

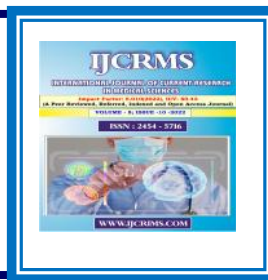


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A review of *Kaala Ozhukam* - Seasonal Conduct in the Siddha system of Medicine.

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Abstract

The Siddha medical system is an indigenous practice that emphasizes the importance of following seasonal regimens to bolster the body's defense mechanisms(1). Seasonal changes are controlled by nature, but modern lifestyle behaviors such as smoking, unhealthy diets, and inactivity have led to numerous lifestyle disorders and chronic diseases. This shift in lifestyle problems appeared about 3-4 decades ago, reflecting an unhealthy relationship between people and their environment. Ancient sages created the Kaala ozhukam (seasonal regimen), which is based on the changing seasons and aimed at promoting perfect health and preventing illness. Seasonal routines are divided into distinct states of Thodam-Vatham, Pittam, and Kabham according to seasonal variations over time. By adhering to the Kaala ozhukam, individuals can avoid seasonal diseases and lifestyle disorders, maintaining the harmony of the Thirithodamand promoting good health. However, the relevance of Kaala ozhukam may be called into question by global warming and changes in seasonal patterns.

Keywords: Siddha medical system, life style disorders, Kaala Ozhukam (Seasonal regimens).

Introduction

One of India's traditional medical systems, the Siddha system, places emphasis on following seasonal regimens to boost the body's defence mechanisms (1). Change is a natural rule and sign of progress, according to the seasons. The Siddha system has many notions for sustaining human

wellbeing, with "*Andathil ullathe pindam pindathil ullathe andam*" being one of them. This adage views the universe as a macrocosm and the human as a microcosm (2). Our environment has undergone significant changes due to the seasons, and the external environment has a major impact on the human body. External and endogenous cycles interact and synchronize with each other,

in a phase relationship (3). Living organisms must adapt to the changes brought about by seasonal features, or else deviate from nature's equilibrium and make the body susceptible to ailments (4). In the Siddha system, the distinction between preventive and curative measures does not exist, as the focus is on preventing rather than curing disease. Ancient *Tholkappiyam* literature mentions the unique knowledge of managing seasonal variations within natural ecology, known as Kaala Ozhukam (regimen for various seasons) (3). The primary goal of the Siddha holistic approach is to prevent disease and maintain health. Today, lifestyle disorders are caused by altered behaviours such as smoking, unhealthy diets, and physical inactivity, leading to chronic lifestyle diseases (5). This issue has affected the population in the past 3-4 decades, due to an inappropriate relationship between people and their environment. The purpose of this article is to

raise awareness of living in relation to the environment through seasonal regimens in the Siddha perspective.

Classifications of seasons:

Based on ancient Tamil literature, there are two divisions of time, day and month, referred to as *Cirupozhuthu* and *Perumpozhuthu* respectively. According to Siddha astrology, the year is divided into two periods known as *Ayanams* (solstices), named *Uthara Ayanam* (northern solstice) and *Thatchana Ayanam* (southern solstice). There are six distinct seasons in a year: Kaar Kaalam (monsoon), Koothir Kaalam (Autumn), Munpani Kaalam and Pinpani Kaalam (early and late winter), Illavenil Kaalam and Muthuvenil Kaalam (spring and summer) respectively. Each season consists of two months.

Season		Month	
Kaar Kaalam	Monsoon	<i>Aavani - Purattasi</i>	Mid-August to Mid-October
Koothir Kaalam	Autumn	<i>Iypasi - Karthigai</i>	Mid-October to Mid-December
Munpani Kaalam	Early winter	<i>Markazhi - Thai</i>	Mid-December to Mid-February
Pinpani Kaalam	Late winter	<i>Masi - Panguni</i>	Mid-February to Mid-April
Illavenil Kaalam	Spring	<i>Chithirai - Vaigasi</i>	Mid-April to Mid-June
Muthuvenil Kaalam	Summer	<i>Aani - Aadi</i>	Mid- June to Mid- August

Uthara Ayanam:

This period indicates the sun's ascent or its movement towards the north. The sun and wind are both powerful during this time. During Pinpani (late winter), Ilavennil (spring), and Mudhuvennil Kaalam (summer), it brings an increase in bitter, astringent, and pungent tastes respectively, leading to dryness in the body and decreased strength. It is also known as Aadhana Kaalam⁽⁷⁾.

This time period is similar to the Earth's rotation around the sun until reaching the summer solstice on June 21st each year, when the sun's rays are perpendicular to the 30-degree meridian of the North Pole. The sun moves from the Tropic of Capricorn to the Tropic of Cancer in a northerly direction⁽⁴⁾.

This period is comparable to Thai to Aani (mid-January to mid-July), when the warmth and dryness in the surrounding air increases. It has a general weakening effect on the ecosystem, including humans⁽⁸⁾.

Thatchana Ayanam:

It refers to the sun's movement in a southern direction and its descent. At this time, the moon is more powerful than the sun, and the breeze is not particularly dry. Due to the clouds, rain, and chilly winds, the earth becomes cooler.

As sour, salty, and sweet flavors are more prominent during this time, a person's strength increases. It is also known as Visarga Kaalam⁽⁷⁾.

According to modern science, this is equivalent to the earth's steady rotation around the sun, which leads to the winter solstice on December 21st

each year. During this time, the sun's rays cross the 30-degree meridian of the South Pole perpendicularly. The sun moves southward from the Tropic of Cancer to the Tropic of Capricorn⁽⁴⁾.

In the Indian subcontinent, there are separate transitions from Kaar (monsoon), Koothir (autumn), and Munpannikaalam (early winter) during Thatchana Ayanam. This time period is comparable to Aani to Thai (mid-July to mid-January), when the temperature drops and anabolic activity surpasses catabolic activity in the environment.

On December 21st, Margazhi 6th, and Aani 7th, and June 21st, the sun is directed towards the south. As a result, the first part of the Uthara Ayanam includes the early winter season. Given that this period's quality is similar to the previous Thatchana Ayanam, it is considered comparable.

Regimens for various seasons:

Kaar Kaalam (Monsoon):

Changes in the macrocosm and microcosm:

The "Vaadaikattu" wind, which brings rain at this time of year, often blows from mid-August to mid-October. The sky is heavily clouded during this time of year, which raises the humidity in the air. Human physical health already weakens due to the effects of the preceding season, and the three humors known as Vatham, Pitham, and Kabam become vitiated during the wet season, when the pond's water becomes contaminated. And because of the sourness, Pitham becomes stronger and Vatham vitiates⁽⁷⁾.

Diet regimen: Food stuffs that are sweet, sour, salty, and non-drying mixed with honey should be consumed in large quantities during this season. De-fatted buttermilk, honey, meat and old grain can be taken. It is recommended to use both rain and well water. Also, it is best to avoid fatty buttermilk, daytime nap, excessive exposure to sunlight, and heavy labour work⁽⁸⁾.

Life style: To neutralize the unbalanced Pitha humor and other humors, an exothermic

emetic and purgative treatment should be administered. It is recommended to take a hot bath, wear fresh and dry clothing, and put on appropriate shoes. Apply fragrant pastes such as Pachai Karpooram (*Cinnamomum camphora*), Kasthuri (Musk Deer), Eaglewood (*Aquilaria agallocha*), and Sandalwood all over the body⁽⁸⁾.

Koothir Kaalam (Autum):

Change in the macrocosm and microcosm:

The Breeze "KulirKattu" blows during this season, causing the water to become clear roughly from mid-October to mid-December. During this time, the *Agasthya star* is visible in the sky. The presence of the *Agasthya star* causes changes in the microcosm and can lead to a scarcity of water sources. The increased Pitham from the previous season becomes weakened due to the cold climate, reducing the heat⁽⁷⁾.

Diet regimen: During this season, the water in the waterways is considered sacred and can be used without boiling. Large quantities of easily digestible foods with bitter, astringent, and sweet flavour's should be consumed. Samba rice, legumes, sugar, gooseberries (*Emblica officinalis*), and honey are all beneficial to health. It is important to avoid mist, dew, sun exposure, eastward winds, salt, toddy, curd, fatty foods, strong alcoholic beverages, and oleation⁽⁸⁾.

Life style: To restore the disturbed Pitham to its normal state, bitter purgatives, and ghee should be taken. After eating, apply a mixture of sandalwood paste, *Vetiveria zizaniodes* (khus-khus grass), and *Cinnamomum camphora* (Pachai karpooram) to the skin⁽⁸⁾.

Munpani Kaalam (Early Winter):

Changes in the macrocosm and the microcosm:

An easterly wind called "Kondal Kattu" generally blows during the season from mid-December to mid-February. During the Winter Solstice, the sun's path in the sky is the furthest in the Northern Hemisphere and the longest night of the season occurs. Because of the cold weather, the body requires more heat to stay warm and this increases hunger and digestive fire. To raise the body's temperature, it is recommended to

consume more easily digestible and metabolizable food during this season ⁽⁷⁾.

Diet regimen: Foods with sweet, sour, and salty flavours should be consumed, as well as fatty meats, cakes made from black gram (*Vigna mungo*), wheat, and sugarcane. Jaggery, rice, and grape-based beverages should also be ingested ⁽⁸⁾.

Lifestyle: Physical activity should be performed first thing in the morning during this season and the body should be covered in a medicinal oil that is beneficial for Vatha disorders. After taking a bath, the head and body should be exposed to incense vapours. A paste made of saffron flowers, zedoaria tubers (*Curcuma zedoaria*), musk deer, eaglewood paste (*Aquilaria agallocha*), sandalwood, and civet cat scent should be applied all over the body ⁽⁸⁾.

Pinpani Kaalam (Late Winter):

Changes in the macrocosm and the microcosm: The southeast wind known as "*UlavaiKattru*" blows during this season, approximately from mid-February to mid-April. Throughout the seasons, changes in the macrocosm and the microcosm possess the characteristics of the Munpani Kaalam (early winter season), causing Kabham to become disturbed in its state ⁽⁷⁾.

Lifestyle: In Pinpanikallam, dryness occurs, so the practices mentioned for Munpanikaalam may be followed during this season as well. In both seasons, after eating, a paste made of saffron flowers, zedoaria tubers (*Curcuma zedoaria*), musk deer, eaglewood paste (*Aquilaria agallocha*), sandalwood, and the fragrance secreted by a civet cat mixed with rose water should be applied all over the body. This helps to increase physical strength, improve spermatogenesis, boost libido, enhance beauty, bring wealth and joy. Thirst, insanity, Kabha diseases, and Pruritus are also cured. ⁽⁸⁾

Illaveil Kaalam (Spring):

Changes in the macrocosm and the microcosm:

The southern wind known as "*ThendralKattru*" blows during this season, typically from mid-April to mid-June. The heat from the sun can cause Kabham to become disturbed during this

season, reducing appetite and potentially leading to various Kabham-related illnesses ⁽⁷⁾.

Diet regimen: The roots of *Vetiveria zizanioides*, also known as Khus-khus grass, can be utilized along with water infused with sandalwood, honey, wheat, mango, etc. However, it is important to avoid consuming foods that are tough to digest, including those with low potency, greasy items, and foods that have both sour and sweet flavours. ⁽⁸⁾

Lifestyle: During this season, to bring Kabham back to a normal state, emetics and nasal drops with strong potency are preferred. Physical exercise and dry-natured foods are recommended. It's also best to avoid daytime sleep. This season is naturally a delight for lovers ⁽⁸⁾.

Muthuvenil Kaalam (Summer):

Changes in macrocosm and microcosm: Changes in the Macro and Microcosm: During this season, a west wind known as "*Kodai Kattru*" blows and there may be rain, which is called Koodai-mazhai. Due to the intense heat, the Kabham humor remains stable, but the Vatham humor becomes imbalanced ⁽⁷⁾.

Diet regimen: To bring the imbalanced Vatham back to its normal state, it is recommended to consume foods that are greasy, sweet, and easily digestible. Food that is salty, sour, and pungent, as well as physical exercises and alcohol, should be avoided. A mixture of water kept in a new earthen pot, Khus-khus grassroots (*Vetiveria zizanioides*), trumpet flower (*Sterospermum chelonoides*), samba rice, meat, plantain (*Musa paradisiaca*), and jackfruit (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*) can be consumed ⁽⁸⁾.

Lifestyle: To prevent skin diseases, sandalwood paste can be applied. Light clothing should be worn and sexual activities should be avoided during this season ⁽⁸⁾.

Discussion and Conclusion

The ancient sages established the Kaala Ozhukam, a seasonal regimen based on seasonal considerations, to achieve optimal health and prevent disease. In recent decades, numerous

chronic diseases have been linked to lifestyle changes. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 60% of the factors affecting a person's health and quality of life are related to their lifestyle. Many individuals are unaware of lifestyle disorders and do not practice proper habits(6).

As a result, they may suffer from diseases, disabilities, and even death. An unhealthy lifestyle can contribute to problems such as metabolic disorders, joint and bone issues, cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, obesity, and violence(5). Changes in diet and lifestyle can affect the balance of the Thirithodam, causing disharmony and lifestyle diseases. It has been observed that seasonal diseases such as the flu, dry skin, heat stroke, pollen allergy, waterborne and airborne diseases, and skin diseases are more prevalent during winter, summer, and autumn, respectively. Nowadays, medical professionals recommend following a healthy eating regimen to prevent lifestyle disorders.

In the Siddha system, seasonal routines are described in terms of the distinct states of Thodam-Vatham, Pittam, and Kabham that change with the seasons. By following the Kaala Ozhukam regimen, we can avoid seasonal diseases and maintain the harmony of the Thiridosdam for optimal health. The relevance of Kaala Ozhukam may be challenged by global

warming and seasonal variations, but its underlying principles are backed by physiology.

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