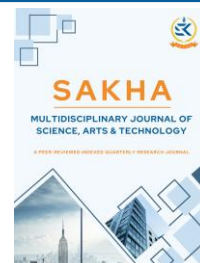




Vol. 1, No. 3; Jul – Sep (2025)

SAKHA: Multidisciplinary Journal of Science, Arts & Technology

Available at <https://sakha.co.in/journals/mjsat>



Vinayagar and Tamil Medicine

Dr. G. Rangarajan^{1a}

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of History, Kalaignar Karunanidhi Government Arts College,
Thiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu, India.

Abstract

Vinayagar, also known as Ganesha, is a prominent deity in Hinduism, venerated primarily in South India. His significance extends beyond spirituality; he is often associated with knowledge, wisdom, and the removing obstacles. This paper explores the connections between Vinayagar and Tamil medicine, focusing on the integrating spiritual practices, herbal medicine, and traditional healing systems prevalent in Tamil culture. Additionally, it investigates how these elements reflect the socio-cultural ethos of Tamil society and their relevance in contemporary health practices.

Keywords: *Vinayagar, Herbs, Tamil Medicine, Benefits, Tamil Culture, Spiritual Practices.*

Introduction

The rich tapestry of Tamil culture is deeply intertwined with spirituality, superstition, and traditional medicine. Among the pantheon of deities worshipped in Tamil Nadu, Vinayagar holds a unique position due to his attributes that resonate with health and well-being. This paper aims to analyze the Vinayagar's significance in Tamil medicine, drawing on historical texts,

^a Corresponding Author: rangarajan_history@gmail.com

cultural practices, and ethno botanical knowledge that highlight the interplay between faith and health.

Vinayagar and Natural Medicine

Natural plants are used in many forms as defense, food and medicinal herbs for man. People in the Asian continent believe that certain trees have divine powers in nature. Man first He worshiped trees as gods. Then he bowed down saying that the Lord resides in the tree. That may have eventually led to worshipping the Lord under a tree.¹

If wealth accrues to one who helps others, it is like fruit ripening on a useful tree in the middle of a town.

“பயன்மறம் உள்நூற்பு பழுத்தற்றால் செல்வம்

நயனுடை யான்கண் படிந்” ²

as Thiruvalluvar mentioned in his Thirukural. So we can learn the presence of useful trees in the middle of the town and their importance. People worshiped the lord Vinayagar in most places under a tree with medicinal properties. This article is intended to explore the medicinal properties of herbs associated with the lord Vinayagar.

Vinayagar sits under the Peepal tree like the Buddha under the Bodhi tree. It has been a custom of Tamils that childless women take a bathe in the morning and go around the Peepal tree where Vinayagar sits and worships. It is generally believed that the woman who worshiped like this will conceive. A young leaf of the peepal tree cures mental disorders. Also, its bark heals ulcers and the seeds cure constipation.³

The place where the peepal tree and neem tree are intertwined is the best place for Pillaiyar. Neem leaves have the power to destroy worms and cure measles. Neem flower powder cures gonorrhea, Neem bark powder cures malaria.⁴ It is also customary to mention that the Peepal tree is symbolized as lord Shiva and the Neem tree as matha Parvathi and Vinayagar sit as their child and give his blessing to the deities for birth.

The Tamil proverb mentions “Alum velum pallukku uruthi” means the milk from the banyan tree tightens the teeth that move. Its aerial roots are used to brush

teeth, the bark relieves diabetes and the seed relieves constipation.⁵ It is significant that Alalasundara Vinayakar is sitting under a banyan tree at the junction of Madurai Melamasi Road and North Madurai Road.

In Kumbakonam Kumbeswarar temple there is Vanniyadi Vinayagar sits under the Vanni tree. The leaves of this Vanni tree, which looks like a tamarind leaf, mixed with ghee and fenugreek will cure rashes and scabies.⁶

Sankarankovil is a place in the Thirunelveli district there is one such street name called Kilaavadi Vinayagar Street. The name kilaavadi derives from the Bengal currant tree known as kilaamaram in Tamil. Three drops of the juice of kilaa flower will remove the mucous membrane in the eye. The fruit can be pickled and eaten. It removes toxins from the body.⁷

Vinayakar can be found under the Vilvam tree (Bael Tree) on the south road of Madurai Meenakshi amman temple. Bael leaves are always used in lord shiva's pooja as well as Ganesha. It is said that the valvathi thailam will get rid of flatulence. Its flower removes dullness. The fruit cools the brain and cures mental illness. Tender vilvam fruit is a special cure for tuberculosis.⁸

Maavadi Vinayagar is seated in Nagapattinam. Mavadi means mango tree, its leaves are considered as holy: by placing them in the water, the water becomes purer. Mangoes are rich in vitamin A which relieves cramps, vomiting and lethargy. Mango seeds cure heartburn and diarrhea.

Pillaiyar is under the fig tree in the inner courtyard of the Thanjavur art gallery. Fig leaf cleans the blood, fig bark is powdered and ground into ghee to cure cleft, etc. Consuming fig milk in the morning and evening for three days will heal the mouth ulcer. It is also believed that women will become pregnant if they eat it.⁹

At the Arunachaleswarar Temple in Tiruvannamalai, Vinayagar is seated under the Magizham tree (Spanish Cherry tree) to the right of Sindura Vinayagar. Grinding the seeds of Magizham and mixing them with milk will make the mineral - rich.¹⁰

Thalamoola Vinayakar or Karukadi Vinayakar in Tirukkachur, Sengai district seated under a Palm tree.¹¹ There are many books about the benefits of palm viz. Padhanir relieves body heat and palm candy sugar relieves cough. Nungu also known as ice apple reduces the severity of measles. Palmyra sprout has mineral development in the body. People in the villages know the benefits of palm trees.¹²

“Yavarkumaam iravarkoru pachilai” said by Thirumoolar . like that for lord Ganesha Bermuda grass is one of the leaf considered to be powerful offer. Similarly, twenty-one pachilais are included in the worship of Vinayagar.¹³

Like the medicinal properties of the trees where Vinayagar resides; these pachilais are also full of medicinal properties. Six pachilais are found with different names among the pachilais.¹⁴

Arunagirinathar mentions the offerings made to Vinayagar in his Thirupugazh. From these, it is clear that the number of things offered to Vinayagar is twenty-one.¹⁵ sugarcane, indian broad beans, fruits, sugar, dal, sesame, puffed rice, flattened rice, ghee, mung bean, pigeon pea, tender coconut, honey, payanuu appam, raw rice, pittu, cucumber, Idipal type, cooked white rice, groundnut and sweet potato. All the mentioned twenty - one items are full of medicinal properties and have a strengthening effect on the body.¹⁶ Leaf juice of indian broad beans with curd mix cure diarrhea.¹⁷

“Muppazhamum mugarum Musika Vahana” as Avvaiyar mentions in her Vinayagar Agaval.¹⁸ Mukanis are mango, jackfruit and banana. Other types of bananas except rasatali give strength to the body. Mangoes are rich in fiber. Jackfruit is a cure for many diseases. Cucumber removes kidney disorders, if cucumber seeds are ground in milk and consumed regularly, it will cure water blockage, stone blockage and water retention.¹⁹ Consuming of chickpeas, puffed rice, tender coconut water, etc., will cool the body, remove bile, soak chickpeas and eat them to increase virility.²⁰

Turmeric plays an important role in Vinayagar worship. People worship Pillaiyar by dissolving turmeric in water and kneading it into a small vinegar shape. Sprinkling the Turmeric water everywhere in the house will remove the germs, if you rub turmeric daily and take a bath, you will get rid of the scurvy in the body and you won't get sore.

Vinayakar Puja begins by standing up with the fingers closed and the hands crossed with the forehead dump and holding the left ear with the right hand and the right ear with the left hand and doing the situp. Arunagirinath mentions this type of worship in his song. As follows,

“வளர்கை குழைந்தி தொப்பண குட்டொடுவகை
புந் பொற்புத வர்ச்சனை” ²¹

Witnesses say that this kind of practice leads to improve memory and balance the breathing.

Conclusion

Thus it can be known that in the time when medicine was not developed, people considered Vinayagar as a medicine to solve their problems and worshiped medicinal trees, plants, vines and fruits wherever Vinayagar was present and this is connected with people's life.

References

- [1] G.Subramania Pillai, Tree worship and Ophiolotary, p.57,
- [2] Thirukural. kural -216, Adhikaram – 22, Oppuravarithal
- [3] Nellai Kumaraswamy Vaithiyar, Mooligaigal Thanmayum Payanum, p.16.
- [4] T. Kannan, Uyirkakkum Iyarkai Unavukal, p.336.
- [5] Nellai Kumaraswamy Vaithiyar, op. cit, p.23.
- [6] T. Kannan, op.cit, p..347-348.
- [7] C. Chidhambardhanu pillai, Porutpanbu Nool, p.204-205.
- [8] C. Dhandapani Thesigar, Ganapathi, p.74.
- [9] Munisami Muthaliyar, Mooligai Marmum, p.4-5.
- [10] Nellai Kumaraswamy Vaithiyar, op. cit, p.270.
- [11] C. Dhandapani Thesigar, op. cit, p.73.
- [12] Rajaji. Somu, Thirumoolar Thavamozhi, p.60.
- [13] Aru. Ramanathan, Vijayanagar Puranam, p.581.
- [14] C. Dhandapani Thesigar, op. cit, p.83.
- [15] Kazhaga Pulavar kuzhu, Arunagirinathar Iyatriya Thirupugazh Pernthirattu, p.5.
- [16] T. Kannan, op.cit, p.10-330.
- [17] C. Chidhambardhanu pillai, op. cit, p.30
- [18] Avvai Amudhu, Vellore Jalakandeshwar Temple publicaon p.1.
- [19] Munisami Muthaliyar, op. cit, p.103.
- [20] C. Chidhambardhanu pillai, op. cit, p.148
- [21] Kazhaga Pulavar kuzhu, op. cit, p.5.