

# A literary review of congruences and distinctions in the fundamental concepts of Siddha and Ayurveda

## Review Article

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## Abstract

Siddha and Ayurveda system of medicine are important field of traditional medicine with Vedic and post Vedic origin in India. Both the system of medicine were formulated by Noblemen who are known by different names like Sage, Rishi's, etc. Siddha and Ayurveda systems of medicine have many similarities like humoral pathology (*Thridhosham/ thrithodam*), usage of herbs, and diagnostic methods to name a few and also few differences. Various Siddha and Ayurveda literatures were reviewed to document scientific and rationale diversities prevailing in Siddha and Ayurveda fundamental concepts namely *Siddha maruthuvanga churukkam*, *Sushrutha Samhita* etc. Based on the review of literature, some scientific diversities and rationales are prevailing in the Siddha and Ayurveda systems of medicine. Even though both the systems seem to be similar, all the basic concepts in the Siddha system comes under a single entity called 96 thathuvas. Whereas in the Ayurveda system of medicine, the basic concepts are not organized under a single entity. Neither system of medicine is higher than the other and each system of medicine is unique in its own.

**Key Words:** *Siddha, Ayurveda, Basic Concepts, 96 Thathuvas, Thrithodam, Thridhosham.*

## Introduction

The Siddha and Ayurveda are the chief traditional medical systems of India, formulated by Noblemen known by different names like Sage, Rishi's, etc. They have imparted various manuscripts of different genres such as medicine, alchemy, astrology, yoga, etc. In India, most of the scripts were destroyed during foreign rule. Only a few of the crafts survived, like Siddha and Ayurveda medical systems. Siddha and Ayurveda system of medicine have taken their origin from post-Vedic and Vedic medical wisdom. Both the systems include different angles of approach in treatment and are being practiced separately for the last 1,500 years. Siddha has been mainly popular in Tamil Nadu, and Kerala in comparison to the nationwide popularity of Ayurveda. They both depend on mainly natural remedies and exercise to prevent, treat illness and improve quality of life. Siddha predates Ayurveda, and each was developed in two different regions of India. Siddha manuscripts were written on palm leaf which is available especially in Tamil Nadu, whereas Ayurveda

was incorporated in Vedic texts. Both believe that imbalance in the tri doshas creates an illness or disease.

Siddha medicine is a traditional system of healing and is considered the mother medicine of Tamils/ Dravidians in south India. The word Siddha means established truth. The system is a treasure house of secret science. The Siddha system is based on the combination of ancient medicinal practices and spiritual disciplines as well as alchemy and mysticism. This civilization is dated back to 12000 years BC. The findings of historians and Tamil literary works such as "*Tholkaapiyam*," "*Thiruvagam*," etc., reveal that there were three Tamil academies for the growth of 64 arts of Tamilians. The persons who were associated with establishing such a Siddha soul of thought were known as Siddhars. Siddhars were upright people and mystics who acquired supernatural powers. Siddha aims to attain Siddhi. The siddhi in its pure form means "The attainment of flawless identity with reality; perfection of spirit".

Siddha medicine utilizes the plant extracts and metal oxides with chanting of mantra during the preparation of medicine. It also uses methods and medication such as intense yogic practices including years of periodic fasting and medication, that are believed to strengthen the physical body and thereby the souls, to achieve supernatural powers and even immortality. Siddha medicines are meant for the human body which is based on the theory of *panchaboothas* (Earth, Water, Fire, Wind, and Space)

Ayurveda is considered by many scholars to be the oldest healing science. In Sanskrit, Ayurveda means

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“the science of life” Ayurvedic Knowledge originated in India more than 5,000 years ago and it is called as “Mother of all healing”. The prime object of Ayurveda is the preservation of human life & of animals and & the preservation of health in the healthy” Siddha and Ayurveda systems of medicine have many similarities like humoral pathology, usage of herbs, and diagnostic methods to name a few. Despite similarities, they do have differences in various aspects. I have tried to shed some light on this topic with the medical literature available.

## Methodology

The main focus of this review is to elucidate the conceptual differences and similarities between major traditional Indian Medical systems – Siddha and Ayurveda based on various available literatures. The review was carried out by various Siddha and Ayurveda books were collected to find out the diversities regarding Siddha and Ayurveda. The Study was done within three months. As per reviewed literature and articles, there are some diversities seen in the diagnosis of diseases.

## Discussion

### Basic Concepts

In the Siddha system of medicine, the basic concepts come under 96 Thathuvams, and it falls under 3 broad categories (ie. Muthal thathuvam, Irandaam thathuvam, and Moondram thathuvam)<sup>2</sup>. Ayurveda incorporates on Shad dharshan (Six philosophy of life) which are ways orienting with reality. In Siddha, cosmogenesis of universe is caused by Panchabhoothams. According to Ayurveda the cosmogenesis of universe is said to be caused by Nine Causative substances (Nava karana dravya) namely Ether, air, fire, water, earth, soul, mind, time and direction. Bootham (Elements) – 5, Pori (Sense organs) – 5, Pulan (Five Senses) – 5, Kanmenthiriyum (Five motor organs) – 5, Gnanenthiriyum (Organs of perception) – 5, Anthakaranam (Four Intellectual activity) - 4, Arivu (Wisdom / Brain) – 1 comes under Muthal thathuvam, Naadi (Ten humoral energy channels) – 10, Vaayu (Ten Vital air) – 10, Aasayam (Functional repositories) – 5, Kosam (Five body systems) – 5 comes under Irandaam thathuvam, Aatharam (Psychophysical centers / Plexuses) – 6, Mandalam (Regions) – 3, Malam (Impurities) – 3, Thodam (Humour / Principles of functional constituents of the body) – 3, Edanai (Physical binding) – 3, Gunam (Qualities of Man) – 3, Vinai (Affinity) – 2, Raagam (Eight Passions) – 8, Avathai (Five States of consciousness) – 5 comes under Moondram thathuvam<sup>1</sup>. Whereas in Ayurveda the basic concepts are (1) Three dhosas – Vata, Pita, Kapha, (2)Sapta dhatus - Rasa (Blood devoid of Erythropoietic elements), Rakta (Erythropoietic elements), Hamsa (Muscle tissue), Medas (Adipose tissue) lipid stores in the body, Asthi (Bone tissue), Majja (Bone marrow), Sukla (Reproductive tissue), (3) Three Malas – Purisha (Feces), Mutra (Urine), Sweda (Sweat). In Siddha the

Vaayus are classified into 10 types via Pranam (Air of life), Abanan (Air of downward motion), Viyanan (Air which spreads throughout), Udhanan (Air of upward motion), Samanan (Balancing air), Naagan (Air of intellectual function), Koorman (Air of yawning), Kirugaran (Air of salivation), Devathathan (Air of laziness), Dhanancheyan (Air that acts on death), in Ayurveda system Vaayus are classified into five types. They are Prana, Udana, Vyana, Samana, and Apana. Naadi in Siddha system are classified into ten types. They are (i) Edakalai, (ii) Pingalai (iii) Suzhimunai, (iv) Siguvai, (v) Purudan, (vi) Kaanthari, (vii) Atthi, (viii) Alambudi, (ix) Sangini, (x) Gugu (2). In Ayurveda the Naadi is classified into three types namely Vatham, Pitham and Kabham. According to Siddha classical text, the fundamental functions of Vatham, Pitham, Kapham are creation, protection and destruction<sup>(3)</sup>. In Ayurveda, the fundamental functions of Vata, Pitta, Kapha are destruction, protection and creation respectively<sup>(10)</sup>. The theory of Ashtangayogam, Taste (Suvai/ Rasa) is common in both system of medicine. In Ayurveda, Prakuruti is classified into four types namely Janma prakuruti, Dega Prakuruti, Dosha Prakuruti and Manasa Prakuruti whereas in Siddha it known as Thega ilakanam.

### Diagnostic methods

The determination of disease, its cause, and symptoms are called diagnosis. In Siddha system diagnosis of a disease is done by, Poriyal therthal - Examination of sense organs of the patient by the physician, Pulanalarithal - Examination of sensory functions of the patient by the physicians, Vinathal (Interrogation) - Enquiry of the patient/attendee about the complaints and history of disease<sup>6</sup>. Naadi (Pulse) is strictly followed from ancient days. Siddha system has literature with main stream focus in pulse diagnosis. Envagai thervu – (a) Naadi, (b) Sparisam, (c) Naa, (d) Niram, (e) Mozhi, (f) Vizhi, (g) Malam, (h) Moothiram. Manikadai nool (wrist circumference) - Is one of the Methods of diagnosing the disease, with the help of measuring the wrist circumference. Thoothuvan ilakkanam (observations while sending the messengers to the physician), Jothidam (Medical Astrology) is ancient medical system associates with body, disease and drugs under the influence of sun, moon, and planets along with twelve astrological science, each astrological science associates with different parts of the body. After examining the individual's natal chart, a medical astrologer may give advice to the patient about the areas of the body in which they are most likely to have trouble. It is used as a diagnostic tool in Siddha system. Pancha Patchi is an ancient palm leaf scripture. Pancha means five and patchi means bird, Panja Bhutham is present in universe and also in all living beings. The five elements are represented by five birds, Vulture, Owl, Crow, Cock and Peacock. These birds influence and control all our action. These are the diagnostic methods followed in Siddha System<sup>(3)</sup>. In Ayurveda system the diagnostic process is enumerated under (1) Pratyaksam (Observation of signs by use five senses and by three fold examination they are Darsana,

Sparsana and prasna), 1a) Darsana (Inspection), 1b) Sparsana (Palpation) - It includes auscultation, 1c) Prasana (Introgation)- taking history of patient, (2) Yukti - By the judgement on basis of correlation of effects of different causes as in the case of upasaya and anupasaya. (i.e.) clinical and laboratory examination. (3) Atopadesa - Authortiative instruction (A textual instruction confirms the diagnosis). (4) Anumana or tarka - After observation of physical findings and their relation with particular pathology applied, Shadanga pariksha - examination of major classification of body parts. Shareera (Human body) is broadly made up of six large parts or units. i.e two upper limbs, two lower limbs, one head, one trunk, Dhasavidha pariksha - It includes ten aspects which are examined viz prakruthi, vikruthi, sara, samhanana, pramana, satmya, satwa, ahara shakti, vyayamashakti, vaya, Astasthana pariksha - (i) Naadi pariksha (Pulse diagnosis), (ii) Mootra pariksha (Urine examination), (iii) Mala priksha (Stool examination), (iv) Jihwa pariksha (Tongue examination), (v) Shabda pariksha, (vi) Sparsha pariksha (Examination of skin), (vii) Drika pariksha (Examination of eye), (viii) Akriti pariksha (Nature of person) were followed in Ayurveda(18).

### Classification of Medicine

Siddha system describes the classification of medicine into two types, Aga marunthu (Internal medicine) and Pura marunthu (External medicine). The medicines are administrated orally are called Aga marunthu (Internal medicines) which is classified into 32 types which includes lower, middle and higher order medicine. The external medicine are also classified into 32 types. According to Siddha texts, The treatment methods are classified into (A) Vinnavar maruthuvam (Divine method) - The medicines which are prepared from metals and minerals the speciality of these medicine is that a very small dose will brings a quick recovery, (B) Maanida maruthuvam (Human or rational method) - They are herbal medicines which have short definite life span., (C) Asura maruthuvam Surgical method) - these are surgical procedures meant for disease those which are not cured by internal medicines alone. Twelve types of Internal medicine comes under Vinnavar maruthuvam they are, (A.1) Parpam (Microfine and white coloured), (A.2) Chenduram (Microfine and red in colour), (A.3) Chunnam (Higher order medicine when compared to parpam and chenduram), (A.4) Mezhu (medicine with waxy consistency), (A.5) Pathangam (Medicine which is made from mud made apparatus), (A.6) Sathu (Prepared from minerals and mercuric compounds), (A.7) Kalangu (Another method of medicine prepared from minerals and mercuric compounds), (A.8) Kattu (It is non breakable and stable product), (A.9) Urukku (prepared from mercuric, arsenic compounds, metals kattu etc.), (A.10) Karpam (taken internally in a proper dose with proper diet restriction), (A.11) Theener (prepared by distillation process), (A.12) Guru Gulligai (Prepared by solid balls called mani e.g. Rasa mani). (B) Manida maruthuvam comprises types of internal medicines, thy are (B.1) Charu - juice, (B.2) Surasam -

boiling the extracted juice, (B.3) Kudineer - decoction, (B.4) Karkam - Raw matrials prepared in the form of paste, (B.5) Utkali - medicine which is dry in superficial and past form inside, (B.6) Adai - Prepared from raw drugs, rice flour and ghee, (B.7) Choornam - A fine powder of raw drugs, (B.8) Pittu - A raw drugs processed in steam, (B.9) Vadagam - Medicine which is rolled into tablets of required size, (B.10) Vennai - Medicine with waxy consistency like butter, (B.11) Manapaagu - medicine in syruform, (B.12) Rasayanam - medicine in semisolid form, (B.13) Nei - medicine in the form of ghee, (B.14) Ilagam - medicine in semisolid state, (B.15) ennai - medicine in oil form, (B.16) Maathirai - pills or tablet, (B.17) Pakkuvam - Proccsing raw drugs after soaking it in a rice washed water, lemon juice, ginger juice, (B.18) Thenural - Raw drugs like gooseberry are soaked in honey after making holes in it, (B.19) Kadugu - medical drug processed in ghee, (B.20) Kuzhambu - Medicine prepared in semiliquid consistency. Some of external applications which comes under Manida maruthuvam are (B.21) Vedhu - Steam therapy, (B.22) Pattru-pasting processed raw drugs on diseased part, (B.23) Ottradam - Fomentation, (B.24) Poochu - processed juice of herb, (B.25) Kattu - Bandaging, (B.26) Pottanam - Foementation after oil application, (B.27) Thokkanam - Physical manipulation of the body, (B.28) Podi thimirthal - Application of medicated powders, (B.29) Nasiyam - Nasal drops, (B.30) Kalikkam - Eye application. (B.31) Naasigabaranam - Application of nasal powders, (B.33) Mai - Raw drugs processed with anjanakkal. (C) Asura Maruthuvam is also called as surgical procedures are of 3 types ther are, (C.i) Aruvai or surgical applications - Aruvai (Excision), Keral (Incision), Kuruthi vaangal (Blood letting), and Attai vidal (leech application) are some of the procedures included in this treatment. (C.ii) Agni or heat application - Suttigai (Cauterization), Vedhu (Steam therapy), Ottradam (Fomentation), Pottanam (Foemented bundle application), Pugai (Fumigation). (C.iii) Kaara murai - Kaaram (alkali application), Seelai (medicated plastering), Kalimbu (oinments), Podi (medicated powder), Neer (medicated powder), Kali (creams), Pasai (pastes)(1). In Ayurveda Ausadha or Bhaisajya (Medicine) are broadly divided into two categories (a) Aahaara dravya - Food substance (b) Ausadhi dravya which means the substance used as drug. Some of aushadhas are (a) Arka - A liquid preparation obtained by distillation of certain liquids or drugs soaked in water. (b) Aasava or aristas - these are fermented prearation of medicinal plants. (c) Avaleha - It is a Semisolid preparation of drugs, acquires the consistency of thick paste. The other similar forms are Modaka, guda, Kandha, Lehya, Praasa etc. (d) Choorna - A fine powder of single drug or compound drugs, (e) Ghana - A dried aqueous extract. It is a solidified mass prepared by evaporating all aqueous portion. (f) Tailas (Medicated oils) and ghritas (Medicated ghee) - It is a preparation in which oil or ghee is boiled with prescribed kasaayas (Decoction) and Kalkas (Fine paste) of drugs according to the formula. (g) guggulu - an exudate obtained from plant *Commiphora mukkul*.

The preparations having this exudate as main effective ingredient are known as Guggulu. (h) Lepa – Drug formulations in the form of paste used for external applications are called as lepas. (i) Sattva – It is a water extractable solid substance collected from a plant. (j) Varthi, Netrabindhu and anjana – these are medicinal preparation meant for external applications to the eyes. (j) Vati and Gutikas – A drug prepared in the form of tablets.

### Treatment procedures

The Line of treatment in Siddha system is categorized into A) Oil bath – oilbath is recommended for once in four days. It strengthens the five motor organs and also helps to fight against the illness during any season. Gingelly oil / cow's ghee / some medicated oil is used for oil bath. Some diet restrictions are followed while taking oil bath and is also discussed in ancient Siddha Literature. B) Purgation - Purgation is one of treatment in Siddha System of medicine. Purgation is given for management of deranged vaatham. For chronic disorders, purgation is given for three consecutive days to neutralize the Vaatham, and for a fast recovery. C) Emesis – Vamanam (Emesis) is one among the treatment methods followed in Siddha system. Emetic therapy is done in diseases which affects lung due to increased Vatha and Kapha humors. D) Fasting therapy – It is also called as Langanam in Siddha system. Medical fasting is safe and effective as it corrects deranged Vatham, Pitham and Kabam. The main external therapy in Siddha system are (1) varmam which is the life force / energy concentric points where the flow of life force traverse through it in a periodic manner with respect to circadian rhythm. Varmam points in the body are vital energy storing points through which the vital energy is transmitted through the various parts of the body and all functions of the body are mediated. There are 108 varmam points used to stimulate energy and heal diseases (2) Thokkanam which is a therapeutic manipulation and mobilization procedure usually done with hands on body in nine different ways with or without application of medicated oil in five different postures (Standing, sitting, walking, lying one side and supination) in treatment of conditions related to deranged Vatham associated humors – Manipulative therapy. Two basic treatment principles are followed in Ayurveda they are I) Brmhana – Nutrition and II) Langhana – Attenuation. Langhana is of two types they are A) Sodhana – Elimination therapy and B) Samana – Palliative therapy. Sodhana which expels the deranged dhosas from the body. A Five folded external treatment known as panchakarma or detoxification therapy. It helps to stop further production of ama. The purpose of panchakarma is complete detoxification and purification of the body. It has five distinct steps (1) Vasti – Herbalised oil enemas : This type of medication is administered rectally to expel Vatha, (2) Nasya – Nasal irrigation : The medicine which is administrated through nose is called Nasya. The excess of humors which is accumulated above the nect is eliminated through nasya, (3) Vamana – Therapeutic vomiting : Vomiting

helps to eliminate Kapha causing excess mucus, (4) Virechana – Purgation : Purgation relives excessive Pitta or Pitta along with Kapha and Pitta along with Vaatham in the body, (5) Rakta Moksha – Bloodletting or Sraaviyadham : The toxin which is present in blood is eliminated through Raktha Moksha. Leeches are used as alternative of bloodletting(16 -18).

### Conclusion

As per literatures and reviewed articles, in Siddha system basic concepts comes under 96 thathuvas. Where as in ayurvedha system of medicine the basic concepts are Three dhosas, Sapta dhatus and three Malas. According to diagnostic Methodology, Envagai thervu, Manikadai nool, Thoothuvan Ilakanam, Jothidam pancha patchi are some of the methods followed in Siddha System of Medicine and Shadanga pariksha, Astasthanam pariksha, Dhasavidha pariksha was followed in Ayurvedic System of Medicine. In Siddha the medicines are classified into 32 types Internal medicines and 32 External medicines, whereas in Ayurveda Aushada (Medicine) is classified into Aahaara dravya and Ausadhi dravya. Line of treatment in Siddha system is classified into oil bath, purgation, emesis and fasting therapy. Brmhana and Langhana are the two basic line of treatment followed in Ayurvedic system of medicine. Neither system of medicine is higher than the other and each system of medicine is unique in its own.

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