



Research Article

**A STANDARD OF CONDUCT FOR THOKKANAM (MASSAGE)  
TECHNIQUES IN SIDDHA SYSTEM OF MEDICINE**

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**Abstract**

The traditional Dravidian system of medicine referred to popularly as Siddha medicine is a vast repository of external therapies particularly, administration of drugs through routes other than oral. Siddhar's classified external therapies as 32 types. Among them Thokkanam is placed under seventh category. It is one of the ancient therapies followed since many years among house hold folk practices and kings for getting relief from body pain and neuro muscular diseases. It is also called as Matthanam by Siddhar Therayar. Thokkanam is a method of manipulation and mobilization used primarily in the treatment of conditions related to changes in the varmam points leading to mechanical type of problems in joints and muscles. According to the physical nature it is classified into nine types. They are Thattal, Irukkal, Pidithal, Murukkal, Kaikattal, Azhutthal, Izhutthal, Mallathuthal, Asaithal. It also sorted the technique of massaging pressure into Mandham(Superficial), Mathimam(Subcutaneous) and Chandam(Deep). These study focuses on the literary view of nine types of procedure of thokkanam with its beneficial effect.

**Keywords:** Siddha medicine, external therapies, thokkanam, Therayar.

**Introduction**

Siddha Medicine is a vast repository of External therapies. In several instances, only the procedures without any drug are sufficient and these procedures are already systematized. Most of the therapies are aimed at maintaining healthy balance of the three physiological factors and also seven tissues of the body. There are occasions where administration of oral medicines becomes impossible and hence to revive the patient, administration of drugs or manipulation through external therapies like thokkanam, pattru, otradam are required. Nasal application including

inhalation and ophthalmic applications become important particularly in unconscious comatose patients, epilepsy, stroke patients and conditions like trauma, snake bite. It is very clear that the ancient physicians knew the connections between the brain and the sense organs and chose their routes and drugs accordingly [1]. Siddha Medicine is classified as Internal Medicines [Aga Marundugal 32] and External medicines [Pura marundugal 32] [2]. In Siddha system of Medicine, the term "Marundhu" is not exactly equivalent to the English 'drug'. "Marundhu"

may be concrete or abstract. The abstract may be physical manipulation, heat or cold application, etc., Hence these non oral medicines are listed as External Medicines - 'Puramarundhugal'. External therapy procedures are as important as in the management of Health and Disease. According to the mode of application, the siddha medicines could be categorized into two classes. Aga marunthugal/Internal medicines were used through the oral route and further classified into 32 categories based on their form, methods of preparation, shelf - life, etc., Pura marunthugal/External medicines include certain forms of drugs and also certain applications [such as nasal, eye and ear drops] and also certain procedures [such as leech application]. It is also classified into 32 categories [3].

## **Materials and Methods**

Thokkanam is a method of manipulation and mobilization used primarily in the treatment of

conditions related changes in the varmam points leading to mechanical type of problems in joints and muscles [3]. This treatment may be defined as physical manipulation of body or the massage treatment which is either given to the entire body or a particular diseased part. Massage is done in two ways: First is just by using bare hands and second by using oil. There are 9 techniques used in this treatment.

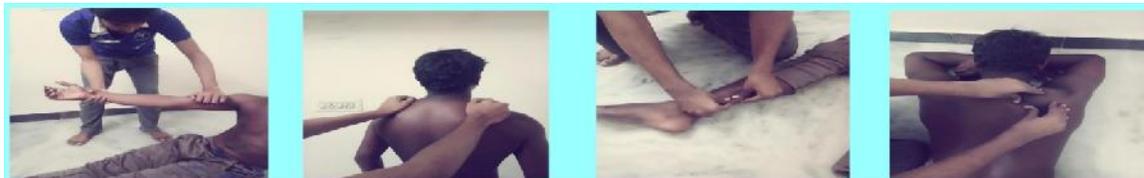
### **2.1 Thattal**

Thattal is done by tapping or clapping or spitting by four fingers except thumb which is kept folded or tapping and make the palmar surface concave without folding thumb. The tapping or clapping or spitting by the medial surface obtained from little finger to wrist area if fold the thumb like a cup holder. The physician performs this massage using his two hands[4].



### **2.2 Irukkal**

Irukkal is performed by the physician on the affected areas using his hands by tightening and releasing[4].



### **2.3 Pidithal**

Pidithal is performed the physician using his palmer surface[4].



## 2.4 Murukal

Murukkal is performed on the affected areas using the physician thumb and index finger of both

hands. It is done by wringing the affected muscles forward and backward[4].



## 2.5 Kaikattal

Kaikattal is performed by the physician by joining the hands of the patient from front or back positions[4].



## 2.6 Azhuthal

Azhuthal is a method used by pressing the affected areas of the patient using the palmer and finger areas of the physician[4].



## 2.7 Izhuthal

The physician use their palms and fingers and gently pull or friction from top to bottom

downwards and bottom to top upwards on the affected areas like limbs, neck, head and trunk after applying some oil. It is a post oleation therapy and not to be performed without oil[4].



**2.8 Mallathuthal**

Mallathuthal is performed slowly without any urgency by bending the patient with the

assistance of physician in forward, backward, lateral as bow and extending upto ear lobes using three forces[4].



**2.9 Asaithal**

Asaithal is done by holding the affected muscles firmly and shaken with high pressure in a wave pattern with or without applying the oil[4].



**2.A Position for doing Thokkanam**

Thokkanam can be done in Sitting position, walking position, Standing position, Lying supine position and Lying lateral position.

**2.B Force of manipulation**

There are three types of force of manipulation used in this technique they are Mandham(Mild force), Mathimam(Moderate force), Sandam(Severe force).

**Table 1. Types of Thokkanam with description**

S.No	Types	Eligible site	Force	Position	Uses
1.	Thattal	Back of trunk, Abdomen, Legs, And not performed on chest cage.	Mandham, Mathimam, Sandam.	Sitting, Walking, Standing, Lying supine and Lying lateral.	Vaatha diseases
2.	Irukkal	Muscular areas and not be more compacted on	Mandham, Mathimam,	Sitting, Standing,	Vaatha diseases

		the long bones and joints.	Sandam.	Lying supine and Lying lateral.	
3.	Pidithal	It is performed on the muscular areas by smearing or without smearing medicated oils	Mandham, Mathimam, Sandam.	Sitting, Walking, Standing, Lying supine and Lying lateral.	Muscular sprains
4.	Murukal	It is employed in all limbs and is avoided in in chest cage and bone joints.	Mandham, Mathimam.	Sitting, Standing.	Low back ache
5.	Kaikattal	It is performed on the hands and legs with smearing medicated oils	Mandham, Mathimam, Sandam.	Sitting, Standing, Lying supine and Lying lateral.	Osteoarthritis and other vaatha diseases
6.	Azhuthal	It is employed on hip area and is avoided in chest cage and head	Mandham, Mathimam.	Sitting, Standing.	Vaatha diseases, Lambago
7.	Izhuthal	It is employed on Visible bones, Head, Neck with smearing medicated oils	Mandham, Mathimam.	Walking, Standing , Lying lateral.	Cramps and sprains
8.	Malarthuthal	It is bending in forward, backward, lateral as bow and extending upto ear lobes using the forces	Mandham, Mathimam, Sandam.	Sitting.	Vertebral joint diseases
9.	Asaithal	It is performed on the hands and legs with smearing medicated oils	Mandham, Mathimam, Sandam.	Sitting, Standing , Lying supine and Lying lateral.	Cramps and sprains

### 3. Discussion

Thokkanam are Gifts to Siddha, which need to be researched and practised with full concentration by all Siddha Doctors to make Siddha well flourished, welcomed and reached into the general population. This therapy stimulates the internal organs through skin, muscle and nerve endings. Medicated oils penetrates and tonifies the skin, Improves blood Circulation, Revitalizes the skin and Increases the intelligence.

### 4. Conclusion

This paper helps in giving the types of procedure of Thokkanam towards Traditional therapies of Sidhha that have tremendous results in various diseases. The speciality of these Therapies lies therapeutic in nature. External therapies can be done in major measures with locally available resources and therefore is accessible as well as affordable to the entire society.

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