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## **Biotyping of human body based on Siddha literature with focus on traditional herbs for Tri-humoral harmony**

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**Abstract**--The Siddha system is the most ancient medical system. According to Siddha medicine, the human body is a replica of the universe. This system believes that all objects are made up of 5 basic elements such as earth, water, fire, air, and space. The food which human consumes is also made of these five elements and they constitute the trihumours vatham, Pitham and kabam. The proportion of elements present in drug vary and their preponderance is responsible for certain activities and therapeutic effects. Siddha medicine emphasizes that medical treatment is oriented not merely to disease but has to consider the patient's environment, age, sex, race, mental frame, habitat, diet, physiological constitution, etc. This article explores the nature of body constitution, susceptible diseases, and taste impact on trihumoural harmony.

**Keywords**--Biotypes, Traditional medicine, body constitutions, five tastes, three humours, *panchabootham*.

## Introduction

The Siddha system of medicine which has its origin in the southern part of India is a noble system of medicine. It takes into account various physiological and scientific data that include age, sex, race, eightfold examination (*Envagaithervu*), geographical habitat (*Ainthina*), weather and climatic variations (*Pozhuthugal*), body constitutions (*Thega ilakkanam*), etc., for the effective treatment of patients and their diseases. According to Siddha, the universe is made of *Panjabootham* and so does the human body and every other creature in the universe. The combination of certain Bootham in turn gives rise to *Thirithodam* i.e., *Vatham*, *Pitham*, *Kabam* where its action in the embryo determines the growth of the fetus and in the later part which is responsible for the development of various diseases. The body takes its physique (*Thegam*) according to the dominating *thodam* during its growth in embryo leading to three distinctive body types i.e., *vaatha thegi*, *pitha thegi*, and *kabha thegi*. The physique can change in several diseases due to the derangement of *thirithodam*. Siddha medicine emphasizes on the administration of drugs from several herbal, animal, and mineral resources made of *panchabootham* which is reflected in its taste to cure ailments made of derangement of *thirithodam* in the body. Siddha classifies body constitution based on several physical, mental and physiological traits. This article critically explores the nature of body constitution based on its characters, frequent diseases encountered on each body type, and its cure based on individual body constitution mentioned in classical Siddha literature(1).

## Biotyping (*Udaliyal*) based on Siddha

According to classical Siddha literature, the body takes up its physique based on the dominating *thodam* during fertilization and development of the embryo. The dominating *thodam*, in turn, determined by the dietetics, work nature, environment, and genetic makeup of the parents thus dominating levels of *vatham* leading to the formation of *vaatha thegi*, *pitham* leading to the formation of *pitha thegi*, and *kabam* leading to *kabha thegi* and two mixed *thodam* leading to the body with characters of both *thodam* (*thontha thegam*).

## Features of vatha, pitha, kabha udaliyal

In Siddha system of medicine biotyping assessment is essential to predict the vitiation of three vital humors. The unique and eminent features of the three humors should be known to promote a personalized approach of diagnosis, treatment and preventive care. Some of the general features of three humors are as follows,

### Vatham

Its site in the body is from perineum to umbilicus. *Thathus* of *vatham* includes *Saaram* (*plasma*), *veneer* (reproductive tissue), *oon* (muscle), *kozhuppu* (fat), and *elumbu* (bone)(1,2). *Vaatha thegi* has a dark complexion and enthusiastic speech with a normal pitched voice. They usually have a dunce memory. The Siddha text also compares the movements and qualities of biotypes with that of birds and animals. Animals that depict the qualities of *vaatha thegi* are dog, fox, camel, rat,

hawk, night owl, and crow. Colic disease and flatulence are the most frequent diseases encountered in *vaatha thegi*.

### **Pitham**

Umbilicus to the chest is the site of *pitham* in our body. *Thathus* of *pitham* includes *elumbu* (bone), *majjai* (bone marrow), and *oon* (reduced muscle). *Pitha thegi* has a complexion of pinkish-red or yellowish and sharp, penetrative speech with high pitched voice. They usually have a good memory and are also a quick learner. Animals that depict the qualities of *pitha thegi* include tiger, bear, monkey, snake, and cat. The most frequent diseases susceptible to *pitha thegi* are gastritis and its related problems.

### **Kabham**

The site of *kabham* in our body is from the chest to the top of the head. *Thathus* of *kabham* includes *saaram* (plasma), *oon* (muscle), *kozhuppu* (fat), *venneer* (reproductive tissue), and *elumbu* (increased bone). *Kabha thegi* has a pale whitish complexion and calm complacent speech with a low pitched voice. They usually have an excellent memory. Animals which depict the qualities of *kabha thegi* include elephant, male lion, horse, cow, swan, kite, and bullock. Bronchial related problems are the most frequent disease encountered on *kabha thegi*(3).

### **Types of taste and its impact on thodam**

According to Siddha concepts balanced intake of tastes thereby regulating the *thirithodam* is essential for maintaining good health. Our taste buds not only identifies the taste but also unlock the nutritional value of food and kick-start the digestion process. Siddha concepts identifies that all foods have all five natural elements, but predominantly one or two. According to the dominant taste, its action varies.

- **Sweet**

Sweet flavour is made from the element of earth and water. It is considered to be a tonic and nourishes us.

- **Sour**

Sour flavour is made from the element of earth and fire. It stimulates digestion and clears dryness.

- **Salt**

Salt flavour made from water and fire elements. Helps in moistening and enkindles digestion, grounding for the nervous system, and encourages stability.

- **Pungent**

Pungent flavour is a combination of fire and air. It is great for drying excess moisture, mucus and stimulates metabolism.

- **Bitter**

Bitter flavour is made from space and air. It is the body's way of giving us a last line of defence, supports the daily cleansing process, and creates space in the body by draining and drying excess fluids.

- **Astringent**

Astringent flavour is made from earth and air elements. It helps the whole mouth contract and draws mucus membranes closer together.(4)

Table 1  
Formation of taste from panjabootha anukkal

Taste	Formation from panjabootham
<i>Inippu (sweet)</i>	Earth + Water
<i>Pulippu (sour)</i>	Earth + Fire
<i>Uvarppu (salt)</i>	Earth + Air
<i>Kaippu (bitter)</i>	Space + Air
<i>Kaarpu (pungent or spicy)</i>	Air + Fire
<i>Thuvarppu (astringent)</i>	Air + Earth

Table 2  
Formation of thirithodam from panjabootha anukkal

Thodam	Bootham (elements)
<i>Vatham</i>	Space + Air
<i>Pitham</i>	Fire
<i>Kabham</i>	Earth + Water

Table 3  
Panjabootham as a link between thirithodam and taste (5)

Thodam	Pacifying tastes	Aggravating tastes
<i>Vaatham</i>	Sweet, sour, salt	Spicy, bitter, astringent
<i>Pitham</i>	Sweet, astringent, bitter	Sour, salt, spicy
<i>Kabham</i>	Spicy, bitter, astringent	Sweet, sour, salt

## Measures for frequent diseases based on body constitution

### Measures for indigestion and flatulence

1. *Zingiber officinale* – *Inji*  
5gm crushed rhizome of *zingiber officinale* with salt or jaggery juice daily before meal cures indigestion.
2. *Tachyspermum ammi* – *Omam*  
2g of seed with equal quantity of saunf powder with warm water helps cure flatulence.
3. *Punica granatum* – *Madhulai*  
10ml juice of fruit with black salt, jeera powder, honey, or sugar to be taken before food cures indigestion.
4. *Coriandrum sativum* – *Dhaniya*  
5g of seed is made into *kashayam* with ginger powder thrice a day helps treat indigestion(6).

### Measures for gastritis and related diseases

1. *Allium cepa* – Eerulli  
Flower decoction or seed powder along with sugar twice daily helps cure gastritis and ulcer(7).
2. *Zingiber officinale* – Chukku  
1 -3 gm of chukku twice a day with water helps in gastritis.
3. *Glycyrrhiza glabra* – Athimathuram  
3 gm twice a day with milk helps treat gastritis(8).
4. *Cinnamomum zeylanicum* – Lavangapattai  
Equal parts of lavangapattai, elam, sukku are powdered, mixed, and taken 180 – 650 mg along with water(7).
5. *Phyllanthus emblica* – Nelli  
3 gm twice a day with water helps in gastritis.

### Measures for bronchial diseases

1. *Pergularia daemia* – Uthaamani  
16ml (one uchikarandi) of fresh leaf extract or juice is given for suvaasakaasam (bronchial asthma)(7).
2. *Abies webbiana* – Thalishapathri  
2gm of leaf powder along with adathoda leaf juice or 650 – 1300 mg of powder with honey cures cough, bronchial asthma, and bronchitis(9).
3. *Solanum xanthocarpum* – Kandankathiri  
Decoction of the root along with thippili powder and honey cures Cough, bronchitis, asthma(10,11).
4. *Ocimum sanctum* – Thulasi  
Juice of thulasi leaves mixed with honey cures bronchial asthma(12).
5. *Alpinia galanga* - Chittaratai  
2 to 4 grams of root powder with honey helps cure bronchitis and cough(7).
6. *Pimpinella anisum*- Peruncheeragam  
2gm of peruncheeraga chooranam along with warm water or sugar twice daily is effective in bronchial asthma(13).

### Herbs that balance Trihumours.

Table 4  
Herbs that balances vatham(7)

Herbs for balancing Vatham	Action	Taste
<i>Thippili</i> ( <i>piper longum</i> )	The root of piper longum ground with milk helps treat vatham diseases	Sweet
<i>Parattai keerai</i> ( <i>Ipomoea reniformis</i> )	leaf treats both vatham and kabham diseases	Mild bitter and sweet
<i>Sombu</i> ( <i>Pimpinella anisum</i> )	The powdered form of <i>Pimpinella anisum</i> treats vatham diseases	Mild spice & sweet

Table 5  
Herbs that balances pitham (7)

Herb for balancing Pitham	Use	Taste
<i>Nannari</i> ( <i>Hemidescus indicus</i> )	Powder of nannari with honey cures aggravated pitham	Sweet, mild bitterness
<i>Athimathuram</i> ( <i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> )	Root powder	Sweet
<i>Thaamarai</i> ( <i>Nelumbo nucifera</i> )	Flower, seed, petals, tubers	Sweet, astringent
<i>Seenthil</i> ( <i>Tinospora cordifolia</i> )	Stem, leaves	Bitter

Table 6: Herbs that balances kabham(7)

Herbs for balancing Kabam	Action	Taste
<i>Thoothuvalai</i> ( <i>Solanum trilobatum</i> )	Leaf decoction treats all types of kabham diseases	Mild bitter and spicy (Pungent)
<i>Thaanri</i> ( <i>Terminalia bellirica</i> )	Powdered leaf form treats kapam disease	Astringent
<i>Thalisapathri</i> ( <i>Abies spectabilis</i> )	5-10 drops of leaf juice treats kapam diseases	Spicy (Pungent)
<i>Thulasi</i> ( <i>Ocimum sanctum</i> )	Leaf juice treats kabham diseases	Spicy (Pungent)

## Conclusion

Assessment of patients *thega ilakkanam* (Biotyping of human body), *envagai thervu* (eight fold examination in Siddha) is an essential part of treating, as well as diagnosing a disease in siddha system of medicine. Treatment along with specific diet and exercises should be selected upon the basis of *suwai* (taste), *veeryam* (potency for the maintenance of trihumoural harmony thus providing a disease free environment according to each individual. Further research should be undertaken to find out diseases that are more frequent in each type, modes of presentation of the disease, efficacy and pharmacological action of various drugs in each type of body constitution and its impact on immune system on molecular basis. Thus the knowledge of *thega ilakkanam* not only helps in treating the disease but is also essential for the complete physical, mental and social wellbeing of the patient.

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