanliness and unhygienic atmosphere,

it is important to adopt cleanliness and hygienic measures in routine practice.

### Conclusion:

Finally, based on all above description of *bala-grahas* are now resemble to various microbial infection e.g virus, bacteria, fungus, etc. *Balagraha* are now compared with various microbial infections which can be treated with a combined approach of therapeutic and psychiatric management. In Ayurveda the management of such viruses is given with both therapeutic and psychiatric approach. So, with Ayurved approach it is necessary to implement the concept and utilize its clinical importance in child health care. Further study can be conducted to establish evidence-based facts for Balagraha and its clinical manifestation with microorganism which would be helpful in protocol development of management of such illness.

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