



CRITICAL APPRAISAL ON VAYA - AN AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE

Chandan Singh^{1*}, Amit Singh² and S. N. Shahi³

¹Associate Professor, Dept. of Samhita Sidhant, G.S. Ayurveda Medical College & Hospital Hapur, U.P. India.

²Assistant Professor, Dept. of Kaumarbhritya, Chandrashekhar Singh Ayurved Sanshathan Kaushambi, U.P. India.

³Principle & Professor, Dept. of Kriya Sharir, Aroma Ayurvedic medical college & Hospital Roorkee Uttarakhand. India.

***Corresponding Author: Chandan Singh**

Associate Professor, Dept. of Samhita Sidhant, G.S. Ayurveda Medical College & Hospital Hapur, U.P. India.

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ABSTRACT

A constant reactivity and change in the form and probably functioning is one of the important features of living beings in biosphere. Modern scientists say that biosphere is an open system which constantly reacts with the environment. However, the nature of reactivity varies from one organism to another, which is an inherent phenomenon. This is triggered at the time of conception, runs throughout the life span and when it totally ceases, the organism dies. Within the period of life span, the nature has bestowed two important mottos. One is growth and other is reproduction or multiplication of the species. Growth ensures proper maturity for reproductive phase. After cessation of reproductive phase, the organism declines towards death. Thus ageing, both chronological and qualitative, will be counted, in strict sense, from the time of conception. In other words, ageing occurs as a result of constant biological activities throughout living period. Ayurveda elucidates Ageing as the process initial right from the birth through different stages of life and ending in the death as Vaya. It is inevitable and it can only be overdue. During this progression the Hrasa or decay in specific features can be perceived in specific decades. Ahara and Vihara definitely have an influence on the sudden or late manifestation of the Jara. So one should evade Ahita Ahaara like Gramya Ahaara and should ingest Hita Ahara. Vihara like Achara Rasayana should be assumed to delay ageing. Intake of Ghrita and Ksheera daily in correct quantity should be trained from the childhood and can be sustained lifelong for sustaining the youth.

KEYWORDS: Vaya, Ayurveda.

INTRODUCTION

A constant reactivity and change in the form and probably functioning is one of the important features of living beings in biosphere. Modern scientists say that biosphere is an open system which constantly reacts with the environment. However, the nature of reactivity varies from one organism to another, which is an inherent phenomenon. This is triggered at the time of conception, runs throughout the life span and when it totally ceases, the organism dies. Within the period of life span, the nature has bestowed two important mottoes. One is growth and other is reproduction or multiplication of the species. Growth ensures proper maturity for reproductive phase. After cessation of reproductive phase, the organism declines towards death. Thus ageing, both chronological and qualitative, will be counted, in strict sense, from the time of conception. In other words, ageing occurs as a result of constant biological activities throughout living period. This incessant activity is made possible by continuous process of both consumption and preservation of substances for energy. If Cetana (soul) is considered symbolically as a form of energy in a living

entity, then Pravrtti (constant activity) can be observed obviously either at cellular microcosmic level or at systemic macrocosmic level. This was well explained by our revered Acaryas in the very definition of Ayu as an inseparable bond between Sarira, Indriya, Sattva and Atma (Ca. Su. 1/42). Though ageing is restricted to Sarira or physical body, other are essential factors and give meaningful definition for Ayu. Various activities exhibited by the body indicate the presence of Atma, which is the most important factor in sustaining life and without which the body will be declared dead as no activities could be seen (Ca. Sa. 1/70-74). These narration of the classical books gain more weight in the light of modern explanation.

Anabolism and catabolism in ayurveda: The process of anabolism and catabolism was clearly known to our revered scholars about three thousand years ago. They understood these processes even without the sophisticated equipments or fully developed technology the present day is having.

1. While mentioning the very definition of Sarira, it has been told that This definition of Kaya, the synonym of Sarira, indicates the underlying anabolic activity where as the next one i.e., Sarira directs towards the catabolic activity.
2. Definition of Ayu given in the 1st chapter of Sutrasthana of Caraka Samhita also indicates the same. The synonyms given for Ayu show total body's metabolic activity. One that supports the body and stops from undergoing decomposition is called Dhari. As per this definition, the body has greater resistance to combat the invasion of infective agents which if unchecked causes the formation of Puti, thereby leading to decay. This definitely shows the anabolic activities taking place within the body so as to sustain body growth.
Jivita: One which keeps body healthy and alive by getting proper nourishment; resulting in steadiness of body functions is called Jivita.
Nityaga: One in which normal functions slow down leading to derangement of total body, eventually to death is called Nityaga. This points towards the underlying catabolic process.
3. In 7th chapter of Sarirasthana, Caraka said that, The body (organism) is made up of a number of minutest entities (cells). Their union and disunion are controlled by Vayu. Commenting on this, Cakrapani says that by governing the union (Samyoga) and disunion (Vibhaga), Vayu plays a vital role in Sarirarambha and Sariravinasa process. This Sarirarambha and Sariravinasa certainly points at the anabolic and catabolic process taking place respectively which are part and parcel of life.
4. A reference from Nirukta clearly indicates the knowledge of anabolism and catabolism our Acaryas had thousands of years ago. From the above quotation it is evident that anabolic activity gains the upper hand over the catabolic activity in the earlier phase of life and as the age advances, it becomes viceversa. In (normal) physiology, for growth and development of a body, anabolic activity should take place from the initial phase of life itself. As the age advances, i.e., moves towards middle age, this anabolic activity is counterpoised by catabolic activity. During this period, the activity of both will be equal indicating the neutral phase which every individual passes through. With age advancing, anabolic activity becomes overpowered by catabolic activity, triggering off degenerative changes ending in death.

This indicates that anabolic process will be followed by catabolic process in (normal) physiology and not the other way. So in childhood, activity of anabolism will be more; in adolescence, both will be equally active maintaining healthy state and in adulthood, there will be preponderance of catabolic process leading to downfall in body metabolism. These processes are the major factors of ageing process and are natural phenomena. The order given in the classics Dhari, Jivita and Nityaga,

and Sarirarambha and Sariravinasa, points at the fact that anabolism will definitely be superceded by catabolism in the later stages of life which was known to our ancient scholars at that time itself.

Definition of vayas: Ageing / life is a continuous process which never stops. Acarya Caraka defines the age (Vayas) as a factor dependent on Kala Pramana Visesa i.e., quantum of time duration. Arunadatta, commentator of Astanga Hrdaya defined Vayas as time bound changes occurring in the body, Bhadanta Nagarjuna, the author of Rasa Vaisesika Sutra opines the same.

Classification of vayas: Counting the chronological age from the time of birth, Ayurvedic texts divide human life span into three major categories - Balya, Madhya and Vrddha. There is some difference of opinions regarding this amongst our ancient scholars. Acarya Susruta quotes that i.e., upto sixteen years, it is Balya (childhood); upto seventy years, it is Madhya (middle age) and thereafter Vrddha (old age). But Acarya Caraka has opined differently. According to him, Balya is upto thirty years; from thirty to sixty years it is Madhyama period and beyond sixty years, it is Vrddhavastha (Ca. Vi. 8/122). Kasyapa opines in a different way. He includes Garbha in his classification of age. His classification includes Garbha (foetal life), Bala (upto one year), Kumara (from one to sixteen years), Yauvana (sixteen to thirty four years), Madhyama (thirty four to seventy years) and Vrddha (above seventy years). The child will be on milk diet only upto one year. From Kaumaravastha, diet mainly includes solid diet. In Yauvanavastha, there will be progress in the development of Dhatus, Bala, Sattva, Virya and Parakrama. Later period is Madhyama in which total maturity ensues and lastly in Vrddhavastha, declination in the functions of Dhatus initiates (Kasyapa Khilasthana 3/72-76). Harita, another well known scholar of those days, classified Vayas into four namely Bala, Yuvana, Madhyama and Vrddha. Upto sixteen years, Bala, from twenty five to seventy years it is Madhyama and beyond that, Vrddha. By all the above lines, one can infer that all Acaryas had more or less the same opinion regarding different milestones of life.

Balyavastha: The period of infancy and childhood is Balya. Though literally synonymous, the word Sisu is referred to as infant specially. No Acaryas have counted the period of life from conception till birth as a period of ageing. The absence of complete human form in the embryological period (Bhrunavastha) might be the cause behind non inclusion of that period in the period of ageing by our Acaryas. Acarya Susruta has further classified Balyavastha into three as Ksirapa, Ksirannada and Annada. Ksirapavastha is upto one year wherein only milk is fed to the child. Then, upto two years, it is Ksirannadavastha in which along with milk feeding, light solid food is given. Above two years, it is Annadavastha, i.e., solid food is given. This classification is purely based on the gradual adaptation of child's digestive

system to normal adult food. The same criteria were followed by Acarya Kasyapa to scale the period of child's years. Acarya Caraka lays stress on the qualitative definition for Vaya Avastha. On this ground, he aptly subdivided Balyavastha into two. The first period involving first sixteen years is considered as underdeveloped period and next fourteen years i.e. upto thirty years, it is the developing period. The basis for such a consideration and determination of undeveloped and developing period are the status of Dhatus, Bala and constitutional faculties. Caraka considered that till the age of sixteen years, the child will have Sukumarata (tender constitution) and Aklesasaha (unable to bear down any stress). Dhatus are not fully formed (Aparipakva Dhatus) and their functions are not established to full extent (Ajatavyanjana). Gangadhara, commentator of Craka Samhita, says Ajatavyanjana as non appearance of Smasru, etc. developments which occur later. Cakrapani, another commentator justifies this with the recommendations of the texts for Alpa and Mrdu Bhesaja to the children as adult dose of medicines causes adverse effects because of undeveloped Dhatus (metabolic system) of the children. Vrddha Vagbhata (A.S.Sa. 8/22) adds Sneha, Mardava and Alpa Krodha as dominant features during this period whereas Indu, commentator of Astanga Samgraha, says that during this period, process of development takes place. Arunadatta, commentator of Astanga Hridaya, adds that during this period (i.e., upto sixteen years) development of Rasadi Dhatus, Caksuradi Indriyas and Ojas, the essence of all Dhatus takes place. In addition, this period of life is dominated by the activity of Kapha Dosa. The period after sixteen years till the age of thirty years is the developing period in which there will be progress in the development of Dhatus both quantitatively and qualitatively. It has been mentioned that during this period, Anavasthita Sattva can be observed. Gangadhara includes that this stage is dominated neither by Slesma nor by Pitta. Susruta has a different opinion. He included the period of life from sixteen to seventy years as Madhyama period. Further, he divided this into four categories out of which first two come under the above classification of Caraka. First one called Vrddhi is the period between sixteen and twenty years. It is the period of development. Next one is called Yauvana ranging from twenty to thirty years. Commenting on this, Dalhana says "Yuno Vikaro Yauvanam" which means the period in which total maturity is yet to occur. The characteristics of Anavasthita Sattva mentioned by Caraka may be included here. In other words, Caraka's period of Balya involves Susruta's period upto Yauvana. Thus, from the standpoint of both classics, it is certain that till the age of thirty years, complete maturation will not occur.

Madhyavastha: Literally it means any subject lying in between. So, the authors of classics have also designated the period of life (age) between Balya and Jara as Madhyama Vayas or Madhyamavastha. This seems to be the only chronological criteria for considering the

Madhyama Vayas and this is the phase of life wherein total maturity of body ensues. As mentioned earlier, Madhyama Vayas ranges from sixteen years to seventy years according to Susruta. It was well supported by Vagbhata but Caraka concised this upto sixty years from thirty years. There is no classification done by Caraka whereas Susruta categorised this into four as Vrddhi, Yauvana, Sampurna and Hani. In Vagbhata's version, there is no category as Vrddhi. His classification includes only last three. Susruta's classification says Vrddhi is from sixteen years to twenty years; Yauvana, upto thirty years; Sampurna, upto forty years and beyond that upto seventy years, it is Hani or Parihani. In first two, i.e., Vrddhi and Yauvana, process of development takes place. Next one, Sampurna indicates completion of total maturity and last one Hani itself indicates start of declination process. But, Caraka does not go through these phases. As per Caraka's version there is no Hani phase. So, graphically, one can see a clear variation in the opinion of different Acaryas. A curve can be seen if we consider Susruta's and Vagbhata's opinion whereas Caraka's opinion indicates a straight line. No much explanation was found for Vrddhi in the classics. Only point they told about this was during this period development of Dhatus takes place. Though no specification was done, Astanga Samgraha adds few more characteristics such as Diptagni (good digestive capacity), Paripaka (profound metabolic activity), Prajnadhikya (increased capability of judgement) and Vyavasaya (wide field of interest/activities). Yauvana, on the other hand, is the period of further development. Cakrapani, a renowned commentator, in his commentary "Bhanumati" on Susruta Samhita, states that 'Yauvana is the period wherein the amalgamation of the features of preceding Vrddhi phase and succeeding Purna phase. He further says, there will be no complete maturation of body'. The above said characteristics mentioned by Astanga Samgraha can be attributed to this also. The phase which follows Yauvana is Sampurna or Purna ranging from thirty to forty years. It is the stage (period) of complete total maturity. Even the literal meaning conveys the same i.e., complete. The maturity is complete not only at the physiological level but also at the psychological level. Features characteristic of Madhyama Vayas given in the classics are as follows (Ca.Vi. 8/122) - concurrent appearance of proper strength, virility, valour, courageousness, cognition (grasping power), retention, recollection (retrieval abilities), good speech and knowledge and all qualities of Dhatus. Along with this, there will be stability of body and mind and non degradation of qualities / features of Dhatus. Moreover, this phase of life is dominated by the activity of Pitta. Arunadatta adds that no development of Dhatus takes place in Madhyama Vayas. Caraka has counted Madhyama Vayas only till sixty years whereas Susruta, Vagbhata and other Acaryas extended this upto seventy years. Vagbhata of Astanga Samgraha agrees with Caraka's opinion where as Vagbhata of Astanga Hridaya is on Susruta's side. Susruta and other Acaryas who extended Madhyamavastha upto seventy years,

included 'Hani', the period extending from forty years and this was not seen in Caraka.

Table 1: Madhyam vaya according to difference text.

Samhita	Madhya Vayas (years)
Caraka	30 - 60
Susruta	16 - 70
Vagbhata (A.S.)	16 - 60
Vagbhata (A.H.)	16 - 70
Kasyapa	34 - 70
Harita	25 - 70

Caraka in his quotation of Madhyamavastha, did not mention anything regarding the declination of metabolic functions of body which was observed in 'Hani' period of Susruta. Indu, commenting on this, told that there will neither be Vrddhi (growth) nor be Apacaya, in this period. He specifically mentioned 'Aparihani' which is quite the other way (i.e., Hani) mentioned by Susruta. However, senility or old age is considered only after seventy years. So, considering all the above points, one can land up in a more acceptable conclusion i.e., Vardhakya ensues after the age of sixty as Caraka has observed. This was relatively nearer to Susruta's opinion as decrement of body functions takes place in the later half of Madhyamavastha or at least, initiation of the same (Hani). From both scholars' standpoint, it is certain that Vrddhavastha occurs after seventy years.

Vrddhavastha: It is the last phase of Vayas accepted by all Acaryas. It is having synonyms like Vardhakya, Jara. From this stage onwards, gradual declination of functions of physical and mental faculties gears up. Susruta holds the view that after seventy years, there occurs day to day decrement in Dhatu, sensory-motor system, strength, virility, enthusiasm associated with wrinkles, graying, baldness, frequent attacks of cough, breathlessness, etc. and will be unable to do one's own functions. (Su. Su. 35/29). Caraka adds further to Susruta's opinion. He along with physical faculties included mental faculties like reduction in the capacity of perception, retention, recollection, speech and knowledge. This period is dominated by Vayu. Vagbhata (A.S. Sa. 8/24) adds more to the above features i.e., this phase of life is accompanied with reduced digestive capacity and tremors. A simile has been given by our ancient scholars for Jaravastha as an old mud house gets crumbled in the pouring rainwater. Candranandana, another commentator of Astanga Hrdaya, says that the stage of life after seventy years is the stage of declination of body tissues. This state lasts up to the death, whether death occurs earlier or later than normal life span. From the classics, we can see that revered Acaryas had great observation of body changes occurring during old age. They clearly distinguished somatic changes (including pathological conditions) from psychic variations. Somatic changes (with pathological conditions) like Tvak Parusya, Slatha Sara, Slatha Mamsa, Slatha Sandhi, Slatha Asthi, Dhatu Ksaya, Indriya Hani, Prabha Hani, Agnisada, Kayasya Avana, Vepathu, Khalitya, Vali,

Palitya, Kasa and Swasa are clearly observed. Mental variations include Grahana - Dharana - Smarana - Vacana - Vijnana Hani along with Paurusa - Parakrama - Utsaha Ksaya. From the above explanation, it is evident that Susruta has concentrated more on physical variations whereas Caraka has given due importance to both physical and psychological changes. Jara is considered one amongst four Svabhavika Vyadhis by Susruta. i.e., Jara is a natural phenomenon through which an individual has to come across. Commenting on this, Cakrapani in his 'Bhanumati' commentary says - The definite stage of life which appears before death. Again in Sutrasthana 24/7, Susruta has mentioned Jara as Svabhava Bala Pravrtta Vyadhi along with Ksut, Pipasa, Mrtyu, etc. Dalhana, commenting on this, told that these occur due to the power or influence of nature (Svabhava). Cakrapani adds further saying the nature (Svabhava) of a particular individual depends upon the invisible factors hereditarily carried out by that particular race in which he born. The word "Prakrti" here denotes both to the nature of a particular species and nature of an individual within that particular species. For example, onset of ageing process differs from one species to another. Similarly, within the species also, the nature of an individual varies according to Desa, Kala, Prakrti, Ahara, etc. and accordingly, ageing process may initiate early, timely or late. Susruta further divided Svabhava Bala Pravrtta Vyadhis into Kalaja and Akalaja. We, here deal only with, Kalaja and Akalaja Jara (Su. Su. 24/7).

Kalaja Jara: Jara coming at the proper age is Kalaja Jara i.e., after sixty years of life. Kalaja Jara is Pariraksana Krta which means that it occurs at the proper age even after following the daily and seasonal regimen mentioned in Swasthavrtta. However, this Kalaja Jara is of less intensity, slow progressing one and less troublesome. This is nothing but chronological ageing. There is no cure for Kalaja Jara; it is Yapya i.e., by Rasayana, the ill effects of ageing can be checked and its progress can be slowed down or halted to some extent.

Akalaja Jara: Jara occurring before the proper age (sixty years) is Akalaja Jara. This type of Jara is Apariraksana Krta which means that it occurs before the proper age due to not taking the proper care of personal hygiene (Swasthavrtta) or not following Sadvrtta. This Akalaja Jara is of greater intensity, rapidly progressing one if neglected. This is biological ageing. Akalaja Jara can be treated according to the Dosa involved or Vyadhi associated, with respective treatment and Rasayana Dravyas. Cakrapani told that life span depends on Prakrti, Vikrti, Sara, etc. ten factors. Based on this, life span may be either longer or shorter than normal life span i.e., hundred years. Whether shorter or longer, life span or age is classified into three similar to previous. He says that if the total life span is eighty years, then Balyavastha is up to twenty five years; Madhyavastha, up to fifty years and Vrddha vastha beyond that. If the total life span is one hundred and twenty years, then Balyavastha is upto thirty six years; Madhyavastha, upto

seventy two years and beyond that is Vrddhavastha. The passage of time also affects the total life span of living beings. The life span at the beginning of creation was unlimited and started diminishing gradually in subsequent Yugas. In Manu Smrti (1/80), it has been said that total life span of human beings was 400 years in Satya (Kṛta) Yuga. In the subsequent Yugas, total life span reduced by hundred years i.e., Treta Yuga, 300 years; Dwapara Yuga, 200 years and Kali Yuga, it is 100 years. In Caraka Samhita also, it has been mentioned that the rate of diminishing of life span is one year after the passage of one hundredth of the Yuga. Cakrapani states that 'as a result of this, the total life span of human beings is 99 years in Kaliyuga. This reduction in total life span in subsequent Yugas is because of reduced involvement in righteous deeds, decrease in features of Bhumi, etc. faculties and in Yugas itself. Ultimately, the universe lands up in total destruction (Pralaya)'. Hence, it may be stated that the total life span of human beings decreases with passage of time.

Ageing starts in different attributes at different period

Thus, the ancient classics give a detailed version on the biological aspects of ageing including growth, puberty and senility. Though the classics have categorised Vayas into Balya (undeveloped), Madhya (developed) and Vrddha (degenerative) Avasthas, they have observed changes occurring during growth and also the initiation of decrement of certain particular faculties of the body. Vagbhata was the first one to record such an observation which was followed later by Sarangadharacarya. Sarngadhara Samhita, he followed the same. From the above quotations, it is clear that ageing does not occur simultaneously in all the tissues. Different body tissues are affected with ageing at different time period. Gradual declination of a particular faculty takes place in each decade of life and by the end of decade, that particular faculty is lost. Following table shows the loss of body tissues during various decades of life:

Table 2: Loss of body tissues during various decades of life:

Decade	Loss of Tissues	
	Astanga Samgraha	Sarngadhara Samhita
I	Childhood	Childhood
II	Growth	Growth
III	Complexion	Complexion
IV	Intellect	Intellect
V	Skin	Skin
VI	Reproductive Capacity	Vision
VII	Vision	Reproductive Capacity
VIII	Hearing	Valour
IX	Mind	Knowledge
X	All sensory and motor organs	Motor organs
XI	-	Mind
XII	-	Life

Vagbhata limits the life span of human beings to hundred years whereas Sarngadhara extends it further by twenty years. After the first decade of life, Balyavastha starts declining. In infancy, the growth rate is rapid and this (accelerated growth) is partly because of continuation of the foetal growth period. Second decade witnesses the gradual halting of Vrddhi of an individual. The rapid growth spurt which occur at the time of puberty is due to growth hormone, androgens and estrogens and subsequent cessation of growth is due in large part to closure of the epiphysis by estrogens. The complete growth of the body is achieved by mid twenties. Third decade starts showing deterioration of complexion / lustre of the body (Skin). Pigmentation of the skin is due to melanin fed into the basal keratinocyte rather than that stored within the melanocyte. Skin colour is partly due to the amount and activity of the melanocyte and partly a reflection of how melanin is stored and processed in the keratinocytes. Fourth decade onwards, Medha starts declining. Medha is nothing but the grasping capacity of mind. Lansing, in his book 'Cowdry's Problems of Ageing' has noted that in subjects above forty years there is a marked progressive decline in overall test performances as related to increasing age. There is a progressive restriction in forming new interests, reduction in new learning and conceptual thinking becomes progressively simplified. Fifth decade signals the declination of functioning of Tvak. Modern scientists also opine the same. Although the skin is constantly ageing, pronounced effects do not occur until a person reaches the late forties. Around that time, collagen fibres decrease in number, stiffen, break apart and form into a shapeless, matted angle. Elastic fibres lose some of their elasticity, thicken into clumps and fray and the skin forms crevices and furrows known as wrinkles. There is a decrease in the number of functioning melanocytes, resulting in gray hair and atypical skin pigmentation. Sixth decade onwards, the activity of Sukra becomes less i.e., reproductive capacity decreases. In male, declining reproductive function is much subtle than in females. At about age of mid fifties, decline in testosterone synthesis leads to less muscle strength, fewer viable sperm and decreased sexual desire. Healthy men often retain reproductive capacity into their 80s and 90s. When a person reaches seventh decade, he starts losing his Drsti. As an individual grows older, the lens grows larger and thicker and becomes far less elastic, partly because of progressive denaturation of the lens proteins. Therefore, the ability of the lens to change shape progressively decreases with age. The power of accommodation decreases as low as zero diopters at age seventy years from about 14 diopters in the childhood. Thereafter, the lens remain almost totally non accommodating, a condition called Presbyopia. Second most common cause of blindness in the elderly is glaucoma, which is characterized by an abnormally high intraocular pressure due to a buildup of aqueous humour inside the anterior chamber. The fluid compresses the lens into the vitreous body and puts pressure on the neurons of the retina. If the pressure continues, there is a progression from mild

visual impairment to irreversible destruction of neurons of the retina, degeneration of the optic disc and blindness. Eighth decade onwards, an individual starts losing his *Srutindriya*. A gradual hearing loss associated with ageing is evidenced affecting more than a third of those over seventy five years and is probably due to gradual cumulative loss of hair cells (by prolonged exposure to noise) and neurons. This condition is termed as *Presbycusis*. Ninth decade witnesses the gradual loss of functioning of *Manas*. Memory loss or *Dementia* is a common problem wherein the deterioration in cognitive abilities that impairs the previously successful performance of activities of daily living. Memory loss is frequently observed in individuals over eighty five and it is the most common and important cognitive ability that is lost. Other mental faculties may also be affected such as attention, judgement, comprehension, orientation, learning, calculation, problem solving, mood and behaviour. Agitation or withdrawal, hallucinations, delusions, insomnia and loss of inhibitions are also common. *Delirium* is an acute confusional state associated with a change in level of consciousness (ranging from lethargy to agitation). Memory functions such as registration (encoding or acquisition), retention (storage or consolidation), stabilization and retrieval (decoding or recall) get deteriorated with advancing age. Last decade shows deterioration of the functions of both sensory and motor organs. i.e., *Sarvendriyas*. One of the effects of ageing on the nervous system is loss of neurons. This is a consequence of the ageing process. Associated with this decline, there is a decreased capacity for sending nerve impulses to and from the brain so that processing of information diminishes. Conduction velocity decreases, voluntary motor movements slow down and reflex times increase. Degenerative changes and disease states involving the sense organs can alter vision, hearing, taste, smell and touch. The evacuatory organs (*Payu*) comprising rectum and bladder are often the victim of ageing pathology. Sluggish bowel movements leading to constipation, incontinence of faeces and urine due to reduced tone of sphincters are well acknowledged. These signs may sometimes also be associated with degenerative changes in CNS. 'Hesitancy' for evacuation is commonly seen among aged individuals. Extremities (*Pani* and *Pada*) are the chief organs for locomotion, posturisation and movements. The slowness in movements is mainly due to diminished strength in the skeletal muscles, reduced tone and gonadal steroid deficiency. Considerable downfall in gonadal endocrinal activity lead to lack of libido, sexual drive and penile erection in male and menopause and vaginal atrophy in women. In addition, reduced tone in pelvic musculature in women and prostatic hypertrophy also add to the hampered reproductive system in the aged. Speech (*Vak*) is less affected in the aged unless and until greater CNS pathology occurs. However, phonation and pitch of the voice are affected in varying degrees among the older people. Slowness in the articulation of speech may leave an impression of *dysarthria* in the aged. Thus on going

through the above details pertaining to *Karmendriya* and *Jananendriya*, it is obvious that *Indriya Hani* does occur in the old age with varying degrees. *Sarngadhara* added one more faculty which gets deteriorated in the eight decade is *Vikrama* or *Parakrama* (Valour). It has been noted that there is a marked progressive decline in overall test performance as related to increasing age.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda elucidates Ageing as the process initial right from the birth through different stages of life and ending in the death as *Vaya*. It is inevitable and it can only be overdue. During this progression the *Hrasa* or decay in specific features can be perceived in specific decades. *Ahara* and *Vihara* definitely have an influence on the sudden or late manifestation of the *Jara*. So one should evade *Ahita Ahaara* like *Gramya Ahaara* and should ingest *Hita Ahaara*. *Vihara* like *Achara Rasayana* should be assumed to delay ageing. Intake of *Ghrita* and *Ksheera* daily in correct quantity should be trained from the childhood and can be sustained lifelong for sustaining the youth.

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