Review Article

Evaluating the Pharmacological Effects of Varma Kanji (Varma Diet) Mentioned for Padu Varmams in Siddha Varma Literatures - A Narrative Review

Ulagamadhavan Muthuraj[1*], Shanmugeshwari Murugesan[2], K. Salma Ryhana[3], J. Sriram[4].

[*]1. PG scholar, Department of Noi Naadal, National Institute of Siddha, Tambaram Sanatorium, Chennai-47, Tamilnadu, India.

2. PG scholar, Department of Kuzhandhai Maruthuvam, National Institute of Siddha, Tambaram Sanatorium, Chennai-47, Tamilnadu, India.

3. Siddha Consultant, Musculo Skeletal Disorder Scheme, Govt. Primary Health Centre, Uluppakudi, Dindigul, Tamilnadu, India.

4. Lecturer, Government Siddha Medical College, Palayamkottai, Tamil Nadu, Tamilnadu, India.

***Corresponding author's E-mail:** ulagamadhavansiddha@outlook.com

Received: 10-07-2025; **Revised:** 18-10-2025; **Accepted:** 25-10-2025; **Published online:** 20-11-2025.

ABSTRACT

Varmam is a vital component of Siddha medicine, focusing on energy points in the body known as varma points. In Varma therapy, Varma Kanji (Varma diet) plays a crucial role in the prognosis and management of symptoms. This work aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of pharmacological actions in Varma kanji (Varma diet). The review was undertaken during two months at ATSVS Siddha Medical College Library, Munchirai, focusing on literature related to traditional Siddha *varma* texts This study results in the pharmacological effects of Varma Kanji associated with the twelve *Padu Varmas* to support their role in improving Varma therapy outcomes. This review highlights a strong association between traditional Varma Kanji formulations and recent pharmacological findings, validating their therapeutic relevance. Following these dietary guidelines can enhance Varma therapy and the overall effectiveness of Siddha medicine.

Keywords: Varmam therapy, Varma kanji, Pharmacological activity, Siddha, Varmam, Varma diet, Traditional medicine.

INTRODUCTION

Varmam is a vital component of Siddha medicine, focusing on energy points in the body known as varma points. It is believed that there are 108 main varmam points, where life energy (prana) is concentrated. Varmam therapy involves gentle pressure, massage, or stimulation of these points to restore balance and health. It is traditionally used to treat pain, nerve disorders, injuries, and energy imbalances.

In Varma therapy, *Varma Kanji* (Varma diet) plays a crucial role in the prognosis and management of symptoms. Ancient Siddha literatures have documented the importance and guidelines of this therapeutic diet. Therefore, strict adherence to Varma Kanji is maintained throughout the course of Varma treatment. Based on this traditional knowledge, this study aims to explore and establish the pharmacological activities of specific Varma Kanji formulations associated with the twelve *Padu Varmas*, supporting their role in enhancing the effectiveness of Varma therapy.[1]

METHODOLOGY

This review was conducted over a two-month period at ATSVS Siddha Medical College Library, Munchirai. By examining various classical and traditional Siddha varma texts. Among these, the Siddha text *Siddha Maruthuvam Sirappu* specifically details the twelve *Padu Varma* points along with their corresponding *Varma Kanji*. A thorough review of this text was carried out, and the information on *Varma* points and *Varma Kanji* was then correlated with the pharmacological activities described in *Gunapadam Mooligai*, *Thathu* texts, and supporting research articles.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1. Thilartha Kaalam:

Location: It is positioned at the nasal bridge of the frontal bone, between the eyebrows.

Symptoms:

Syncope (due to injury to the nasal arch of the frontal veins), which can potentially result in thrombosis.

Varma Kanji: Athi Madhuram Kanji (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*)

Gunapadam (Mooligai) Reference:

Tittikku matimaturak kuṇattaiyeṭuttu raikkil
ciramayakkañ curatākan tiritōṭaṅkaḷ
pittañcat tikkumitu kuṇamā maturatīpaṉamān
tātuvuṭṭiṇamun tavirkkum viḻikkitamām
puttikku vittākuñ cantāpan tīrkkum
pukainteṭukkuñ cēṭṭumattaip pittarōkattai
attippaṟ ṟiṇamēkan taṉṉaivā tattiṇai
yaṟuttiṭumvac cirameṉpā ratimaturantaṉaiyē.

Pharmacological activity:

Recent research has shown that Glycyrrhiza glabra exhibits anticoagulant activity. Glycyrrhizin, widely recognized for its anti-inflammatory effects, has been discovered as the first plant-based inhibitor of thrombin. It prolongs both thrombin and fibrinogen clotting times and enhances the plasma recalcification duration.[8]

2.Natchathira Kaalam:

Location: They are paired structures located at the junction near the inner corner of each eye, positioned just beneath the tip of the eyebrow.

Symptoms:

Bleeding from the nose, impaired or defective vision, and blindness may occur due to injury to the intraorbital artery, which can lead to thrombosis.

Varma Kanji: Seeraga Kanji (*Cuminum cyminum*)

Gunapadam (Mooligai) Reference:

Pittameṉu mantiriyaip piṉṉap paṭuttiyavaṉ

catturuvai yuntuṟantu cātittu-mattaṉeṉum

rācaṉaiyu mīveṉṟu naṇpaip palappaṭutti

pōcaṉaku ṭāriceyum.

Pharmacological activity:

Recent studies have demonstrated that Cuminum cyminum exhibits anticoagulant, antiplatelet aggregation, and central nervous system (CNS) effects. Cumin extract was found to inhibit arachidonate-induced platelet aggregation. Additionally, it reduced the production of thromboxane B2 from exogenous (14C)-arachidonic acid in washed platelets. Alongside this inhibition, there was a concurrent increase in the formation of lipoxygenase-derived metabolites.[9]

3. Chevikuttri Kaalam:

Location: It is situated at the lower end of the ear.

Symptoms:

Abnormal movements of the eyeballs, retraction of the lips, frothy discharge from the nose and mouth, and loss of hearing. (these symptoms resemble an epileptic seizure and may result from injury to the posterior extrinsic ligament.)

Varma Kanji: Chukku Kanji (*Zingiber officinale*)[5]

Gunapadam (Mooligai) Reference:

“Cūlaimantam neñcerippu tōṭamēp pam'maḻalai

mūlam iraippirumal mūkkunīr-vālakapa

tōṭamati cāran toṭarvāta kuṉmanīrt

tōṭamā mampōkkuñ'cukku”.

-Akattiyar kuṇa vākaṭam [2]

Pharmacological activity:

The hydroethanolic extract of ginger exhibits anticonvulsant properties, potentially by modulating inhibitory and excitatory neurotransmission, enhancing antioxidant defences, reducing oxidative stress, and inhibiting calcium channels.[10]

4. Pidari Kaalam:

Location: It is situated at the junction of the posterior aspect of the head and neck.

Symptoms:

Tremor of the head due to injury to the transverse process of the arch of the atlas vertebra.

Varma Kanji: Vendhaya Kanji (*Trigonella foenum graecum*)[5]

Gunapadam (Mooligai) Reference:

“Porumal mantam vāyukapam pōrāṭukiṉṟa

irumal aruciyivai ēkun-taraiyil

tītu luyarnamaṉaic cīṟum viḻiyaṇaṅkē!

Kōtilventa yakkīrai koḷ”.

-Akattiyar kuṇa vākaṭam

Pharmacological Activity:

The current study identified and assessed SFST-T, a standardized hydroalcoholic extract of Trigonella foenum-graecum L. seeds, in animal models of Parkinson’s disease. SFST-T demonstrated an improvement in motor deficits, likely due to its neuroprotective effects.[11]

5. Urakka Kaalam:

Location: It is located three fingerbreadths below the chin and 2.5 fingerbreadths above.

Symptoms:

Injury to the external and internal jugular veins, vagus nerve, and phrenic nerve can result in hallucinations, delirium, stupor, coma, and even death.

Varma Kanji: Elam Kanji (*Elettaria cardamomum*)[5]

Gunapadam (Mooligai) Reference:

“Toṇṭai vāykavuḷ tāluku taṅkaḷil

tōṉṟum nōyati cārampaṉ mēkattāl

uṇṭai pōleḻuṅ kaṭṭi kiriccaram

uḻalai vānti cilanti viṣañcuram

paṇṭai vekkai vitākanōy kācamum

pāḻuñ cōmap piṇivintu naṭṭamum

aṇṭai yīḷaivaṉ pittam ivaikkellām

āla māṅkamaḻ ēla maruntatē”.

-Akattiyar kuṇa vākaṭam

Pharmacological activity:

Recent studies have investigated the effects of Elettaria cardamomum extract on anxiety-like behaviours in a rat model of post-traumatic stress disorder. The active constituents of E. cardamomum, including quercetin, kaempferol, and rutin, are of particular interest, with quercetin known for its influence on central nervous system functions. As a flavonoid, quercetin exhibits neuroprotective properties and has demonstrated antidepressant and anxiolytic effects at doses ranging from 20 to 40 mg/kg.[12]

6. Thummi Kaalam:

Location: It is situated one finger breadth above the supra sternal fossa.

Symptoms:

Hoarseness and loss of voice, along with loss of taste sensation, may occur due to injury to the superior laryngeal nerve and glossopharyngeal nerve. Since the superior laryngeal nerve innervates the thyroid gland, thyroid-related pathologies can also contribute to these symptoms. Notably, hoarseness is a characteristic feature of hypothyroidism.

Varma Kanji: Vilva ver Kanji (*Agele marmelos*).[1]

Gunapadam (Mooligai) Reference:

"Vilva pattiri vērcciṟu muṭṭiyum

valla cukkum vaḷampeṟak kāycciyē

nalla tēṉil nayantu kuṭittiṭak

kolla vantiṭuñ catti kuṟukumē".

- Tēraiyar kuṇa vākaṭam

Pharmacological activity:

Recent studies have demonstrated that Aegle marmelos possesses neuroprotective properties. Its extract influences serotogenic activity in the hippocampus and also exhibits antithyroid effects. Scopoletin, a bioactive compound from Aegle marmelos, is being evaluated for its potential role in regulating hyperthyroidism.[13]

7. Naer varmam:

Location: It is located in the thoracic region, between the two breasts.

Symptoms:

Syncope, excessive sweating, cooling of the body, death, and haemoptysis.

Varma Kanji: Combination of vilva ver, vengayam kanji [1]

Vilvam (*Agele Marmelos***):**

"Vilva pattiri vērcciṟu muṭṭiyum

valla cukkum vaḷampeṟak kāycciyē

nalla tēṉil nayantu kuṭittiṭak

kolla vantiṭuñ catti kuṟukumē".

- Tēraiyar kuṇa vākaṭam

Veṅkāyam (*Allium cepa***):**

"Caṉṉiyoṭu vātan talainōvu tāḷvali

maṉṉivaru nīrkkōvai vaṉcītam-aṉṉamē!

Uḷḷuḷḷi kaṇpāy uḷaimūla rōkamum pōm

veḷḷuḷḷi taṉṉāl veruṇṭu".

-Akattiyar kuṇa vākaṭam

Pharmacological activity:

Allium cepa:

Recent pharmacological research has confirmed the cardioprotective effects of Allium cepa. The bioactive compounds present in onions play a significant role in preventing cardiovascular diseases. Rich in flavonoids, onions are utilized for both the prevention and management of heart conditions. Studies have shown that onion extract and onion soup exhibit strong inhibitory activity against platelet aggregation.[6]

Agele marmelos:

Preliminary studies indicate that Aegle marmelos exhibits superior cardiotonic activity compared to digoxin. Further research is needed to confirm its lower toxicity, which could offer a significant advantage of A. marmelos over digitalis.[13]

8. Adappa Kaalam:

Location: It is situated 4 finger breadths above the 11th floating rib.

Symptoms:

Chillness of foot and hands, flaccidity of upper and lower limbs. (Injury to the nerve)

Varma Kanji: Combination of vendhayam and seenthil kanji.[1]

Gunapadam (Mooligai) Reference:

Ventayam *(Trigonella foenum graecum***):**

"Porumal mantam vāyukapam pōrāṭukiṉṟa

irumal aruciyivai ēkun-taraiyil

tītu luyarnamaṉaic cīṟum viḻiyaṇaṅkē!

Kōtilventa yakkīrai koḷ".

-Akattiyar kuṇa vākaṭam

Cīntil (*Tinospora cordifiolia***):**

"Kuṭṭam patiṉeṭṭum kuñcarattiṉ ṟōṟcoṟiyuṅ

kaṭṭam peritāṅ kayanōyum-paṭṭavuṭaṉ

centīmuṉ pañceṉavē cīntalup pōṭaḷainta

tantā vaḷanīrkkuc cām".

-Tēraṉ veṇpā

Pharmacological activity:

Trigonella foenum graceum:

The current study identified and assessed SFST-T, a standardized hydroalcoholic extract of Trigonella foenum-graecum L. seeds, in animal models of Parkinson's disease. SFST-T demonstrated an improvement in motor deficits, likely due to its neuroprotective effects.[11]

Tinospora cordifiolia:

The neuroprotective effects of Tinospora cordifolia ethanolic extract were further evidenced by its ability to reduce oxidative stress and improve locomotor function. The findings indicate that TCEE offers significant neuroprotection in 6-hydroxydopamine (6-OHDA) induced Parkinson's disease by safeguarding dopaminergic neurons and mitigating iron accumulation.[14]

9. Churukki Kaalam:

Location: It is situated two finger breadths below the 11th floating rib.

Symptoms:

Injury causes emacitation atrophy of lower parts and death. (emaciation atrophy means marked weight loss) (Injury to the greater sciatic and lesser sciatic notch).

Varma Kanji: Combination of Vendhayam and Seenthil Kanchi [1]

Gunapadam (Mooligai) reference:

Ventayam (*Trigonella foenum graecum*)

"porumal mantam vāyukapam pōrāṭukiṉṟa
irumal aruciyivai ēkun-taraiyil
tītu luyarnamaṉaic cīṟum viḻiyaṇaṅkē!
Kōtilventa yakkīrai koḷ"

-Akattiyar kuṇa vākaṭam

Cīntil (Tinospora Cordifolia):

"Kuṭṭam patiṉeṭṭum kuñcarattiṉ ṟōṟcoṟiyuṅ
kaṭṭam peritāṅ kayanōyum-paṭṭavuṭaṉ
centīmuṉ pañceṇavē cīntalup pōṭaḷainta
tantā vaḷanīrkkuc cām".

-Tēraṉ veṇpā

Pharmacological activity:

Trigonella foenum graecum:

Fenugreek is a culinary spice known for enhancing digestion and metabolism. It offers various health benefits, including blood sugar regulation. Additionally, as a natural appetite stimulant, fenugreek boosts digestive fire, aiding individuals who wish to increase their appetite and gain weight. Moreover, it has been found to promote bone density, potentially benefiting conditions like osteoporosis.[11]

Tinospora Cordifolia:

The current study demonstrated that herbal formulations of Tinospora cordifolia stem extract can serve as an effective feed supplement in poultry, showing promising improvements in body weight gain and feed conversion efficiency in broiler chicks.[15]

10. Urumi Kaalam:

Location: It is situated 4 finger breadth above the umbilicus.

Symptoms:

Abnormal breathing sounds, Breathlessness, loss of hearing.

Varma kanji: Chukku Kanji (*Zingiber officinale)* [5]

Gunapadam (Mooligai) reference:

"Cūlaimantam neñcerippu tōṭamēp pam'maḻalai
mūlam iraippirumal mūkkunīr-vālakapa
tōṭamati cāran toṭarvāta kuṉmanīrt
tōṭamā mampōkkuñ'cukku".

-Akattiyar kuṇa vākaṭam

Zingiber Officinale:

Extracts of Zingiber officinale have been shown to exhibit anti-hyperactivity and anti-inflammatory effects on the respiratory tract, thereby supporting its role as a bronchodilator.[10]

11. Athi Churukki Kaalam:

Location: It is situated 4 finger breadth below the umbilicus.

Symptoms:

Oliguria, distended abdomen.

Varmakanji: Combination of vengayam, vilvaver kanji.[1]

Gunapadam (Mooligai) reference:

Veṅkāyam (*Allium cepa):*

"Caṉṉiyoṭu vātan talainōvu tāḷvali
maṉṉivaru nīrkkōvai vaṉcītam-aṉṉamē!
Uḷḷuḷḷi kaṇpāy uḷaimūla rōkamum pōm
veḷḷuḷḷi taṉṉāl veruṇṭu".

-Akattiyar kuṇa vākaṭam

Vilvam (*Agele marmelos):*

"Vilva pattiri vērcciṟu muṭṭiyum
valla cukkum vaḷamperak kāycciyē
nalla tēṉil nayantu kuṭittiṭak
kolla vantiṭuñ catti kuṟukumē".

- Tēraiyar kuṇa vākaṭam

Pharmacological activity:

Allium cepa:

The n-butanol extract of Allium cepa bulbs, at a dose of 20 mg/kg, significantly increased urine output and electrolyte excretion. These findings confirm the acute diuretic effect of A. cepa, supporting its traditional use as a natural diuretic agent.[17]

Agele Marmelos:

Both the root and leaves of Bilva (Vilvam) exhibited notable diuretic activity in albino rats at a dosage of 90 mg per 200 g body weight. However, the root extract demonstrated a more significant diuretic effect compared to the leaves. While both extracts increased urine output, the root sample produced the highest volume when compared to the leaf-treated and control groups. Additionally, urine analysis revealed the absence of glucose, bilirubin, ketones, and hemoglobin.[16]

12. Kalladai Kaalam:

Location: It is situated in the base of the testis.

Symptoms:

- Anuria, distended abdomen.

- Ascended testis.

Varma Kanji: Equal amount of common salt with the rice kanji. [1]

Guna Padam (Thathu) reference:

Cōr̲ruppu (*Sodium Chloride):*

"Aḷattiluṟai nallup paṉalvātam mār̲ruṅ

kaḷattunōy taṉṉaik kaḷaiyuṅ-kiḷaittakapa

ācuṭaiya vallainōy aṣṭakuṇma mumpōkkuṅ

kāciṉiyuḷ mātē kaḷaṟu."

-Patārttakuṇa cintāmaṇi [3]

Pharmacological activity:

Normotensive rats were fed either a high-sodium or basal NaCl diet. After 2.5 weeks, conscious, pre-instrumented rats received an intravenous infusion of isotonic saline, and urine was collected via a bladder catheter over a 90-minute period. Rats on the high-salt diet excreted a significantly higher percentage of sodium and fluid volume. Additionally, recent research has highlighted the laxative properties of common salt.[18,19]

DISCUSSION

This review highlights the pharmacological actions and therapeutic effects of Varma Kanji, emphasizing its integral role in traditional Siddha medicine. The synergistic application of Varma points along with Varma Kanji not only accelerates symptom relief but also optimizes the body's internal balance (Uyir Thathukkal) and promotes faster tissue repair.[4] This combined approach enhances circulation, reduces inflammation, and improves the body's natural healing response. Furthermore, it contributes significantly to the patients' overall well-being by improving energy levels, restoring physiological functions, and enhancing quality of life. Integrating these traditional practices into clinical protocols can offer a holistic and scientifically validated pathway for managing chronic conditions.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this review reveal a strong correlation between the traditional descriptions of Varma Kanji in Siddha literature and recent pharmacological evidence supporting the actions of the herbs used. These insights reaffirm the scientific validity of classical formulations. Hence, adherence to Varma diet guidelines by Siddha practitioners can significantly enhance the therapeutic outcomes of Varma therapy and strengthen the overall efficacy of Siddha medicine.

Source of Support: The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article

Conflict of Interest: The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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