

# *E-CONTENT*

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## UDAI PRATAP COLLEGE, VARANASI

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**UG, Year: II, Semester: IV, Paper: I**

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**Course Title:** Economic Botany, Ethnomedicine and Phytochemistry

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**Class:** B.Sc. –Botany

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**Topic:** Importance of Ethnobotany in Indian System of Medicines-Siddha

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## Importance of Ethnobotany in Indian System of Medicines - Siddha, Ayurveda and Unani

The Indian System of Medicine is the culmination of India thought of medicine which represents a way of healthy living valued with a long and unique cultural history. It also amalgamates the best of influence that came in from contact with other civilizations be it Greece (resulting in Unani Medicine), Germany (Homeopathy) or Our sages (which gave us the science of Ayurveda, Siddha as also Yoga and Naturopathy).

An indigenous system is a natural form of medicine outside the stream of Western or allopathic medicine practiced by majority of doctors all over the world today. These systems are Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Yoga, and Homoeopathy (**AYUSH**).

Medicinal plant based traditional systems of medicines are playing important role in providing health care to large section of population, especially in developing

countries. Indian Systems of Medicine are among the well-known global traditional system of medicine.

## *Siddha System of Medicine*

Siddha system of medicine emphasize that medical treatment is oriented not merely to disease, but also has to take into account the patient, environment, age, habits, physical condition. Siddha literature is in Tamil.

Siddha is one of the ancient medical system in India considered as the mother medicine of ancient Tamils/Draavidians in South India.

The word siddha means established truth or “one who is accomplished” and refers to perfected masters who according to Hindu belief have transcended the ahamkara (ego or I-maker), have subdued their minds to be subservient to their awareness, and have transformed their bodies composed mainly of dense Rajotama gunas into a different kind of bodies dominated by sattva. This is usually accomplished only by persistent meditation over many lifetimes.

Siddha System of Medicine is as old as mankind and dominated the civilization of the southern peninsula of India. It is a treasurehouse of secret science, embodying the results of the ardent pursuit thereof by the ancient Siddhars.

***A siddha has also been defined to refer to one who attained a siddhi.***

The siddhis as paranormal abilities are considered emergent abilities of an individual that is on the path to siddhahood, and do not define a siddha, who is established in the pranav – the Aum, which is the spiritual substrate of creation. The persons who were associated with establishing such a Siddha school of thought were known as Siddhars.

Siddhars were upright people and mystics who acquired supernatural powers. The siddhi in its pure form means “the attainment of flawless identity with Reality (Brahman); perfection of spirit.” The concept of siddhas is a prime notion in Jainism.

The Siddha system of Medicine is one of the traditional medical system, providing preventive, promotive, curative, rejuvenative and rehabilitative, health care by adopting scientific and holistic approach.

The word *SIDDHA* is derived from the root word '*Citti*' meaning attainment of perfection, eternal bliss and accomplishment in Indian subcontinent, Siddha medicine has strong roots reflecting the culture, tradition and heritage of India.

The Siddha system has four main divisions:

1. Chemistry/Iatrochemistry Alchemy (vatam/ Iracavatam),
2. Treatment (Vaithiyam),
3. Yogic Practices (Yokam),
4. Wisdom (Nanam)

Siddha system of Medicine is evolved based on Ninety-six tools otherwise called *Tattuvam*, which include physical, physiological, psychological and intellectual aspects of every human being. Among the ninety-six tools, the five elements (**Pancaputam**) are the fundamental units for everything in the human body and the Cosmos. There are three vital life factors responsible for good health. The three vital life factors are formed by the appropriate combination of elements even from intra uterian life. **Vali (Vatam)** is formed by the appropriate combination of elements of the elements of air and space. **Azal (Pittam)** is formed by the free element and **Aiyam (Kapam)** by the combination of earth and water elements. There are seven physical constituents (similar to tissues) in our body, and the physiological and pathological features of these tissues have been detailed in Siddha literature and they are applied in practice.

The Siddha system is believed to have evolved from 10000 – 4000 B. C. With its Dravidian origin, it serves mostly the people living in southern India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, Mauritius and some of the South-East Asian countries.

The oldest Tamil book '*Tolkappiyam*' of 1400 BC contains medical information. Tirukkural written in 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC has a separate chapter named *Maruntu Atikaram*. Some of the ethical works in Tamil have been named after Siddha Medicines like *Tirikatukam* (Three pungent drugs) and *Elati* (indicating Cardamom), which talk about healthy living, though they have no direct reference to medicine. In *Manimekalai*, an ancient Tamil classic literature belonging to 2<sup>nd</sup>

century A.D., the contemporary concepts of atom, soul, almighty and matter are dealt with in a chapter titled “*Camayakanakkar Tam Tiran Ketta Katai*”. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D., the *Caiva Cittanta* cult obtained some of the early Cankiyam – Acivakam philosophies which reflected the ancient thoughts of Siddha Medicine. Princess Kuntavai Nacciyar established a free dispensary in the name of her father Cuntara Cozon. A 13<sup>th</sup> century inscription found in Citamparam temple depicts a list of grants given to Siddha Physicians (Vaittiyarkal) and mid – wives.

The highly evolved consciousness, intellect and heightened intuition of Siddhars resulting from their Yogic powers enabled them to explore the world around them and utilizes its natural resources for the well being of the humanity. Their findings on the characteristics of plants, minerals and animal products and their knowledge of the properties of drugs, their purification, processing, dosage, toxicity, antidote and clinical application have been preserved and handed down.

Significant contributions have emerged from the experiences of various traditional healers who have documented their experience and knowledge. Siddha, in its present education system, has various branches such as:

## **BRANCHES OF SIDDHA SYSTEM**

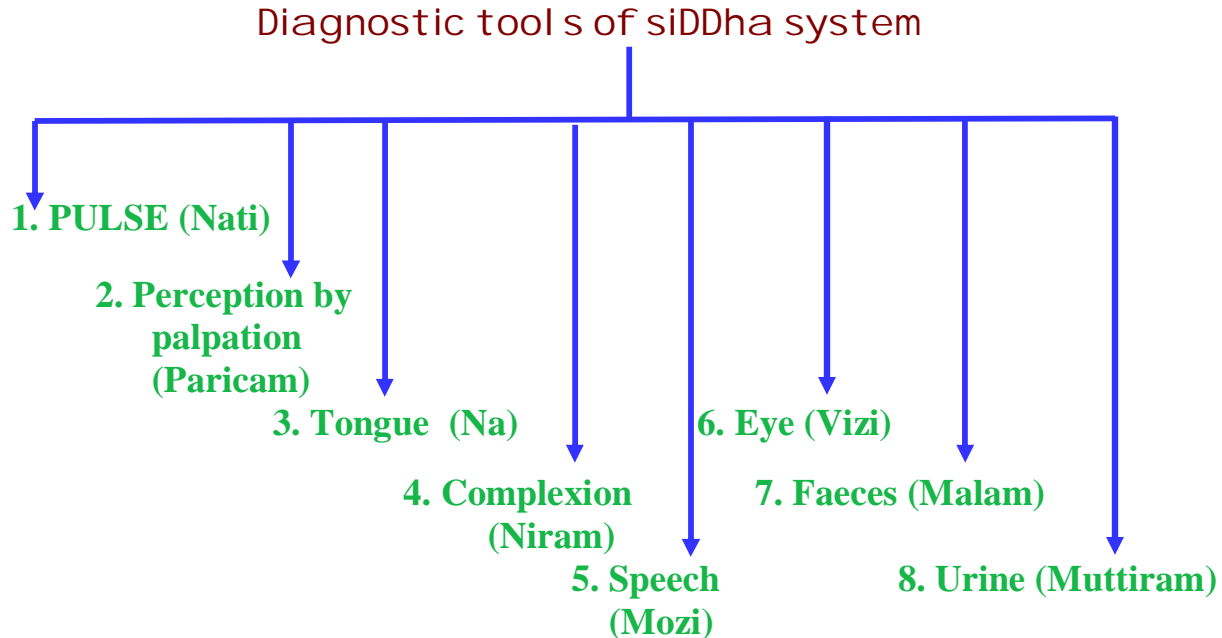
1. Siddha Pharmacology (Kunapatam),
2. Siddha Toxicology (Nancu Maruttuvam),
3. Siddha Pathology (Noy Natal),
4. General Medicine (Maruttuvam),
5. Obstetrics, and Gynaecology (Cul Marrum , Makalir Maruttuvam),
6. Siddha Paediatrics (Kuzantai Maruttavam),
7. Surgery (Aruvai Maruttuvam),
8. Dermatology ((Tol Maruttuvam),
9. Ear, Nose, Throat (Katu, Mukku, Tontai Maruttuvam),
10. Ophthalmology (Kan Marttuvam),
11. Psychiatry (Kirkal noi Maruttuvam),
12. Pressure Manipulation Theory (Varmam),
13. External Therapy (Pura Maruttuvam),
14. Geriatrics (Mutiyar Maruttuvam),
14. Yogam and Rejuvenation (Kayakarpam).

Siddha education was earlier imparted traditionally through – student (**Kuru Citan Paramparai**) relationship but now it is imparted through formal education system. There are eleven educational institutions including one National Institute of Siddha. **The National Institute of Siddha (NIS), situated at Chennai.**

The strength of the Siddha Medicine lies in its holistic approach – physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being by adapting simple lifestyle practices (postures, breathing exercise, meditation, etc.), dietary regimens relevant to six tastes, usage of safe and effective plant based drugs and drugs of mineral and animal origin.

Another aspect of Siddha for its universal adaptability is its unique therapeutic methods – pressure manipulation therapy i.e. Varmam and physical manipulation therapy i.e. Takkanam, that are skillfully carried out by trained practitioners.

The process of ageing bring along with it a numerous degenerative physical and mental changes which are managed in Siddha system by the rejuvenative (**Kayakarpam**) practices involving simple herbal formulations (powerful antioxidants) prescribed with specific dose to be taken for a particular length of period and **Yokam techniques**.



Examination of pulse and urine are very important because they are helpful not only in arriving at the diagnosis but also in assessing the prognosis of the diseases.

In the area of diagnosis, the pulse diagnosis, which is predominantly dependent on the clinical acumen of the practitioner, could be carried out in any location.

The corner stone of Siddha Medicine for healthy living is food and life style. *'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 landscape where one lives, the climate one is exposed to and the lifestyle that one adopts is essential to lead a healthy life.

Siddhars have recommended certain basic lifestyle guidelines – **preventive measures** (*Piniyanuka Viti*) that help to prevent diseases. Rejuvenating procedures (*Kayakarpam*) increase our immunity.

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***T H A N X***

