

**SAMANYA-VISHESHA SIDDHĀNTA—AN AYURVEDIC FRAMEWORK FOR
DYNAMIC BALANCE AND REGULATION****Dr. Tania Sen***

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ABSTRACTसर्वदा सर्वभावानां सामान्यं वृद्धिकारणम् । हासहेतुर्विशेषश्च प्रवृत्तिरुभयस्य तु ॥^[1]

(Cha.Su.1/44)

सामान्यमेकत्वकरं विशेषस्तु पृथक्त्वकृत् । तुल्यार्थता हि सामान्यं विशेषस्तु विपर्ययः ॥^[2]

(Cha.Su.1/45)

The *Samanya-Vishesha Siddhanta* is one of the most fundamental theoretical frameworks in *Ayurveda*, providing the basis for understanding physiological processes, pathological changes, and therapeutic interventions. Derived from classical *Ayurvedic* texts, particularly the *Charaka Samhita*, this principle explains that similarity (*Samanya*) leads to an increase, whereas dissimilarity (*Vishesha*) leads to decrease. This dual concept provides a rational foundation for the regulation of bodily tissues (*dhatus*), *doshas*, and metabolic activities. After understanding these principles, individuals who carefully followed the rules of healthy living were able to enjoy good health, happiness, and a long life.^[3] The study of *Samanya-Vishesha* is essential for understanding how diet, lifestyle, environment, and medicines influence the human body. In *Ayurvedic* therapeutics, treatment strategies are largely guided by this principle, aggravation of *doshas* is alleviated through opposite qualities (*Vishesha*), whereas depletion of tissues is managed through similar qualities (*Samanya*). Thus, the principle supports the entire decision-making process in dietetics, pharmacology, and clinical practice. Furthermore, *Samanya-Vishesha* supports the personalized approach of *Ayurveda*. Its application varies according to individual constitution (*prakriti*), age, seasonal variations, and disease conditions, making it highly relevant to contemporary personalized medicine. By underscoring the effects of qualities (*gunas*) and their interactions, the principle enhances the practitioner's ability to analyze clinical conditions logically and select appropriate therapeutic interventions. In conclusion, the *Samanya-Vishesha Siddhanta* is not only a classical philosophical concept but also a practical, scientific tool essential for understanding and applying *Ayurvedic* principles. Its study provides deeper insight into the mechanisms of growth and reduction, therapeutic pathways, and holistic patient care, thereby strengthening its significance in both traditional and modern healthcare settings.

KEYWORDS: *Samanya, Vishesha, Ayurvedic principles, Dosha balance.***INTRODUCTION**

Samanya-Vishesha Siddhānta (सामान्य-विशेष सिद्धान्त) is one of the most fundamental principles of *Ayurveda* that explains the natural law of increase and decrease in all substances and entities of the universe. The term *Samanya* denotes “similarity”, “commonness” or “generality”, whereas *Vishesha* denotes “dissimilarity”, “particularity” or “specificity”. The concept is concisely expressed in the classical *Ayurvedic* dictum.

“*Samānyam ekatvakarakam, Viśeṣaḥ prthaktvakarakah.*”
(*Caraka Samhitā, Sūtrasthāna* 1/44)

Similarity (*Samanya*) leads to increase or unity, while dissimilarity (*Vishesha*) leads to decrease or separation.

According to this principle, substances possessing similar qualities promote the increase one another (*Samanya* or generality), while those possessing opposite or dissimilar properties lead to decrease (*Vishesha* or

specificity). This principle is not confined to the biological phenomena but extends to physical, psychological, and pharmacological processes.

In the *Ayurvedic* framework, this principle governs both physiology and pathology. The normal balance of *doṣa* (functional principles), *dhātu* (tissues), and *mala* (wastes) depends on the dynamic interplay of similarity and dissimilarity among their inherent qualities (*guṇas*). Disease develops when there is either aggravation (*vyādhī*) or depletion (*kṣaya*) of the *doshas*, *dhatu*s, or *malas*.^[4]

Thus, *Samanya-Visheshā Siddhānta* serves as the foundation of *Ayurvedic* therapeutics. It offers a rational approach for selecting treatments—where *Samanya* principles are used to nourish and strengthen deficient tissues (e.g., *brimhana* therapy), and *Visheshā* principles are used to reduce or eliminate excess (e.g., *langhana* or *sodhana* therapies).

Philosophically, the concept of *Samanya* and *Visheshā* can be traced to the *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* school of Indian thought, which classifies all entities of the universe into categories of general and particular. *Ayurveda* adopts and applies these philosophical categories to biological and therapeutic contexts, transforming abstract metaphysics into practical medical science.

In modern interpretation, *Samanya-Visheshā Siddhānta* can be compared to homeostasis and feedback regulation—the biological mechanisms that maintain equilibrium in living systems. It represents *Ayurveda*'s holistic understanding of balance, adaptation, and interdependence, which remains relevant for preventive, promotive, and curative.

Rationale of the Study

विकारो धातुवैषम्यं, साम्यं प्रकृतिरुच्यते।
सुखसंज्ञकमारोग्यं, विकारो दुःखमेव च॥^[5]
(cha.su 9/4)

Error in the equilibrium state of *dhatu* is known as disease (*vikara*) and their balanced condition is known as health (*Prakṛti*). Health is also known as happiness and the disease is nothing but misery. *Ayurveda*, the ancient Indian system of medicine, is built upon several fundamental philosophical principles. Among these, the *Samanya-Visheshā Siddhānta* stands as one of the most important, providing the scientific basis for understanding the processes of growth, depletion, balance, and transformation within the human body. Described elaborately in the *Charaka Samhita*, this principle guides the entire *Ayurvedic* approach to diet, lifestyle, pharmacology, and treatment. Its study remains indispensable for understanding the theoretical and clinical foundations of *Ayurveda*.

Understanding *Samanya-Visheshā Siddhānta*

Samanya (Generality or Similarity)

Samanya refers to similarity in properties, qualities, or constituents. According to this principle, similar things have the ability to promote increase.

In simple terms, “like increases”.

For example

Hot substances increase body heat.

Sweet taste (*Madhura Rasa*) increases body tissues (*dhatu*s).

Heavy foods add bulk to the body.

Thus, *Samanya* is responsible for growth, increase, and reproduction at the physical and psychological levels.^[6]

Visheshā (Specificity or Dissimilarity)

Visheshā refers to dissimilarity or opposite qualities. Its action causes decrease, reduction, or separation.

Thus, “opposites bring decrease.”

Examples include

Cold substances reduce *pitta*.

Light foods reducing heaviness or obesity.

Exercise reduces *kapha*.

Visheshā governs all processes of breakdown, reduction, and normalization in the body.

Together, *Samanya* and *Visheshā* explain how the body maintains dynamic balance and responds to internal and external influences.^[7]

Need for the Study of Samanya–Visheshā Siddhānta

The understanding of this principle is foundational for mastering *Ayurveda*. Its importance can be highlighted through the following key points.

1. Explains Physiological Processes Scientifically

All bodily functions—nutrition, metabolism, tissue growth, and tissue depletion—operate through *Samanya* and *Visheshā*.

Studying this principle provides clarity on.

how *dhatu*s form,

how *doshas* increase or decrease,

how qualities (*guna*) influence the body.

It offers a rational and scientific understanding of *Ayurvedic* physiology.

2. Forms the Basis of Disease Treatment (*Chikitsa*)

Ayurvedic treatment is entirely guided by this principle.

To reduce an aggravated *dosha* → use opposite qualities (*Visheshā*).

To build tissues or increase strength → use similar qualities (*Samanya*).

For example

Vata aggravation is treated with warm, oily, and heavy substances.

Pitta aggravation is treated with cold, sweet, and mild substances.

Kapha aggravation is treated with light, dry, and hot substances.

Thus, proper treatment planning requires understanding *Samanya–Visheshā*.

3. Essential for Diet and Lifestyle Planning

Ayurvedic nutrition (*Ahara*) is completely based on this principle.

Foods with similar qualities increase certain tissues or *doshas*.

Foods with opposite qualities maintain balance.

The selection of daily diet, seasonal regimen, and lifestyle advice all use this principle to maintain health and prevent disease.

4. Foundation of *Ayurvedic* Pharmacology (*Dravyaguna*)

The therapeutic action of medicines—based on *rasa*, *guna*, *virya*, *vipaka*—depends on *Samanya-Vishesha*.

A physician selects herbs according to their qualities to either increase or decrease specific elements in the body.

Therefore, this principle is crucial for understanding drug action, formulation, and prescription.

5. Supports Personalized Medicine (*Prakriti*-based Treatment)

Ayurveda recognizes each individual as unique.

Samanya-Vishesha helps determine what qualities should be increased or decreased according to:

prakriti (constitution), season, age, disease condition.

This makes it essential for personalized and preventive healthcare.

6. Develops Scientific Reasoning and Clinical thought Studying *Samanya-Vishesha* enhances the practitioner's ability to:

analyze qualities of substances, predict their effects on the body, plan logical, evidence-based treatments.

It nurtures deeper clinical insight and decision-making skills, making it vital for successful *Ayurvedic* practice.

DISCUSSION

The *Samanya-Vishesha Siddhanta* serves as a foundational concept in *Ayurveda*, offering a simple yet comprehensive explanation for the dynamic processes of growth, reduction, and balance within the human body. The discussion on this principle highlights its wide-ranging relevance across *Ayurvedic* physiology, pathology, pharmacology, and therapeutics.

Understanding *Samanya*, which refers to similarity and leads to increase, allows students and practitioners to appreciate how bodily tissues (*dhatu*s) and *doshas* accumulate or strengthen. This concept also provides clarity regarding nutrition and physiological changes that occur due to food habits, environmental influences, and lifestyle choices. Similarly, *Vishesha*, referring to dissimilarity causing reduction, offers insight into therapeutic interventions aimed at removing excess or correcting imbalances. It explains how opposites can restore homeostasis, forming the basis of the *Ayurvedic* concept of equilibrium.

The discussion further emphasizes that *Samanya-Vishesha* is not limited to theoretical understanding but has strong practical implications. The entire *Ayurvedic* treatment approach—whether it involves the use of

herbs, dietary corrections, or lifestyle modifications—is guided by the principle of using similar or dissimilar qualities. For example, when a *dosha* is aggravated, opposite qualities are selected to reduce it, demonstrating the practical utility of *Vishesha*. Conversely, when nourishment or tissue building is required, similar qualities are used, showcasing the role of *Samanya*.

Another significant aspect of this principle is its relevance to personalized medicine. *Ayurveda* views each individual as unique, and the application of *Samanya-Vishesha* varies depending on the person's *prakriti* (constitution), age, season, and disease condition. This aligns closely with modern trends of individualized healthcare, demonstrating the timeless applicability of the principle.

The discussion also reveals that the simplicity of the *Samanya-Vishesha* theory makes it universally applicable. Whether one considers dietetics, drug formulation, seasonal regimens, or disease management, the principle remains constant and logical. It provides a strong scientific framework that helps practitioners reason through complex clinical scenarios and make rational decisions.

In summary, the discussion highlights that *Samanya-Vishesha Siddhanta* is not merely a classical philosophical idea but a practical, scientific, and essential tool for understanding and applying *Ayurveda* in a meaningful way. Its study is necessary to develop a deep comprehension of bodily processes, therapeutic interventions, and personalized treatment strategies—ultimately improving the quality and effectiveness of *Ayurvedic* practice.^[8]

CONCLUSION

Samanya-Vishesha Siddhanta is one of the most fundamental and scientifically grounded principles of *Ayurveda*. It explains the mechanisms of increase and decrease, balance and imbalance, and the actions of diet and medicines on the body. From understanding physiology to planning diet, lifestyle, and treatment, this principle forms the backbone of *Ayurveda*.

Therefore, the study of *Samanya-Vishesha* is essential for every student and practitioner, as it provides the conceptual clarity and scientific foundation necessary for effective *Ayurvedic* practice.

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