

A REVIEW ON LEHANA IN BALROGA: CLASSICAL INSIGHTS AND CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

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ABSTRACT

Lehana is a classical Ayurvedic pediatric intervention described in *Kashyapa Samhita* and other texts, referring to the administration of specific medicated preparations to infants and children for promoting health, immunity, and intellectual development. It includes substances such as *Suvarna*, *Ghrta*, *Madhu*, and *Medhya dravyas* administered in small quantities to enhance strength, complexion, digestive capacity, and resistance against diseases. The practice of *Lehana* is recommended particularly in children with low birth weight, poor immunity, delayed milestones, and recurrent infections.

The principle behind *Lehana* is not merely nutritional supplementation but comprehensive bio-enhancement, targeting physical growth, mental development, and immune modulation. It functions through *Rasāyana* and *Medhya* properties, thereby supporting both body and mind. Classical

texts describe various formulations like *Suvarnaprāśana*, *Ghrta preparations*, and herbal pastes as effective *Lehana yogas*. Preventive as well as promotive aspects of child health are emphasized, making it an integral part of *Bālrog chikitsā*.

Modern scientific perspectives correlate *Lehana* with immunomodulation, neuroprotection, and growth promotion. Such practices, when validated through clinical research, may provide safe, cost-effective, and holistic pediatric health solutions.

KEYWORDS: Lehana, Bālroga, Suvarnaprāśana, Ayurveda pediatrics, Immunity, Medhya Rasāyana.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda emphasizes that childhood is a delicate phase of life where growth, development, and immunity are in a formative stage. The branch of *Bālroga* (Ayurvedic pediatrics) described by *Kashyapa*, *Charaka*, *Sushruta*, and *Vagbhata* highlights special measures for ensuring the healthy upbringing of children.^[1] Among these measures, *Lehana* holds a pivotal place. The term “Lehana” literally means licking, and in the Ayurvedic context, it refers to the administration of medicated substances prepared with *ghṛta*, *madhu*, *suvarna*, or *medhya dravyas* to infants and children for health promotion.^[2]

Kashyapa Samhita, a principal authority on pediatrics, has elaborated on *Lehana vidhi*, recommending it for children who are weak, emaciated, frequently ill, or lacking proper strength and complexion.^[3] The practice is not confined only to sick children but also extends to healthy ones for promoting *bala* (strength), *varna* (complexion), *medhā* (intellect), and *āyuh* (longevity).^[4] This reflects the Ayurvedic vision of both preventive and promotive healthcare in pediatrics.

The substances used in *Lehana* include *suvarna bhasma*, *madhu*, *ghṛta*, and herbal drugs like *brāhmī*, *śaṅkhaṇḍī*, and *yaṣṭimadhu*. These possess *rasāyana* and *medhya* properties, nourishing the *rasa dhātu*, enhancing immunity (*vyādhi-kṣamatva*), and supporting neurocognitive development.^[5] The combination of *madhu* and *ghṛta* is also described as *yogavāhi*, enhancing the bioavailability of active principles and promoting effective assimilation.^[6]

From a modern standpoint, *Lehana* can be correlated with immunization and pediatric supplementation. Preparations like *Suvarnaprāśana* have been reported to improve immune response, cognitive function, and resistance to recurrent infections.^[7] Studies on *suvarna bhasma* suggest immunomodulatory, antioxidant, and neuroprotective effects, providing a scientific rationale for its pediatric application.^[8] Similarly, herbs like *Brāhmī* and *Śaṅkhaṇḍī* are known to enhance learning, memory, and concentration.^[9]

Thus, *Lehana* serves as a holistic pediatric intervention, bridging nutrition, immunity, and mental health. Its preventive role in reducing childhood morbidity and promotive role in

improving overall development is emphasized in both classical texts and modern research.^[10] An in-depth review of *Lehana* practice can help integrate Ayurvedic wisdom with contemporary pediatric care, potentially offering safe and effective strategies for child health.^[11] Hence, this article aims to explore the classical basis, clinical relevance, and modern applicability of *Lehana* in *Bālroga*.^[12]

AIM AND OBJECTIVE

- To review classical Ayurvedic concepts of *Lehana* with special reference to *Bālroga*.
- To explore the indications, types, and therapeutic relevance of *Lehana* in child health.
- To correlate Ayurvedic descriptions of *Lehana* with modern pediatric supplementation and immunomodulatory practices.
- To highlight the preventive and promotive role of *Lehana* in improving growth, development, and immunity of children.

MATERIALS & METHODS

- **Sources of Data:** Classical Ayurvedic texts such as *Kashyapa Samhita*, *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, and commentaries were reviewed for references related to *Lehana Vidhi*.
- **Supplementary Literature:** Nighantus, *Bhaishajya texts*, and *Balroga treatises* were consulted for formulations and therapeutic practices.
- **Modern Correlation:** Contemporary pediatric textbooks and peer-reviewed research articles were assessed to understand parallels between *Lehana* and modern immunonutrition and supplementation practices.
- **Method:** The data was compiled, analyzed, and synthesized to provide a comprehensive review highlighting both classical insights and modern perspectives.

Detailed Description of *Lehana* in *Bālroga*

Ayurveda places special emphasis on the health of children, as they represent the foundation of society's future. *Bālroga Tantra*—the branch of Ayurveda dealing with pediatrics—describes not only curative measures but also preventive and promotive strategies for child health. Among these, *Lehana* is considered a highly important practice aimed at improving overall health, immunity, and intellect in children.

Concept of Lehana

The word *Lehana* is derived from the root “liḥ,” meaning “to lick.” In Ayurvedic pediatrics, it refers to the administration of specially prepared herbal and herbo-mineral formulations in small quantities for infants and children. The process usually involves licking medicated substances mixed with *madhu* (honey) and *ghṛta* (clarified butter). This mode of administration is both palatable and therapeutically potent for children, ensuring easy intake and assimilation.

Indications of Lehana

Lehana is particularly indicated in:

- Infants with poor strength or low immunity.
- Children with delayed growth and development.
- Recurrent illnesses like respiratory infections, diarrhea, or skin disorders.
- Cases of low appetite, indigestion, or emaciation.
- As a general health-promoting and preventive measure in healthy children.

Thus, it serves a dual role: therapeutic in weak or sick children, and promotive in healthy ones.

Types of Lehana

The classical texts describe different *Lehana yogas* based on the intended action:

- **Suvarnaprāśana** – administration of *Suvarna bhasma* with honey and ghee for enhancing immunity, intellect, and strength.
- **Medhya Lehana** – using drugs like *Brāhmī*, *Śaṅkhaṇḍī*, and *Yaṣṭimadhu* to promote memory and learning.
- **Balya Lehana** – formulations with *Ghṛta*, *Pippali*, and *Ashwagandha* to improve strength and nourishment.
- **Vyādhi-pratibandhaka Lehana** – preparations to protect against recurrent infections and seasonal disorders.

Mode of Action

- **Ayurvedic View:** *Lehana* acts by nourishing *rasa dhātu*, strengthening *ojas*, and balancing *doṣhas*. Its *Rasāyana* property improves tissue quality, while *Medhya* action sharpens intellect and concentration.

- **Scientific Correlation:** Studies suggest that components of *Lehana* preparations act as immunomodulators, antioxidants, and neuroprotectives. Honey and ghee serve as bioavailability enhancers, while herbs like *Brāhmī* improve neurotransmission. Gold particles in *Suvarnaprāśana* stimulate immunity and enhance cognitive function.

Benefits of Lehana

- Enhances physical strength (*Bala*) and immunity (*Vyādhi-kṣamatva*).
- Promotes mental development (*Medhā*), learning, and memory.
- Improves digestion and metabolism (*Agni dīpana*).
- Provides a natural shield against recurrent childhood illnesses.
- Promotes longevity and overall well-being.

Preventive and Promotive Role

One of the unique aspects of *Lehana* is its emphasis on *swasthasya urjaskara*—maintaining health in already healthy children. The practice aligns with modern concepts of pediatric supplementation, vaccination, and preventive care, but goes beyond by including mental and spiritual well-being.

DISCUSSION

The concept of *Lehana* in Ayurveda highlights the vision of preventive pediatrics, where interventions are not only meant for curing disease but also for promoting growth, intelligence, and immunity in children. Unlike many therapeutic practices that focus on specific ailments, *Lehana* emphasizes strengthening the child's overall constitution and resilience.

From the Ayurvedic perspective, *Lehana* works through multiple pathways. It nourishes the *rasa dhātu*, which is the first and most fundamental tissue responsible for nutrition. Well-nourished *rasa* supports the production of quality *ojas*, the essence of immunity and vitality. The substances used in *Lehana* such as *Suvarna bhasma*, *madhu*, *ghṛta*, and *medhya dravyas* act as *Rasāyana* and *Balya* agents, thus promoting both physical and mental health. The combination of honey and ghee serves as *yogavāhi*, enhancing the assimilation and bioavailability of the active principles.

The practice of *Suvarnaprāśana* under *Lehana* has special significance. Ayurveda considers gold as a potent immunomodulator and *medhya rasāyana*. When administered in a properly

processed form, it enhances memory, intellect, complexion, strength, and disease resistance. This corresponds with the modern understanding of micronutrients and trace elements playing a role in immunity and neurodevelopment. Similarly, herbs like *Brāhmī* and *Śaṅkhaṇḍī* described in *Medhya Lehana* are known for their nootropic properties, aligning with contemporary neuropharmacological findings.

In the modern context, *Lehana* can be compared with immunization, pediatric supplementation, and neurodevelopmental support. While modern supplementation often targets specific deficiencies, *Lehana* provides a more holistic approach by balancing *doṣhas*, strengthening *ojas*, and promoting both immunity and intellect simultaneously. Moreover, it places importance on preventive care, which is a crucial aspect of child health in today's era of recurrent infections, malnutrition, and neurodevelopmental challenges.

Another noteworthy aspect is the safe and gentle administration method. Given as a palatable preparation mixed with honey and ghee, *Lehana* is well accepted by children, ensuring compliance. The emphasis on small doses, palatability, and natural adjuvants reflects Ayurveda's deep understanding of pediatric physiology and psychology.

Thus, *Lehana* serves as a bridge between ancient preventive healthcare and modern pediatric needs. It provides a safe, holistic, and practical strategy for addressing common challenges in child health such as weak immunity, poor growth, recurrent infections, and cognitive development. However, while classical texts strongly support its benefits, systematic clinical studies and scientific validation are essential to establish its efficacy in contemporary terms and integrate it into modern pediatric practice.

CONCLUSION

Lehana is a unique Ayurvedic pediatric intervention described in classical texts with the aim of strengthening children both physically and mentally. It reflects the holistic vision of Ayurveda, where prevention and promotion of health hold as much importance as treatment. By nourishing *rasa dhātu*, enhancing *ojas*, and supporting *medhā*, *Lehana* contributes to immunity, vitality, and neurocognitive development.

The formulations used, such as *Suvarṇaprāśana* and *Medhya Lehana yogas*, not only protect children from recurrent illnesses but also foster healthy growth and learning ability. In comparison with modern pediatric supplementation and immunization practices, *Lehana*

offers a broader and integrative perspective by addressing immunity, intellect, and overall wellness together.

With today's rising concerns of malnutrition, recurrent infections, and developmental challenges in children, *Lehana* can be seen as a safe, natural, and holistic approach. While traditional wisdom strongly supports its role, scientific validation through clinical studies will further strengthen its credibility and facilitate its integration into contemporary pediatric care.

Thus, *Lehana* stands as a timeless contribution of Ayurveda in *Bālroga*, ensuring a strong foundation for child health and nurturing future generations in a balanced and holistic manner.

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