

According to their pharmaceutical preparations, Siddha medicine could be categorized into:

Kudineer churanam (decoction powder): It is a fine powder of drugs.

Chendooram: It is a red colour powder generally made of metallic compounds.

Chunnam: It is alkaline in nature.

Kalangu: It is based on mercury.

Karpams: It could be herbal or non-herbal in nature, made on a daily basis.

Karruppu: Mercury and sulphur are essentially present and its colour is dark black.

Legiyams and rasayanams: It contains ghee, honey and sugar, apart from herbal powder and juices.

Mathirai and vadagam: It is pills prepared from fine powdered paste.

Maappagu: It is flavoured medicinal syrup and contains generally aromatic herbs, honey and sugar.

Mezhugu, kuzhambu, kalimbu and mai: All of these categories have a waxy feel.

Ney: It is medicated ghee, which contains fat-soluble plant substances.

Pakkuvam and theenooral: It is herbal medicine with honey.

Parpam: It is prepared by the process of calcination.

Patangam: It contains mercury, camphor, etc.

Thailam: It is medicated oil; usually sesame seed oil, coconut oil, castor oil, etc are used in its preparation.

Theeneer: It is distilled essence, which contains volatile constituents of the drugs.

Mercury is used in five forms such as rasam (mercury), lingam (red sulphide of mercury), veram (mercury perchloride), pooram (mercury subchloride) and rasa-chinduram (red oxide of mercury). They are known as panchasutha.

In addition to drugs, pranayama and other disciplines of yoga are necessary for good health and longevity.

Concept of Treatment

The treatment in Siddha medicine is aimed at keeping the three humors in equilibrium and maintenance of seven elements. So proper diet, medicine and a disciplined regimen of life are advised for a healthy living and to restore equilibrium of humors in diseased condition. Saint Thiruvalluvar explains four requisites of successful treatment. These are the patient, the attendant, physician and medicine. When the physician is well qualified and the other agents possess the necessary qualities, even severe diseases can be cured easily. The treatment should be commenced as early as possible after assessing the course and cause of the disease. Treatment is classified into three categories: devamaruthuvum (Divine method); manuda maruthuvum (rational method); and asura maruthuvum (surgical method). In Divine method medicines like parpam, chendooram, guru, kuligai made of mercury, sulphur and pashanams are used. In the rational method, medicines made of herbs like churanam, kudineer, vadagam are used. In surgical method, incision, excision, heat application, blood letting, leech application are used.

According to therapies the treatments of Siddha medicines could be further categorized into following categories such as Purgative therapy, Emetic therapy, Fasting therapy, Steam therapy, Oleation therapy, Physical therapy, Solar therapy and Blood letting therapy, Yoga therapy, etc.