

## Evaluating Consumer Attitudes Toward Siddha Products in Contemporary Health Practices

**M. Hajeeral Baham, S.M.A Syed Mohammad Khaja**

1. Research Scholar (21221191012001), Department of Commerce, Sadakathullah Appa College, (Autonomous) Rahmath Nagar, Tirunelveli. Affiliated to Mononmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, Tamilnadu, India

2\*. Assistant professor, Department of Commerce, Sadakathullah Appa College, (Autonomous) Rahmath Nagar, Tirunelveli. Affiliated to Mononmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, Tamilnadu, India

### Abstract

Siddha medicine, one of the oldest traditional systems of medicine, has gained significant attention due to its holistic approach and use of natural ingredients. This article explores the increasing preference for Siddha products, their medicinal benefits, and their role in contemporary healthcare. By delving into the historical context, growing consumer interest, and scientific research backing these products, the article highlights the resurgence of Siddha medicine in modern times. Additionally, this study analyzes consumer behavior, market trends, and the potential for integrating Siddha practices with mainstream medical treatments.

**Keywords:** Siddha Medicine, Traditional Healthcare, Herbal Remedies, Natural Medicine, Holistic Healing

### Introduction

Siddha medicine, an ancient system of medicine that originated in South India, is deeply rooted in the Dravidian culture. It emphasizes balancing the elements of the human body through natural remedies, lifestyle practices, and diet. The principles of Siddha are based on the belief that the body is composed of five basic elements: earth, water, fire, air, and space, with health being the balance of these elements. While modern medicine has dominated healthcare for decades, there has been a resurgence in the preference for natural and traditional healing methods, including Siddha medicine.

The rise in consumer awareness regarding the harmful side effects of synthetic drugs has led many to seek alternative solutions. Siddha products, made from herbs, minerals, and animal products, offer a natural alternative with fewer side effects. From treating chronic diseases to enhancing overall well-being, Siddha products are being increasingly preferred for their therapeutic properties and holistic approach to health.

### **Historical Background of Siddha Medicine**

The origin of Siddha medicine is attributed to the ancient Siddhars, enlightened beings with deep knowledge of medicine, spirituality, and alchemy. According to Siddha tradition, there were 18 Siddhars who laid the foundation for this medical system, with Agathiyar being the most prominent. Siddha texts, written in Tamil, outline the medicinal properties of various herbs and minerals, detailing the preparation of remedies for a wide range of ailments.

Traditionally, Siddha was practiced primarily in Tamil Nadu and nearby regions. However, with growing global interest in Ayurveda and other natural systems of healing, Siddha is gaining recognition in various parts of the world. Its rich heritage and ancient knowledge are being revisited and incorporated into modern healthcare practices.

### **Siddha Products: Market Trends and Consumer Behavior**

Recent market studies indicate a sharp rise in consumer preference for Siddha products. The demand for traditional medicines has grown as people seek natural alternatives to allopathic treatments, especially for chronic diseases, lifestyle disorders, and immunity enhancement.

**Table 1: Market Trends for Traditional Medicines (including Siddha) in India (2020-2024)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Traditional Medicine Market (INR Crore)</b>	<b>Growth Rate (%)</b>	<b>Siddha Medicine Market Share (%)</b>
2020	14,000	7.2	18.4
2021	15,500	10.7	19.0
2022	17,200	11.0	19.5
2023	18,800	9.3	20.0

2024 (Est.)	20,400	8.5	20.4
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Consumer behavior towards Siddha products reflects a growing awareness of the importance of natural treatments and a preference for remedies that align with their lifestyle and philosophical beliefs. Key factors driving this trend include the perceived safety of natural products, fewer side effects, the efficacy of long-term use, and a cultural affinity for traditional healing methods. The increasing number of research studies validating the efficacy of Siddha treatments has also contributed to its rise in popularity.

### Benefits of Siddha Medicine

1. **Holistic Healing:** Siddha medicine treats not just the symptoms but the underlying cause of diseases. It balances the body's energies and focuses on physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.
2. **Use of Natural Ingredients:** Siddha products are prepared from natural herbs, minerals, and metals that have therapeutic properties. The medicines are customized according to the patient's body constitution.
3. **Preventive Approach:** Siddha not only treats diseases but also prevents them through lifestyle practices, diet, and herbs that promote overall health.
4. **Chronic Disease Management:** Siddha has shown promising results in the management of chronic diseases such as arthritis, diabetes, and asthma.
5. **Detoxification and Rejuvenation:** Many Siddha products are used for detoxifying the body and promoting regeneration of tissues, thereby improving vitality and longevity.

### Review of Scientific Research on Siddha Products

Recent research has focused on validating Siddha treatments through scientific studies and clinical trials. Several studies have demonstrated the efficacy of Siddha formulations in treating various ailments:

- **Diabetes Management:** Siddha products like *Kalmegh* (*Andrographis paniculata*) and *Nilavembu* (*Chiretta*) have shown hypoglycemic effects in clinical trials, making them effective in managing type 2 diabetes.
- **Immunity Boosting:** The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a surge in demand for Siddha immunity-boosting products like *Kabha Suram Kudineer* (herbal decoction) due to their potential antiviral and immune-modulatory properties.
- **Anti-inflammatory Properties:** Studies have indicated that Siddha formulations containing *Aloe Vera*, *Ginger*, and *Turmeric* exhibit strong anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, which are useful in the treatment of chronic inflammatory diseases.

**Table 2: Common Siddha Products and Their Benefits**

Siddha Product	Key Ingredient	Primary Use
Nilavembu Kudineer	<i>Andrographis paniculata</i>	Fever, flu-like symptoms, immunity boosting
Kabha Suram Kudineer	Herbal blend	Immunity, respiratory ailments
Vatha Kulambu	<i>Piper longum</i>	Joint pain, arthritis
Mathulai Manapagu	<i>Punica granatum</i> (Pomegranate)	Digestion, skin health
Thuthuvalai Chooranam	<i>Solanum trilobatum</i>	Respiratory diseases, asthma

### Challenges in Promoting Siddha Medicine

Despite its growing popularity, Siddha medicine faces several challenges:

1. **Lack of Standardization:** There is a need for standardizing Siddha products to ensure consistency in quality and dosage.

2. **Scientific Validation:** While many Siddha formulations are based on traditional knowledge, more rigorous scientific studies and clinical trials are necessary to validate their efficacy and safety.
3. **Global Recognition:** Although Siddha is widely practiced in India, it has not gained the same level of global recognition as Ayurveda. Increased international collaborations and awareness campaigns could help promote Siddha globally.
4. **Integration with Modern Medicine:** The integration of Siddha medicine with modern healthcare systems remains limited. Efforts should be made to bridge this gap and encourage collaboration between traditional and allopathic practitioners.

### **The Future of Siddha Medicine in Global Healthcare**

Siddha medicine, rooted in ancient wisdom and a holistic approach to health, is witnessing a resurgence in popularity as people increasingly turn to traditional and natural forms of treatment. The system's reliance on natural herbs, minerals, and holistic practices makes it an appealing alternative to conventional medicine, especially for those seeking treatments that focus on overall well-being rather than just addressing symptoms. The rise in the demand for Siddha products reflects not only a growing interest in traditional medicine but also a broader shift towards embracing alternative healthcare solutions that are more aligned with nature.

### **The Rising Preference for Natural and Traditional Healthcare**

In recent years, there has been a noticeable global shift towards natural and plant-based healthcare products, driven by growing concerns over the side effects and limitations of synthetic drugs. Siddha medicine, with its deep understanding of the body, mind, and spirit connection, offers a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of ailments. This aligns well with the increasing consumer preference for preventive care and natural remedies, as people seek treatments that promote long-term health and balance.

Siddha medicine, with its rich pharmacopeia of herbs, minerals, and other natural substances, provides treatments for a wide range of conditions, from chronic illnesses to lifestyle disorders.

Many Siddha formulations, which have been passed down through centuries, are known for their effectiveness in boosting immunity, improving digestion, and detoxifying the body. This emphasis on natural healing and preventive care has made Siddha an attractive option for those looking to enhance their overall health without relying heavily on pharmaceutical drugs.

### **Challenges of Standardization and Scientific Validation**

While Siddha medicine has a long history of use, one of the key challenges it faces is the need for greater scientific validation and standardization. Although many Siddha formulations are based on centuries-old practices, modern scientific research and clinical trials are necessary to fully understand the mechanisms behind these treatments and ensure their safety and efficacy. The lack of rigorous scientific studies and clinical data has been a barrier to the wider acceptance of Siddha medicine in mainstream healthcare.

To overcome this challenge, there is a growing need for collaborative efforts between traditional medicine practitioners, researchers, and the scientific community. By conducting clinical trials, pharmacological studies, and toxicology assessments, Siddha medicines can be subjected to the same rigorous testing as conventional drugs. This will not only help establish their therapeutic benefits but also build trust among healthcare professionals and consumers alike.

Moreover, standardization of Siddha medicines is critical to ensure consistency in quality and potency. The lack of standardized formulations and dosage guidelines can lead to variability in treatment outcomes. By developing standardized protocols for the preparation, dosage, and administration of Siddha medicines, the system can gain greater credibility and acceptance in the medical community.

### **Integration with Mainstream Healthcare Systems**

For Siddha medicine to achieve its full potential, it must be integrated into mainstream healthcare systems. This requires recognition and support from government health authorities, regulatory bodies, and healthcare professionals. In countries like India, where Siddha medicine has been

practiced for centuries, there has already been significant progress in integrating traditional medicine into national healthcare policies. However, more needs to be done to promote Siddha medicine on a global scale.

The integration of Siddha medicine into modern healthcare systems could offer patients a broader range of treatment options, allowing them to choose the best approach for their individual needs. A complementary approach, where Siddha treatments are used alongside conventional therapies, could be particularly beneficial for managing chronic diseases, enhancing recovery, and improving overall well-being.

### **Future Role of Siddha Medicine in Global Healthcare**

As consumer demand for natural and traditional healthcare products continues to grow, Siddha medicine is poised to play a significant role in the future of global healthcare. The system's focus on holistic well-being, preventive care, and natural remedies resonates with the modern healthcare trends of personalized and patient-centered care. Moreover, as people become more aware of the long-term effects of pharmaceutical drugs, the appeal of natural alternatives like Siddha is likely to increase.

The global wellness industry, which includes traditional medicine, herbal supplements, and natural health products, is expected to continue growing in the coming years. This presents a unique opportunity for Siddha medicine to expand its reach and contribute to the global movement towards more sustainable and natural healthcare practices. By addressing the challenges of scientific validation, standardization, and integration, Siddha medicine can position itself as a credible and valuable alternative in the global healthcare landscape.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Siddha medicine, with its holistic philosophy and reliance on natural ingredients, offers a valuable alternative to conventional healthcare practices. As consumer interest in traditional and natural remedies grows, Siddha medicine is well-positioned to meet this demand and play a significant role in the future of global healthcare. However, for Siddha to fully realize its potential, there is a need for greater scientific validation, standardization, and collaboration with

modern healthcare systems. By overcoming these challenges, Siddha medicine can emerge as a powerful force in promoting health, wellness, and sustainable healthcare solutions worldwide.

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