

High Order Medicine Forms in Siddha

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Siddha medicine employs a variety of herbs and minerals, many of which were developed in the ancient past under advanced scientific techniques, even by today's standards. Being one of the world's most complex and intricate forms of medicine, today it is on the verge of being lost due to change.

Siddha system is one of the oldest systems of medicine evolved from the cradle of human race which owes its origin to medicinal ideas and practices of a class of Tamil sages called the Siddhars, "perfected" or "holy immortals", who were, and are still, believed to have superhuman powers. They had firm faith in the "deathless" physical body being in tune with the spiritual immortal "soul". Significantly, one of the definitions of Siddha medicine is conquest of death: "*that which ensures preventives against mortality*". Siddhars were the ones who declared that the immortality is the birth right of the man. Hence Siddhar's devised the practices of **Vatam** (alchemy), **Vaidhyam** (medicine), **Yogam** (physico-mental exercises) and **Gnanam** (spirituality) to attain their goal.

“ A physician is the son of an alchemist
- Tamil proverb ”

Siddhar's intuition that transmutation of base metals into higher metals (auriferous action i.e. transmutation of base metals into gold), elixirs of gold and cinnabar (mercuric sulphide), and certain "herbs of deathlessness" will bestow immortality. In the process, they discovered lot of formulations and utilized them for curing diseases. Thus Siddha medicine was derived from alchemy.

Siddha medicine has unique diagnostic parameters based on the five elements, physiology, pathology, and disease classification, anatomy, drugs and principles of treatment. The drugs used are from three kingdoms viz.

Siddha Medicine



- i. Mooligai (Herbal Origin)
- ii. Thattu (Mineral Origin)
- iii. Jeevam (Animal Origin)

With their great insight and deep knowledge in chemistry and metallurgy, Siddhars evaluated a number of metal and mineral preparations which even today challenge the incurable diseases.

Classification of Siddha Medicine

In accordance to the bio availability, pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics, shelf life and half life of drug, Siddhars classified the medicaments into 64 pharmaceutical forms i.e. 32 for internal medication and 32 external medications. This is said to be a supreme classification, which is not available in any other form of medicine throughout the world.

Apparently, the Siddhars use several toxic metals and minerals for their pharmaceutical preparations. These

substances undergo many purificatory steps with definite principles of combining compatible and non compatible substances to increase their potency. They are also further combined with organic materials such as plants and animal products to arrive at the final pharmacologically active substance. The final product should be totally nontoxic.

As Siddhar's used to travel throughout the country, they found difficult to ascribe the raw materials needed for the medicines. So they invented the Kattu, Kazhangu and Cattu known to be high order Siddha pharmaceutical products.

Special Features of High Order Pharmaceutical Products

- Increased Bio availability
- Long Shelf life
- Long half life
- User friendly in transportation.
- Palatable
- Therapeutic efficacy is high.
- Administer for many disease by altering the adjuvant
- Quick remedy
- Challenges incurable diseases

Ancient medical systems developed in a slightly different path than that of conventional medicine. Siddha medicine grew out of empirical observations that were handed from generations to generations. These observations were on the description, progress and natural course of events regarding diseases as well as the effects of plants, animal products, minerals, and incantations on known diseases. Most of this information was recorded in clay tablets, palm leaf manuscripts and other media for posterity. Huge volumes of information were generated that amounted to human studies of diseases and treatments conducted by generations of sages and teachers that extended over the millennia. Most of these written materials did not survive the onslaught of time, but some books and manuscripts do remain. This is especially true for herbal and herbo-mineral combinations, some a mixture of hundreds of plants, the study of which is beyond the scope of our current laboratories.

Classification of High Order Medicines

KATTU : It literally means that is bound. It is a process where the mercurials and the arsenic compounds, which

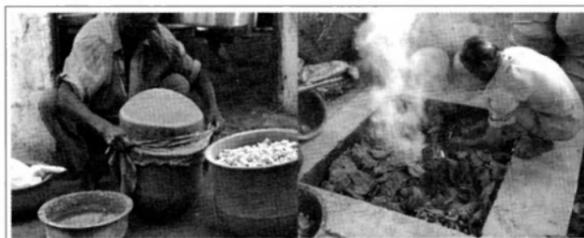
are combustible, are converted into non-combustible.

Process: A pan is gently heated and in it are added the liquids such as herbal juice or Jejaner, thravagam or Kuzhi thailam in small quantities periodically.

Dose: The drug thus prepared is rubbed with the vehicle number of times as specified. This form of administration is waning due to several reasons which are not feasible. Shelf life of these drugs is one hundred years.



URUKKU : The drugs, like metals or solid minerals are placed in crucibles specially mentioned like 'Pancha chunna Kugai' and sealed properly. Then using the blowers the drug is calcined and the final product is collected. In this process the drugs are burnt to a malleable form and the particles of the drug attain more fineness so that its absorption and the efficacy are optimal.



KALANKU : These are medicaments of metals and easily volatile substances such as mercury, mercurials and arsenicals. In this recipe mercury or mercurials components should be present while processing. In this category of medicine, the metals become finely brittle during the process and are present at finely reduced mass.



Process: Heat a pan on moderate fire, where the metals and other ingredients are melted. The easily volatile substances are separately melted very cautiously taking care not to vaporize them off. While they are still in hot or in molten condition, herbal juices or jayneer or pugaineer alias Thiravakam (both of them are acids of peculiar nature) as stipulated in the recipe are added in

small increments periodically so as to enable the melt to absorb them completely. (Recipe mentioned in Surukku – Koduththal).

When mass of the juices and acid are spent they are taken out, combined together and put into a crucible and intensely heated in a coke oven operated by a blower until they become a solid mass like a lead.

CATTU : Any metal rendered brittle for the purpose of reducing it to powder by destroying its corrosive force.

GURULIGAI : Reputed pills, prepared from mercurials.

It has been found that these types of high order pharmaceutical products are not available in any form of medicine throughout the world. In practical, the existence of these products in therapeutical sector is very meagre. But there are some traditional vaidhyars who even now prepare these forms of products and are practicing them in their day to day clinical practice.

Today, it is the need of the hour to explore and establish these high order pharmaceutical products as we are in living in an era where pollution is increasing day by day; there is an increase in the carbon usage and a drastic climate change. The green cover is vanishing.

Many chronic diseases, considered incurable in western medicine, can be treated successfully with Siddha medicine. Siddha medicines are for the most part natural and processed in such a way as to be readily absorbed within each cell in the body, giving it proper nourishment to sustain a long and healthy life. Healthy cells within the body can reproduce new cells that are just as healthy, thus slowing the process of ageing from the inside out. Modern medicine could benefit from some of the hidden treasures in Siddha medicine if less importance was put on having a patent for their drugs than having an actual cure.

Efforts should be made to revive an ancient science which is in danger of being lost without the assistance of dedicated students and the resources of others who can afford giving to help continue this science which is given for the benefit of humankind.



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The above mentioned herbal options prove the strength of tribal's traditional herbal knowledge. Actually, tribal people, deficient a printed lingo, rely on oral traditions to transmit their olden times and gathered knowledge from one generation to the next. Unfortunately, young generation of these tribal groups is merely interested in knowing the secrets of medicinal plants. They are now influenced by the modern world and think that they can earn more money by doing labour work at farms or working as a waiter in any hotel. Indeed, it is true that herbal healers are not paid enough for the creative and curative services they do for the society. They are deprived of recognition and credit. The new generation does not know the potential of knowledge of their elderly. Healers too are also not much interested in sharing their knowledge with the new generation. They want to transfer this knowledge to safe hands so that it is safeguarded and used for the welfare of the society. Efforts such as Abhumka made should be carried out by other organization, private institutes, universities etc. so that the knowledge gets proper reward and we, as Indian, promote our knowledge and people.

Modern science has to learn a lot from the folk medicines and the herbal experts. Various esteemed Universities, research organizations and NGO's are now exploring botanical medicine and folk remedies by scouting and documentation of tribal traditional herbal knowledge. Botanists, Physicians and Pharmacists are working together to tap the botanical riches and the knowledge of folk healers worldwide but they should always acknowledge the tribal healers and try to uplift them by providing financial, intellectual as well as moral support.

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