



***Kankaasa Maathhirai* – a boon for Siddha Ophthalmology**

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ABSTRACT

Siddha ophthalmology is often a less focused and comparatively less exposed field. While much importance is being given for popular diseases, the arena of eye diseases in siddha is not that much documented. Siddhars have classified eye diseases into 96 types with almost complete details about the sign and symptoms, treatment etc for most of the types. *Kankaasam* can be correlated to cataract which is defined as a clouding of eyes' which impedes the passage of light. There are many medicines indicated for cataract in Siddha both as Internal and External forms. Among these medicines, '*Kankaasa Mathirai*' has its own uniqueness. Siddha Materia Medica has three sources of drugs namely Herbal, Metal & mineral and animal Kingdom. *Kankaasa mathirai* has the specialty of having ingredients from all the three available sources as mentioned above. This review paper is an attempt to highlight the uniqueness of this Siddha Herbo-mineral Preparation '*Kankaasa mathirai*'

Keywords

Kankaasa mathirai, Siddha ophthalmology, Cataract in Siddha

INTRODUCTION

According to World Health Organization (WHO), cataract is responsible for 51% of world blindness, which represents about 20 million people (2010). Although cataracts can be surgically removed, in many countries barriers exist that prevent patients to access surgery. Cataract remains the leading cause of blindness. As people in the world live longer, the number of people with cataract is anticipated to grow. Cataract is also an important cause of low vision in both developed and developing countries.

Siddha Medicine is an ancient medicine in the world. Siddhars brings down 4448 types of diseases under the category of general medicine, special medicine, gynecology, pediatrics, toxicology, surgery and ophthalmology etc.

In Siddhar "aruvai maruthuvam" Siddhar mentioned about 96 types of eye diseases. The "agathiar nayana vidhi 500" is a witness of the above 96 types of eye diseases. Also the "nagamuni nayana vidhi" classifies the eye diseases. According to the manuscript 27 eye diseases in the people, 10 in retina, 13 in cornea, 9 in between retina and cornea 24 in upper eye lid and whole eye totally 96 in eye diseases. *Nagamuni siddhar* mentioned about *vatham*, *pitham* and *kabam* i.e three dhosham which may be the causative factors for the above diseases. Many palm leaf manuscripts on ophthalmology are also an evident of the same.

Ophthalmology in Siddha

Siddhars' way of treatment for the eye diseases except surgery there are no effective medicines to cure cataract in the Modern medicine. Defective vision is corrected only by prescribing spectacles. These ailments were treated in the ancient days through traditional Siddha Medicine. Internal and external medicines for the above eye diseases along with the traditional surgical methods are also explained in the *Siddhar aruvai maruthuvam* (Surgery). *Anjanam* (collyrium), *Kalikkam* (eye salve) and *Mye* (eye-tex) are the names of the external medicines used for the eye diseases.

The Different Kinds of Treatment

- Scarification
- Operation
- Poultice
- Application Of Fumigation
- Fumigation
- Bandaging
- Incision
- Excision
- Perforation
- Vene-Section
- Cauterization
- Leeching
- Solving
- Washing
- Corneal Pricking With A Copper Triangular Needle (*Salagai*)
- Applications of Eye Drops
- Application of Medicated Oil
- Application of Ointment

Kankaasam (cataract) in Siddha

Kankaasam can be correlated to cataract which is defined as a clouding of eyes' which impedes the passage of light. Kan kasam and Kanpadalam are among the 96 eye diseases which occur in the cornea. 8 types of *kaasam* and 7 types of *padalam* are explained in “*Siddhar aruvai maruthuvam*” and kan kasa mathirai is documented as a time-tested, safe and effective medicine

for treating the same. Siddha Materia Medica has three sources of drugs namely Herbal, Metal & mineral and animal Kingdom. *Kankasa mathirai* has the specialty of having ingredients from all the three available sources as mentioned above.

கண்காச மாத்திரை :

சங்கு சுக்காடு மிளகு திப்பிலி

தாரமோடதி மதுரமும்

புங்கம் வித்தாடு பீதரோகிணி

புதிய துத்த மனோசீலை

அங்கரைப்பது நந்தி பத்திரி

யான தேனோடளாவியே

கங்குல் பற்றிய கண்ணிலிட்டிடு

காச படலமு நாசமே.

This Medicine contains the source from Herbs, Metals and Animal Sources,

Ingredients

Table 1. Ingredients of Kankasa Mathirai

Herbal origin	Metal, Mineral & Animal origin
Dried Ginger	Zinc
Long Pepper	Arsenic Realger
Pepper	Yellow Arsenic Trisulphide
Indian Beech	Conch Shell
Gold Thread Coptis	
Jamaica Liquorice	
Ceylon Jasmine	

Table 1.2 Information about the ingredients from Herbal Sources

S.No	Tamil name/ Botanical Name/ Family	Common Name	Part Used	Phyto Chemicals	Uses in Siddha
1	Chukku Zingiber officinale Zingiberaceae	Dried Ginger	Rhizome	β - sitosterol, palmitate, hexa cosanoic acid, gingerol, omega glycerol	Indigestion, cold, Anti- vatha, Headache.
2	Milagu Piper nigrum Piperaceae	Pepper	Seed	Thyone, pinene, camphene, sabene, linalol, carypophyllene	Pitha Diseases, Tridosha diseases, Cough, Cold, Nausea, Diarrhea
3	Thippili Piper Longum Piperaceae	Long Pepper	Unripened	Coumaperine, Piperolactum, Demethoxy curcumin, Prolidine	Anti Spasmodic ENT & Eye Diseases
4	Athimathuram Glycyrrhia Glabra Fabaceae	Jamica Liquorice	Root	Glycyrrhizin Glycyrrhizic	Eye Diseases Leprosy
5	Pungu Pungamia Glabra Fabaceae	Indian Beech	Seed	Karanjin Pungamol Glabrine	Skin Diseases Eye Diseases
6	Peetharokini Thalictrum Foliolosum	Gold Thread Coptis	Root	Berbrin	Eye Diseases Tonic

	Ranunculaceae				
7	Nandhiavattai Tabernaemantana Divaricata Apocynaceae	Ceylon Jasmine	Flower	Tabernaemantanine Coronarine	Eye Diseases

Table 1.3. Ingredients from Metal, mineral & Animal Sources

S.No	Name	Common Name	Uses In Siddha
1	Thaalagam (Arithaaram)	Yellow Arsenic	Leprosy Peptic Ulcer Eye Diseases
2	Paal Thutham	Zinc Sulphate	Eye Diseases Vatha Diseases
3	Manoseelai	Arsenic Realger	Eye Diseases Leprosy Kabha Diseases
4	Sangu	Conch Shell Part Used-Shell	Eye Diseases Tonic

Conclusion

Practicing Siddha physicians are quite unaware of the tremendous potentiality of many medicines prescribed in the traditional literatures. This may be due to their lack of updation of recent advances in the field, making compromises in their quest and thrive for new medicines etc. This work is a small step towards documenting and creating awareness regarding Siddha Ophthalmology and treatment options. With this basic input, more work is needed to explore and document wonderful internal and external medicines for the effective management of eye diseases in Siddha.

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