

Review Article

## Paediatric Management in Siddha System of Medicine

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**Abstract** Siddha system of medicine is the most popular traditional system of medicine followed by the people of Tamilnadu nowadays. Gradually, the system is spreading its benefits to the people of surrounding states also. With strong basic principles and cultural background, Siddha system of medicine is providing health care solutions to a number of health issues of the modern era. Though it is a system of medicine, Siddha system is guiding us to lead a perfect living in this world, starting from the first day of birth to the last day of death. Not only that, the system takes care even before the conception itself. Today's children are the future citizens of a nation. To have a better nation, healthy citizens can contribute a lot. The health status of the children, their growth and development at different stages of life, the expected health issues during their childhood and its management, prevention of those obstacles, the way of living are all clearly described in Siddha system in a scientific approach. Specific Siddha drug formulations exclusive for Paediatric usage are given by Siddhars to combat common childhood diseases and disorders. These information are dealt with in this presentation.

**Keywords** *Children's health; Paediatric Siddha drug formulations; Siddha; Stages of child life*

### 1. Introduction

Siddha system of medicine is the most popular traditional system of medicine followed by the people of Tamilnadu nowadays. Gradually, the system is spreading its benefits to the people of surrounding states also. With strong basic principles and cultural background, Siddha system of medicine is providing health care solutions to a number of health issues of the modern era. Though it is a system of medicine, Siddha system is guiding us to lead a perfect living in this world, starting from the first day of birth to the last day of death. Not only that, the system takes care even before the conception itself. Siddha System of Medicine is founded by 18 Siddhars who had achieved Eight Siddhis. Siddha is the word derived from the root word "Siddhi" which means "Perfection" or "Eternal Bliss". Siddhars are those who have attained this by practicing "Attangayogam" or Eight types of Yoga. They wanted to overcome the mysteries of life like narai, thirai, moopu, pini, sakkadu (Greying of hair, loss of elasticity of skin, ageing, diseases, and death) in order to attain "Veedu Peru" or "GOD". Siddha system of Medicine is a by-product of this noble deed.

## 2. Siddha – Fundamentals

Siddha System of Medicine describes the Healthy way of living in this world. The system is based on five elements, three vital forces, six tastes. They are called as Aymperum boothangal, Muththathukkal and Aru suvaikal. Mann, Neer, Thee, Kaatru and Akayam are the five elements [4]. These five elements combined in different permutation and combination to form the Three vital forces (Vali, Azhal and Iyam) and Six tastes (Sweet, Sour, Astringent, Pungent, Bitter and Salt). These five are responsible for the formation of 96 Thathuvankal which are the basic phenomenon and principle of Siddha system of Medicine. The concept of “Unavae Marunthu; Marunthae Unavu” [14] is the famous paradigm followed in the system. Siddha System of Medicine has classified the medicines in to two types [13].

- 1) Internal Medicines – 32 types.
- 2) External therapies and procedures – 32 types.

Apart from these two certain special treatment procedures are also followed. They are

- 1) Varmam Therapy
- 2) Kayakarpam – Rejuvenation therapy
- 3) Yogam and Pranayamam [18]

The main aim of Siddhars is “Prevention is better than cure”. The preventive principles are explained elaboratively in the text “Theraiyar Pini anugavithi ozhukkam” which describes the daily and seasonal regimens to be followed by the people to prevent diseases [20]. Also the sage Thiruvalluvar, has briefly explained the principles of prevention of diseases in his “Thirukkural” in 10 couplets in the chapter “Marunthu”.

## 3. Paediatrics in Siddha System

Today's children are the future citizens of a nation [2]; [9]. To have a better nation, healthy citizens can contribute a lot. The health status of the children, their growth and development at different stages of life, the expected health issues during their childhood and its management, prevention of those obstacles, the way of living are all clearly described in Siddha system in a scientific approach [6]. Specific Siddha drug formulations exclusive for Paediatric usage are given by Siddhars to combat common childhood diseases and disorders. The Text book dealing with Paediatrics in Siddha system is called as “Balavagadam”. “Balavagadam” is the branch of medicine dealing with the diseases of the children and their management & treatment through Siddha System of Medicine or Care of infants and children through Siddha way [1].

### 3.1. Antenatal Care

Care of infants and children starts from time of puberty of a girl itself. Siddha Medicine aims at healthy germs (Quality unicellular Sperm and Ovum) which yields healthy generation or off springs. The food and health wise practices of different community people of Tamilnadu during menarche and puberty are aimed at quality ovum. Hence the Maternal and Child care Management goes simultaneously hand in hand with each other. In order to get quality embryo, Siddha System has explained specified month wise regimen of formulations with Siddha herbal drugs [12]. Also, specified month wise therapeutic formulations for combating probable pathological signs and symptoms constitute the ante natal care of the gestational women. During the gestational period, Siddha system insists to take Bavana Panchankula thylam at 5<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> month of gestation to have healthy development of foetus and

normal delivery of the baby. The rituals performed during the period of pregnancy are to ascertain optimal growth and development of all the organs of the growing fetus. Eg. Valaikappu function. It is also targeted to execute socio cultural bond of the family with the society [10]. Not only that, the imbalance of the Psycho social environment of the pregnant women is kept at bay and makes them to feel secure and happy to have a normal delivery of the baby.

### 3.2. Postnatal Care

Normal Puerperium of the delivered mother is ensured by gradual introduction of normal food and beverages to the mother as described in Siddha literatures. Apart from that, introduction of certain Siddha medicines like Sowbakkiya Sundi Legyam, Athirsta Rasayanam are specifically indicated for normal puerperium and for sufficient secretion of breast milk to meet out the healthy needs of the child which can improve the immunity of the infants. House hold preparations containing Vendhayam (Fenugreek seeds), Ulunthu (Black gram), Chukku (Dried Ginger), Gingelly oil are periodically administered as food supplements which are also helpful for both mother and baby [8].

### 3.3. Importance of Rituals – Health aspects

The Post Natal Care [7] includes ceremonies that are celebrated in order to develop natural immunity, social maturity, emotional bonding and social security. They are

- 1) Birth (Information and registering in community)
- 2) Introduction of Seinei/Urai marunthu by maternal uncle (To prevent common disorders like respiratory, Gastro intestinal disorders etc.,)
- 3) Naming (Authenticating gene carriers with surname)
- 4) Ear Boring (First Injury to develop Immunity)
- 5) Annapraasannam - First solid feeding – Rice Introduction
- 6) Induction of Knowledge (To develop cognitive parameters)

### 3.4. Paruvangal

In Siddha system of medicine, the Growth & Development and diseases of the children [16]; [17] are explained in consonance with different stages (Paruvangal). The scientific approach in those days with respect to Paruvangal is so common that these stages are mentioned in linguistic literatures like Meenakshi Pillai Tamil etc. [15]. The terminologies coined for each stages are so scientific that each one these are correlated exactly with the developmental milestones of the growing infants and children. Also the probable health issues that a child can encounter at each stage are also described. The different stages for male children up to the age of five are 1. Kappu, 2. Senkeerai, 3. Thaalaattu, 4. Sappani, 5. Muththam, 6. Varugai, 7. Ambuli, 8. Siriril, 9. Siruparai, 10. Siruthaer. For female children, the first seven stages as explained for male children are common and the last three stages are 8. Kalangu, 9. Oonjal and 10. Ammanai.

### 3.5. Diseases of the Children

Paediatric illnesses or the diseases of the children are classified into

- 1) Agakaarana noigal  
due to intra uterine factors (develops congenitally)
- 2) Purakaarana noigal  
due to external factors (acquired) [1], [6].

#### Agakaarana Noigal

- 1) Erythema toxicum neonatorum & Asphyxia livida (Senkiranathi & Karunkiranathi)
- 2) Infectious diseases [10] (Thodam)
- 3) Gastro intestinal disturbances [17] (Maantham)
- 4) Respiratory diseases [16] (Kanam)
- 5) Eczema & skin diseases (Karappan)
- 6) Diseases of oral cavity (Akkaram)

#### Purakaarana Noigal

- 1) Non-stop crying immediately after birth
- 2) Borborygamus
- 3) Fullness of abdomen
- 4) Regurgitation of milk
- 5) Reluctance to suck milk
- 6) Coeliac diseases [3]
- 7) Constipation [3]
- 8) Anuria [3]
- 9) Infections[3]
- 10) Hiccups [3]

Though the Siddha Paediatric literatures classified the diseases of the children as mentioned above, clinically some important diseases are also being registered in a Siddha hospital. The diseases that affect the children are Respiratory disorders, Gastro intestinal disorders, Skin disorders, Neurological

disorders, Cerebral palsy, Autism, Muscular Dystrophy, Nutritional disorders, and Metabolic disorders other common childhood disorders [3].

### 3.6. Treatment

Siddhars have enumerated various effective internal and external remedies for the above said conditions. In these remedies, herbal drugs play a major role and most of the formulations are using plant raw drugs. The formulations contain very less ingredients of Mineral drugs. Most of these medicines are administered in breast milk up to one year of age as it contains necessary immunity factors for the child. The formulations are mostly in the form of decoction and tablets as these forms are easily absorbed in the circulation. Lipid based medicines (Ghee) are nutritive and also cross blood brain barrier to reduce the neurological symptoms.

#### ***Common Paediatric prescriptions***

- 1) Urai Mathirai: A Siddha formulation which is very effective immune-booster for children. This can be prescribed from 3<sup>rd</sup> month of age to 5 years which can prevent common respiratory and gastro intestinal disorders [11].
- 2) Sei Nei consisting of juice of 54 herbs mixed with castor oil administered in drops even from first day of birth. This is still in practice in certain Southern districts of Tamilnadu like Madurai, Theni districts etc., This is referred to as senai vaithal.
- 3) Bala Sanjeevi and Balakudori mathirai - A Herbomineral formulation very effective in URTI/LRTI.
- 4) Bhavana kadukkai [11], [19] – A good herbal haematinic formulation.
- 5) Vasambu karukku – The activated charcoal in this formulation controls diarrhoea and dysentery.
- 6) Vallarai mathirai – a common herbal tablet which calms ADHD and sharpens memory.
- 7) Oma theneer – a distillation process which increases appetite & promotes digestion.
- 8) Sombu theneer – a distillation process which helps in digestion and regurgitation.
- 9) Asta chooranam – an effective herbal formulation which is very useful in digestive disorders.
- 10) Vallarai nei – a medicated ghee preparation used for Kanam and neurological problems.
- 11) Brahmi Nei [5] – a good herbal ghee preparation for all neuro muscular disorders.
- 12) Chundai vatral Chooranam – a powder Siddha formulation which is a good antehelminthic.
- 13) Aya Birungaraja Karpam – Haematinic preparation in Siddha [21].

#### **Puramaruthuvam procedures**

- 1) Thokkanam – for all types of neuro muscular disorders.

- 2) Podi Thimirthal – effective in spastic paralysis of the limbs.
- 3) Puravalaaiyam- for all joint disorders.
- 4) Varmam – for all neuromuscular disorders, autism, mental retardation.
- 5) External application of oils, ointments, paste etc.,
- 6) Foementation, inhalation therapy, fumigation etc.,
- 7) Yogam – for autism, MR, learning disabilities, ADHD and sharpens memory.
- 8) Pranayamam – for respiratory disorders, ADHD etc.

### **Food for Children**

- 1) Exclusive Breast Milk feeding till 6 months of age.
- 2) Cow's milk, buffalo's milk, goat's milk – after months.
- 3) Annaprasanam – After 6 months- weaning of solid foods – Able to appreciate tastes.
- 4) Introduction of fruits, vegetables, greens etc.,
- 5) Fruit juices
- 6) Gram boiled water
- 7) Greens boiled water [11]
- 8) Coriander leaves boiled water – may be used even before 6 months.(aids in digestion, controls regurgitation, helps in defaecation)
- 9) Carom seeds boiled water – similar to Coriander leaves
- 10) Dried grapes soaked water [8]
- 11) Ghee is important as it favours digestion.(Good preservative).
- 12) Most of the Siddha Paediatric drug formulations are in the form of kudineer and nei. Quick digestion, easy assimilation and can cross BBB. e.g Vallarai nei, Sei nei, Adathodai Kudineer etc.

Siddha System of medicine is caring for the total well-being of the children as it also gives importance to socio cultural development by recommending certain games for children which is very helpful in developing the physical, mental and socio cultural well-being. Thus the system paves the way for total and complete health well-being.

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