

Review



Relevance of Astrology in *Balachikitsa*: A Review in Ayurvedic context

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ABSTRACT:

Background: The holistic approach of Ayurveda explains the enormous influence of nature on human beings. This divine healing science has an in-depth relation with astrology as it deals with the influences of planets on human beings. Acharya Sushruta explains the influence of *Soma, Surya, and Anila* to that of *Kapha, Pitta, and Vata*. The mutual relationship between man and nature is also well explained through *Lokapurusha Sidhanta* by our *Acharyas*. Astrological evidence can be seen in various treatment aspects of *Balaroga*. *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* is one of the psychosomatic approaches of treatments explained in our classics. Role of *Pushya Nakshatra* in *Pumsavana* (the procedure to obtain a healthy child), influences of various *Grahas* in the wellbeing of a *Kumara* (child), role of *Prajapatya* constellation in the context of *Annaprasna Samskara*, etc. establishes the strong relation of astrology in *Balachikitsa*. This review focuses on the astrological methods explained in Ayurveda and their influence on the growth as well as developmental aspects of a child. **Objective:** To understand the relevance of astrology in *Balachikitsa* with special reference to Ayurveda. **Materials and methods:** Literature Screening was done on the available published literature related to Astrology, *Jyotisha Sastra* and *Daivavyapashraya chikitsa*. A manual search was also done in Ayurveda Samhithas and Ancient Astrology textbooks. **Conclusion:** Adapting the ancient astrological techniques in ayurveda will help in identifying and treating the diseases of unknown origin. This valuable science can be implemented for the wellbeing of a child. Astrological methods can be considered as a part of *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* in Ayurveda

KEYWORDS: Astrology, *Balaroga*, *Balachikitsa*, *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa*, narrative review

RECEIVED ON:

22-09-2025

REVISED ON:

06-11-2025

ACCEPTED ON:

12-11-2025

Access This Article Online:

Quick Response Code:



Website Link:

<https://jahm.co.in>

DOI Link:

<https://doi.org/10.70066/jahm.v13i10.2360>

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CITE THIS ARTICLE AS

Vijay Bhaskar S, Krishna Priya G. Relevance of Astrology in *Balachikitsa*: A Review in Ayurvedic context. *Journal of Ayurveda and Holistic Medicine (JAHM)*.2025;13(10):58-64

1. INTRODUCTION

The holistic approach of Ayurveda explains the enormous influence that nature and planets hold on human beings. According to Paracelsus “Man is a microcosm, or a little world, because he is an extract from all the stars and planets of the whole firmament, from the earth and the elements; and so he is their quintessence”. [1] This same principle is explained in Ayurveda as *Loka Purusha Samya Siddhanta*. This divine healing science has an in-depth relation with astrology as it deals with the influences of planets on human beings. Relevance of astrological can also be seen in various treatment aspects of *Balaroga* (pediatric disorders). Astrology is the science that predicts or determines the influence of the planets and stars on human affairs. The principles of astrology are mainly related to prevention, health care, and relief from illness through various religious ceremonies. Astrology deals with the account of good and bad deeds during this life and previous lives, and their consequences on health or ill health. [2] Childhood is considered the most important phase of life. *Balachikitsa* is given utmost importance in Ayurveda as it determines the quality of health, wellbeing, social and psychological behavior of a child across the lifespan. Each astrological method explained in Ayurveda has its own influence on the growth as well as developmental aspects of a child. In this article, an attempt is made to correlate and convey the importance of astrological concepts in the ayurvedic practices of *Balachikitsa*. The present article also addresses how these principles help in the welfare of a child.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Aims: To critically analyze the relevance of astrology in *Balachikitsa*

Objectives:

- To identify the relationship between astrological principles and *Daivavyapashraya* methods implemented in *Balaroga Chikitsa*
- To understand the utility and limitations of astrological principles in pediatric clinical practice.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Literature Screening was done on the available published literature related to Astrology, *Jyotisha Sastra* and *Daivavyapashraya chikitsa*. Materials related to *Balaroga*, pediatric healthcare and *Balachikitsa* was obtained through an online search using Boolean operators such as AND, OR, NOT. Searched databases include PubMed, Scopus and Google Scholar. Search terms include “Astrology,” “Medical Astrology,” “*Balaroga*,” “Pediatric health care,” “*Graharoga*,” and “*Balachikitsa*”. A manual search was also done in Ayurveda Samhitas and Ancient Astrology textbook like Varahamihira Horasastram, Brihat samhitha etc.

Literature Review

Concept of Astrology in Ayurveda

Astrology or *Jyotisha Sastra* is the science that provides an understanding of the planetary influences on human beings. A deeper study gives an intricate aspect of the day-to-day life of a person and their relationship with destiny. These are the conclusions derived from particular movements and alignment of the Sun, Moon, and other planets following a particular pattern and their role in human life. Ayurveda also emphasizes the

practice of *Manidharana* (wearing of gems), *Mantra* (hymns), *Homa* (Oblations), etc. as a part *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa*. Astrology can also predict one's wellbeing based on higher cosmic powers and their beneficial forces can be utilized for the management of various disorders. It is concerned with the healing of body, mind, and soul using tools of the entire universe viz stars and planets. Both these sciences put forth a holistic approach with a proper understanding of the influence that nature and the planets hold on human beings which can be directed toward the eradication of human suffering i.e., both physical and mental ailments. Astrology addresses the diseases arising from unseen or cosmic influences which are, beyond any physical causes. Unlike the principles of *Jyotisha*, *Daivavyapashraya chikitsa* also suggests auspicious timings for therapeutic interventions and remedial rituals such as *Mantra*, *Homa*, or *Bali* to pacify adverse planetary effects. *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* also works on the basis on *Prabhava* (*special action*) and has an *Ashukari* (Immediate) effect.

4. DISCUSSION

Significance of astrology in *Bala Samskaras*

Bala Samskaras refers to various religious ceremonies and rites conducted during the lifetime of a child for attaining and ensuring various developmental milestones. This will imbibe various *gunas* (qualities) in the child. The entire life span of a child from the moment he is conceived in the mother's womb till his death is covered under the term *Samskara*. In *Nishkramana Samskara*, the baby is taken out of *Kumaragara* (neonatal care unit) to a temple by

chanting Vedic *Mantras* (Sacred Chants). The importance of worshipping various *Devatas* like the god *Vishnu*, *Agni*, and *Brahmanas* is explained in this context. In *Naamakarana samskara* (naming ceremony); it is auspicious that the child's name should start with the *Beeja Akshara* (Seed Syllables) of his respective star. As per the position of the star, each star has its own *Beeja akshara*. Importance of *Navagraha Puja* (Worship of Nine Planets) is explained before conducting the *Dolayana samskara* (Cradle Ceremony). *Annaprasha samskara* is the procedure of introducing solid food to the child. It should be conducted in *Prajapathi Nakshatra* on the 10th day as per Kasyapa. *Karnavyadhana Samskara*, the ear-piercing ceremony is conducted in *Sukla Paksha* on a *prasasta tidhi karana muhurta* (auspicious time). It is indicated as an act for ornamental purposes as well as a ceremony for the protection of the baby. *Sooryodaya darshana* (seeing the sun) and *Chandrodaya darshana* (seeing the moon) *Samskara* were performed during the first month.

Importance of *Nakshatras*

Like how the universe is sustained by the moon, sun, and wind through the process of nourishment, depletion, and distribution, so do the *Kapha*, *Pitta*, and *Vata* hold the *Sharira* (body). The planets and stars represent various bodily elements and help in their proper functioning. Ashtanga Sangraha explains that the longevity of a child depends on *Nakshatras* (stars). Commentator Indu explains about 27 *Nakshatras* and presiding deities. Various *Nakshatras* and their role in a child's health and development are highlighted in many parts of classical literature. *Pushya nakshatra* is an

important constellation that is suitable for *Pumsavana karma* as well as for the administration of *swarna prasha* (an immune-boosting remedy). [3] Specific days were also mentioned for when the child should not be taken outside the home like *Poornima* (full moon) and *Amavasya* (new moon). In Charaka Samhitha, Punarvaasu Atreya explains the role of *nakshatras* in collection of various medicinal plants like *madanaphala* (*Randia dumetorum Lamk.*). [4] In *Pumsavana Samskara*, Acharya Charaka has mentioned using various drugs like *Jivak*, *Rishabhak*, *Apamarga*, etc. in *Pushya nakshatra*. He has also explained to take bath in medicated water in *Pushya nakshatra*. In order to attain a healthy progeny *Pushya nakshatra* also plays a vital role. Acharya Charaka has mentioned *Hamsodaka*; the water which is heated by the sun during the day, cooled by the moon at night and got detoxified by the *Agastya* star in *Sharad Ritu*. It reveals that even the quality of water can be changed by the influences of the sun; moon and *Agastya* star. Drugs processed in *Chandra nakshatra* act as Ambrosia and subdue *tridosha*. Atharva Veda also highlights that *Agni* and *Surya* are responsible for the destruction of *Krimi* (micro-organisms) caused by *Rakshasa* (Demonic Being) and *Pisacha* (Evil Spirit) which can be considered natural sterilization done by the nature.

Importance of Mantras

Mantras are the sacred utterance consisting of syllables, words, or verses which helps in protection from the bondage or troubles. According to Ayurveda, it's a part of *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa*. *Mantras* are energy-based sounds that when repeatedly uttered tune to a

particular frequency and this frequency establishes a contact with the cosmic energy and drags it into the human body and surroundings. [5] Samaveda has given importance to the musical chanting of *Mantras* with a proper rhythm. It stimulates and modulates the electromagnetic waves in the brain. *Mantras* were chanted during the *Jatakarma Samskara* (Birth Ceremony) and *Nishkramana Samskara* (first outing ceremony) which is helpful in enhancing the *satva bala*. While explaining *Prashana* (Administration of Medicinal Substances), there is a reference regarding the importance of *Mantra* chanting i.e., before the establishment of lactation the baby should be made to lick the mixture of honey and ghee mixed with *Ananta* (gold) fortified with *Mantras*. [6]

Relation of Planets and stars on bodily elements

Acharyas have clearly explained the importance of understanding the relationship between planets and their effects on the human mind. Bodily elements like doshas and dhatus have a clear relationship between planets. [7] *Jyotisha Shastra* explains that the origin of diseases in children is due to the influence of certain malefic planets. *Dhatus* like *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majja*, and *Shukra* is ruled by astrological elements such as *Budha* (Mercury), *Chandra* (Moon) *Shani* (Saturn), *Guru* (Jupiter), *Surya* (Sun), *Mangal* (Mars) and *Shukra* (Venus) respectively. *Surya* and *Mangal* control the *Agni Mahabhuta* (fire element), *Chandra* and *Sukra* control the *Jala Mahabhuta* (water element), *Shani* rules the *Vayu Mahabhuta* (air element) and *Guru* denotes the *Akasha Mahabhuta* (Ether). Malefic grahas (planets) are believed to cause specific

diseases in the body. *Surya, Chandra, and Mangal* are linked with fevers, cutaneous, hematological and ocular manifestations, while *Budha* and *Shukra* are associated with cutaneous, ENT, and genitourinary ailments. *Guru* relates to metabolic and digestive diseases like *Prameha*

and *Gulma*, whereas *Shani* causes *Vata-Kaphaja* disorders, fatigue, and neuromuscular issues. Rahu and Ketu are connected with infectious, toxic, and psychosomatic conditions. As shown in table 1 various diseases caused by malefic grahas are represented.

Table 1: Diseases caused by malefic grahas. [8]

Malefic grahas	Diseases
<i>Surya</i> (sun)	<i>Jwara</i> (fever), <i>Apasmara</i> (epilepsy), <i>Hridroga</i> (heart disorders), <i>Druk Rogas</i> (Eye diseases), <i>Twak Kushtha</i> (skin diseases) <i>Asthi vikara</i> (bone disorders), <i>Visha Vikara</i> (Poisoning).
<i>Chandra</i> (moon)	<i>Nidra</i> (sleepiness), <i>Aalasya</i> (lassitude), <i>Kapharoga</i> (disorders of Kapha), <i>Agnimandya</i> (decreased in appetite), <i>Atisara</i> (loose motions), <i>Pitaka</i> (papule, boil), <i>Sheeta Jwara</i> (fever with chill), <i>Kamala</i> (Jaundice), <i>Rakta-Vikara</i> (blood disorders), <i>Kushata</i> (skin diseases).
<i>Mangal</i> (Mars)	<i>Trishna</i> (thirst), <i>Rakta Prakopa</i> (vitiation of blood), <i>Pitta Jwara</i> (Inflammatory fevers), <i>Kushtha</i> (skin diseases), <i>NetraRoga</i> , (eye diseases), <i>Gulma</i> (tumors), <i>Apasmara</i> (epilepsy), <i>Parushta</i> (dryness), <i>Deha-bhanaga</i> (fractures).
<i>Budha</i> (Mercury)	<i>Bhranti</i> (vertigo), <i>Netra Vikara</i> (Eye diseases) , <i>Gala Vikara</i> (Throat diseases), <i>Ghrana Vikara</i> (Nasal diseases), <i>Jwara</i> (fever), <i>Pitta-Kaphaj Vikara</i> , <i>Pandu</i> (anemia), <i>Twacha, Vikara</i> (skin diseases), <i>Vicharchika</i> (eczema).
<i>Guru</i> (Jupiter)	<i>Gulma</i> (abdominal tumor), <i>Antra Jwara</i> (enteric fever) <i>Kapha Rogas</i> (Kapha diseases), <i>Shrotra Rogas</i> (diseases of Ear), <i>Prameha</i> (diabetes), <i>Shoka</i> (depression).
<i>Shukra</i> (Venus)	<i>Pandu</i> (anemia), <i>Netra Vikara</i> (ophthalmic diseases), <i>Aasya Vikara</i> (diseases of mouth), <i>Shrama</i> (fatigue), <i>Guhya Rogas</i> (genital disorders), <i>Mutrakrichhra</i> (dysuria), <i>Shukra Struti</i> (premature ejaculations).
<i>Shani</i> (Saturn)	<i>Vata-Kaphaj Vikara</i> (disorders of vata and kapha), <i>Tandra</i> (drowsiness), <i>Shrama</i> (fatigue), <i>Bhranti</i> (vertigo) <i>Kukshi Ruk</i> (pain in loins).
<i>Rahu & Ketu</i> (Dragon's head & Tail)	<i>Tapa kara/Jwara</i> (fever), <i>Kushtha</i> (skin diseases), <i>Visha</i> (poisoning).

Analysis of astrological influence on neonatal health

Various theories and conclusions were present on the role of astrology and its action in human health. As the child category represents the nearest embodiment of God and is also in a stage of development, they are

more prone to various *Graha Badhas*, diseases, etc. Rather than correlating these with supernatural elements, researchers have constructed a relationship between the human body and its planetary influences in mechanical terms. They drew analogies between the

effects of the Sun and Moon upon the tides and their presumed effects upon fluids within the body. *Grahas* are also recognized as reflectors or transmitters of light energy. These solar and planetary radio-like waves, emitted at various angles, were seen to bear influence on every animate and inanimate object; it can affect the human system on both biological and psychological levels. [9] Various *Mantras*, *Nakshatra puja*, and *Bala Samskaras* explained in Ayurveda might be based on these concepts in order to prevent the child from afflicting with malefic *Grahas*. This also clearly helps in understanding the good and bad deeds during this life and previous lives, and their consequences on health or ill health.

Clinical significance

Longevity and health status of a child can be determined by astrological principles. Ayurveda also mentioned various *Mantras* and role of *Nakshatras* in influencing the wellbeing of a child. Astrological claims in early death cases were clinically proved through various studies which showed the affliction of *Lagna* (Ascendant) and *Lagnesh* (Lord of Ascendant) along with moon and sun. [10] *Purvaparadhaja vyadhis* (disorders due to past deeds) or *Karmaja vyadhis* (disorders due to actions) can be managed with the help of *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* (spiritual therapy). As per vedic medical astrology the major cause of every diseases is derived out of the sinful acts committed in the previous birth; and this deeds of past will metaphysically follow soul from births to births as accretion of sins. [11] Studies have also showed the relation of planets and its effect on *Manasika vikara*

(mental disorder) like *Unmada* in patient who is suffering from mental illness since childhood. [12] Brihat Samhita by Varaha Mihira have an in detail explanation of position of *grahas*, time of conception and its role in determination of lifespan and health. [13] In the current scenario practical application of astrology holds as one of the major limitation. Since there is a lack of extensive clinical evidences conclusions about clinical effectiveness remain primarily inferential. Further studies should be conducted clinically to validate the relevance of astrology in *Balachikitsa*

5. CONCLUSION

Acharya Sushruta explains the importance of knowing other *Shastra* and gives the freedom for its application along with Ayurvedic treatment principles. Since children are the embodiment of true divinity, *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa*, and *Jyotisha Chikitsa* are highly relevant for their growth and development. Ayurveda and Jyotisha are two diverse sciences which indeed holds and unspoken connection by means of Vedic origin. These principles can be simultaneously adopted for the well-being of a growing child.

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Declaration of Generative AI

The authors declare this manuscript was written without the use of generative artificial intelligence tools. All the content, including text generation, data analysis and references was developed and reviewed by the author without assistance from AI technologies.

Conflict of Interest – The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Source of Support – The authors declare no source of support.

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