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Materia medica of *Bala Dwaya* - A Literary Review

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ABSTRACT

Literary *Dwaya* means two, *Bala Dwaya* means two types of *Bala* i.e. *Bala* and *Atibala*. *Bala* means strength promoting, hence it bestows strength and is a tonic in general as well as rejuvenator for all kinds of *Vataja* disorders. The *Bala* is *Sida cordifolia* Linn. and *Atibala* is *Abutilon indicum* Linn. both belongs to Malvaceae family. Both are having *Madhura Rasa*, *Madhura Vipaka* and *Sheeta Virya*. In *Brimhaniya Mahakashaya* of *Charaka Samhita* it is enumerated that *Vatyayani* as *Bala* and *Bhadroudini* is *Atibala*. There are two varieties of *Atibala* one is big and the other is small. The big one is named as *Abutilon hirtum* where as the second one is named as *Abutilon indicum* Linn. which is smaller variety. In the *Atharva Parishista* the *Bala* flowers can be used as *Pushpabhisheka*. The present study of *Bala* and *Atibala* reveals the pharmacological actions, their controversies, therapeutic application, etc. according to different Ayurvedic lexicons.

Key words: *Bala*, *Atibala*, *Abutilon indicum*, *Abutilon hirtum*, *Bala Dwaya*.

INTRODUCTION

In the Ayurvedic lexicons, *Bala* is from a group of four drugs, *Balachatusthaya*^[1] and is *Balya* (tonic) and *Prajastahapana* (which promotes reproduction).^[2] *Acharya Vagbhata* mentions *Bala* under *Madhyama Panchamoola*^[3] and *Sushruta* enumerated under *Vata-Sanshamana Ganas* and *Vamanopaga Gana*.^[4] *Charaka* has also mentioned it under *Vatashanshamana Gana*.^[5] In the *Panchashirsha Agada*,^[6] and in *Sarvadhutugata Visha Chikitsa*, *Bala* is one of the ingredient.^[7] *Bala* is more effective in heart as a tonic, where as *Atibala* is stronger diuretic.

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Among four *Bala* viz; *Bala*, *Atibala*, *Mahabala* and *Nagabala*, the first two are commonly used. In *Brimhaniya Mahakashaya*^[8] of *Charaka Samhita* it is enumerated that *Vatyayani* as *Bala* and *Bhadroudini* is *Atibala*. There are two varieties of *Atibala* one is big and the other is small. The big one is named as *Abutilon hirtum* whereas the second one is named as *Abutilon indicum* Linn. which is smaller variety.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

*Bala*⁹

Botanical name - *Sida cordifolia* Linn

Family - Malvaceae

Shrubby, branched, softly hairy and with much stellate, hair nearly all over and subpersistent. Leaves: 1-2 inch long, cordate or subacute, not acuminate, petioles are ½- 1½ inch long. Pedicels : Solitary or few together, hort. Some up to ½- ¾ inch long jointed much above the middle. Calyx : ¼ -3/4 inch long, lobes ovate, acute. Corolla : Slightly exceeding the calyx, yellow. Fruit; ¼-1/3 inch in diameter. Carpels : 7-10 strongly reticulated ciliate on the upper margins. The two dorsal margins almost scabrid, awns 2 nearly as long as the carpels, linear, retroselyscabrid, hairy. Root : Occurs in variable sized pieces, 5-15 cms long

with few lateral slender rootlets of smaller size, tap root branched at the tip; outer surface buff to grayish - yellow minutely striated or smooth, odorless, taste slightly bitter. Available in all over India.

Atibala^[10]

Botanical Name: *Abutian indicum* Linn.

Family: Malvaceae

It is a perennial softly tomentose shrub, with very big leaves. Stem - round, frequently tinged with purple. Leaves - ovate to orbicular - cordate, 2-2.5 cm. long acuminate, toothed, petioles long, stipules long, linear, acute,. Flowers - Solitary on jointed peduncles, orange-yellow or yellow. Calyx - lobes ovate, apiculate, Corolla - yellow, opening in the evening. Staminal tube hairy at the base, Filaments long. Seeds: 3-5, reniform, tubercled or minutely stellate - hairy, black or dark brown. (Flowers and fruits almost throughout the year). Found as a weed in all over India, the sub-Himalayan tract and hills upto 1,400 m. and in hotter parts of Srilanka.

Vedic period^[11]

- *Bala* is mentioned as *Rasayana*, *Vishagna*, *Balya* and *Pramehagna*.
- In *Atharva Veda*, *Kalpasutra* the reference regarding *Bala* is available.
- In *Atharva Parishishta* it is used as *Pushpaabhisheka*. (Pai.19/39/1-13. A.P. 5/1/4.)

According to Charaka Samhita

- *Bala* is mentioned in *Brunhaniya*,^[8] *Balya*, *Prajasthapana*^[12] and *Madhuraskandha*^[12]
- *Bala* is mentioned as strength promoting and *Vatashamaka* drug.^[5]
- The *Bala Churna* is advised with water in *Sarvadhatugata Visha Chikitsa*.^[7]
- Also it is one of the ingredients of *Panchashirishoagada*^[6] and *Amrutaghrta*.
- While explaining the different types of varieties *Chakrapani* told that, *Vatyayani* is *Sweta Bala*^[8] and *Bhadraudini* is *Peeta Bala*.^[8]

- *Charaka* - *Madhura Rasa*, *Snigdha*, *Sheetaviryya*, *Madhuravipaka*, *Vatashamaka*, *Grahi*.

According to Sushruta Samhita

- In *Vamanopagagana*^[4] *Bala* is mentioned.
- In case of *Sahadiva*, *Acharya Sushruta* explained that it is one of the varieties of the *Bala* and it is having *Peeta Pushpa*^{[13],[14]} (yellow flowers) but the other varieties have *Neelapushpa* (blue color flowers).
- For all types of *Vataraktarogas*, *Bala Taila*^[15] is used.
- For the preparation of *Mahasugandhi Agadaraj*^[16] which is used in snake poison *Bala* is one of the ingredients.
- While explaining the *Baladwaya*, it is mentioned that *Bala* is having white flower (*Shuklapushpa*) and *Atibala* has yellow flower (*Peetapushpa*)^[17] and its seed is *Seetapaki*.^[18]
- *Sushruta* - *Madhura Rasa*, *Snigdha*, *Sheetaviryya*, *Madhuravipaka*, *Vatashamaka*, *Balya*, *Rasayana*.

According to Acharya Vagbhata

- The reference regarding *Bala* found in *Balya Dashemani*^[19] and in *Madhyama Panchmoola*.^[20]
- In *Astanga Hrudaya*, *Uttaratantra*, *Vagbhata* has mentioned *Bala Dwaya*,^[21] *Dwibala*^[22] and *Balatraya*.^[23]
- According to *Arunadatta* the *Balatrayment*^[24] are *Bala*, *Atibala* and *Nagabala*.
- *Vagbhata* - *Madhura Rasa*, *Snigdha*, *Sheetaviryya*, *Madhuravipaka*, *Vatashamaka*, *Balya*.

Bhavaprakasha Nighantu^[25]

- *Bala* is mentioned in *Guduchyadi Varga*.
- *Bala Chatusthaya* (Four types of *Bala*) are *Madhura* in *Rasa*, *Snigdha* in *Guna*, *Sheeta* in *Veerya*, *Bala*, *Kantikaraka*, *Grahi* in *Karma*, alleviates *Samira*, *Arsha*, *Pittaasra* and *Kshata*.

- The root bark of this is taken along with curd or sugar cures *Mutratisara*.
- *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu* - *Madhura Rasa*, *Snigdha guna*, *Sheetavirya*, *Madhuravipaka*, *Vatashamaka*, *Balya*, *Kantikaraka*, *Grahi*.

Dhanavantari Nighantu^[26]

- *Bala* is mentioned in *Guduchyadivarga*, *Shukravardhaka*, *Balya*, *Tridoshashamaka*, also acts as *Shukra*, *Ojavaradhaka* and cures *Raktapitta* and *Kshaya*, *Madhura Rasa*, *Snigdha Guna*, *Sheeta Virya*, *Madhura Vipaka*.

Shaligrama Nighantu^[27]

- *Bala* is mentioned in *Guduchyadivarga*. Also explained various synonyms of *Bala*. *Ruchikaraka*, *Vrushya*, *Grahi* and *Vata* and *Pitta Shamaka*.
- *Shaligrama Nighantu* - *Madhura Rasa*, *Snigdha Guna*, *Sheetavirya*, *Madhuravipaka*, *Vata-Pitta Shamaka*, *Balya*. *Vrushya*, *Grahi*.

Shodhala Nighantu^[28]

- *Bala* is mentioned in *Guduchyadivarga*, *Vrushya* and strength promoting i.e. *Balakaraka*.
- *Shodhala Nighantu* - *Madhura Rasa*, *Snigdha guna*, *Sheetavirya*, *Madhuravipaka*, *Vata-Pitta Shamaka*, *Vrushya*, *Balakaaraka*.

Kaiyadeva Nighantu^[29]

- In *Oshadivarga*, *Bala* is mentioned as *Balachatusthaya* (all the four types of *Bala*), are *Ayurvedhaka* and alleviates *Vatarakta*, *Tridosha*, *Kshata* and *Kshaya*.
- Its fruits (seeds) are *Kashaya* and *Madhura* in *Rasa*, *Madhuravipaka*, *Sheeta* in *Veerya*, *Guru*, *Sthambaka*, *Lekhana Karaka*, *Vibandha*, *Adhmana*, *Vata-Pitta* and *Rakta-Vikaranashaka*.

Raja Nighantu^[30]

- The *Raj Nighantu* explained various synonyms of *Bhadraudini* like *Nagabala*, *Kharagandha*, *Chatushphala*, *Mahodaya*, *Mahashakha*, *Mahapatra*, *Mahaphala*, *Vishvadeva*, *Arishtha*, *Kharva*, *Hrisva*, *Gavedhuka*, *Deavadanda*, *Mahadanda* and *Ghata*. Its qualities are, *Mahura*,

Amla, and *Kashaya* in *Rasa*, *Ushnavirya* and *Guru*. It alleviates *Kandu*, *Kushtha*, and *Vatadosha*, *Vrina* and *Pitta Vikaranashaka*.

- *Bala* is mentioned in *Shatahvadivarga*. *Bala* is *Ati-tikta*, *Madhura* in *Rasa*, cures *Pittatisara*, provides *Bala*, *Veerya*, *Pushti* and relieves *Kapharoga*.

Adarsha Nighantu^[31]

- In *Karpasadivarga*, *Bala* is mentioned, and having *Brumhaniya*, *Balya*, *Prajasthapana*, *Grahi*, *Vrushya*, *Ojavaradhaka*, *Vatahara*, *Pittaghna* and *Kshayanashaka* properties.
- *Adarsha Nighantu* - *Madhura Rasa*, *Snigdha guna*, *Sheetavirya*, *Madhuravipaka*, *Vata-Pitta Shamaka*, *Brumhaniya*, *Balya*, *Prajasthapana*, *Grahi*, *Vrushya*, *Ojavaradhaka*,

Priya Nighantu^[32]

- In *Shatapushpadi Varga*, *Balapanchaka* is mentioned. The *Balapanchaka* are *Bala*, *Atibala*, *Mahabala*, *Nagabala* and *Raja Bala*.
- *Priya Nighantu* - *Madhura Rasa*, *Snigdha guna*, *Sheetavirya*, *Madhuravipaka*, *Vata-Pitta Shamaka*, *Balya*, *Vrushya*, *Brumhanakaraka*.

Gada Nigraha^[33]

- While explaining the treatment of all types of *Vatavyadhi*, *Bala Taila* and *Brihad Bala Taila*, *Tritiya Bala Taila* and *Mudhagarbhe Chaturtha Bala Taila* is mentioned.

Substitute and Adulterants^{[34],[35],[36]}

- The plants most commonly used as the source of *Bala* belong to the genus *Sida*. *Sidaretusa* Linn, syn. *S.rhombifolia*, var. *retusa* Linn, *S. rhombifolia* Linn, *S.rhoboidea* Roxb, *S. spinosa* Linn, *S.acuta* Burn, *S.veronicae folia* Lamk and *Abitulon indium* G.Don, *Urenalobata* Linn, *U. sinuate* Linn, *Pavonia odorata* Wild, *P. zeylanica* Cav. are being used under the name of *Bala* in different part of the country.
- *Abitulon indicum* (L). Sweet, *S.retusa* Linn, *Pavonia odorata* Wild and *Urena lobata* Linn. are used as adulterants.

- *Sida cordifolia* Linn. is the widely used source of *Bala* in northern parts of India while physicians of Kerala have adopted *Sida rhombifolia* Linn. *S. retusa* (Linn) Borss. (Syn *S. rhombifolia* var. *retusa* (Linn) Mast; Family: Malvaceae) as *Bala*.
- The drugs may commonly adulterate with *Sida rhombifolia* and *Sida spinosa* species.

Chemical constituents^[37]

- **Root:** C 28 phyto-ecdysones viz, sidasterone B, carboxylated tryptamines, quinazoline alkaloids, symathomimetic amines, bête-phenethylamine, beta - sitosterol, acylstery glycosidesitoinoside, ephedrine, S-(+)- Nb-methyl tryptophan methylester, hypaphorine, vasicinone, vasicine, vasicinol, choline, betaine, phytosterol, resin acids.
- **Seed:** Proteins, steroids, resin, resin acid, mucin, phenethylamine, ephedrine, pseudoephedrine, fatty oil, potassium nitrate, linoleic acid, malvalic acid, sterculic acid and coronaric acid.
- **Aerial parts:** Palmitic, stearic, hexacosanoic acids, beta - sitosterol.

Controversial aspect of *Bala*^[38]

- In Kerala, fresh bundles of green *Bala* plants are sold in the market. It is widely used in Kerala. Not a single pharmacy may be there, which may not be using *Bala*. Ghee, *Taila* and other preparations are made from *Bala*. But their *Bala* is *Sida retusa* Linn, some what different from ours.
- *Vatyalaka* is a synonym of *Bala* and this word has been as derived as it is used for sweeping purposes. Some plants are tied together and made into a sweep.
- *Sida cordifolia* Linn. contains an alkaloid Ephedrine; other species do not contain ephedrine. So *Sida cordifolia* Linn. should be used for medication.
- Looking to all this *Bala* is not at all controversial.
- Still, however, in some parts of India *Atibala* is known as *Bala*. This should be corrected.

- Another species *A. theophrastii* Mdic. (*A. avicennae* Gaertn) is also used by some as *Atibala* because of their similarity in appearance. It is mainly used for nerve disorders like paralysis and *Vata* prominent disorders. It is also used as the adulterant of *Bala*.

CONCLUSION

The literary review reveals that all the types of *Bala* are having *Madhura Rasa Snigdha Guna, Sheeta Veerya*. So the other species can be taken into consideration for various therapeutic applications. As both *Bala Dwaya* possesses *Vatashamaka* property and same chemical composition, can also be used vice-versa.

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