Ayurveda is an ancient system of medicine which originated in North India. It dates back to the Vedas. Ayurveda means “A life saving medicine based on vedic sasthras”. The system originated from Atharvaveda. This system of knowledge has been gathered due to the constant observation of nature for many years by men since the advent of civilization. Ayurveda is basically based on the predominance of three humours namely, Vatha, Pittha and Kapha in the human body. Balanced state of these doses denotes health and their imbalance produces diseases.¹

**Definition of Ayurveda**

Ayurveda is the name, which the ancient Indians gave to their science of medicine. ‘Ayul’ means life and ‘Veda’ to know or attain. Ayurveda therefore, is the science by the knowledge of which life can be prolonged or its nature understood. There are two versions of its origin. The medical

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the above branches. It enjoys popularity because of its having a hand on therapy and injury and very relaxing to the fatigued body and tired mind.

From very early period the Ayurvedic systems of medicine had existed, especially in the Tamil Districts. The Ayurvedic system had setback under the Mauryas as human dissections were banned during King Ashoka’s rule in India, which can be evidenced in the Royal edict. After the fall of Buddhism, the hospital system of treatments seemed to be on the decline. As early in the eleventh century A.D. the ruling kings founded regular hospitals for the treatments of inpatients. Thus indigenous medical science was patronized and practised by the state and the people far before the advent of the Europeans to India for trade purposes. There are sufficient evidences for medicinal preparations and drugs usages in medicine meant for export purposes to the European countries.

When British rule came to be established in India, these systems of medicines were suppressed. However, some

During 1880, attempts were also made to teach the medical students of the various provinces in vernaculars.

**Political Awakening and Revival**

With the political awakening in India in the wake of the partition of Bengal a stimulus was given to all national movements. The improvement of the vernacular was one of the first attempts made towards national uplift. Medical literature played a prominent role and books were published in all vernaculars as in Sanskrit. Eminent ayurvedic physicians formed themselves into an association called the All India Ayurvedic Maha Mandala in the year 1907. This association conducted annual conferences and exhibitions of indigenous drugs, literature and apparatus. During this decade, many Sanskrit books were published in important centres like Poona, Allahabad, Calcutta and Madras. It was not long before several ayurvedic schools were opened all over the country, thus promoting the teaching of Ayurveda. In 1920, the Indian National Congress adopted a resolution.

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7. Principles of Ayurveda Treatment (nd), pp.43-44.
council meeting of 31st March 1920 wherein the government sanctioned the payment of certain grants, which the Corporation of Madras proposed to make available to some of the ayurvedic institutions.

**Sri Venkataramana Dispensary and Ayurveda College**

This institution owed its origin entirely to the philanthropy of the late V. Krishna Swami Iyer who died prematurely. V. Krishna Swami Iyer showed a keen interest in maintaining the dharma Vaidyasala during the 1900s at Mylapore for the treatment of poor patients in the Madras City. In 1905 he had an idea of establishing an institution, which would give medical relief to the poor on the basis of indigenous system of medicine and to train the students about the study and practice of the indigenous system. He accordingly executed a deed of trust on 21st November 1905. By which he constituted himself and two others as the board of management for the institution. He made an endowment initially of Rs. 25,000/-. This institution was founded on 15th December 1905 and it was started in a rented building in No.9, East Madras Street, Mylapore. He

efforts of the late Dr. M. Subramanya Iyer, B.A., B.M.B.S.,
a leading medical practitioner of Mylapore and the
construction was completed in that year. In the year 1930
additions were made to the main building at a cost of Rs.
3,644. In 1931 additions were made to the store room and
the manufactory was done at the cost of Rs. 6,966 from out
of the funds of the institution.\textsuperscript{14}

\textbf{Establishment of Colleges on New Models}

With the advancement of western education slowly
vanished the Gurukula system or discipleship system.
Though the discipleship had its advantages is could not be
explained in the modern periods. The medical educational
system slowly changed over to colleges. Dr. Gopala Chandra
Guru and the honourable Mr. K. Krishna Swami Iyer of
Mylapore devoted their efforts to the progressive changes.\textsuperscript{15}

The eligibility condition for admission to ayurvedic
medical colleges were as follows:

The candidates should pass the entrance exam
conducted by the Ayurvedic Colleges and should pass

\begin{itemize}
  \item History of Higher Education in Colonial South India, Madras, 1957, pp.344-345.
  \item Malathy, \textit{op.cit.}, p.30.
\end{itemize}
Government of Madras formed a committee under the head of Sir Rao Bahadur M.C. Koman L.M.S., to investigate the efficiency of the indigenous drugs. M.C. Koman L.M.S. published the report in the year 1918. Governor General concluded, after going through the reports, that he did not have enough knowledge in the indigenous medicines and therefore the committee’s reports were rejected. However, there was some useful information about Ayurvedic drugs and preparation of medicines for the uses of Allopathic practitioners in the modern hospitals and dispensaries that saved more money to the State. The Government of Madras decided to appoint a committee consisting mainly of non-officials. Khan Bahadur Mohammad Usman reported to recognize and encourage the indigenous systems of medicine. The main object of the committee was to support the representatives of the Ayurvedic and the Unani Medical systems, also to monitor the scientific criticisms, and to justify state encouragements of these systems.

The committee was set up by the government of Madras in October 1921. The committee finally recommended the following criteria:

18. G.O.Ms. No. 964, Puplic Health Department, dated 10th August, Madras, 1921.
not more than three thousand while the numbers following the Indian system was not less than twenty thousands, i.e., to say there were at least seven practitioners of Indian systems to everyone practitioner of the European system.\(^{22}\)

4. Establishment of adequate number of medical schools and colleges from which a sufficient number of efficient practitioners may be accepted to be sent out every year was the first step that ought to be undertaken before medical registration was introduced in respect of the practitioners of the Indian medicine.

5. The General Council of Medical Registration or practitioners of Indian system must be quite distinct from and independent of the existing Madras Medical Council. It should be empowered to directly supervise both Medical Registration and Medical Education.\(^{23}\)

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\(^{22}\) Report of the Khan Bahudur Mohammed Usman Committee, Madras, 1921, p.19.

\(^{23}\) Ibid., pp.27-29.
purpose at Hyder Park, Poonamalle High Road, Kilpauk. The outpatient and inpatient department were opened during this year, as per the prospectus of the school approved by the Government order. The scope of training, given in the institution was widened and it was notified that “The school is intended to provide such training to the alumni as well enable them to become competent practitioners of Indian System of Medicine, with good working knowledge of the Western System also.  

 Provision had been made in this school not only for the proper training of students in Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani batch but also for giving them courses of instruction in such subjects. Like modern Anatomy, Physiology and Surgery in all its branches including midwifery and Ophthalmology provision had also been made for Herbarium museum and Library. “The number of students to be admitted each year was fixed as 120. Permanent habitation was provided for the school. By the time, the government purchased Hyder Park for the school and an attached hospital was constituted in 1927. 

28. Ibid.  
**Indigenous Medical Practitioners**

The first Unani Physician found in Indian History is Ziauddin Abdul Rafi Hirwi, who was the court physician of Sultan Khusrow Malik. Hakim Ghulam Dastagir the son of Hakim Ghuyalum Ahamed carried the name Ghyath, which was one of his ancestor names. Shah Ghyath, Al-Din, with the pen name of Laiq was the chief physician during the Nawab’s period in Madras. He run a school in his house where he conducted classes to teach medicine for his students. His collection *Tadhkira-Ishucra* had been published under the title *Tadhkira-L-Laiq*. Hakim Quadir Mohammedan Naiti bore the title of Quadir Ahmed Khan Muhtamin and Muhtamin-Al-Dalwah and Sarbarah Khan Muhtamin. His grandfather Hakim Mohammed Said Khan was also a noted physician, and a special physician to the ruler of Madras, Nawab-Azam-Al-Dawlaht. At the same time his father was a staff surgeon serving on Azam-Jah of Madras. Amir-al-Hind, Nawab-Ghauth-Mohammed-Khan, the ruler of Madras, appointed him as the Chief of the Court Physicians. At the end of the Nawab rule the British Government of India granted him a considerable pension, which continued even thereafter. His son

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named Samburvedagarai, one of the very beautiful villages located on the banks of the Courtallam Falls. His family from a Hindu Nadar community was converted to Christianity since his grandfather’s period, due to the death of the 11 of his 13 sons due to cholera. Both his parents were employed by a British missionary. His father was a gardener and his mother was a Bible woman. Abraham learnt Siddha Medicine from Guru Karumanandar who lived in the nearby Surihi hills and taught him the preparation of the Sanjeevi medicines. After his marriage, he and his wife went to Tanjore in search of employment. There they both worked in a school named Lady Naiper’s school. Later they resigned their jobs and Abraham devoted his entire time to be a physician. After a great struggle with the poverty and privation for a period of two years he established a hospital named Karunanidhi Medical Hall, where he employed all his poor relatives and lived prosperously with his aged parents. His prosperous descendants are successfully continuing his noble service on siddha medicine such as manufacturing and distribution of medicines.\textsuperscript{35}

Vaidya Vidwanmani C. Kannuswamy Pillai (1875-1946) was another remarkable person in the history of Indigenous medicine. He was born in 1875 as the second son of his parents. His ancestors were famous siddha physicians like him too. He belonged to the family of traditional siddha medical practice. At his twentieth age, he married Kamakshi who handled all the family responsibilities. His wife died next year without any issue. This incident made him leave home and go to groves in search of a master to learn Siddha Medicine. It was here his long felt need for basic learning Siddhars and their medical secrecy of Siddha System of medicine was fulfilled. Being an efficient Tamil scholar he mastered the Siddhar’s language mostly poetical and with hidden axioms. After three years of strenuous training and close companionship, the Guru made him to return to family life, as he was young and aged only 24 years. Then he married another girl named Pattammal and secured a clerical job in the Indian Postal Department. He spent most of his hard earned money in Siddha medicinal research and with other Siddha colleagues.37

Clay vessels were used which could afterwards be discarded. The mother herself became an outcast at that time. The Dai had no idea of mechanism of labour. She used crude, artificial force to induce the delivery. Sometimes child death occurred. The training of the indigenous dais was not taken up on a large scale, until the establishment of the Victoria Memorial scholarship fund in 1903. The fund was established by Lady Curzon to take a special effort to do something to improve the conditions of childbirth. However, the Dufferin fund and other organizations were opposed to this at that time, and therefore efforts were started shortly after the death of Queen Victoria. The Madras and Bombay presidencies were not included in the operations of the Victoria memorial fund. In Madras, trained midwives were replacing the hereditary dais in order to regulate the medical profession. Madras Legislative Council passed the Act of Registration of Nurses and Midwives. This was possible because education was widespread and women were not secluded. Because of these conditions women were to come forward to be trained in midwifery.

The Vico Laboratories which has upraised the Indian Ayurveda has invented many products for people suffering from **fierce abyss of disdain**. Their products such as Vico Turmeric Suncreams, shaving cream, sugarfree paste and powder, Ayurvedic medicine for strong gum and mighty bite, Vico Narayani cream and Ayurvedic medicine for gum and tooth are widely used by the people of Tamilnadu.\(^{43}\)

Sabania or *Agathikeerai* soup of the leaves is taken as Vermifuge and it cures peptic ulcer.\(^{44}\) *Musumusukai* extract if taken daily cures piles and also darken the hair. *Kottai Karanthi* juice if taken a spoonful blackens the grey hair.\(^{45}\)

Of extract of Karisalankanni leaf is applied on the head to relieve dandruff and blacken the grey hair. *Semparuthi* or shoe flowers are dried in shade and powdered and used for cleaning hair and prevents falling of hair. Mudukathin paste of the leaf is applied externally for joint pain and it relieves rheumatic pain. Yanainerunchi extract is used for the reduction of pain and inflammation in the body.

The extract of *Mukkutipoondu* applied externally cures paralysis. Juice of *Nilavembu* is used for excess bleeding in

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43. The Hindu Daily Newspaper, dated 07.10.1912, p.7.
Ayurvedic Colleges in Tamilnadu

Ayurveda College-Coimbatore, Dharma Ayurveda College-Sri Perumbudur, Government Ayurveda Medical College, Rajiv Gandhi Ayurveda Medical College and Hospital, Shri Venkataraman Ayurveda College, Chennai, Sri Jayendra Saraswati Ayurveda College, Nazarathpet, Sri Sairam Ayurveda Medical College & Research Centre, Chennai and Sri Sankara College of Ayurveda, Trichy acted very well in the history of Ayurveda in Tamilnadu.48

Danvantari Vaidyasala

The Danvantari Vaidyasalas found in many places in Tamilnadu are giving treatment to various kinds of diseases, such as rheumatic complaints, gastric diseases and orthopaedic treatments of all kinds.49

The Ayurvedic formulas became popular and the people began to use it regularly. The Ayurvedic formulas for external applications are also very popular.

Thus, Ayurveda and Siddha system of medicine is generally popularised in the history of Tamilnadu.