

**FACTORS BEHIND THE PREFERENCE TO SIDDHA MEDICAL SERVICE IN TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT**

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**ABSTRACT**

Siddha medical system is the oldest documented medical system and pharmacology in the world. The medicines were prepared by the various research work done by the Siddhars on herbs, minerals and animals. In this paper an attempt is made to analyse the factors behind the preference to siddha medical service in Tirunelveli District. A sample size of 100 respondents was taken for the study. The tools such as Percentage Analysis and Factor Analysis were used for analysing the data. The objectives are to study the demographic profile of the consumers of siddha medical service and to study the factors behind the preference to siddha medical service. After analysing the collected data the researcher suggested that the help from Government for promoting awareness about siddha medicine among public is need of the hour. In siddha medical system, nursing care quality needs special attention. More number of nurses need to be appointed in every hospital. Government should provide assistance to develop siddha medicine and the number of siddha hospitals and colleges can be increased. If these things which are needed to give new life to siddha medical system is attended to once again, like the olden days with a revival siddha medical system sure to rock the medical field.

**KEY WORD: SIDDHA MEDICAL SERVICE, MEDICAL SYSTEM.**

**INTRODUCTION**

Siddha Vaidya is the oldest documented medical system and pharmacology in the world. The Siddha medicine is a form of south Indian traditional medicine and part of the trio Indian medicines – Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani. Siddha system of medicine is the most primitive medical system. This system was formulated and established about more than 2500 years back. The medicines were prepared by the various research work done by the Siddhars on herbs, minerals and animals. The father of Siddha Medicine is the primordial Gure Agasthiar. Eighteen siddhars were said to have contributed towards the development of this medical system. Siddha literature is in Tamil and it is practised largely in Tamil speaking part of India and abroad. The drugs used by the Siddhars could be classified into three groups: Thavara (herbal product), Thathu (inorganic substances) & Jangamam (animal products). The thathu drugs are further classified ad uppu (water soluble inorganic substances or drugs that give out vapour when put into fire), pashanam (drugs not dissolved in water but emit vapour when fired), uparasam (similar to pashanam but differ in action), loham (not dissolved in water but melt when fired), rasam (drugs which are soft) and ghandhagam (drugs which are insoluble in water, like sulphur). The drugs used in Siddha medicine were classified on the basis of five properties: Suvai (taste), Guna (character), Veerya (potency), Pirivu (class) and Mahimai (action). According to their mode of application the Siddha medicine could be categorized into two classes: **Internal medicine & External medicine.**

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Eugene Wilson, Hannah R. Vasanthi, Rajamanickam G.V. and Dubey G.P. (2003)** in his study, "Siddha system of medicine and herbal remedies" is the materials used by the siddhars as drugs could be classified into herbal (mooligai or thavaram), inorganic substances (thathu) & animal products (jeeva vaguppu). In general, among the Indian system of medicine, siddha used herbs by our ancient siddhars. Accordingly, it is advised to administer first pure herbs in the form of liquid, power, pill or paste. If it is not controlling then, the physicians use mixture of herbs, metals, minerals and animal products in addition to herbs.

**Kasimugideen (1988)**, Muddutra Keel Vayu is a condition where toxic symptoms prevail like severe, dyspnoea, incoherent speech, vomiting, coma with absence of bowel movements and anuria with severe presentation of arthritis in the joints. In siddha pharmacopoeia, various herbs siddha system, equal importance has been given to interna as well as external medicine because siddha medicine advocates 32 types of internal and 32 types of external medicine with their shelf life.

**Somasundarm S., (1997)** in his study, Siddha system of medicine caters a totality of herbs and is unique in exhibiting fewer side effects. Secondly, siddha medicine has better answer for curing refractive diseases like arthritis, cancer, bronchial asthma, etc.,

**Swaminathan G., (2002)** in his research, WHO currently encourages, recommends and promotes traditional as well as natural remedies in national healthcare programmes, as they are easily available at low cost, comparatively safe and are culturally acceptable. Since time immemorial, siddha system of medicine, the heritage of the family practice of South India, is a special scientific, significant, most respectable and of high order one. In Bogar Nikandu about 4,448 diseases are described and various herbs are indicated for these diseases.

## OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To study the demographic profile of the consumers of siddha medical service.
- ❖ To study the factors behind the preference to siddha medical service.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is an empirical research based on survey method. **Primary data** were collected directly from the respondents by using Interview Schedule. The collected data were coded, tabulated and analysed with the help of different statistical tools and various inferences has been drawn. The researcher collected the data from 100 respondents selected on the basis of convenient sampling method. The data in this study has been analysed with the help of following statistical tools – Percentage Analysis and Factor Analysis.

The **secondary data** were collected from the published as well as unpublished reports, various books, journals, magazines, websites, etc.

## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

### DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

This part of the report presents the demographic dimension of customers of siddha medical services in the study area. They are classified and analysed on the basis of their age, gender, martial status, educational qualification and family income.

Table: 1

Demographic Variable	Categories	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Age	Below 20 years	7	7
	21 – 30 years	9	9
	31 – 40 years	31	31
	41 – 50 years	28	28
	51 – 60 years	14	14
	Above 60 years	11	11
Gender	Male	52	52
	Female	48	48
Marital Status	Married	53	53
	Unmarried	47	47
Educational Qualification	Higher Secondary education	25	25
	Under graduation	33	33
	Post graduation	26	26
	Others	16	16
Monthly Income	Below Rs. 5000	17	17
	Rs. 5001 – Rs. 10000	25	25
	Rs. 10001 – Rs. 15000	26	26
	Above Rs. 15001	32	32

**Source: Primary Data**

In 100 respondents, the table 1 shows the majority of the majority of the respondents (31% of the total) fall under the age group of 31 – 40 years. The analysis of data shows that 52% male respondents are comparatively higher than 48% female respondents. The percentile analysis shows that 53% of the respondents are married and 47% of respondents are unmarried. Majority of the respondents (33% of the total) have completed their Under graduates. The analysis of data shows that most of the respondents of siddha medical service are belonging to the highest earning group with a percentage of 32.

### FACTORS BEHIND THE PREFERENCE – FACTORAL ANALYSIS

The factors influencing the beneficiaries preference towards siddha medical service are innumerable in number. Even though the factors influencing the preference are many, the present study confines itself to 14 variables. The variable so identified for analysis are: natural treatment, no side effects, no need for surgery, permanent remedy, less cost of medicine, easy availability of products, low consultation fees, lack of herbal treatment in allopathy, motivation by others, media influence, increasing popularity of siddha treatment, comfortability, sentiment towards traditional treatment and popularity of siddha doctors.

The factors influencing the beneficiaries' preference towards siddha medical service in the study area are discussed in this section, by applying factor analysis. The technique of factor analysis is used to reduce the number of variables into smaller and manageable number by combining related ones into factors. "Principal Component Analysis" method is used to extract factors in Eigen Value of one or more. In order to assign variables "Rotated Factor Matrix" is used.

In order to find out the appropriateness of this analysis **Kaiser Meyar Olkin (KMO)** and **Bartlett's Test of Sphericity** are used and the results are shown below.

**KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST**

Description	Value
KMO Measures of sampling adequacy	0.510
<b>Bartlett's test of Sphericity</b>	
Approximate Chi-square value	214.008
Difference	91
Significance	.000

The KMO value is very high (0.510). Similarly, the Bartlett's test rejects the null hypothesis i.e., the variables are not related as the approximate chi-square value is 214.008 at 91 degrees of freedom which is significant at 1 percent level of significance. This factor analysis may be considered as an appropriate technique.

The result of Principal Component Analysis to extract the number of variables are presented in the next table.

**PRINCIPAL COMPONENTS ANALYSIS**

Compo- nents	EXTRACTION SUMS OF SQUARED LOADING			ROTATED SUMS OF SQUARED LOADING		
	Total	Percentage of Variance	Cumulative Percentage	Total	Percentage of variance	Cumulative Percentage
1	2.450	18.552	18.552	1.741	13.180	13.180
2	1.967	14.898	33.450	1.517	11.490	24.670
3	1.637	12.393	45.842	1.480	11.205	35.874
4	1.187	8.988	54.831	1.418	10.739	46.614
5	1.125	8.518	63.349	1.405	10.638	57.252
6	0.980	7.421	70.769	1.785	13.517	70.769

**Source: Primary Data**

It is shown from the above table that six factors can be extracted together which account for 70.769 percent of the total 14 variables. Hence 14 variables are summated to six factors by losing nearly 29.231 percent of data.

The following table presents the Rotated Component Matrix table by using Varimax Method which is used to assign factors which have higher loadings.

**Table: 2**  
**Factors behind the preference – Factor analysis**  
**Rotated Component Matrix**

FACTORS	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
No side effects	<b>.834</b>	.124	-.313	.127	.043	-.085
Easy availability of products	<b>.661</b>	-.036	.352	.042	.492	.035
Natural treatment	<b>.584</b>	.009	.278	-.312	-.167	.155
To avoid surgery	<b>.493</b>	.197	.049	.174	-.088	-.323
Permanent remedy	.258	<b>.784</b>	.118	.026	.134	-.305
Increasing popularity of Siddha treatment	-.030	<b>.759</b>	.100	-.041	-.174	.247
Lack of herbal oil treatment in Allopathy	.017	<b>.565</b>	-.190	-.079	.051	-.164
Less cost of medicine	.020	.322	<b>.762</b>	-.002	.130	.032
Low consultation fees	.126	.170	<b>.534</b>	.110	.526	.490
Comfortability	-.022	.233	<b>.488</b>	.106	.093	-.209
Motivation by others	-.124	-.080	.045	<b>.909</b>	.037	.099
Media awareness	.174	-.009	-.111	<b>.592</b>	-.101	.038
Sentiment towards Traditional treatment	-.014	.039	-.009	-.095	<b>.861</b>	-.133
Popularity of siddha doctor's	.007	-.078	.270	.218	-.184	<b>.864</b>

**Source: Primary data**

The above table clearly shows that in the first column the variables namely, 'No side effects', 'Easy availability of products', 'Natural treatment' and 'No need for surgery' in the field have higher loadings of 0.834, 0.661, 0.584 and 0.493 respectively and it can be suggested that factor one is the combination of these four factor and have the variance of 13.180% and it can be named as **'Product factor'**.

From the second column it can be seen that the variables of 'Permanent remedy', 'Increasing popularity of siddha treatment' and 'Lack of herbal treatment in allopathy' in the field have higher loading of 0.784, 0.759 and 0.565 respectively and it can be suggested that factor two is the combination of these three factors and have the variance of 11.490% and it can be called as **'Deficiency in alternative treatment factor'**.

The third column shows that the factors 'Less cost of medicine', 'Low consultation fees' and 'Comfortability' in the field have higher loadings of 0.762, 0.534 and 0.488 respectively and it can be suggested that factor three is the combination of these three factors and have the variance of 11.205% and it can be named as **'Cost factor'**.

The fourth column shows that the factors 'Motivation by others' and 'Media awareness' have high loadings (0.909 and 0.592 respectively) and summated and named as **'Influence factor'**.

The fifth column shows that the factor 'Sentiment towards traditional treatment' 0.861 has high loadings and it is named as **'Sentiment factor'**.

The sixth column shows that the factor 'Popularity of siddha doctors' has higher loadings of 0.864 and it is named as **'Reputation factor'**.

Thus the listed 14 variables are reduced into six factors such as 'Product factor', 'Deficiency in alternative treatment factor', 'Cost factor', 'Influence factor', 'Sentiment factor' and

'Reputation factor'. They are identified the factors behind the beneficiaries' preference to siddha medical service.

## FINDINGS

- ❖ Permanent remedy ranks first as the most important aspect representing remedy which is followed by absence of side effects to the patients.
- ❖ Slow remedy, long process of treatment and high level of food restrictions are the highly dissatisfying factors of siddha medical service in the study area.

## SUGGESTIONS

- The Government should help in promoting awareness about siddha medicine among public.
- At present we see even in small towns multi-speciality hospitals (modern medicine) springing up everywhere. The present hospitals providing siddha medicine do not have a healthy infrastructure and this should also have infrastructure as the other multi-speciality hospitals and to pull the attraction of the public.
- In siddha medical system, nursing care quality seems to be very poor. This needs special attention. More number of nurses with good standard and experience need to be appointed in every hospital.
- For various tests, the people have to depend on some other labs. Because lab facility and equipment available in siddha medical system are not upto the mark. Government should enhance this.

## CONCLUSION

In this modern world, English medicines cannot be avoided in life and most of the medicines cure the disease immediately but affect the health and creates side effect. It increase body weight and makes a feeling of appetite. But siddha medicine has no side effect and it is good for the health. To create awareness, informative advertisement can be made. Government should provide assistance to develop siddha medicine and the number of siddha hospitals and colleges can be increased. If these things which are needed to give new life to siddha medical system is attended to once again, like the olden days with a revival siddha medical system sure to rock the medical field.

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