



Role of tastes in treatment modalities of Siddha Science

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ABSTRACT

Each and every system of medicine has its own exclusive specialities. Selection of drugs based on the chemical composition and action is the common entity followed all over the world. An important method of selection of drugs based on the tastes, characteristics, effects and ultimate taste has been followed in India's holistic indigenous medical science called Siddha science. According to Siddha science, all the things in the universe both inside and outside the body are made up of five basic elements namely space, air, fire, water and soil in balanced proportion. The basic motto of Siddha science is, "Food itself is medicine and medicine itself is food". The six tastes of food materials are also composed of these basic elements. Intake of all these six tastes at right proportion in our diet maintains the physiological homeostasis in our body. Excessive intake of a particular taste or avoiding some other taste leads to alteration. Such an alteration in this balanced proportion leads to ailments. Giving a drug that balances this alteration is the treatment method of Siddha science. Hence most of the drugs in Siddha science are the ingredients of our food we take in our regular diet. This paper deals with this advanced and excellent method of treatment. This paper includes various topics – nature of the body, humours of the body, assessing the patient, diagnosis, the six tastes of the drugs, nature of drugs and selection of drugs.

Keywords

Siddha Treatment modalities, Taste in siddha, Non-Invasive Siddha diagnostics.

INTRODUCTION

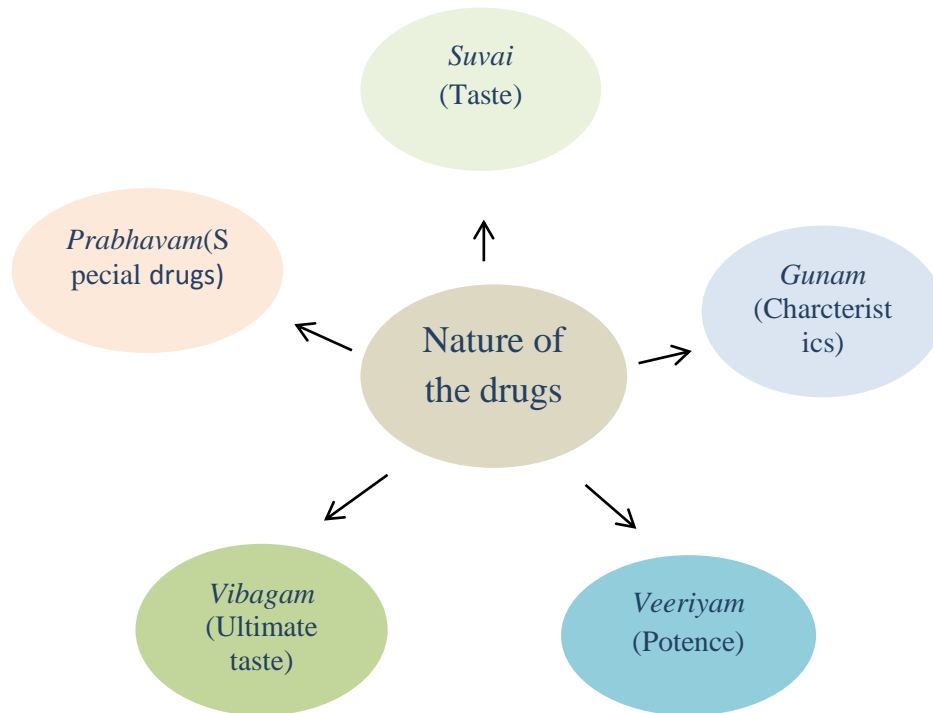
Siddha science deals with the natural remedy for diseases. The treatment methods in Siddha science includes assessing the nature of the body, the altered condition from the nature of the body, and the nature of drugs to balance the alteration. According to Siddha science, all the things in the universe are made up of five basic elements. There are three humours in the body. They are at right proportion in the normal physiological condition of the body. Any alteration in this proportion leads to pathological states. Selection of drugs that take back the physiological condition of the body is the common way of treatment method followed in Siddha science.

I. Three Humours of the Body

<i>Vaatha</i> (dry cold)	<i>Pitha</i> (heat)	<i>Kabha</i> (wet cold)
1. <i>laku</i> (weightlessness)	1. <i>vemmai</i> (heat)	1. <i>neimai</i> (wetness)
2. <i>varatchi</i> (dryness)	2. <i>koormai</i> (sharpness)	2. <i>kulirchi</i> (cold)
3. <i>kulirchi</i> (cold)	3. <i>pasumai</i> (prosperity)	3. <i>palu</i> (weight)
Cooling effect	Heating effect	Cooling effect

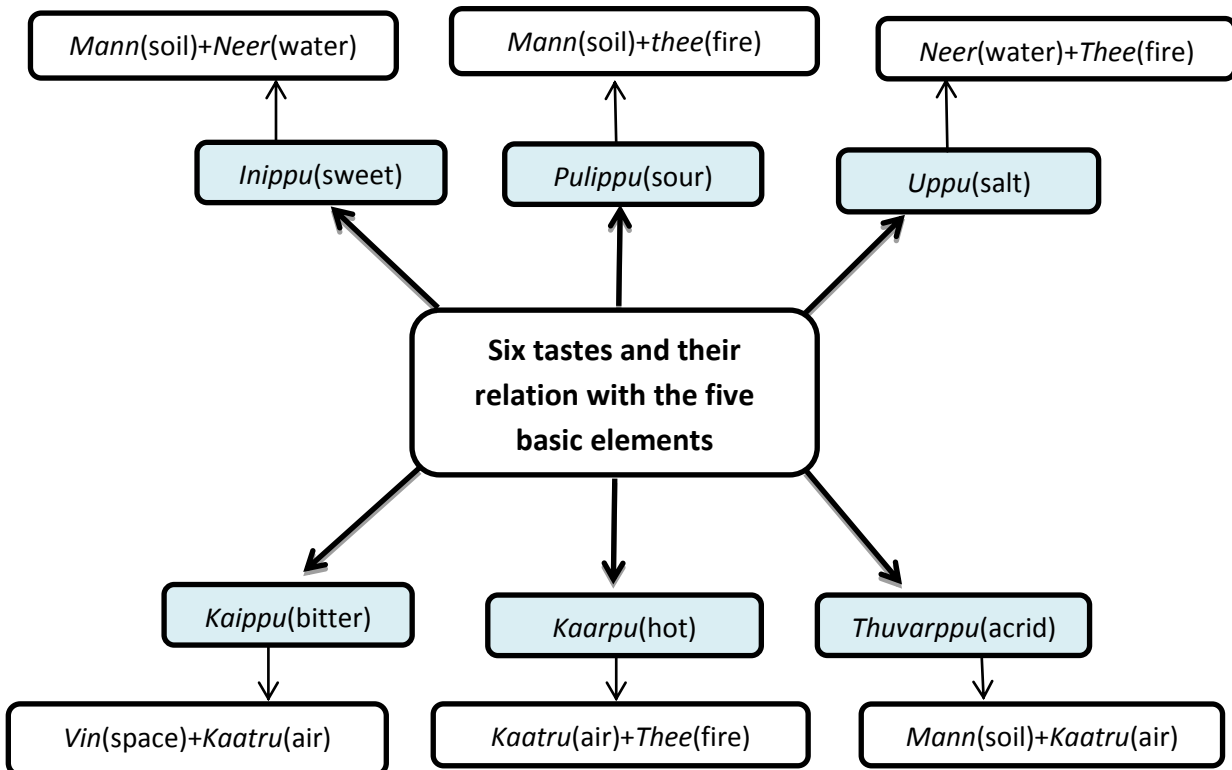
- 11. *Pal* (Teeth)
- 12. *Puruvangal* (Eyebrows)
- 13. *Annam* (Upper and lower jaws)

IV. *Nature of the Drug*



1. *Suvai (Taste):*

The proportion of the five basic elements of nature in six tastes is...



2. *Gunam* (Characteristics):

There are totally twenty characteristics. Any of them can be found in a drug. But only eight characteristics that represent the rest of the characteristics are important.

1. *Thinmai* (Hardness)
2. *Neippu* (Wetness)
3. *Kulirchi* (Cold)
4. *Menmai* (Softness)
5. *Koormai*(Sharpness)
6. *Vemmai* (Hot)
7. *Varatchi* (Dryness)
8. *Noimai* (Blunt)

These are the characteristics of the *arusuvaigal* (six tastes) listed above

3. *Veeriyam*(Effect):

The two common effects are

- a) *Veppaveeriyam* (Heating effect)
- b) *Kulirchiveeriyam*(Cooling effect)

Any of the two effects can be in a drug

4. *Vibagam* (Ultimate taste):

The taste of drugs which when reacts with *sadarakkini* (the heat energy present in the digestive system) may be converted to some other taste which is called the ultimate taste. It has three common types.

- a) *Inippu*(Sweet) and *uppu*(salt) may be converted to *inippu*(sweet).
- b) *Kaippu*(Bitter), *Kaarpu*(hot) and *Thuvarppu*(acid) may be converted to *tokaarpu*(hot).
- c) *Pulippu*(Sour) remains the same

5. *Prabhavam*(Special drugs):

Some drugs have their action against their own taste, characteristics, effect and the ultimate taste. These are called special drugs. This may be due to the presence of some additional tastes and characteristics in the drug other than the actual taste in the drug.

V. *Alteration in the Composition of Humours*

We have to select a drug that has a taste, characteristics, effect and ultimate taste that balances the alteration in the composition of the humours in patients body and must avoid the taste that increases the imbalance. Increase in a humour is always associated with the decrease of any of the other humours.

1. Increased *vaatha* condition

- Increase in the basic elements *Vin* (space) and *Vali* (air) in the body.
- *Varatchi* (dryness), *Laku* (weightlessness) and *Kulirchi* (cold) are the common characteristics.
- Commonly, it has cooling effect (*kulirchi veeriyam*).

2. Increased *pitha* condition

- Increase in the basic element *Thee* (fire) in the body
- *Vemmai* (hot), *Koormai* (sharpness), *Pasumai* (prosperity) are the common characteristics
- Commonly, it has heating effect (*veppa veeriyam*).

3. Increased *kabha* condition

- The basic elements *Mann* (soil) and *Neer* (water) are increased in the body
- *Kulirchi* (cold), *Neimai* (wetness), *Palu*(weight) are the common characteristics
- Commonly, it has cooling effect (*kulirchi veeriyam*).

VI. *Selection of Drugs for Altered Humours*

a) For the treatment of increased *vaatha* condition, commonly a drug with

- The taste of *Pulippu* (sour) can be taken if *pitha* is reduced.
- The taste of *Inippu* (sweet) and *Uppu* (salt) can be taken if *kabha* is reduced.
- The characteristics of *Neimai* (wetness), *Vemmai* (hot), *Palu*(weight) and *Pasumai* (prosperity) can be taken.
- *Veppa veeriyam* (heating effect) can be selected

b) For the treatment of increased *pitha* condition, commonly a drug with

- The taste of *Kaippu* (bitter) or *Thuvarppu*(acrid) can be selected if *vaatha* is decreased.
- The taste of *Inippu* (sweet) can be selected if *kabha* is decreased.

- The characteristics of *Kulirchi*(cold), *Neimai* (wetness) and *Varatchi* (dryness) can be selected
 - *Kulirchi veeriyam*(cooling effect) can be selected.
- c) For the treatment of increased *kabha* condition, commonly a drug with
- The taste of *Kaippu* (bitter) or *Thuvarppu* (acid) can be selected if *vaatha* is decreased
 - The taste of *Kaarpu*(hot) can be selected if *pitha* is decreased
 - The characteristics of *Varatchi*(dryness), *Vemmai*(hot), *Koormai* (sharpness) can be selected
 - *Veppa veeriyam* (heating effect) can be selected

VII. Examples of Drugs

Vaatha increased condition:

Neervetkai (Excessive thirst)

- Characteristics:

Varatchi (dryness), *Laku*(weightlessness), *Kulirchi* (cold)

- Effect:

Kulirchi veeriyam(cooling effect)

- Treatment:

a) ***Akkarakaaram*(*Anacyclus pyrethrum*)**

Taste:*Kaarpu* (hot)

Characteristics:*Vemmai* (hot)

Effect: *Veppa veeriyam*(heating effect)

Ultimate taste: *Kaarpu* (hot)

Proof on the anti –*vaatha* properties of *Anacyclus pyrethrum*⁵

b) ***Athi mathuram*(*Glycyrrhizaglabra*)**

Taste: *Inippu* (sweet)

Characteristics:*Neimai* (wetness), *Palu* (weight)

Effect: *Veppa veeriyam*(heating effect)

Ultimate taste:*Inippu* (sweet)

Proof on the anti-*vaatha* properties of *Glycyrrhiza glabra*⁶

Pitha increased condition:

Kunmam (Acid Peptic Disease)

- Characteristics:

Vemmai (hot)

- Effect:

Veppa veeriyam(heating effect)

- Treatment:

a) Coconut milk (*Cocosnucifera*)

Taste: *Inippu* (sweet)

Characteristics: *Kulirchi* (cold)

Effect: *Kulirchi veeriyam*(cooling effect)

Ultimate taste: *Inippu*(sweet)

Proof on the anti – ulcer properties of *Cocos nucifera*⁷

b) *Vilvam* (*Aeglemarmelos*)

Taste: *Kaippu* (bitter), *Thuvarppu* (acid)

Characteristics: *Kulirchi* (cold)

Effect: *Kulirchi veeriyam*(cooling effect)

Ultimate taste: *Kaarpu* (hot)

Proof on the anti-ulcer properties of *Aegle marmelos*⁸

Kabhaincreased condition:

Saliirumal (Congestive cough)

- Characteristics:

Kulirchi(cold), *Neimai* (wetness), *Palu*(weight)

- Effect:

Kulirchi veeriyam(cooling effect)

- Treatment:

a) *Arathai* (*Alpiniagalanga*)

Taste: *Kaarpu*(hot)

Characteristics: *Vemmai* (hot)

Effect: *Veppa veeriyam* (heating effect)

Ultimate taste: *Kaarpu* (hot)

Proof on the anti-*kabha* properties of *Alpinia galanga*⁹

b) Aadathodai(Justiciaadhatoda)

Taste: *Kaippu*(bitter)

Characteristics:*Varatchi*(dryness)

Effect: *Veppa veeriyam*(heating effect)

Ultimate taste:*Kaarpu* (hot)

Proof on the anti-*kabha* properties of Justicia adhatoda¹⁰

CONCLUSION

Siddha system has many uniqueness in itself which includes the specialities found in its own exclusive basic principles, physiology, diagnostic methods and treatment modalities. This paper serves as an eye-opener for diagnosis based on the tastes. This concept itself is new to other systems and also establishes the greatness of Siddha system. Much more extensive studies may be done in exploring the application of this basic treatment method for several diseases.

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