INTRODUCTION

Mental retardation is one of the most important among the developmental disorders which can neither be called a diseases not a syndrome. It refers to a significantly sub average mental intellectual functioning resulting or associated with concurrent impairment in adaptive behavior which are manifested during different developmental stages. The presentation of mental retardation varies broadly stating from mild form to moderate, severe and may be profound is some cases.

Ayurveda categorizes such disorders as Janma Bala Pravrt or congenital ailments resulting into the impaired mental functioning with or without physical disabilities. Though Ayurvedic literature dose not describe it clearly as a separate disease entity but it throws light on the actiopathogenesis, presentation, along with prophylactic and some specific measures for management of such disorders in the context of terms like Jadata/Jadtva/Jada etc.

Acharya Hem Chandra in his book Dhatu Parinam has give the derivation of jadata as below Jalghatye, Ghatyama jadatvam, Ataiksyanyam Iti Arthah. Word jada is derived from the root jala, means ghatayay which means jadatvam i.e sharpeners of brain. Etymologically the word jada has been formed by adding “Ach” suffix to the root jalaghatane.

According to Sir. M. Monnir Williams (1970) in his dictionary, the word jada referred to cold or rigid and has been referred in the context of idiocy, stupid or unintelligent.

According to Amarkosha a Jada person is unable to differentiate between good and bad things and feelings of happiness and sorrowness.

Singh, R.H. in his book Ayurvediya Manas Vijana has mentioned Amedhata as the state of mental deficiency, the description of which stimulates jadata. He considers Amedhata as a psychiatric illness under the category of manas prakrti vikaras in the classification proposed by him Nagesh Bhata in his work “Paribha sendu shekhar” correlates jada with the ox or bull.

Amarkosa has referred this word for idiocy or idiots and literally originates from the root “Jadati Ghani Dhaawanti” (Amarkosa Ramasriya tika 3/1/38).

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Here authors have interpreted that the brain of the *jada* persons is cool, hard, and dead like a piece of ice.

**Aetiopathogenesis of jadata** – Susruta while elaborating month wise development of *foetus describes* that women in the fourth month of pregnancy is called *Dauhrdini*. During this period due to the development of heart in the foetus cetana i.e. consciousness also becomes apparent (heart being the seat of cetana). At this stage the foetus starts desire for the objects of different *Indriyas* like sound, touch, vision, taste smell etc, which are fulfilled through the mother unfulfillment of these desires or inadequate nutrition produces the abnormalities like humpbacked, crooked arms, mental subnormality, dwarfism *dyshapeeye* in the foetus (Su. Sa 2/54)⁴.

Sushruta states that the variety and quality of the life of an individual predominantly due to the actions of is past life i.e. Purvajanamkrt karmas (Su Sa 2/61)⁴.

Acharya Kasyapa the authority on Kaumara bhritya states that when a multigravida women with vata or pitta predominant endowment with salt (lavana rasa pradhana) breast milk, provides breast feeding to an infant the child becomes lame, dumb ad idiot or Jada (K, Sa, Phakk Chi 17/5)².

According to astanga samgraha, pregnant women consuming *vata* aggravating substances uninterruptedly leads to vitiation of *vata* all over the body, ultimately Rajasic or dynamic nature of *vata* is converted into static process in uterus which ultimately affects the growth of the fetus, as a result the delivered child ma become idiot (*jada*), deaf, dumb, hump, dwarf and develops similar other disorders.

**MANAGEMENT**

Various Medhya drugs and other related formulations have been described in various texts for the management of *jadata* and allied conditions ancient acharyas have described various drugs and *Rasayanas* in combination or as a single drugs to achieve such effect, such measures can be categorized into

(i) **Prophylactic measure**

(ii) **Jatakarma:**

Caraka and Susruta³ (Ca.Sa. 8⁴, Su.Sa. 10) have advocated the use of *Medhya* drugs just after birth during *jatakarma samskara*. After deliver resuscitation and cutting of the cord the infant should be offered honey and gee in unequal proportions with enchantment of sacred hymns.

Sushruta has advocated its administration before bath and as advised to add *swarna* (Gold) and to continue it till the establishment of breast feeding i.e. to ⁴th day. Kasyapa has also expressed similar views in *Lehadhyaya*. He states that it increases the *Medhya* (intellect), digestive power (*agni*), strength, vitality and immunity (*Bala*) It also increases the longevity (*Ayusya*) and over all well being (*magalam punyam*) of the child.

(ii) **Observance:**

Observance of strict general and specific month wise dietary regime during, pregnancy, pauperism and lactation, as described by different acharyas helps in the normal, easy uncomplicated deliver of health child.

(iii) **Fulfillment of Dauhridya:**

During ⁴th month of intrauterine life due to development of *Hrdaya* i.e. the seat of
cetana in the foetus carrying mother having double heart is termed as the *dauhrdyani*.

Non fulfillment of the desires of the Dauhridiya in the dauhrda sate leads to multiple congenital anomalies and leads to multiple congenital anomalies and mental subnormality in the foetus (Ca. Sa. 4/17).

(iv) **Avoiding the Garbhopaghat Kar Bhavas:**

Caraka samhita has advocated to avoid various dietic factors, vihara janya psychological trauma and rituals other wise it ma lead to abortion or birth of a child with multiple content congenital anomalies and psychological disorders including jada (Ca.Sa 4/18).

(b) **Specific management**

Ayurvedic classics have given elaborate description, for the management of *jada* and related disorders the Acharyas have advocated the use of various *Medhya* drugs and other compounds to promote the level of intellect.

Acharya caraka as described four major *Medhya Rasayana* (Ca.Ci 1/30-31) i.e.

(a) Mandukaparni swarasa

(b) Yastimadhu Chuma

(c) Guduchi swarasa

(d) Sankhupusi kalka

These Medhya Rasayanas increase longevity, prevent diseases, increase vitality, promote intellect, power of retention etc. the texts also describe various other Rasayanas like *Brahma Rasayana, Amalaki Rasayana* etc.

Similarly sushruta (Su.Sa 10/72-74) has described four *Avalehas* to promote *medha* i.e. Cognitive ability and vitality of a child. These are

(i) Finely powdered *Swarna, Kushtha, Madhu, Ghrtta, Vaca*

(ii) Finely powdered *Swarna, Brahma shankhpuspi, Madhu;Ghrtta*

(iii) *Arkpuspi, Swarna Bhasma, Madhu, Ghrt, Vaca*

(iv) *Swarna Bhasma, Katphal, Sweta, Durba Ghrt, Madh*

Likewise Kasyapa samhita as prescribed samvardhana ghrtta for the management of jadatva and other mental disorders.

Thus is view of t above description it ma be concluded that there is a dispered description of Jadatva vis-a-vis mental subnormality available in ancient texts.

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