

Siddha- Tamil Nadu Traditional Medicine- An Overview

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Introduction

One of the ancient, distinctive methods and enduring allies of humanity for maintaining good health and fending against illness is the Traditional Medicinal System (TMS). Every indigenous group has its own distinct methods for practicing TMS, although the Chinese, Indian, and African TMSs are the most well-known worldwide. The Indian System of Medicines (ISM), which includes Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Naturopathy, and Homeopathy (AYUSH), is exclusive to India. As with Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy, AYUSH is the abbreviation for the Indian traditional medicinal system. These systems, which are founded on specific medical philosophies, embody a healthy lifestyle with well-established ideas about disease prevention and health promotion. All of these systems take a holistic approach to illness, health, and treatment. The southern region of India is where the Siddha medical system is primarily practiced. One of the world's first systems of traditional medicine, it treats the mind and soul in addition to the body. The Tamil term Siddhi, which means "an object to be attained," "perfection," or "heavenly bliss," is where the word Siddha originates. The ancient Tamil civilization's culture is deeply ingrained in this system. In ancient times, the leading scholars of this school were known as "Siddhargal" or Siddhars. The Siddha system of medicine was founded by Siddhars, who were primarily from Tamil Nadu. It is hence known as Siddha medicine. Spiritual masters with the ashta (eight) siddhis, or special abilities, were known as siddhars. It is thought that Agathiyar is the originator of Siddha medicine. The 18 Siddhars are regarded as the cornerstones of Siddha medicine. This method focuses on an individual's physical, psychological, social, and spiritual well-being, treating them as a whole and bridging the gap between spiritual and physical.[1] The specialties of the Siddha medical system include Kayakarpam (a unique combination of medicine and lifestyle for rejuvenation and longevity) and Muppu (the universal salt), which are said to revitalize and rejuvenate dysfunctional organs that cause disease and to maintain the Dosha ratio [2].

It is said that Lord Shiva taught Parvati the Siddha medical method, and that Parvati then taught Nandidevar, who in turn taught Siddha to Siddhars for the good of humanity. Those who have achieved Siddhi, or heavenly happiness, are known as Siddhars. In order to achieve eternal joy, they invented and practiced Astanga Yogam, which consists of eight levels. These eight tiers are:

<i>Eyamam</i>	Good thoughts
<i>Niyamam</i>	Good deeds
<i>Asanam</i>	Posture of the body
<i>Pranayamam</i>	Control of breath
<i>Prathiyakaram</i>	Restraint of senses from their objects of enjoyment
<i>Tharanai</i>	Focusing of mind
<i>Dyanam</i>	De-concentration
<i>Samaadhi</i>	Super consciousness

In addition, they were supposed to have eight Ashtamasiddhigal (supernatural abilities): Anima, Mahima, Lahima, Karima, Praapti, Prahamiyam, Vasithuvam, and Esathuvam. Agathiyar is regarded as the most prominent Siddhar of the numerous Siddhars who are thought to have contributed to the Siddha medical system. The four primary categories into which their contributions were divided were as follows:

- i. *Gnanam* - Spiritual knowledge
- ii. *Yogam* - Yogic Principles, meditation techniques
- iii. *Vaatham* - Alchemy and the like practices
- iv. *Vaidhyam* - Medical practices

Maintaining a healthy body and mind is the foundation for achieving eternal joy, and this is the goal of each of these activities. In its own method, the Siddha system emphasizes a number of seasonal and habitual practices as defenses against physical and mental sickness. This approach places a lot of focus on eating since it is crucial to maintaining a healthy body, which in turn supports a healthy mind. The physiological doctrine of the three humors—Vaatham, Pitham, and Kabham—collectively referred to as Uyir Thathukkal, forms the foundation of this system. Because of this, every person is seen to have a different bodily composition, and this medical system takes a personalized approach to maintaining health [3].

Siddhars: (Philosophers and Physicians)

It was also discovered that the Siddhars were the greatest doctors and philosophers. There is no denying that the rich Tamil culture, heritage, and medical system are more ancient (CCRAS, 2008). By using their yogic awareness and experimental results, Siddhars—also known as spiritual scientists from Tamil Nadu—explored and described the reality of nature and how it relates to humans. Their techniques became known as the Siddhya System of Medicine, and they proposed the idea of spiritualism for self-improvement (Ram et al., 2009). The Siddha medical system has been around for 2000 years and is still in use today (Thas, 2008); however, printed Siddha texts date back to the 18th century, and before to that, they were recorded on palm leaves by various writers (Sampath, 1983). The Siddhars preserved their wisdom on palm leaf manuscripts, stones, and other materials, which have been preserved for millennia by governmental organizations such as palace libraries, temples, and

mutts. Because of this, the Siddha system has been in use for as long as Tamil. Siddha medicine is associated with 18 Siddhars with Agasthiyar, Tirumoolar, and Bogar being the most important [5]. As per Siddha literature the name of 18 Siddhars are [6] mentioned below

Name of the Siddhars in order of their time period

1. Shri Pathanjali	2. Shri Agasthiyar	3. Shri Kamalamuni
4. Shri Thirumoolar	5. Shri Kuthambai	6. Shri Korakkar
7. Shri Thanvantari	8. Shri Sundaranandar	9. Shri Konganar
10. Shri Sattamuni	11. Shri Vanmeegar	12. Shri Ramadevar

Historical evolution of Siddha Medicine:

It is thought that the Siddha system began to develop around 4000 BC. Through careful observation and experimentation, as well as the traditional medicinal practices of the Siddhars, the Siddha system has developed into a well-documented medical discipline. Siddha medicine has deep origins in the Indian subcontinent, reflecting the country's culture, customs, and legacy. The Siddha system, which has Dravidian roots, primarily benefits residents of Southern India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, Mauritius, and a few other South-East Asian nations. It is believed that the oldest Tamil epic, "Tolkappiyam," was composed around 1400 B.C. There is a lot of medical information in "Tolkappiyam." It explains the six senses—the human sense of reasoning—the five element theory, and the theory of the five senses. A distinct chapter on "Maruntu Atikaram," or lyrics describing medicine and the three vital forces, can be found in the second-century B.C. work "Tirukkural." Although they don't specifically mention medicine, some Tamil ethical writings that discuss healthy living are called after medications, such as "Tirikatukam" (three strong drugs) and "Elati" (Cardamom). They serve as textual proof of the medicine's age, much as "Tirukkural." In the chapter "Camayakanakkar Tam Tiran ketta katai" of the ancient Tamil classic "Manimekalai," which dates to the second century A.D., modern ideas of atoms, souls, the Almighty, and matter are discussed. Some of the earliest "Cankiyam-Acivakam" concepts, which mirrored the prehistoric ideas of Siddha medicine, were acquired by the "Caiva Cittantam" cult in the tenth century A.D. Under her father Cuntara Cozan's name, Princess Kuntavai Nacciyar opened a free dispensary. An inscription from the 13th century that was discovered in the temple of Citamparam shows a list of rewards awarded to midwives and Siddha doctors (Vaittiyarkal)[4].

Diagnostic methods of Siddha Medicine:

Three humoral concepts—Vatham (wind), Pitham (bile), and Kapham (phlegm)—are the foundation of Siddha medicine diagnosis. These can be ascertained by examining the patient's Naadi (pulse) by appropriately placing the doctor's fingers on the patient's wrist. According to the Siddhar Theraiyar, the pulse would move like a swan or peacock in the case of aberrant Vatham humor, while it would move like an ant or hen in the case of incorrect Pitham. The movement of the pulse in vitiated kapham would resemble that of a vulture or fly [7]. In order to identify the type of ailment, a skilled Siddha physician categorized pulse motions

according to the right- and left-side humors [8]. Urine analysis is a crucial diagnostic technique in Siddha medicine. Urine's colour or the addition of a drop of recommended oil to the early-morning urine are used to gauge its intensity. When oil is added to the urine, changes in the urine are used to diagnose the condition [9].

Uniqueness of Siddha Medicine:

Varmam: One of the special external manipulation therapies in the Siddha system is Varmam treatment. The study of specific important energy spots in the body that allow Pranan, or life energy, to flow normally is known as Varmam. In the event that the Varmam points are damaged or infected, it is blocked. By employing fingers to therapeutically stimulate these important energy spots in the afflicted area, blocked energy is released and returns to its natural flow inside the body [10].

Kayakalpam: The Siddhars developed an applied alchemy called Kaya Kalpam (Kaya = body, mind, psyche, and kalpa = transmutation) to raise the soul's spiritual force. Siddha Materia Medica states that herbs, minerals, and the animal kingdom are all included in Kayakalpa medicines. The transformative approach to health and awareness known as Kayakalpa aims to prevent and eradicate chronic diseases. In addition to revitalizing, it has preventive properties [11].

Standardization and Quality Control:

The Indian government is eager to establish quality control and standardization processes in order to guarantee the quality of Siddha medicines. The Indian government has regulated the Siddha industry in accordance with international standards to guarantee the quality of herbal and traditional medicines. To guarantee and improve the quality of ASU medications, the Government of India has notified Good Manufacturing Practices under Schedule "T" of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940. Additionally, it guarantees that the raw ingredients used to make medications are genuine, of the appropriate quality, and uncontaminated [4].

Pharmacovigilance - Drug safety:

The prevention and treatment of diseases have been revolutionized by medications and vaccines. Despite their potential advantages, pharmaceuticals can often have unintended and/or unexpected adverse effects. The research and practices involved in identifying, evaluating, comprehending, and preventing side effects or any other issue pertaining to medications or vaccines are known as pharmacovigilance. Before being approved, all medications and vaccines go through extensive clinical trials to ensure their efficacy and safety. The medications are categorized as harmful, semitoxic, nontoxic, cautionary, etc. Siddha toxicology, or Nancu Maruttuvam, provides a detailed explanation of the potential Adverse Drug Reactions (ADRs) of Siddha medications and toxicities, as well as how to treat them. On the basis of thorough safety data, it is vital to demonstrate the safety of the Siddha medications.

The Ministry of AYUSH launched the new Central Sector Scheme to encourage pharmacovigilance of Ayurvedic, Siddha, Unani, and Homeopathic (ASU&H) medications. This program's main goal is to foster a culture of recording negative effects, monitor the safety of ASU&H medications, and keep an eye out for deceptive advertising in print and digital media. This program was put into effect in the nation in 2017–18. The plan aims to make it easier for a three-tiered network of Peripheral Pharmacovigilance Centers (PPvCC), Intermediary Pharmacovigilance Centers (IPvCCs), and National Pharmacovigilance Centers (NPvCC) to be established. To coordinate the initiative's many operations, the Ministry of AYUSH's autonomous All India Institute of Ayurveda in New Delhi has been named the National Pharmacovigilance Center. In the first phase of implementation, 42 AYUSH institutions with clinical facilities are designated as Peripheral Pharmacovigilance Centers and five (05) National Institutes of AYUSH are designated as Intermediary Pharmacovigilance Centers. These centers will be responsible for reporting, documenting, analyzing, and determining the causality of adverse reactions and events linked to the use of Ayurvedic, Unani, Siddha, and homeopathic medications.[13]. More than ten centers were identified as Peripheral Pharmacovigilance Centers for Siddha Medicine, with the National Institute of Siddha in Chennai being one of the Intermediary Pharmacovigilance Centers for Siddha Medicine. Peripheral Pharmacovigilance Centers (PPvCC) include Siddha Central Research Institute in Chennai, Siddha Regional Research Institute in Puducherry, Siddha Regional Research Institute in Thiruvananthapuram, and Siddha Clinical Research Unit in New Delhi. The pharmacovigilance project will make it easier to identify potentially harmful ASU&H medications and deceptive advertising so that regulatory action can be taken against them [4]

Siddha Drug Manufacturing:

The Medications and Cosmetics Act of 1940 regulates the manufacturing of Siddha medications, which are produced under a drug manufacturing license granted by the state licensing authority of the state in which the drug manufacturing facility is located. There are two categories of medications produced by the Siddha pharmaceutical industry: Classical medications are those made according to the formulas of the Siddha classic literature listed in the Medications and Cosmetics Act of 1940. Proprietary or patent medications are new combinations developed by researchers from the Siddha books indicated in the Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940, subjected to safety and efficacy investigations, and meeting quality criteria. By following the rules for Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), a medicinal plant growing program is put into place to guarantee the best possible production of any medicinal plant in terms of both quality and quantity. Standards for the manufacturing of the raw ingredients used to make ASU medications are established by these rules. Additionally, it guarantees that production procedures are uniform from the field to the facility. The National Medicinal Plants Board was created to guarantee the production and supply of high-quality plant materials for the ASU (Ayurvedic, Siddha, and Unani) pharmaceutical business. In addition to encouraging the cultivation of species with high commercial value and the creation of processing zones for medicinal plants, the NMPB guarantees the conservation of medicinal plants and the gene pool. Additionally, it helps to build and promote the regulatory

framework that ensures quality control, research and development (R&D), and processing technology involving government and non-government recognized laboratories.

Global Scenario Apart from India:

In Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Singapore, where a sizable Tamil population resides, the Siddha medical system is practiced. By registering practitioners under the Traditional and Complementary Medicine (TCM) division, the Malaysian government controls Siddha practice. Siddha education (undergraduate course) is offered in Sri Lanka by a department linked with Jaffna University and another institution in the Trincomalee Campus affiliated with Eastern University. The Indian government has launched numerous campaigns to promote and spread AYUSH medical systems after realizing the renewed interest in these systems around the world. India holds a key position in the World Intellectual Property Organization's Inter-Governmental Committee (IGC) on Traditional Knowledge, Genetic Resources, and Folklore. The following is a list of several such initiatives: (1) International specialists and officers are sent to various nations to set up chairs and promote reciprocal acceptance of AYUSH medical credentials, including Siddha. (2) Incentives for Siddha institutions, entrepreneurs, and medicine manufacturers to promote Siddha systems globally and register their products for export with the USFDA/EMA. (3) Assistance for the growth of global markets and initiatives pertaining to Siddha promotion. Siddha literature is translated and published in other languages. (4) The creation of AYUSH health centers and information cells in Indian embassies and missions abroad, as well as the establishment of cultural centers by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) abroad and the delegation of specialists. International fellowships are available to foreign students enrolled in AYUSH degrees at prestigious Siddha universities in India. With assistance from the Indian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the Ministry of AYUSH established an AYUSH information cell on the grounds of the Indian Cultural Center in Malaysia as part of the Department's International Cooperation program. A Siddha (Varmam) Unit has been operating at Sungai Buloh Hospital, close to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, since 2017 as a result of the ITEC program. In partnership with Indian Missions, Universities, Associations, and other organizations that promote traditional medical systems abroad, the Ministry of AYUSH has been sponsoring a number of international conferences, seminars, workshops, and trade shows. Siddha specialists are assigned to assist with continuing medical education (CME) and training programs on AYUSH systems in international universities, as well as to serve as resource individuals for such activities.

Conclusion:

The scientific documenting of the substances is crucial for their therapeutic application, even if the indigenous people still employ traditional medicines. Therefore, the Central Council for Research in Siddha (CCRS) was split off from CCRAS, which is under the Ministry of AYUSH, in order to advance the scientific study of the Siddha medical system. With eight Research Institutes/Units spread across six states—Tamil Nadu (Chennai, Mettur, and Palayamkottai), Puducherry, New Delhi, Kerala (Thiruvananthapuram), Karnataka (Bangalore), and Andhra Pradesh (Tirupati)—the CCRS is headquartered in Chennai. . In order

to prevent, manage, and cure diseases of various aetiologies, the Council aims to preserve and transmit knowledge while improving the quality of research for the development of drugs with quality, safety, and efficacy through reputable preclinical and clinical research facilities. Through clinical research, medication research, medicinal plant research, fundamental research, literary study, and documentation, CCRS is attempting to validate the Siddha System of Medicine scientifically. The ability of Siddha medicine to demonstrate its efficacy through scientific validation and reproducibility will therefore be crucial to its future. It will continue to serve as a healthcare system for the general public in Tamil Nadu as well as gradually spreading to other Indian states.

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