



National
Foundation

Innovation

State Award, Tamil Nadu
Herbal Drugs: Human Health Practices
Siddha medicine for leprosy and traditional knowledge
documentation



Shri S. R. Muthusamy

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Muthusamy read a couplet in 'Yogagnana Thirattu' about a salt which could help in alchemical work required for preparing the remedy for leprosy. After lots of hard work he was able to identify six different salts e.g. Sodium Carbonate, Silicon Nitrate, Copper Sulphate, Ammonium Carbonate, Calcium Carbonate and Sodium chloride. He discarded three salts out of six by trial and error process and finally learnt the art of using Cl (-), NO₃ (+), SO₄ (+) ions, which could help alchemical process to add potency to herbal preparations. He struggled for years together to standardize the protocol for combining these three salts and developed the 'Trine salt'.

Symptoms associated with various stages of the leprosy

Sri Muthusamy has formulated treatments for three distinct stages - initial, intermediate and advanced stages of leprosy. Appearance of yellow spots on the skin is the first sign of leprosy. The skin becomes hard at the spots and gradually



S. R. Muthusamy (70 years), is educated up to fourth standard. He has rich traditional knowledge about the uses of nearly 700 herbal plants. He has practically demonstrated the protocol for using 200 herbal drugs and is very good at the art of alchemy for the medicinal purpose. Every Saturday he addresses a group of traditional healers to share his experience and to sustain the knowledge for the posterity free of cost. At the age of four, he started learning by writing the alphabets in sand. The master happened to be a sound Siddha practitioner. So, the interest to know about plants was kindled in him naturally. When his master advised him to love leprosy patients on Gandhian lines, he retorted back as to why not remove leprosy itself and love all? The master replied that the cure was there in traditional systems of medicine and is about to become extinct because there are no supporters of this traditional knowledge. At the age of 13, he left his home and was wandering along with sages right up to the Himalayas. The Siddha literature attracted him and he dwelt upon it for months and years to decode the verses of Siddha books. He

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nodules grow. More spots appear around the first one and patches of horny layer develop. The skin loses sensation in the region. The intermediate stage is keratodermatitis or the inflammation with proliferation of the horny layer of the skin. The patches turn into abscesses all over the body. The extremities start wearing off as new cells fail to form to replace the dead cells of the skin. The advanced stage is reached if the patient continues to use his fingers, and to ambulate. The disease spreads from the outer skin to invade the cartilage. Fingers and toes disappear. Facial features are distorted. The tip of the nose wears off and the nose becomes flat and sets deep into the face. Lesions and sores appear and the patient is unable to ambulate. The formulations containing the triple-salt compound is administered to patients in each of the stages and is supplemented with herbal preparations.

Treatment associated with various stages of the leprosy;
Initial stage:

Oral administration of Vilvanga Bhasmam - 100 mg. with ghee, once a day and Sivanar Vembu Sooranam prepared from leaves, flowers and tender shoots of indigo (*Indigofera tinctoria*) known as *sivanimba* in Sanskrit and *sivanar vembu* in Tamil - one g a day. The treatment is recommended for 30-60 days. The process to prepare Velvanga Bhasmam: Take 50 gm of lead, heat it till it melts. Pour the liquid lead into castor oil (250 ml). Allow it to solidify. Heat it and cool it. Repeat the process for seven times. This will purify the lead. Wash and clean this lead with a clean cloth. Cut it into small flat pieces/chips. Obtain saw dust from one foot diameter wood-piece of *Thespesia populnea* (L.) Sol. Place the lead chips in this saw dust. Cover it with 8 kg of rice husk. Ignite the saw dust and rice husk. After 3 days remove the ash and retain the lead-ash. Add 1 g of trisalt muppu to 10 g of lead-ash. Mix them with the help of mortar and pestle for three hours. Filter the dust with cloth. This is the 'vilvanga bhasmam'. Oral administration

has cured 2112 leprosy patients so far.

There were several occasions when his wife was very unhappy with her husband for what she considered his wasteful practices and squandering of money on medicinal plants. She even threw one of the salt sedimentation out of the house. Mr Muthuswamy also threw the cash chest onto the street expressing frustration with constant demand of money. But now the initial anger has been replaced by reverence. One of his grandchildren, Sulochana has become a disciple of Muthuswamy. Mr SKM Maeilantham extended some support for his R & D work on herbal plants. What seems to be a unique case, BSMS students are under him every year for training. He has been invited by universities and colleges to lecture on Siddha medicine. SKM health and mind welfare charity trust are manufacturing 220 products based on the recipes provided by Mr Muthuswamy. Dr Vadivel, Professor of Horticulture at Tamil Nadu Agriculture University has spent a great deal of time and energy in getting medicines properly documented and validated.



of 100 mg of Vilvanga bhasbam with ghee once daily is the recommended dose. Length of the treatment depends upon the condition/stage of leprosy.

Intermediate stage (to cure cutaneous afflictions related to keratodermatitis):

Oral administration of Velvanga Bhusbam - 100 mg twice a day in ghee and Rasagandhi prepared from 41 different ingredients - 850 g to be mixed with buttermilk and drunk in the morning. A fluid prepared from thornapple (*Datura stramonium*) called 'shivapriya' in Sanskrit and 'ummatta' in Tamil is prescribed for topical application over abscesses and sores. Stramonium is a narcotic, anti-spasmodic and anodyne and it avoids the sores from causing excessive pain. The treatment is to be continued till the wounds are completely cured, which may take about one year or more.

Advanced stage:

Oral administration of Velvanga Bhusbam - 100 mg with ghee once a day. Sivanar Vembu Sooranam prepared from leaves, flowers and tender shoots of Indigo (*Indigofera tinctoria*) known as *sivanimba* in Sanskrit and *sivanar vembu* in Tamil - one g a day; a gel prepared from sal butter (*Shorea robusta*), the oleoresin known as *dhup* in Hindi and *kungiliyam* in Tamil, is prescribed for topical application over abscesses and sores. The treatment is to be continued till the wounds or completely cured, which may take about one year or more.

It is important to note here that the salts he extracts are not pure salt. For instance, 'boominatham' is extracted from soil but is not pure copper sulphate. When the sample was sent to National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research, Chandigarh, it was found to contain more than 29 components.