

Siddha Nosology: A Literature Review on Classification Of 4448 Diseases in Siddha System of Medicine

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ABSTRACT

The Siddha system of medicine, one of the most ancient traditional medical sciences of India, presents a comprehensive and holistic approach to disease classification known as Siddha nosology. Classical Siddha literature describes a total of 4,448 diseases categorized based on physiological, pathological, psychological, and spiritual principles. Diseases are primarily understood as manifestations of imbalance in the three humours—Vatham, Pitham, and Kabam—along with disturbances in the Mukkutram, influenced by environmental, dietary, behavioral, and mental factors. This literature review aims to systematically analyze the Siddha nosological framework of 4,448 diseases as documented in classical texts and to evaluate its relevance to contemporary clinical practice. Primary Siddha manuscripts such as Yugi Vaithiya Chinthamani, Agathiyar Rathina Churukkam, Naadi Nool, and Siddha Vaithiya Thirattu were reviewed along with secondary sources including CCRS manuals and published research articles. The findings highlight that Siddha nosology emphasizes etiology, humoral dominance, disease progression, prognosis, and preventive principles rather than relying solely on symptom-based diagnosis. Revisiting and systematizing Siddha disease classification can contribute significantly to integrative medicine, holistic diagnostic approaches, and preventive healthcare models.

Keywords: Siddha Nosology, 4448 Noigal, Vatham, Pitham, Kabam, Siddha Maruthuvam, Disease Classification.

INTRODUCTION

Nosology refers to the systematic classification of diseases and forms the foundation of diagnosis and treatment in any medical system.¹ In Siddha Maruthuvam, nosology is deeply rooted in philosophical, physiological, and cosmological concepts. Unlike modern medicine, which primarily classifies diseases based on organ systems or etiopathology, Siddha medicine perceives disease as a disturbance in the harmonious balance between the body, mind, soul, environment, and cosmic forces.¹⁵ Health is considered a state of equilibrium, while disease represents disharmony within this integrated system.¹

The Siddhars viewed disease not merely as a physical abnormality but as a complex manifestation involving physical, mental, moral, and spiritual dimensions. Classical Siddha texts enumerate a total of 4,448 diseases, reflecting the profound clinical observation, experiential knowledge, and analytical acumen of ancient Siddhars. These classifications demonstrate an advanced understanding of disease causation, progression, prognosis, and prevention.

Siddha nosology integrates fundamental principles such as Mukkutram (Vatham, Pitham, Kabam), Panchabootham, Udal Thathukkal, Kaalam (seasonal variations), Nilam (geographical factors), dietary habits, lifestyle practices, and psychological influences. This holistic approach enables a comprehensive understanding of disease patterns and individualized treatment strategies.³

In contrast to symptom-based diagnostic models, Siddha disease classification emphasizes etiology, humoral dominance, and preventive measures⁵. The detailed classification of 4,448 diseases serves not only as a

diagnostic guide but also as a framework for prognosis and therapeutic planning⁷. Therefore, revisiting and systematizing Siddha nosology is essential for preserving traditional knowledge and enhancing its relevance in contemporary clinical and integrative medical practice.

Aim: To conduct a comprehensive literature review on the nosological classification of 4,448 diseases as described in classical Siddha texts.

Objective: To review classical siddha literature describing disease classification.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This literature based review was conducted using classical siddha manuscripts and authoritative secondary sources. Yugi vaithya chinthamani, Agathiyar ratna churukkam naadi nool, Siddha vaithya thirattu. Gunapadam textbook, siddha noi naadal noi mudhal naadal – part 1&2, CCRS departmental manuals (Chennai), published research articles and journals on siddha Nosology. Data were extracted and analysed based on disease classification, humoral dominance, etiological factors and clinical features.

Siddha Concept Of Disease

According to Siddha philosophy, health (Aarokkiyam) is defined as a state of equilibrium among the three vital humors-Vatham, Pitham, and Kabam.⁴When these humors remain in balanced proportion, the body maintains physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Disease (Noi) arises due to the disturbance or imbalance of these humors, leading to dysfunction at various levels of the body.⁷

These arises due to imbalance caused by:

1. Improper diet (unavu)
2. Sedentary lifestyle (vaazhkkai murai)
3. Seasonal variations (kaalam)
4. Environmental factors (nilam)
5. Psychological and spiritual disturbances.

Table 1: Classification of 4448 diseses according to the siddha literatures

CLASSIFICATION OF DISEASES	ACCORDING TO AGASTHTHIY AR 2000	ACCORDING TO ANGATHIPATHAM	ACCORDING TO NOI NAADAL PART 1	ACCORDING TO THERIYAR VAAKADAM	ACCORDING TO SIDDHAR ARUVAI MARUTHUVAM
Total Number of diseases	4448	4448	4448	4448	-
Common Vatha diseases	1482	-	-	-	-
Common Pitha disease	1483	-	-	-	-
Common Kapha diseases	1483	-	-	-	-
According to trihumor					
Vatha Diseases	84	-	85	-	-
Pitha Diseases	83	-	42	-	-
Kapha Diseases	-	-	96	100	-
According to body parts					
Diseases in Eye	96	96	96	95	96

Diseases in ear	7	50	10	23	100
Diseases in Nose	27	27	10	30	86
Diseases in Neck	42	6	-	120	100 36
Diseases in head	307	97	-	210	-
Diseases in mouth	186	18	-	70	-
Diseases in Cheek	40	32	-	-	49
Diseases in occipital region of head	10	10	-	-	88
Diseases in Thigh region	201	91	-	30	-
Diseases in Lumbosacral region	306	105	-	16	-
Diseases in Navel	35	108	-	320	-
Diseases in Upper limbs	130	130	-	-	-
Diseases in Back	81	52	-	-	-
Diseases in forehead	32	-	-	-	26
Diseases in Abanan	61	-	-	24(Moolatharam)	-
Diseases in Chest	63	-	-	21	-
Diseases in Anal region	-	101	-	100	-
Diseases in Calf muscles & Knee joint	-	47	-	20	-
Diseases in Heart	-	106	-	21	-
Diseases in Foot	-	25	-	63	-
Diseases in Abdomen	556	-	-	-	-
Diseases in Male Genitalia	185	-	-	-	-
Diseases in Scrotum	25	-	-	-	-
Diseases in Lower limbs	190	-	-	-	-
Diseases in Thanaththil	42	-	-	-	-
Diseases in rib cage	200	-	-	-	-
Diseases in head	75	-	-	-	-
Diseases in Under the Arm	40	-	-	-	-
Diseases in 20 joints	51	-	-	-	-
Diseases in sole of foot	-	31	-	-	-
Diseases in Shoulder	-	-	-	18	-
Diseases in Intestine	-	-	-	320	-
Diseases in small intestine	-	-	-	270	-
Diseases in bones	-	-	-	100	-
Diseases in nerves	-	-	-	228	-
Diseases in Jaw	-	-	-	-	36
Diseases in vertex	-	-	-	-	46
Diseases in Eyebrow	-	-	-	-	16
Diseases around the groin region	-	-	-	-	-
According to diseases					
Thiddai (Palliru Noi)	-	-	6	16	37
Thudi (Lips) Noi	-	-	100	20	16
Sanni Patham	30	-	-	13	-

Paandu (Anemia)	28	-	-	10	-
Ascites (Mahotharam)	30	-	8	-	-
Kaasa Noi	-	-	7	8	-
Soolai Noi	-	-	200	20	-
Peptic ulcer(Gunmam)	-	-	8	8	-
Fever (Suram)	-	-	84(64)	40	-
Leprosy (Kuddam)	-	-	20	18	-
Hemorrhoids (Moola rogam)	-	-	9	100	-
Peenisam, Kadi visam	-	-	76	160(Kadi vidam)	-
Athisaaram	-	-	25	6	-
Meha Neer	-	-	21	21	-
Pori (bird) visam	-	-	800	96	-
Tooth	-	-	-	20	45
Tonsils	-	-	-	6	20
Kudal Vaayu	88	-	-	-	-
Kazhangam	37	-	-	-	-
Skindiseases(Karappa n)	66	-	-	-	-
Vippuruthi	4	-	-	-	-
Kuruvai	8	-	-	-	-
Pilavai	40	-	-	-	-
Fistula (Pavunthiram)	8	-	-	-	-
Kirivai Veddi	9	-	-	-	-
Vandukkadi	18	-	-	-	-
Silanthi	81	-	-	-	-
Veppu	20	-	-	-	-
Neuritis in Hands	100	-	-	-	-
Thikaippu(Breathless ness)	96	-	-	-	-
Veppup paavai	56	-	-	-	-
Vai soori (Meseals)	63	-	-	-	-
Kaamaalai (Jaundice)	8	-	-	-	-
Sori (Skin Diseases)	60	-	-	-	-
Vazhalai	4	-	-	-	-
Maddil Noi	108	-	-	-	-
Sengchali	61	-	-	-	-
Cough, Suvasa Kaasam	300	-	-	-	-
Thanur vaayu	-	-	300	-	-
Santhi	-	-	76	-	-
Eluvai, Kazhalai	-	-	95	-	-
Thalai Veekkam (Oedema in head)	-	-	5	-	-
Generalized oedema	-	-	16	-	-
Paduvan	-	-	11	-	-
Navel Diseases	-	-	7	-	-
Peeli Noi (Liver Diseases)	-	-	8	-	-
Uru vasiyam	-	-	5	-	-
Keel Noi (Joint Diseases)	-	-	30	-	-
Kathir (Alaku) Veechchu Noi	-	-	3	-	-

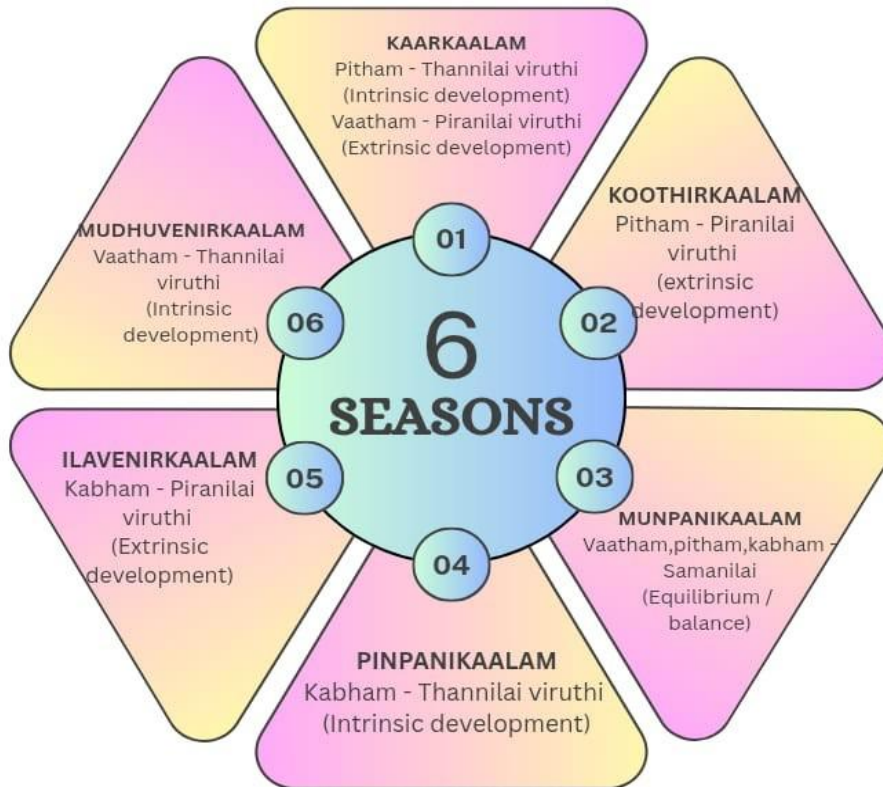
Sobai	-	-	16	-	-
Isivu	-	-	6	-	-
Moorchchai	-	-	7	-	-
Padu (Kuvai)Noi	-	-	46	-	-
Kirani	-	-	25	-	-
Night Blindness	-	-	20	-	-
Kaddi	-	-	12	-	-
Kirumi	-	-	6	-	-
Vomiting	-	-	5	-	-
Chronic Diseases	-	-	20	-	-
Kalladaippu	-	-	80	-	-
Thimir Noi	-	-	10	-	-
Neer Rogam	-	-	5	-	-
Visa Paakam	-	-	16	-	-
Vikkal	-	-	10	-	-
Arosikam	-	-	5	-	-
Kadi Thodam	-	-	500	-	-
Kaajam, Kuththu, Veddu	-	-	700	-	-
Kiranthi	-	-	48	-	-
Pura Neer Kovai	-	-	200	-	-
Peadiatri Diseases	-	-	100	-	-
Snake	27	-	-	-	-
Animal toxin	-	-	-	257	-
Herb	-	-	-	120	-
Aquatic plants	-	-	-	34	-
Thodam	-	-	-	7	-
Vali	-	-	-	8	-
Rasa rogam	-	-	-	6	-
Respiratory Diseases	-	-	-	9	-
Atputham	-	-	-	5	-
Yanthirangal	-	-	-	20	-
Pavanam	-	-	-	40	-
Moolai Noi	-	-	-	360	-
Iraichchi	-	-	-	21	-
Blood	-	-	-	205	-
Muscles	-	-	-	80	-
Malam	-	-	-	7	-
Narutham Porul	-	-	-	9	-
Mandai vinai	-	-	-	15	-
Antharap pinni	--	-	-	6	-
Mayir	-	-	-	30	-
Rana Noi (Surgical Diseases)	-	-	-	200	-
General	-	-	-	59	-
Karuvikkal	-	-	-	18	-
Others					
All over the body	1008	-	-	-	-
Tongue	1008	-	-	49	-
Congenital	160	-	-	-	-
Sanni Paatham	13	-	-	-	-
Diseases in head & Neck	-	-	-	-	1008

Table 2. Description of disease types are explained in the Noi Naadal Noi Muthal Naadal part II & Yugi Muni vaithiya sinthamani

DISEASES	NOI NAADAL NOI MUTHAL NAADAL PART II	YUGI MUNI VAITHIYA SINTHAMANI
1. Fever (Suram)	64	7
2. Mukkuttam	13	13
3. Ammai	14	-
4. Kuralkammal	6	-
5. Nasal blockage (Mookkadaippu)	9	-
6. Hypertension (Kuruthi azhal noi)	8	-
7. Cough (Irumal)	12	5
8. Bronchial asthma (Iraippu)	5	-
9. TB (Elippu)	7	-
10. Ulai maanthai	4	4
11. Heart diseases (Thamaraga noi)	5	-
12. Suvai inmai	5	-
13. Thirst (Neervedkkai)	4	-
14. Indigestion (Seriymai)	9	-
15. Hiccough (Vikkal)	5	4
16. Vomiting (Vaanthi)	11	5
17. Maantham	3	
18. Peptic ulcer (Gunmam)	8	8
19. Soolai	15	15
20. Diseases in spleen (Manneeral noi)	4	-
21. Diseases in liver (Kalleral noi)	3	-
22. Anaemia (Velluppu)	5	5
23. Oothal Noi	4	4
24. Jaundice (Manchal Noi)	13	13
25. Ascites (Peruvayiru)	8	32
Diarrheal diseases 26,27,28		
26. Kudal piddippu noi	4	-
27. Perum kazhichchal	4	25
28. Ninak kazhichchal	11	-
29. Ooli Noi	3	-
30. Hemorrhoids (Moola Noi)	21	21
31. Kidney stones (Kalladaippu noi)	4	4
32. Oliguria (Neer churukku)	4	-
33. Anuria (Soddu neer)	2	-
34. Gonorrheal diseases (Vellai)	21	21
35. Meha neer kaddikal	10	-
36. Cherukku noi	7	-
37. Veri noi	6	-
38. Mayakka noi	6	-
39. Vali Noi	21	-
40. Vazhi Noi	85	80
41. Joint diseases (Keel vayu)	10	-
42. Azhal vayu	42	42
43. Aiya noi	21	21
44. Kuddam	18	18
45. Meha noi	-	20
46. Visa paakam	-	8

47. Chayam	-	12
48. Kaasam	-	12
49. Vippuruthi	-	7
50. Skin Diseases (Karappan)	-	7
51. Fistula (pavunthiram)	-	18
Total	544	431

Relation between 6 Seasons and Mukkutram:



Clinical Significance :

Siddha nosology provides a strong foundation for early diagnosis based on the assessment of humoral imbalance³. It emphasizes preventive strategies through appropriate dietary regulation and lifestyle modification⁸. The system supports an individualized treatment approach, considering the predominance of humors and the patient’s constitution. Siddha nosology also aids in prognostic assessment by evaluating the stage of disease progression and the extent of humoral involvement, thereby guiding effective clinical decision-making.¹⁵

DISCUSSION

The Siddha classification of 4,448 diseases demonstrates an advanced and systematic understanding of human pathology. Unlike modern symptom-based disease classification systems, Siddha nosology emphasizes causative factors, systemic involvement, and preventive care.⁷This approach reflects the deep clinical insight of ancient Siddhars, who focused on understanding disease at its root rather than addressing symptoms alone. Integrating Siddha nosological concepts with modern disease taxonomy may enhance holistic patient management and improve outcomes through a more comprehensive diagnostic and therapeutic approach.¹⁵

CONCLUSION

The Siddha system's classification of 4,448 diseases represents a sophisticated and holistic framework encompassing physical, mental, and spiritual health.¹ Revisiting classical Siddha nosology and correlating it with contemporary medical science can strengthen integrative healthcare practices while preserving the rich traditional medical wisdom of Siddha medicine⁵. This integrative approach has the potential to contribute significantly to preventive healthcare and holistic disease management.¹⁵

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