

## ***Viresanam* - Purgation Therapy in Siddha**

Thanigainathan A<sup>1\*</sup>, Selvalenin C<sup>1</sup>, Lakshmi Kantham T<sup>1</sup>, Vetha Merlin Kumari H<sup>1</sup>, Nalini Sofia H<sup>1</sup>, Mary Sharmila C<sup>1</sup>, Anbarasan B<sup>1</sup>, Meenakumari R<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Maruthuvam, National Institute of Siddha, Chennai 47

<sup>2</sup> Director, Department of Maruthuvam, National Institute of Siddha, Chennai 47

### **Abstract**

*Viresanam* is a purgation therapy in Siddha System of Medicine. The therapy is mainly used for balancing the *doshas* (trihumours) of the body especially *vatha*. The most commonly used herbs in Siddha System for purgation are *Nervalam* (*Croton tiglium* L.), *Sivathai* (*Operculinaturpethum* L.) S.Manso), *Nilavarai* (*Cassia senna* Linn.), *Kadukurokini* (*Picrorrhizakurroa* Benth.). Siddha System contains extensive range of drugs for purgation. There are different forms of drugs like *Kudineer* (Medicated Decoction), *Karkam* (Crushed fresh herb), *Uppu* Medicines (Alkali), *Ennai* (Medicated Oil) and *Mathirai* (Tablet form). The therapy has several beneficial effects without causing harm to the GI tract. The regulation of gut by *Viresanam* therapy not only cures gastrointestinal disorders, but also plays a vital role in treating several other systemic diseases. This review focuses on purgation drugs used in Siddha System of Medicine, possible mechanism of action and their beneficial effects.

### **Introduction:**

*Bedhi* is a Tamil word that means “purging”. *Bedhi Maruthuvam* mainly includes the administration of purgative substances for the cleansing of colon and downward regulation of *vatham* through the lower pathways.

*Viresana* is a word, which literally means removing the *doshas* (toxins) out through the rectal route. This is known as Purgation. It mainly targets cleansing the

sweat glands, small intestine, colon, stomach, liver and spleen.

In Siddha Medicine, the function of body is based on trihumours such as *vatham*, *piththam*, and *kabham*. The balanced equilibrium of the three humours ensures the normal physiological functioning of the body. Method of diagnosis and treatment in Siddha System of Medicine is also based on these trihumours.

**Keywords:** *Viresanam*, Purgation, Siddha

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### **\* Address for Correspondence**

Dr. Thanigainathan A, PG Scholar, Dept of Maruthuvam, National Institute of Siddha, Chennai - 600047.

Mobile: 9489368257

Email Address: bharathyk30@gmail.com

## **Vatham:**

In the text book *Siddha maruththuvanga surukkam* the site of *vatham* is mentioned to be in anus, faecal matter, *idagalai*, below the umbilicus, hip bone, skin, nervous system, joints, hair follicles and muscles. The quality of *vatham* is responsible to conduct

respiration, tone up the activities of the mind, speech, regulation of 14 natural reflexes like movement of the bowels, to regulate the function of the sense organs, and the qualities are dryness, roughness, unstable, minuteness, lightness, and coldness respectively.

*“Vathaththinkunamethannilvayirathuporumikollum  
Thaathathilmenikaikaalsanthumegakadupphondrum  
Theetharrusiruneerthaanunjeriththudankaduththuveezhum  
Pothuththavaathamendrupugandranarmunivartaame  
Aanathorvaathampattiarunduvandhuchalkaaichal  
Thaanamilaathirukkunthanthudalvisaiyil serum  
Kaanamaangkuralkarangalkaduththudalkaruppaaivanthaal  
Vaanakaiminnulsonnavaathaththinkunamithenre  
Vaathamanthiththapothuvaayvumelezhumbimeelum  
Soothamaaiirumalvanthuthoornthidumsannivaatham  
Pethameseikiraaniperuvayarthinidoshangkal  
Pothavevimmithenruporuthamemunivar sonar<sup>1</sup>”*

*(Verse 52, 53, 54 Pathinennsiththargalnaadisaasththiram in KuriadaiyaalaNadi<sup>1</sup>)*

According to the above verse the function of *vatham* is mentioned as pain in the body, pricking and excruciating pain, weakness of the nerve, tremors, stiffness of muscles, dryness, weariness, boring pain, pain felt as that of traumatic cause, dislocation of joints, weariness of the organs, inactiveness of the

organs, retention of urine and feces, thirst, unbearable pain in the calf muscles and the muscles of the thigh, a feeling that something is boring into the bones, erectile hairs, difficulty in flexion and extension of the extremities, secretion of saliva with astringent taste, blackening of eyes, motion and urine etc

## **Viresanam – Purgation Therapy:**

*“Viresanththaalvaathamthaazhum<sup>2</sup>”*

*(Noinaadalnoimudhalnaadal part 1) Pg.No.264<sup>2</sup>*

The above verse indicates that purgation therapy will reduce *vatham*. Many purgative drugs are available in traditional System of Medicine. *Agasthiyar kuzhambu* is one of the familiar and commonly used purgative drug

in Siddha System of Medicine. Other common forms of purgation Medicines are *Thailam* (Medicated oil), *Mooligai Podi* (herbal powder), *Kudineer* (Herbal Decoction) and *Mathirai* (Tablet forms). The

choice of the *Viresanam* drugs also depends on the nature of the body constitution of the individual.

Siddha purgation therapy removes toxins and cleanses the body. It is also effective in the treatment for piles,

constipation, liver diseases, jaundice, skin disorders and gynecological disorders. It relieves pain in the large intestine, non-healing wounds and helps to manage diabetes, asthma, and heart diseases.

#### **Regimen followed for purgation therapy (*SiddhaMaruththuvangaSurukkam* – Pg No: 654<sup>1</sup>)**

As vitiated *Dosha* is the basic factor in the manifestation and progress of any disease, Siddha Medicine indicates specific regimen to be followed for purgation therapy.

1. Only single dose to be given in a day.
2. Should be taken before sunrise.
3. Should be taken 2 months once or thrice in a year.
4. *Certain purgative Medicine* to be used only during summer season.e.g.: *Amanakku Ennai*.
5. *Nervalam* (Croton) based Medicines to be given during rainy and winter season
6. Should be taken during Tamil month of *Aani & Aadi* (June, July & August).

#### **Most commonly used herbs in Siddha for purgation:**

##### ***Nervalam* (Croton tiglium L.)**

Croton tiglium seeds are known to be effective purgative croton contains fatty fixed oil, tigilinic acid, crotonic acid and croton oil. Crotonoleic acid, an active principle in the croton oil internally act as purgative. Underdesirable amount, croton seed oil has therapeutic value such as a good anti

inflammatory agent against rheumatism<sup>3</sup>. There are several Siddha Medicines which contain *Nervalam*. The following are the most commonly used purgation Medicines which contains *Nervalam*,

- MeganathaKuligai*
- LavangathyMathirai*
- AstaBairavam*
- ThazhampooMathirai*
- SoolaiBoobathi*
- PooraMathirai*
- MurukkanvithaiMathirai*
- ViresanaBoopathi*
- Jalotharimani*
- KakkanamMathirai*
- Agasthiyar Kuzhambu*
- Kowsikar Kuzhambu*

##### ***Sivathai* (Operculinaturpethum L.1)**

It helps in improving the peristaltic movements in the body therefore are used as laxative. It is anti-inflammatory in action because of its hot potency. It also helps in managing the normal body temperature<sup>4</sup>. It has long been in use in India as a purgative, i.e., a drug, which hastens active movement of the bowels, but it was officially acknowledged in the list of Indian

Pharmacopoeia only in 1946. Only the dried roots of the white variety with its undamaged bark find its place there.

The roots are bitter, acrid, sweet, thermogenic, purgative, carminative, anti-helminthic, expectorant, antipyretic, hepatic, stimulant and hydragogue<sup>5</sup>. They are useful

in colic constipation, dropsy, vitiated conditions of *vatha*,

paralysis, myalgia, arthralgia, pectoralgia, bronchitis, obesity,

helminthiasis, gastropathy, ascites, inflammations, intermittent fever, leukoderma, pruritis, ulcers, erysipelas, hemorrhoids, tumors, jaundice, consumption and ophthalmia<sup>6</sup>.

### **Nilavarai (Cassia senna Linn.)**

Senna contains two active crystalline glycosides, Sennosides A & B. The taste of senna is pungent, bitter and sweet having high potency. It is light to digest, dry in nature. After digestion, it undergoes into pungent taste. It acts as a mild purgative. The dried leaf of Indian Senna is used as a purgative. The powder

of the leaf is taken in a dosage of 1-2 g with hot water in conditions of constipation, abdominal distention. The anthraquinones of this herb can inhibit a variety of bacteria (staphylococci and Bacillus Coli) and dermatomyces (Microsporumaudouinii) etc<sup>7</sup>.

### **Kadukurokini (Picrorrhiza kurroa Benth.)**

It has been proved to have liver protective actions in the recent studies. It possesses surface lowering action. The drugs due to surface lowering action facilitates penetration into the fecal

mass thus softens it; which scientifically support the purgative action mentioned in Siddha. It does not contain anthroquinone and is non-irritant. It also does not swell in water<sup>8</sup>

### **Types of Purgation Medicines as described in Siddha Literature<sup>9-19</sup>**

#### **Kudineer (Medicated Decoction)**

- i. *Sivathai (Operculinaturpethum L. S. Manso)*
- ii. *Rojamottu (Rosa centifolia L.)*
- iii. *KadukkaiThol (Terminalia chebulaRetz. &Willd.)*
- iv. *Sombu (Foeniculum vulgare Gaertn)*
- v. *SoorathuNilavagai (Cassia senna L.)*
- vi. *Kadugurogini (PicrorhizakurroaRoyle Ex Benth.)*
- vii. *Sarakondrai Puli (Cassia fistula L.)*
- viii. *SeemaiSamanthi poo (Chrysanthemum indicum L.)*
- ix. *KottaiThiratchaipazham (Vitis vinifera L.)*
- x. *Ularantha Athi pazham (Ficus racemosa L.)*

#### **Karkam (Crushed fresh herb)**

Table 1: *Karkam* (Crushed fresh herbs) used in the purgation and their medicinal uses

<b>Karkam</b>	<b>Disease</b>
<i>Aamanaku</i>	Crushed root bark of <i>Aamanaku (Ricinus communis L.)</i> for filariasis
<i>VellaiKakkattan</i>	Root bark of <i>VellaiKakkattan (Clitoriaternatea L.)</i> crushed with lemon juice for filariasis
<i>Poovarasu</i>	Crushed root bark of <i>Poovarasu (Thespesia populnea L.)</i>

## Ennai (Medicated Oil)

Table 2: *Ennai* (Medicated Oil) used in the purgation and their ingredients

Medicated Oil	Ingredients
<b>Vellai Ennai</b>	<i>Pooram</i> (Hydragyrum Subchloride - Calomel) <i>Sitramanaku Nei</i> (Seed oil of <i>Ricinus communis</i> L.)
<b>Vathanasa Thailam</b>	<i>Pooram</i> (Hydragyrum Subchloride - Calomel) <i>Sitramanaku Nei</i> (Seed oil of <i>Ricinus communis</i> L.) Leaf juice of <i>Vathanarayanan</i> ( <i>Delonixelata</i> (L.) Gamble)
<b>Kazharchi Ennai</b>	Root bark, leaves and Nut of <i>Kazharchi</i> ( <i>Caesalpinia bonduc</i> (L.) Roxb.)
<b>Merugankizhangu Ennai</b>	<i>Merugankizhangu</i> ( <i>Alocasia indica</i> (Lour.) Spach) <i>Poondur</i> ( <i>Allium sativum</i> L.) <i>Sitramanaku Nei</i> (Seed oil of <i>Ricinus communis</i> L.)
<b>Rasa Thailam</b>	<i>Rasam</i> (Mercury) Crushes fresh leaves of <i>KaruppuVettrilai</i> ( <i>Piper betle</i> L.) Crushed leaves of <i>Kovai</i> ( <i>Coccinia grandis</i> L.) Crushed leaves of <i>Pavattai</i> ( <i>Pavetta indica</i> L.) <i>Amanaku Nei</i> (Seed oil of <i>Ricinus communis</i> L.)

## Medicines with Uppu(Alkali)

- i. *Navauppu Mezhugu*
- ii. *Navachara Kuzhambu*
- iii. *Nayuruviuppathi Kuzhambu*

## Commonly used purgation Medicines in *vatha* diseases

Table 3: Purgation Medicines in *Vatha* diseases

<i>Pakkavatham</i> <i>Arunavatham</i> <i>Sarvaangavatham</i>	<i>Agasthiyar kuzhambu</i> – 130 mg <i>Kowsikar Kuzhambu</i> – 130 mg <i>MeghanathaKuligai</i> 1-2 tab <i>VathanasaThailam, VellaiEnnai</i>
<i>Keel vatham</i>	<i>MerukankizhanguEnnai</i> 15 – 30 ml <i>VathanasaThailam, VellaiEnnai</i>
<i>Anda vatham</i>	<i>KazharchiEnnai</i> – 8 ml <i>NavauppuMezhugu</i>
<i>NarambuVatham</i>	<i>VathanasaThailam, VellaiEnnai</i>
<i>Tholvatham</i> <i>Iduppuvatham</i>	<i>VathanasaThailam</i> <i>VellaiEnnai</i>

## Other Diseases

Table 4: Purgation Medicines in other diseases

<i>VathaKunmam</i> <i>Pitham related diseases</i>	<i>VallaraiGhritham</i> <i>VellaiEnnai</i> <i>MeganathaThailam</i>
<i>Neerkattu</i> <i>EeralKatti</i> <i>Magotharam, Neerambal</i>	<i>Navachara Kuzhambu – 130 mg</i>
<i>KunmaNoi</i>	<i>NayuruviUppathi Kuzhambu – 130 mg</i>
<i>Soolai, Kavisai, Thalai Idi,</i> <i>Viranam, Kiranthi, Sori sirangu,</i> <i>Kalladaippu, Neerambal,</i> <i>Valippu, Puzhuvettu,</i> <i>Parangipun, Soothagavayu</i>	<i>SiddhathiEnnai – 10 drops</i>
<i>Vellai, Vayitru pun, Neerkattu,</i> <i>Neeradaippu, Neererivu,</i> <i>Pithakaikaalerivu</i>	<i>MeganathaThailam 15- 30 ml</i>
<i>Araiappu, Ranam, Kushtam,</i> <i>TholNoikal, Karumpulli,</i> <i>Kandamalai</i>	<i>Rasa Thailam – 9 g</i>
<i>Porumal, Vatham</i>	<i>ViresanaBoopathi</i>
<i>Mantham</i>	<i>ManthaEnnai</i>
<i>Kudalvayu, Suram, Vayu,</i> <i>Malasalakattu</i>	<i>Jalotharamani</i>
<i>Vandu kadi, Poochu kadi,</i> <i>Kurangu kadi, Kanakadi, Visha</i> <i>kadi</i>	<i>Agasthiyar kuzhambu – 130 mg</i> <i>Kowsikar Kuzhambu – 130 mg</i>
<i>Kasam</i>	<i>VellaiEnnai, MeghanathaKuligai</i>
<i>Swasakasam</i>	<i>ManthaEnnai – 1 Teaspoon</i>
<i>Kamalai</i>	<i>Medicines with Pooram or Uppu</i> <i>VellaiEnnai, MeghanathaKuligai</i> <i>SivathaiverKudineer</i>

## Pediatric Diseases

Table 5: Purgation Medicines in Pediatric diseases

<i>Manthasuram, Kirumi, Seetha kattu,</i> <i>Vayitruuppisam</i>	<i>Pooramathirai – Coriander Seed</i> <i>size</i>
<i>OothuMantham</i>	<i>KakkanamMathirai</i>

## Mechanism of Action of Purgatives

All Purgatives increase the water content of feces by hydrophilic or osmotic action, retaining water and electrolytes in the intestinal lumen increase volume of colonic content and make it easily propelled. Acting on intestinal mucosa to decrease net absorption of water and electrolyte, intestinal transit is enhanced indirectly by the fluid bulk. Increasing propulsive activity as primary action. Allowing less time for absorption of salt and water as a secondary effect. Certain Purgative do increase motility through an action on the mesenteric plexuses<sup>20</sup>.

Stimulant Purgatives are powerful purgatives. They irritate intestinal mucosa and thus were thought to primarily stimulate

motor activity. Osmotic Purgatives exerts osmotic effect and therefore hold considerable amount of water, thus increasing the intestinal bulk. This act as a mechanical stimulus causing an increase in the intestinal motor activities and evacuation<sup>20</sup>

Bulk Purgatives are various natural or semi-synthetic polysaccharides and cellulose derivatives, which when given orally are not absorbed and increase the indigestible residue. These agents absorb water and swell up, thus providing the stimulus of mechanical distention for evacuation. Their action is mild and usually seen in 12-30hours after ingestion. *Isapgol* (*Plantago ovata*)

The probable mechanism<sup>21</sup> for removable of toxin from lower GIT through *Viresanamm* is

Resolution of toxin material into fat which they bound to membrane protein (i.e. toxin which are earlier present in cytoplasm now become membrane bound)



Change in cell permeability leading to expulsion of toxin material to outside the cell which are membrane bound



Now the toxin present in circulation i.e. in vein



Cause irritation of intestinal mucosa



Leading to excessive secretion from intestinal mucosa and vasodilation



Toxin now present in gut lumen along with secretion of electrolyte and fluid from crypt of lieberkuhn in distal ileum and colon



Expulsion of toxin + electrolyte through the route

## Discussion:

*Viresanam* can modify GALT (Gut Associated Lymphatic Tissue) in lamina propria of GIT, which is responsible for immunity also. The lung-gut axis also plays a vital role in viral respiratory infections<sup>22</sup>. The therapy is also effective to balance the vitiated humours and manage the pathological disease.

*Viresanam* and after follow-up showed the correction of the gut flora dysbiosis, thus initiated the weight loss mechanism in the body, resulting in diminution in the signs and symptoms of obesity<sup>23</sup>. *Viresanam* increases the bioavailability of drugs by opening channels and by improving the nutritional assimilation which may lead to increase serum LH level<sup>24</sup>. The modern day

## Conclusion:

Based on the above review, it is concluded that the Siddha system of Medicine contains extensive range of drugs for *Viresanam* (Purgation). The therapy is better choice before treating *vatha* diseases. In the line of management of diseases of pacifying the *doshas* and elimination of the *doshas*, purgation therapy is a first treatment option in elimination of *doshas* and cleansing the

literature suggests that purgation leads to dehydration, electrolyte imbalance and loss of electrolytes, hypotension, and shock<sup>25,26</sup>. To ensure no undesired effects in purgation therapy, the purgative drug is always coupled with suitable *anupanam* like Ginger juice or dried ginger decoction to maintain and balance the electrolyte shifts.

Thus, *Viresanam* flushes out of the toxins and excess mucus from the GI tract and thus improves digestion. It clears congestion from the liver and thus improves metabolism and fat digestion. It also relieves many gastro-intestinal disorders. Improves the condition of skin disorders, rashes and allergies.

body. It is also useful in treating several others diseases and pediatric diseases. The most commonly used herbs in Siddha for purgation has several beneficial effects without causing harm to the GI tract. The regulation of gut by *Viresanam* therapy not only cures gastrointestinal disorders, but also plays a vital role in treating several other systemic diseases.

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