“A Model man is the one, who possesses a creative brain, skilful hands and an affectionate heart”

By Sawmi Vivekanand

Above statement stands as valid in pediatric health as it is for spiritual health. Both growth & Development are important aspect of a child’s wellbeing, for him to become an effective learner & a better communicator. According to Vedic Philosophy Growth & Development are synchronized and coordinated programme by various biological factors.\(^1\)

Development Specifies maturation of different biological functions at an anticipated age. A child is said to have developmental delay when he/she doesn’t attain the specified developmental milestones at the expected age (with the adequate provision for the broad variation among normal children.)

Statistics from different sources indicate that in India, 3.8 % of the population has some form of disability and the same was found to be more common in the children of lower socio-economic class\(^2\)

According to ICMR task force study carried out at three different centres (Delhi, Jaipur, Lucknow) the prevalence rate of disability among children below 6 year of age was found to be 8.8 per thousand in Delhi, 6.5 per thousand in Jaipur & 12.6 per thousand in Lucknow\(^3\). It is also observed that out of 2.5 % prevalence rate of the Developmental delay /disability among under 5 year children majority had speech & Language problems.\(^4\) Advances in Perinatal care have improved the survival chances of Low birth weight babies, adding to the burden of developmental delay.\(^5\)

Experience of developmental evaluation clinics have shown that nearly 50%of referral for developmental delay are without any specific clinical diagnosis.\(^6\) In spite of improved understanding of causative factors, in large majority of cases, etiological factors cannot be attributed reliably.\(^7\)
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Thus reviewing different aspects of Developmental delay from conventional science starting from epidemiology to etiopathogensis and to clinical spectrum it becomes clear that there is an immense necessity to study this topic from different outlook.

From Ayurvedic perspective Developmental delay falls into ‘Anukta Vikara’ category where in direct references are not found in the Ayurvedic classics presenting all the aspects of this condition. Clinical symptoms of Phakkaroga[8], in which child is not able to walk by the age of one year; correlates partially with Delay in Gross motor development. And Etiological factors of Phakkaroga were also kept into consideration while establishing Nidaana of Developmental delay. But to understand other aspects of this disorder more detail study from Ayurvedic Perspective was required.

To simplify the complexity of Anukta Vikara[9] the key is to understand its Diagnostic Triad viz Dosha, Samutthan & Sansthan of Vikara. Samutthan or Hetu[10] is also the important aspect of any disease which is one the feature of Panchanidan, its identification & prevention (Nidan Parivarjan) becomes first line of treatment.

One of the important parts of this Research was identifying & establishing Etiological Factors for Developmental delay & various reference form Ayurvedic Samhita were explored for the same purpose.

Few references found in Ayurvedic classics highlights factors affecting Prakruta &Vikruta Garbha-utpatti which in turn affects the growth & development of fetus[11].

Another description found in Charaka Samhita Sharira sthan states that Beeja, Aatmakarma (Purvajanmakrut karma), Asshay Dushti (Genital organ Dushti), Kaal dosha, Matru-Aahar vihar dosha can cause dusti in Sansthan, Varna & Indriya Vikruti in fetus[12]. These Vikruti in turn can cause Delayed development in child.

Similarly as stated by Acharya Vriddha Vagbhatt in Ashtanga Samgraha[13] that if a pregnant female follows Vata Prakopaka Aahar – Vihar, then Vitiated Vata Dosha will affect the Garbha (Fetus) & will cause Various Vata disorder in child viz Badhirta (Deafness), Muktva (Unable to speak), Minminatva (Stammering), Gad –gad (Stuttering), Khanja (Limping), Kubjatva (Deformity in body), Vamanatva (Short stature), Hinanga, Adhikanag & other similar Vata Predominant Diseases. These conditions can be correlated with Developmental delay.
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Compilations of all such Hetu from Ayurvedic Samhita were done & they were further categorized in Prenatal, Antenatal & Post natal category. These Factors were the base in forming questionnaire.

Disease are nothing but imbalance in dosha & harmony in dosha is considered as diseases free condition. Thus while conducting the study to understand Hetu; a special importance was also kept pertaining to identifying & Establishing predominant Dosha involvement in this Study.

Thus identification & assessment of Hetu or Samutthan, the etiological factor of Developmental delay might prove a vital step in diagnosing this condition from Ayurvedic perspective, which was the intention of this study.

Hence this study has been undertaken in which A total of 256 children suffering from Developmental Delay in the age group starting from birth till 6 year of life were diagnosed with the help of Denver Developmental Screening test (2nd edition) Denver II & were subjected to questionnaire prepared to examine & assess etiological factors from Ayurvedic Perspective.
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