

# Perception And Preference Towards Siddha Medicines During Covid-19 In Tamil Nadu

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## Abstract

The COVID-19 outbreak caused a huge loss of life, both for the victims and their families. It brought to a financial catastrophe that had unanticipatedly large proportions globally and ruined livelihoods. The Indian government has collaborated with the Ministry of Ayush to establish a number of policies and preventative actions to combat the COVID-19 epidemic. Patients have benefited from the use of these strategies in conquering the early stages of Corona virus infection. In light of COVID-19, the researcher is interested in learning how the general public in Tamil Nadu thinks about and favours Ayurvedic medicines. The researcher also wanted to know the respondents' preferences for the Ayurvedic medications they frequently used to treat different conditions. The results of the study were widely publicized throughout Tamil Nadu. The convenience sampling technique was used to gather the samples from the study area. The sample included 390 respondents. The research model was framed by the variables perception, usage, preference, and satisfaction. Four hypotheses were presented for this investigation. Primary data was acquired using a well-structured questionnaire. Variables pertaining to perception, usage, preference, and satisfaction were included in the questionnaire. This shows that consumption serves as a mediating variable in the relationship between consumer perception and desire for Ayurvedic medicines. Preference perception is significant at a level of 0.05. The research methodology and assumptions were tested and determined to be true, yet there is no significant relationship between utilisation and satisfaction.

**Key Words:** Siddha, Ayurvedic medicines, COVID-19, Perception and Preference.

## Introduction

The Sanskrit term "AYURVEDA" has two synonyms: "life" and "knowledge," respectively. The systematic organisation of "knowledge" and reasoning is known as science. The "science of life" is another name for Ayurveda. Its origins can be found in the ancient Vedic literature, which views the body, mind, and spirit as being interconnected. The 5,000-year-old practise of ayurveda is still widely used today (Rajani, 2016). It emphasises the therapeutic properties of nature as well as the notion that prevention is better to therapy. Ayurveda has developed significantly since the Vedic era, when these Vedas were originally taught and disseminated (Girija & Anisha, 2020). Mayekar and Pendenkar (2002). As a system of medicine, Ayurveda has its own theories and techniques for treating patients (Sathiyaseelan et al., 2015). In the past, it was practised in the nations of South Asia. After colonisation, allopathy gained acceptance among the populace while ayurveda declined. As a more effective treatment for a wide range of disorders, including the most prevalent lifestyle diseases including obesity, hypertension, diabetes, and heart disease, ayurveda has lately made a resurgence in the medical community. Kerala, an Indian state, offers both domestic and foreign patients extensive professional Ayurvedic care with more

knowledge of the housing, food, and transport arrangements (Suhail&Srinivasulu, 2021). Traditional medicine is being used more frequently; its effectiveness and safety have been established over time. This could be used to improve public health if supply and demand stay balanced. Both domestically and internationally, ayurvedic formulations are becoming popular. Herbal remedies have long been a part of traditional Indian medical systems like Unani and Ayurveda. Ayurveda uses 700 species, Unani uses 700, Siddha uses 600, Amchi uses 600, while modern medicine uses 30 species (Girendra Kumar et al., 2012). Most people prefer herbal medicines for minor illnesses including a cough, cold, little wound, headache, and body aches. The use of them in deadly illnesses is less usual. The following herbs are frequently used at home: cardamom, fenugreek, giloy, ginger, cinnamon, clove, turmeric, and many others. Clove is used for toothaches, coughs, and colds, whereas licorice is used for mouth ulcers and throat infections (Yashasvi Sharma, 2021). Some treatments, including as massages and rejuvenation therapies, are performed during the monsoon because the chilly, dust-free air dramatically opens the body's pores and makes it more responsive to Ayurvedic herbal oils and therapy (Sunitha, 2020). Ayurveda's comprehensive health approach is the consequence of various elements. It aids patients in gradually regaining their health by boosting the immune system's ability to combat disease, or Ayurveda maintains equilibrium to cure any imbalances and anomalies. Since this medical system values natural species and places equal emphasis on mental wellness, the environment is important (Ranjan et al., 2020). (2017) Bulsara and Yadav Natural remedies soothe other biological systems while also treating the underlying ailment. They are all-purpose daily supplements for health. Human health can be revived and restored through the application of holistic treatments. Natural herbal treatments help to permanently cure a medical ailment by addressing the underlying cause of the problem rather than just the symptoms (Arya et al., 2012). Traditional medical systems (TMS) serve as a natural blessing and play a crucial role for the rural underprivileged in emerging nations. TM is also experiencing a worldwide resurgence due to its user-friendliness and the inherent adverse effects of contemporary medications. Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, and homoeopathy are actually old medical practises that have their roots in India (Karunamoorthi et al., 2012). The Indian government is integrating the local medical system. According to WHO estimates, 70% of Indians use traditional medical systems. As the twenty-first century got under way, certain encouraging developments for ayurvedic products were seen. Ayurveda considers a person's physical, mental, spiritual, and social aspects collectively. Ayurvedic remedies are essential to communal life since they are tried and tested and work regardless of one's financial situation (Sawant, 2019).

## COVID-19

The World Health Organization classified the COVID-19 outbreak as a global pandemic in March 2020. The new coronavirus has seriously harmed public health systems and human health while wrecking havoc on economy all around the world. In order to halt the spread of disease, the majority of nations have implemented preventative measures, such as multi-sector emergency responses, the construction of quarantine or isolation centres, diagnostic and treatment centres, and the provision of crucial intensive care services (Donia et al., 2021). The epidemic caused numerous deaths throughout the world. Even though the loss of livelihoods due to trade and financial collapse has continued to be negative, especially in nations with little resources, the loss of priceless human lives has touched both the wealthy and the poor (Nicola et al., 2020). (Rasul et al., 2021). The federal (central) and provincial (state) governments' united efforts, active handling of all positive cases, and coordinated preventative and mitigation initiatives have led to predictions of a third wave of vaccination campaigns (Joseph et al., 2021). Guidelines for the prevention and treatment of early COVID-19 have been developed by traditional medical systems around the world based on current practises and understanding (Hussain et al., 2020; Tillu et al., 2020). (Zhao et al., 2021). (Paudyal et al., 2022) The Indian government's Ministry of Ayush, which regulates Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy, has already prescribed a variety of Ayurveda-based pandemic preventative tactics as early as March 20, 2020. The Ministry will release the National Clinical Management Protocol for Ayurveda and Yoga in November 2020. It will be based on knowledge from Ayurvedic treatises, empirical data, clinical practise experience, and preliminary results from ongoing clinical investigations (Ministry of Ayush, 2022). Ayurvedic medicine was initially used to treat the COVID 19 pandemic. The researcher is curious to find out more about how the general Tamil Nadu population feels and favours Ayurvedic treatments in light of the COVID 19 outbreak.

## Review of literature

Ayurveda has a bright future in India due to the large rise in demand for natural treatments for ailments including stress, a lack of a good work-life balance, an unorganised lifestyle, and a lack of mental serenity. The deteriorating scenario has caused India's ayurveda sector to flourish quickly (Deshpande, 2015).

AYUSH is well-represented in the health tourism industry, yet there is still a lot of untapped potential. Ayurveda, which is a herbal, natural, and preventive medicine, may have a lot to offer as the world moves toward a healthy, natural lifestyle (Verma et al., 2022). By 2022, it is expected that the Indian healthcare market will be worth approximately Rs 8.6 trillion (US\$ 133.44 billion). The market for medical tourism in India was expected to reach US\$ 6 billion by 2018, up from a growth rate of 22-25% in 2017. The Indian government aims to spend 2.5% of GDP on public health by 2025.

The proportion of GDP that healthcare costs make up is increasing (Rai Menon, 2019). Customer buying behaviour is the culmination of a customer's attitudes, interests, intentions, and decisions around how they will act in the marketplace when making a purchase (Mubarak & Mufeeth, 2020).

Anthropology, psychology, sociology, and economics are all relevant social science fields for researching consumer behaviour (Joshi, 2017). The user's satisfaction with the advantages they want and the value they get from the products heavily influences how customers perceive a brand (Sharma, 2020). (Aruna and Rajeswari, 2017) The general public's perception of taking herbal medications is shifting in favour of them. Due to negative effects and excessive costs, customers are switching from allopathic to ayurvedic therapies, as seen by the constantly growing global market for herbal pharmaceuticals (Jawla et al., 2009). Many businesses have objected to the use of marketing methods for their ayurvedic product.

They emphasise that an important factor in the successful promotion of Ayurvedic products is the product's exceptional features. Furthermore, pricing and distribution are more important than promotion (Mahesh, et al., 2011). In North and West India, Ayurveda has been shown to be most effective in treating both serious and minor illnesses. The responders from the North and West concurred that ayurvedic products are inexpensive, they regularly take health supplements, and there are no negative side effects (Ahuja et al., 2020).

Patient satisfaction is the best strategy for a healthcare service provider to keep current clients pleased and retain them as prospective clients. The largest problem facing healthcare organisations is competing with other institutions on the basis of superior service quality components and effective service delivery. The services provided by healthcare organisations are now seen by people from both a medical and a comprehensive social standpoint. Customers are pleased when goods and services match or beyond their expectations. The degree of a customer's enjoyment, per Mittal and Kamakura (2001), is a significant indicator of whether or not they will make additional purchases (Jothi Lekshmi, 2020).

The vast majority of individuals favour alternative medical procedures today (Hanna et al., 2013). Alternative therapies with no adverse effects include homoeopathy, ayurveda, unani, and siddha (Braun et al., 2010). 2019 (Vetriselvan and Yoganandan). There are no negative effects with herbal treatments or nutritional supplements (K Suleiman, 2013). The majority of people believe strongly in herbal remedies like Ayurveda, Siddha, etc. and use herbal products (Pujari Neelkanth et al., 2015).

Because they are free of chemicals and have a lengthy shelf life, ayurvedic drugs are well-liked (Khanal, 2019). The most trustworthy sources of information prior to using OTC medications are doctors and pharmacists. The majority of Indians, according to the research, are familiar with over-the-counter drugs. The author made the case that as more people become conscious of their health, the OTC industry will eventually overtake the pharmaceutical industry.

In order to provide customers with thorough information on OTC products, the FMCG model is used in conjunction with traditional marketing for over-the-counter medicinal items (Srivastava & Wagh, 2017). Since they are familiar with the brands on the market, consumers are increasingly using over-the-counter (OTC) medications as their first line of defence against common illnesses including headaches, fevers, and colds and coughs. Consumers believe that familiarity with the brand is the most important factor when discussing OTC brand medications.

Pharmaceutical firms ought to consider this so that these over-the-counter goods are successfully marketed across all channels of distribution and that more people are aware of the safe and efficient usage of OTC brand pharmaceuticals (Dadhich & Dixit, 2017). Consumer behaviour is influenced by how consumers feel about and are satisfied with herbal products (Ashok Kumar, 2019; Chopra & Baxi, 2019). (Dubey & Sharma, 2020). Customers appreciate the value and quality of ayurvedic products (Misra et al., 2020). The majority of people learn about a product through advertising (Rani, 2017; Anupriya, 2017). 2019 (Salil & Vivek).

## Materials and methods

This study made use of descriptive research. The study's primary objective was to investigate customer preferences and perceptions of Ayurvedic medicines in Tamil Nadu after COVID-19. Another objective of the study was to determine which Ayurvedic treatments the respondents usually used to treat different ailments. The survey's participants were the people of Tamil Nadu. Convenience sampling was applied to the collection of samples from the study region. There were 390 responses in all. The variables perception, utilisation, preference, and satisfaction were included in a research model. For this investigation, four different hypotheses were developed. A well-structured questionnaire was utilised to collect primary data. The survey considered variables such as perception, use, preference, and satisfaction. There are five comments regarding satisfaction, seven regarding perception, eight regarding usage, and seven regarding preference. Each assertion was scored on a five-point Likert scale. Scores range from 1 to 5, with 5 denoting total agreement, 4 denoting partial agreement, 3 denoting neutrality, 2 denoting dissent, and 1 denoting glaring disagreement. The Cronbach's alpha test was used to evaluate the instrument's internal consistency and reliability. The 23 survey questions' combined Cronbach's alpha was 0.756, which is above than the necessary threshold of 0.07. (2010) Anderson, Hair, Black, and Babin. The tool was deemed trustworthy for this inquiry as a result.

## Henry Garrett ranking method

**Table 2: Siddha Medicines frequently taken by the respondents for treatments**

Medicines	Mean	Rank
Dry ginger popularly known as sonth or sukku	49.15	III
Turmeric	46.84	VI
Cinnamon	47.81	V
Long Pepper	46.24	VII
Neem	45.05	VIII
Tulsi	48.83	IV
Amla	55.24	II
Lesser Galangal – Chitharathai in Tamil	56.77	I

The eight herbal medications widely used by the responders for treating various illnesses include lesser galangal, also known as Chitharathai in Tamil, dry ginger, also known as Sonth or Sukku, cinnamon, long pepper, also known as Thippili, Tulsi, Neem, Amla, and turmeric. Lesser galangal, also known as chitharathai, was ranked best with a mean score of 56.75 among these eight medications, followed by amla with a mean score of 55.25. With a mean score of 49.17, dried ginger, also known as sonth or sukku, came in third place. Tulsi came in at number four with a mean score of 48.84, followed by Cinnamon at number five with a mean score of 47.80, and Turmeric at number six with a mean score of 46.86. Thippili, a long pepper, came in seventh with a mean score of 46.26 while Neem came in last with a mean score of 45.07.

## Conclusion

The governments of India and Tamil Nadu developed a practical decentralised model and participatory framework model for offering Ayurvedic treatments and services to the general public right from the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak. During and after COVID-19, the general public started to favour this traditional healthcare system. Perceptions of individuals might occasionally differ from one another. Despite the fact that Ayurvedic treatments for COVID-19 are extremely effective, several side effects that patients encounter cause them to fear the drugs and/or treatments. There is statistical significance for both perception of and desire for use. This shows that consumption serves as a mediating variable in the relationship between consumer perception and desire for Ayurvedic medicines. Statistics demonstrate the importance of perception of preference. Consumption that is focused on achieving satisfaction, however, has minimal effect. People's choice to take the drug is not yet influenced by perception. But whether or not these medications are utilised in the study area is unrelated to the decisions people make. However, many people who use Ayurvedic drugs are very satisfied with them. They commonly employ them to stop the spread of diseases. Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, herbal remedies, etc. have gained popularity among people across the country as a result of COVID-19. The government has to prioritise the implementation of awareness programmes to draw in the people by highlighting the benefits and relevance of Ayurvedic medicines and therapies. This is because traditional medicines are the cornerstone of our culture. This will give our country the possibility to develop its traditional medicine tourism sector.

## Future Scope for Further Research

In future studies, it will be important to include siddha medicines and customer view on it, so that results will be diverse.

The study can further be researched as below for distinguished results

- 1) Celebrity Endorsement And Its Effect On Siddha Products
- 2) Celebrity Endorsement And customer perception towards siddha product

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## Data Availability Statement

- Absence of the data due to confidentiality issues.

## Ethics approval statement

- I accept that the content hasn't been plagiarised

## Conflict of Interests

- The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article

## Declaration

The authors declare that prior informed consent was taken from all the respondents for collecting the data for the present research work.

## Authors' Contributions

M.Suryakumar: Investigation, data collection, writing original draft, Conceptualization. S.V.Rajkamal: Data analysis, methodology.

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