Review Article

Literature Review of Oma Ilagam for the Treatment of Kaanakadi (Urticaria)

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ABSTRACT

In India follows various traditional systems of medicine. One such traditional system is Siddha medicine, which is predominantly practiced in Tamil Nadu and other parts of South India. One of the classical internal medicines described in the Siddha text *Aathma Ratcha Mirtham* is *Oma Ilagam*. It is traditionally used for the treatment of *Karappan, Sirangu* (a type of itching or scabies), *Vaayu* (one of the three humors), *Pun, Parangi Soolai, Kuttam* and *Nanju Kadigal*. This review describes the individual ingredients of the formulation and their pharmacological activities. Details were collected from various classical Siddha textbooks and published journals. In conclusion, the results of this review revealed that the pharmacological actions of the ingredients, including analgesic, anti-inflammatory, antihistamine and Immunomodulatory activities, are consistent with their traditional medicinal uses, particularly in the management of *Nanju Kadigal* and related ailments.

Keywords: Kaanakkadi, Oma ilagam, Siddha medicine, Urticaria, Literature review.

INTRODUCTION

Siddha Medicine is one of the ancient traditional systems of medicine practiced predominantly in Tamil Nadu and other parts of South India. Among the various disease conditions described in Siddha literature, Kaanakadi is a clinically significant skin disorder traditionally attributed to the bite or sting of an unknown or unnoticed organism. The term "Kaanakadi" is derived from the Tamil words *Kaana* meaning "unseen" and *Kadi* meaning "bite." Classical Siddha texts describe the condition with characteristic features such as lightning-like erythematous patches, severe pruritus, wheal formation, and bark-like roughness of the affected skin [1].

From a modern dermatological perspective, the clinical features of Kaanakadi closely resemble Papular Urticaria and Urticaria, which are hypersensitivity skin disorders characterized by itchy, erythematous lesions mainly affecting exposed areas of the body. These conditions are commonly triggered by insect bites from mosquitoes, fleas, mites, and other blood-feeding insects [2]. Persistent scratching may lead to excoriation, secondary bacterial infection, and post-inflammatory pigmentation. Epidemiological studies show that urticaria is a common dermatological disorder worldwide, affecting nearly 15–20% of the population at least once in their lifetime [3]. Chronic Urticaria affects about 0.5–5% of individuals globally and is more prevalent among females. Women account for nearly 60–70% of chronic urticaria cases, and in Chronic Spontaneous Urticaria (CSU), they constitute up to 72% of affected individuals, often experiencing greater disease severity and reduced quality of life [4].

Siddha Medicine *Ilagam* (also known as *Legium* or *Leghiyam*) is one of the internal dosage forms described in Siddha literature. It is a semi-solid medicinal preparation known for its easy administration, improved palatability, enhanced bioavailability, and easy digestibility. Generally, Ilagam is prepared by finely powdering the ingredients and then mixing them with honey, ghee, or other suitable sweetening agents to obtain a soft semi-solid consistency. Although several formulations are available in Siddha Medicine for the management of Kaanakadi (Nanju Kadigal), Oma Ilagam is a classical herbo-mineral preparation mentioned in the Siddha text Aathma Ratcha Mirtham for the treatment of various skin disorders and toxin-induced conditions [5]. The formulation consists of a harmonious combination of seven ingredients, namely Omam (*Trachyspermum ammi*), Amukkara Kizhangu (*Withania somnifera*), Kukil (*Shorea robusta*), Parangipattai (*Smilax china*), Karpogarisi (*Psoralea corylifolia*), Sarkkarai (*Saccharum officinarum*), and ghee, all of which possess significant medicinal and pharmacological properties. Therefore, the present review aims to explore the phytochemical constituents, pharmacological activities, medicinal values, and therapeutic significance of the ingredients present in Oma Ilagam, while providing scientific evidence to support its traditional use in the management of skin diseases and toxin-related disorders.

METHODS

Research Design: Drug Review on Literature

Research Type: Literature Review

Research Period: 3 months

Literature Collected from: Aathma Ratchamirtham. Edited by S. B. Ramachandiran (October 2000), Page No: 446; Publication: Thamarai Noolagam, 7, N.G.O Colony, Vadapalani, and Chennai-26.

Collection of Raw Drug: The raw drugs were collected from a local Siddha raw drug store in Chennai. The drugs were authenticated based on their structural, morphological, and

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taxonomical characteristics by a botanist from the Department of Medicinal Botany, National Institute of Siddha, Chennai 47. The authentication certificate number is NISMB8972026.

Raw Drug purification: The raw drugs were purified according to the procedures described in classical Siddha literature. Omam was soaked in clear lime water for 1 hour, shade dried at room temperature, and subsequently winnowed. Amukkara and Parangipattai were boiled in cow's milk for 30 minutes, washed thoroughly with water, dried, and finely powdered. Karpogarisi was soaked in the leaf extract of Ocimum basilicum and then powdered. Kukkil was boiled in tender coconut water until complete evaporation of the liquid, followed by sun drying and pulverization into fine powder [6].

Drug Administration: The prescribed dosage of the formulation is Kazhangi (approximately 5.1 g), administered twice daily [7]. It should be taken with a suitable adjuvant, such as hot water or milk, depending on the individual's condition and the practitioner's recommendation. The duration of treatment is one Mandalam (40 days), which provides adequate time for the formulation to produce its intended therapeutic effect within the body.

Table 1: Scientific & Selected Vernacular Names, Families of the Medicinal Ingredients

Botanical name	Vernacular Name in Tamil	English Name	Sanskrit Name	Family
Trachyspermum ammi	Omam	The Bishops weed	Yavani	Apiaceae
Withania somnifera	Amukkara kizhangu	Winter cherry	Aswagandha	Solanaceae
Shorea robusta	Kukil	Sal tree	Guggilam	Dipterocarpaceae
Psoralea corylifolia	Karpogarisi	Babchi seeds	Vakuchi	Fabaceae
Smilax china	Parangipattai	China root	Madusnuhi	Smilacaceae
Saccharum officinarum	Sarkkarai	Sugarcane	Ikshu	Poaceae
Anhydrous milk fat	Nei	Ghee	-	-

Table 2: Morphology, Parts Used & Organoleptic Characters of the Herbal Ingredients in Oma Ilagam

Botanical name	Morphology	Quantity	Part used	Taste	Potency	Division
Trachyspermum ammi	Herb	3500g	Seeds	Karppu	Veppam	Karppu
Withania somnifera	Shrub	35g	Root	Kaippu	Veppam	Karppu
Shorea robusta	Tree	35g	Pisin	Kaippu	Veppam	Karppu
Psoralea corylifolia	Herb	35g	Seeds	Kaippu	Veppam	Karppu
Smilax china	Plant	350g	Tuber	Inippu	Seetham	Inippu
Saccharum officinarum	Tall grass	350g	Cystallised sugar	Inippu	Seetham	Inippu
Ghee	-	1.4 lit	-	-	Veppam	-

Table 3: Phytoconstituents and Medicinal Uses of the Ingredients in Oma Ilagam

Ingredients	Actions as per siddha	Phytoconstituents	Medicinal uses in siddha	Pharmacological Effects
Trachyspermum ammi	Antispasmodic, Carminative, Antiseptic, Stomachic.	Thymene, para-cymene, γ-terpenine, α- and β-pinenes, carvacrol, camphene, myrcene, α-3-carene, and saponin.	Iyasuram, Seriyamaantham, Irumal, Kudaliraichal, Irraippu, Kazhichal.	Anti - inflammatory, Anti-platelet aggregatory activity, Anthelmintic activity, Detoxification of aflatoxins [8].
Withania somnifera	Diuretic, Deobstruent, Tonic, Sedative, Febrifuge, Aphrodisiac.	Anaferine, cuseohygrine, anahygrine, withanolides, withaferins, saponins, and isopelletierine.Acylsterylglucoside sitoindosides VII-X, withaferin-A, 5-dehydroxy withanolide-R, and withaferin-A[9].	Karappan, Valinoigal, Suram, Veekkam.	Anti-anxiet and anti-depression activity, Antioxidant and Immunomodulatory activity[10].
Shorea robusta	Stimulant, Expectorant, Diuretic	Mono-sesqui, tri-terpènes, acide ursolique, acide urcénoïque tri- et tétra-hydroxy, acide asiatique, α et β-amyrine	Mega pun, Kaanakkadi, Nanju,Soolai, Katti.	Wound healing activity, Free radical scavenging, Anti-inflammatory and Antioxidant activity[11].

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Psoralea corylifolia	Laxative, Stimulant	Isoflavone, corylinin, isopsoralen, psoralen, sophoracoumestan A, neobavaisoflavone et daidzin uracil [12].	Kaduvan, Viranam, Sarppavisham, Kiranthi, Yaanaisori, Thinavu.	Immunomodulatory, Antideppressent, Antioxident activity[13,14]
Smilax china	Deprative, Antisyphilitic, Alterative, Aphrodisiac.	Caffeic acid, engeletin, epicatechin, friedelin, heloniosides, hydroxyflavin, isoengeletinaringenin, piceid, quercetin, resin, resveratrol, rutin, saponin, scirpusin, seiboldogenin, smilacin, smilasides, trihydroxystibene, vanillic acid, flavanoids, and stilbenes.	Sirangu. Kadividam, Pun, Iyyam, Magarantha pun, Kurai noi.	Wound healing activity, Free radical scavenging, Anti-inflammatory and Antioxidant activity[15].
Saccharum officinarum	Demulcent, Antiseptic, Carminative	Orientin, diosmetin-8-C-glycoside, luteolin 8-C-(Rhamnosyl-glucoside), and flavolignan 7-O-glycosides are examples of flavone glycosides.	Vadha noigal, Vaanthi, Vaiyittru vali, Vadha suram, Vikkal,	Antioxidant, Anti-inflammation[16]
Ghee	Demulcent, Laxative, Deobstruent, Tonic, Sedative.	Phytosterol, Conjugated linoleic acid, Short chain fatty acids [17].	Immunity , Digestion , Brain tonic.	Antioxidant, Immunomodulatory, Antideppressent activity [18].

CONCLUSION

Oma Ilagam, formulated on the basis of Siddha principles such as Tridosha, Suvai, Gunam, Veeriyam, and Pirivu, demonstrates significant therapeutic potential, which is increasingly supported by modern scientific evidence. This correlation enhances the confidence of Siddha practitioners in its application for managing conditions such as Kaanakadi. Future research should focus on conducting detailed preclinical and clinical studies to scientifically establish its safety and efficacy, while also investigating its pharmacological mechanisms of action and developing standardized quality control measures to ensure consistency. Thus, this review not only reinforces the value of traditional Siddha knowledge but also creates opportunities for further scientific validation and the broader global recognition of Siddha medicine.

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