



**Review Article**

**SIGNIFICANCE OF SIDDHA THIRITHODA BALANCING FOOD STUFFS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The Siddha system of medicine is an ancient medical system, which provides 'Holistic Health'. The word 'Siddha' originated from the word 'Siddhi' meaning achievement of perfection, eternal bliss and accomplishment. The Siddha system evolved based on ninety-six tools (96 *Thattuvam*) which include physical, physiological, psychological and intellectual aspects of every human being. Among the 96 tools, the five elements i.e. *Pancha bootham* namely Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space are the fundamental units of everything in the human body and the cosmos. There are three vital life factors (*Vaatham*, *Pittam*, *Kabham*) responsible for good health. There is a relationship between these to maintain the body's healthy. Any increase or decrease in humour causes diseases. *Thirithoda sama porutkal* (TSP) maintains these humour when we are using our regular diet. This article details the TSP to maintain the body healthy.

**INTRODUCTION**

The Siddha system of medicine is an ancient medical system, which provides 'Holistic Health'. The system provides preventive, promotive, curative, rejuvenating and rehabilitative health care with a scientific and holistic approach. The word 'Siddha' originated from the source word 'Siddhi' meaning achievement of perfection, eternal bliss and accomplishment. This system is mostly close bend with Tamil culture which flourished in Tamil Nadu, India. It has evolved into a well-documented medical stream from the ancient medical practitioners called *Siddhars* by the way of keen observations and experimentations. In India, Siddha Medicine has its strong roots reflecting India's culture, tradition and heritage.

Siddha system serves mostly the people living in Southern India. The pre-existing traditional medical knowledge of the south region of India was codified by the *Siddhars* and then this system is orally educated to the *Sisyars* (student of the *Siddhars*) and after a long time of practices this traditional knowledge was documented in the palm scripts which are named as Siddha system of medicine. *Siddhars* are mostly aware of and documented as actions of the drugs (*Gunapadam*), Symptoms of the diseases and their treatment (*Pothu maruthuvam*), preventive measures (*Noi illa Neri*), pathological changes and diagnostic tools (*Noi Nadal*), pediatric diseases (*Kuzhandhai maruthuvam*), some special diseases treated with special medicines (*Sirappu maruthuvam*), toxic herbs, metals, minerals and animal toxins (*Nanju maruthuvam*), surgical procedures (*Aruvaimaruthuvam*), wound treatment (*Ranamaruthuvam*), gynaecological treatment (*Magalirmaruthuvam*), obstetrics treatment (*Magaperumaruthuvam*), anatomical structures (*Udalkoorugal*), physiology (*Udal thathuvam*).

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**Literature Review**

**Basic Concepts in Siddha**

The Siddha system comprises basically philosophical concepts including the four main components

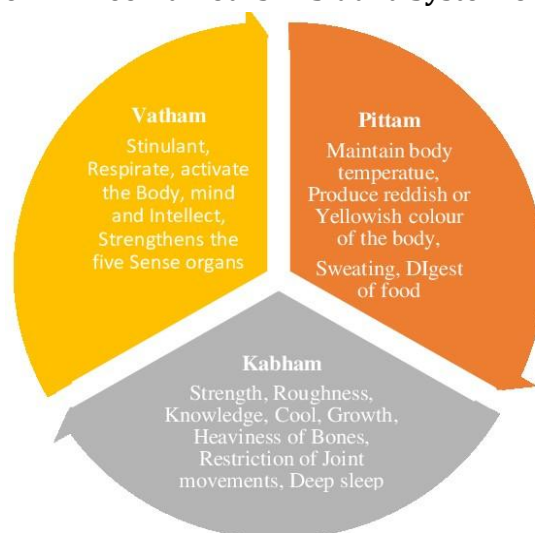
1. Chemistry/Iatrochemistry Alchemy (*Vaatam*)
2. Medical practice (*Vaithiyam*)
3. Yogic Practice (*Yogam*)
4. Wisdom (*Gnanam*)

The Siddha system evolved based on ninety-six tools (*96 Thathuvam*) which include the physical, physiological, psychological and intellectual aspects of every human being. Among the 96 tools, the five elements i.e., *Pancha bootham* namely Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space are the fundamental units of everything in the human body and the cosmos. There are three vital life factors (*Vaatham, Pittam, Kabham*) responsible for good health. These life constituents are formed by five elements in different combinations.<sup>[1]</sup>

**Table 1: 96 Tools (*Thathuvam*) in Siddha System of Medicine**

S. No	Tools/ <i>Thathuvam</i>	Equivalent Terminology	Types
1.	<i>Gunam</i>	Characters	3
2.	<i>Mandalam</i>	Body regions	3
3.	<i>Edanai</i>	Sufferings due to affinity	3
4.	<i>Thodam</i>	Humors	3
5.	<i>Malam</i>	Three impurities of soul	3
6.	<i>Anthakaranam</i>	Mind reaction	4
7.	<i>Avasthai</i>	States of soul	5
8.	<i>Kosam</i>	Five sheaths	5
9.	<i>Asayam</i>	Systems of the body	5
10.	<i>Kanmendiriyam</i>	Motor organs	5
11.	<i>Pulan</i>	Functions of motor organ	5
12.	<i>Gnanendiriyam</i>	Sensory organs	5
13.	<i>Pori</i>	Functions of sensory organs	5
14.	<i>Pootham</i>	Five basic elements	5
15.	<i>Naadi</i>	Body pulse	10
16.	<i>Vaayu</i>	Body air	10
17.	<i>Vigaram</i>	Passions	8
18.	<i>Atharam</i>	Body resource	6
19.	<i>Vinai</i>	Body reaction	2
20.	<i>Arivu</i>	Happiness through self realization	1

**Figure 1: Three Humours in Siddha System of Medicine**



**Table 2: Thridosham and its functions**

Vital factors	life	Basic elements	Functions
Vali		Air + Space	Responsible for movements, respiratory, cardiac and neurologic functions (Creative force)
Azhal		Fire	Functions of digestion, blood cell production, maintenance of body temperature, intellect and vision, lustre to the skin. (Sustaining force).
Aiyam		Earth + Water	Gives strength and stability to the body structures, supports the functions of respiration, appreciation of taste, cooling of eyes, function of digestion, lubricating joints. (Destructive/ Eliminating force)

**Thirukkural**

"Miginum kuraiyinum noiseyyum nooloar  
Valimuthalaa enniya moondru"

**Meaning**

An increase or decrease of the three humour leads to the disease.

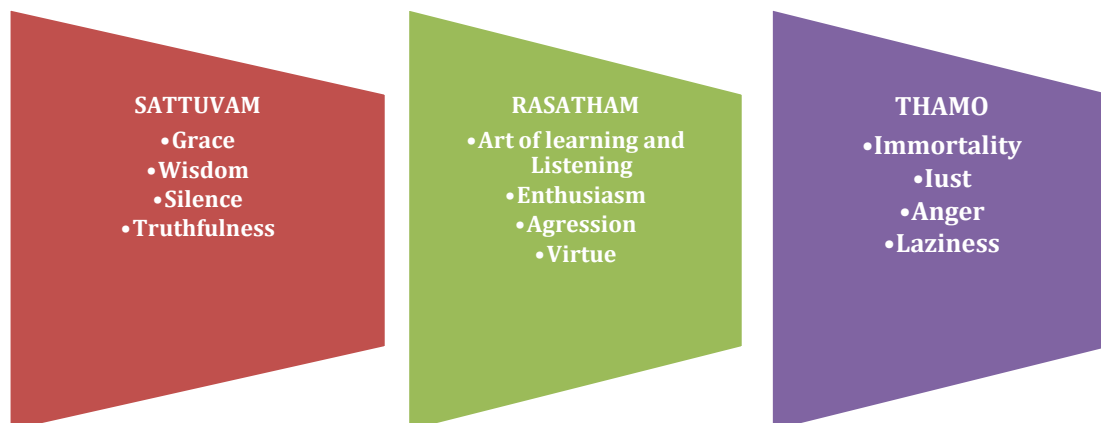
**Therapeutic Principles**

Holistic approach is the highlight of Siddha treatment. Treatment procedures in Siddha help in normalizing the altered vital life factors (*Mukkutram* viz *Vali*, *Azhal* and *Aiyam*).

- Therapeutic purgation normalizes *Vali*
- Therapeutic emesis normalizes *Azhal*
- Therapeutic (instillation of) nasal drops and collyrium normalizes the *Aiyam*.<sup>[1]</sup>

**Table 3: Panchaboothas, Six Tastes and 3 Humours- Relationship**

<i>Pancha Bootham</i> (Five Basic Elements) Combination	<i>Suvai</i> (Taste)	<i>Impact on Trithodam</i> (Three Vital Humours)
Earth + Water	<i>Inippu</i> (Sweet)	Increases <i>Kabham</i>
Earth + Heat	<i>Pulippu</i> (Sour)	Increases <i>Vatham</i>
Water + Heat	<i>Uvarppu</i> (Salt)	Increases <i>Pittam, Kabham</i>
Air + Space	<i>Kasappu</i> (Bitter)	Increases <i>Vatham</i>
Air + Heat	<i>Karppu</i> (Pungent)	Increases <i>Pittam, Vatham</i>
Earth + Air	<i>Thuvarppu</i> (Astringent)	Increases <i>Kabham, Vatham</i>

**Figure 2: Trigunam (Three Characters) of Nature**

**Selection of Medicines for Treatment**

- Taste (*Suvai*) plays a vital role in the principle of treatment.
- Every taste is constituted by the combination of two basic elements.
- Three vital life factors are also formed by five elements in different combinations.
- Selection of drugs for the treatment of diseases is also based on the six tastes.
- 'Food itself is medicine and medicine itself is food' is one of the basic principles of Siddha system of Medicine.
- Selection of food according to the landscape where one lives, the climate one is exposed to and the lifestyle one adopts are essential for a healthy life.

**Substances which balance the three vital life factors**

Eight spices, namely

- Cardamom
- Cumin Seeds
- Turmeric
- Pepper
- Dry Ginger
- Garlic
- Asafoetida
- Fenugreek

These are used for seasoning food during or after cooking. These spices can balance the vital life factors i.e., *Tirithodam*.

**Thirithoda Sama Porutkal**

The substances which neutralize the three basic humours of the body are known as *Thirithoda Sama Porutkal*<sup>[2,3]</sup>. In Siddha literature "*Pathartha Guna Cinthamani*" the *Thirithoda Sama Porutkal* is denoted by the following quotes.

*"Ondriya vaatha pitta kabham ivaiyuyaraa vannanruru*

*Karigal ellaam naalume samaippar aaynhthor*

*Thinridu milagu manjal seeragam uyarnhthakaayam*

*Venri kolsukodelam venthayam ulliserththae"* – *Pathaartha guna chinthaamani*

**Table 4: Thirithoda Sama Porutkal Taste Potency and Division<sup>3,4</sup>**

S.No	Vernacular Name (English Name)	Suvai (Taste)	Veeriyam (Potency)	Pirivu (Division)
1.	<i>Milagu</i> (Pepper)	Pungent, Bitter	Heat	Pungent
2.	<i>Manjal</i> (Turmeric)	Bitter, Pungent	Heat	Pungent
3.	<i>Seeragam</i> (Cumin)	Pungent, Sweet	Cold	Sweet
4.	<i>Perungayam</i> (Asafoetida)	Pungent, Bitter	Heat	Pungent
5.	<i>Chukku</i> (Dry Ginger)	Pungent	Heat	Pungent
6.	<i>Elam</i> (Cardamomum)	Pungent, Sweet	Heat	Pungent
7.	<i>Venthayam</i> (Fenu greek)	Bitter	Cold	Pungent
8.	<i>Poondur</i> (Garlic)	Pungent	Heat	Pungent

**Table 5: Thirithoda Sama Porutkal Action and Medicinal properties<sup>[5,6]</sup>**

Tamil Name	Botanical Name	Phyto chemistry	Actions	Healing Properties
Milagu	<i>Piper nigrum</i>	It contains Alkaloids like Piperine, Piperitone, essential oils, volatile oil	Carminative, Stomachic, Antidote, Stimulant, Anti-spasmodic, Anti-Vatha	Cures <i>Vatham</i> , <i>Pittam</i> and <i>Kabham</i> Diseases, indigestion, diarrhoea, cold, fever, anemia, jaundice, ulcer.
Manjal	<i>Curcuma longa</i>	Alkaloids -curcumin; Essential oils- Turmerone, Atlantone, Zingiberene	Carminative, Stomachic, Hepato tonic	Neutralize three humours, cures vomiting, head ache, coryza

Seeragam	<i>Cuminum cyminim</i>	Volatile oil- myrcene, Limonene, Caryophyllene P- cymene, Cumin aldehyde, Cuminyalcohol, Alcohol-Conine, Quercetin, Lutein, Carotene, Saponins, Resin, Tanins	Carminative, Stimulant, Stomachic,	Controls <i>Pittam</i> , cures vomiting, ageusia, gastric ulcer, buccal diseases, splenomegaly, wheezing, cough, rheumatic diseases.
Perungayam	<i>Ferula asafoetida</i>	Resin - Ferulic acid and its esters - Coumarins, Sesquiterpenecoumarin, Umbelliferone, Asaresinotannols, Farnesiferols A, B Gum - Glucose, Galactose, Arabinose, Rhamnose, volatile oils	Carminative, Stimulant, Antispasmodic, Laxative, Anthelmintic, Expectorant, Diuretic	Treats <i>Vatham</i> diseases, indigestion, worm infestation, anti- peristalsis, gastric ulcer, asciter, amenorrhoea, phlegmatic disorder
Chukku	<i>Zingiber Officinale</i>	Oleoresin - Gingerols, Shogaol, Zingiberene, Zingiberole, Phenol - Zingerone, Gingeol, Volatile Oils	Stimulant, Stomachic, Carminative	Treats derangement of three humours, indigestion, heartburn, dyspepsi, diarrhoea, piles, rheumatic diseases.
Elam	<i>Elettaria cardamom um</i>	Volatile Oil- Cineole, Terpeneole, Terpinyl acetate, Borneole, Terpinene, Fixed Oils	Stimulant, Stomachic, Carminative,	Prevent diseases of get, relieves <i>Pitha</i> , vomiting, diarrhoea, poly dyspsia, sluggish digestion, wheezing
Venthayam	<i>Trigonella foenumgraecum</i>	Alkaloids-Trigocoumarin, Trigonelline, Gentianine, Carpaine Steroidal sapogenins Diosgenin, Polyphenols - Rhaphoniticin, Isovitexin, Volatile Oils.	Carminative, Refrigerant, Laxative, Demulcent, Diuretic, Tonic	Diarrhoea. Dysentery, Polydypsia, Chronic Cough, Tuberculosis
Poondu	<i>Allium sativum</i>	Sulphur compouns -Allin, Ajoene, Saponins, Falvanoids.	Stimulant, Stomachic, Carminative, Tonic, Anthelmintic, Expectorant	Treats <i>Vatham</i> Diseases, Sanni, Headache, Chronic cough, Rhinitis, Piles

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Pepper

The scientific studies expose that the alkaloid of Pepper- Piperine has bioavailability enhancing effects on many therapeutically important drugs and nutrients. Piperine increases the absorption of many drugs and nutrients from the GI tract by several mechanisms. Therefore, piperine is known as bioavailability enhancer and a potent drugs metabolism inhibitor. Hence Pepper is very essential in diet for the digestion, absorption, metabolism and detoxification of food items. Moreover Pepper can balance *Kapham* and *Vatham* humour and maintain the health of the individuals [7].

### Curcuma

Curcumin is the potent immune-modulator and antibiotic and it can remove the toxic substances from the body. Curcumin has antioxidant, antimutagenic, antidiabetic, antibacterial, hepatoprotective, expectorant and anticancerous pharmacological activities [8,9].

### Cumin

Seeds are antioxidants; balances the Azhal humour of subjects. Studies proved that the usage of turmeric and cumin seeds in routine diet is the very ideal concept in healthy lifestyle [10].

### Asafoetida

Antispasmodic and hypotensive, antinociceptive, antioxidant, anxiolytic, aphrodisiac, antiviral, antidiabetic, gastric anti-ulcer, antiseptic, nephroprotective, neuroprotective and anticancer properties of asafoetida are proven pharmacologically and biologically in animal models and humans. Hence the asafoetida is very essential for healthy life [11].

### Ginger

The pharmacological studies of ginger revealed that it has antioxidant Effects, immunomodulatory effects, radio protective activity, antigenotoxic activity, antiemetic, antipyretic, analgesic, antiarthritic, and anti-inflammatory activities. The custom of ginger in diet is the protective of human body from various ailments.

The pharmacological study of Cardamom seeds illustrates the antioxidant, gastroprotective.<sup>[12,13]</sup>

### Cardamom

The pharmacological study of Cardamom seeds illustrates the antioxidant, gastroprotective, anti-lipidemia, antioxidant, hepatoprotective.<sup>[14]</sup>

### Fenugreek

Anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antifungal, antiulcer, immunomodulatory activity, fibrinogen and fibrinolytic activity anti-lithigenic, anti-carcinogenic and other effects of fenugreek. Hence the usage of fenugreek in diet is very supportive for healthy life.<sup>[15]</sup>

### Garlic

The scientific studies reveal that garlic has broad spectrum therapeutic effect with minimal toxicity. Recent studies indicate that garlic extract has antimicrobial activity against many genera of bacteria, fungi and viruses. The role of garlic in preventing cardiovascular disease and anti-carcinogenic effect has been acclaimed by several authors. Chemical constituents of garlic have been investigated for treatment of hyperlipidemia, hypertension, platelet aggregation and blood fibrinolytic activity.<sup>[16]</sup>

### CONCLUSION

The key to balance the body with diet is choosing foods that have the nutritional properties and the adding of substances with activities like neutralizing of toxins and balancing of three humours i.e., the usage of antidote, bioavailability enhancers and immuno-modulators in diet is essential for the maintenance of health. The every time diet should be concerned with the implementation of proper combination and application in appropriate individuals. Conclusively, the usage of *Thirithoda sama porutkal* in diet regularly will provide the balance in three humours and healthy body condition.

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