



Samanya Vishesh Siddhant: A Fundamental Principle of Ayurveda


Vishwakarma MK^{1*}

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^{1*} Mukesh Kumar Vishwakarma, Assistant Professor, Dept of Samhita and Siddhanta, Major SD Singh PG Ayurvedic Medical College and Hospital, Farrukhabad, Uttar Pradesh, India.

Samanya Vishesh Siddhant is a fundamental principle of Ayurveda that explains the mechanisms of increase (Vridhhi) and decrease (Kshaya) in the body. Derived from the Nyaya-Vaisheshika philosophy, this concept plays a crucial role in understanding physiological balance, pathology, and treatment strategies. Samanya (similarity) is responsible for the augmentation of substances with similar attributes, while Vishesh (dissimilarity) leads to the reduction of qualities due to opposing characteristics.[1] This principle is applied in various domains of Ayurveda, including physiology (Sharira Kriya Vigyan), pathology (Roga Nidan), treatment (Chikitsa), dietetics (Ahara Vidhi), and pharmacology (Dravya Guna Vigyan). It helps in diagnosing diseases and formulating therapies based on the balance of Doshas, Dhatus, and Malas. For instance, nourishing therapies (Rasayana) utilize Samanya to promote tissue growth, while purification therapies (Shodhana) employ Vishesh to eliminate excess Doshas. In the modern context, Samanya Vishesh Siddhant is comparable to the concept of homeostasis in contemporary medicine. It provides a logical basis for managing lifestyle disorders such as obesity, diabetes, and hypertension through dietary and therapeutic interventions. Understanding and applying this principle allows for a holistic approach to health maintenance, disease prevention, and personalized treatment in Ayurveda.[2]

Keywords: Nyaya-Vaisheshika Philosophy, Vridhhi, Kshaya, Samanya, Vishesh

Corresponding Author	How to Cite this Article	To Browse
Mukesh Kumar Vishwakarma, Assistant Professor, Dept of Samhita and Siddhanta, Major SD Singh PG Ayurvedic Medical College and Hospital, Farrukhabad, Uttar Pradesh, India. Email: drmukeshvishwakarma@gmail.com	Vishwakarma MK, Samanya Vishesh Siddhant: A Fundamental Principle of Ayurveda . J Ayu Int Med Sci. 2025;10(6):298-302. Available From https://jaims.in/jaims/article/view/4280/	

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Introduction

Ayurveda, the ancient science of life, is based on several fundamental principles that guide its diagnostic and therapeutic approaches. Among these principles, *Samanya Vishesh Siddhant* holds a significant place as it explains the mechanisms of increase and decrease in the body. This principle serves as a foundation for understanding physiological balance and pathological conditions.

Samanya and *Vishesh* are two contrasting yet complementary concepts that regulate bodily functions. Understanding these principles is crucial for diagnosing diseases and planning treatment strategies. This article delves into the depths of *Samanya Vishesh Siddhant*, exploring its meaning, types, applications, and significance in Ayurvedic practice.[3]

Definition and meaning of *Samanya* and *Vishesh*

Samanya (Similarity or Homogeneity)

The term *Samanya* refers to the property of similarity or sameness. It is responsible for the increase (*Vridddhi*) of substances that share similar attributes. According to Ayurvedic texts, *Dravyata* (substantiality) is common to all entities, and when a substance with similar qualities is introduced, it leads to an increase in those qualities in the body.

For example:

- Consumption of oily food increases *Kapha* and *Meda* (fat) in the body due to their similar properties.
- Intake of cold substances increases *Kapha* and reduces *Pitta* due to their respective similarities and differences.

Samanya for *Doshas*

Drugs that have *Katu*, *Tikta*, *Ruksha*, *Laghu*, and *Sheeta Dravya* provide relief in *Vata Kshaya* according to the concept of *Guna Samanya*. In the same way, *Amla*, *Katu*, *Kshara*, *Lavana*, *Ushna*, and *Tikshna Dravya* assist in treating *Pitta Kshaya* while *Snigdha*, *Madhura*, *Guru*, and *Sandra Dravya* are used in *Shleshmakshya*. *Ksheera* also enhances *Kapha* because of its similar *Snigdhadi Gunas*. *Karma Samanya* similarly helps in maintaining *Dosha* balance, as similar activities increase similar *Gunas* within the body.

Kayika Karma (such as running and swimming) boosts *Vata* due to their *Chaltva Guna Samanya*, thus aiding in *Vata Kshaya*. *Santapa* elevates *Pitta* due to its *Tikshna Guna*, while relaxing or sleeping raises *Kapha* because of their *Sthiratva Guna*. [4]

Samanya as *Chikitsa*

Shukra Kshaya can be treated with *Dravya* that is responsible for *Vridddhi*, such as *Kshira* and *Ghrita*, which possess *Madhur*, *Shita*, and *Snigdha Guna*. *Mutra Kshaya* can be alleviated with *Ikshu*, *Varuni*, and *Manda*; these *Dravya* contain *Madhura*, *Amla*, and *Lavana Rasa*. *Purisha Kshaya* can be managed using *Dravya* such as *Kulmasha*, *Yava*, *Shaka*, and *Kushukunda*. *Vata Kshaya* can be addressed with *Dravya* that have *Katu*, *Tikta*, *Ruksha*, and *Laghu Guna*. *Pitta Kshaya* needs to be controlled using *Amla*, *Lavana*, *Katu*, *Ushna*, and *Tikshna Dravyas*. *Shleshma Kshaya* may be treated with *Snigdha*, *Guru*, *Madhur*, and *Pichhila Dravyas*.

Vishesh (Dissimilarity or Heterogeneity)

Vishesh refers to the property of dissimilarity or contrast. It is responsible for the decrease (*Kshaya*) of substances due to opposing attributes. When a substance with opposite qualities is introduced, it reduces the corresponding qualities in the body.

For example:

- Consumption of dry and rough food reduces *Kapha* due to its opposite nature.
- Intake of hot substances reduces *Kapha* but increases *Pitta* due to their opposing qualities.

Thus, *Samanya* leads to increase (*Vridddhi*), and *Vishesh* leads to decrease (*Kshaya*).

Vishesha for *Doshas*

The use of *Ruksha*, *Ushna*, and *Tikshna Dravya* diminishes *Kapha*. Substances with *Ruksha* and *Laghu Guna* soothe *Vata*, while *Yava* provides *Sheeta Guna*, thereby calming *Pitta*. Conditions exhibiting *Pitta* vitiation, such as *AmlaPitta*, can be managed with *Dravya Vishesh* that have sweetness or properties contrary to *Pitta*. In this context, *Dravyas* like *Guduchi*, *Shatavari*, *Patol*, *Kushmand*, and *Gairik*, among others, are employed in the treatment of *AmlaPitta* under the concept of *Dravya Vishesh*. The *Madhur* and *Sheeta* characteristics of these substances contribute to easing symptoms of *Pitta* vitiation. *Karma Vishesha* likewise influences *Dosha* balance,

With *Ratri Jagran* promoting *Kapha* increase, while exercise and swimming help in reducing *Kapha*.^[5]

Vishesha as Chikitsa

The idea of *Vishesh* also aids in regulating *Dosha* predominance since substances with opposing properties to specific *Dosha* help to calm aggravated *Doshas*. *Sadavidhupakrama* represents various activities such as *Langhana*, *Rukshana*, *Snehana*, *Swedana*, *Brimhana*, & *Stambhana*, which rely on *Guna Vishesh* & provide therapeutic relief for many health issues. *Samshodhan* & *Samshamana Chikitsa* are also founded on *Vishesh* concept; these therapies detoxify body & utilize substances with opposite properties to treat specific diseases.

Types of Samanya and Vishesh

Types of Samanya

Acharya Charaka describes three types of *Samanya* based on different perspectives:

1. Dravya Samanya - Similarity in substance (*Dravya*).

- Example: Consuming milk increases the quantity of milk in lactating mothers.

2. Guna Samanya - Similarity in qualities (*Guna*).

- Example: Intake of oily foods increases *Sneha* (unctuousness) in the body.

3. Karma Samanya - Similarity in actions (*Karma*).

- Example: Repeated practice of exercise (*Vyayama*) increases strength (*Bala*).

Types of Vishesh

Similar to *Samanya*, *Vishesh* is also classified into three types:

1. Dravya Vishesh - Dissimilarity in substances.

- Example: The consumption of honey reduces excess *Kapha* due to its drying nature.

2. Guna Vishesh - Dissimilarity in qualities.

- Example: Cold substances reduce *Pitta* because of their opposite nature.

3. Karma Vishesh - Dissimilarity in actions.

- Example: Rest and sleep counteract the effects of excessive exercise.

Philosophical Basis of Samanya Vishesh Siddhant

The Nyaya and Vaisheshika Darshanas provide the philosophical background for *Samanya* and *Vishesh*.

According to these schools of thought:

- Samanya* is the cause of similarity and commonality among objects.
- Vishesh* is the cause of uniqueness and differentiation among objects.

These concepts are applied in Ayurveda to explain the mechanisms of health and disease, as well as the effects of diet, lifestyle, and treatment.^[6]

Role of Samanya Vishesh Siddhant in Ayurveda

1. In Physiology (Sharira Kriya Vigyan)

- The principle explains the growth and nourishment of *Dhatus* (tissues) through similar substances.
- For instance, protein-rich food (having similarity with *Mamsa Dhātu*) helps in muscle growth.

2. In Pathology (Roga Nidan)

- Disease occurs due to an imbalance in *Doshas*, *Dhatus*, and *Malas* based on *Samanya* and *Vishesh*.
- Excessive intake of *Kapha*-increasing food leads to disorders like obesity.
- Intake of *Pitta*-pacifying substances helps in conditions like hyperacidity.

3. In Treatment (Chikitsa)

- The treatment principle is based on *Samanya* for nourishment (*Vridhhi*) and *Vishesh* for depletion (*Kshaya*).
- In *Dhātu Kshaya* (tissue depletion), similar substances are administered for nourishment.
- In *Dhātu Vridhhi* (excess tissue formation), opposite substances are used to reduce it.

4. In Dietetics (Ahara Vidhi Vidhana)

- The selection of food is based on *Guna Samanya* and *Vishesh* to maintain health.
- People with a *Kapha* constitution should avoid heavy, cold, and oily foods (*Kapha Samanya*).
- Individuals with *Pitta* dominance should consume cooling and sweet substances (*Pitta Vishesh*).

5. In Drug Action (Dravya Guna Vigyan)

- Ayurvedic medicines are prescribed based on *Samanya* and *Vishesh* principles.
- Rasayana* (rejuvenating therapies) use *Samanya* principles to enhance bodily functions.

- *Shodhana* (purification therapies) use *Vishesh* principles to eliminate *Dosha* excess.[7]

6. In Panchakarma (Detoxification Therapies)

- *Samanya* and *Vishesh* help in deciding purification therapies.
- **Snehan (Oleation therapy)** increases unctuousness in the body (*Samanya*).
- **Vamana (Emesis therapy)** reduces *Kapha* (*Vishesh*).

Examples of Samanya Vishesh Siddhant in Ayurveda

Application	Samanya (Similarity)	Vishesh (Dissimilarity)
Growth	Nutrient intake increases Dhatu	Fasting reduces body tissues
Digestion	Spicy food increases Pitta	Cooling food reduces Pitta
Obesity	High-calorie diet increases weight	Exercise reduces weight
Treatment	Rasayana enhances longevity	Langhana (fasting) reduces excess Doshas

Significance in Modern Context

The concept of homeostasis in modern physiology aligns with *Samanya Vishesh Siddhant*. Maintaining equilibrium in the body by balancing intake and elimination is fundamental to both Ayurveda and contemporary medical science.

Relevance in Lifestyle Disorders

Modern lifestyle disorders like diabetes, hypertension, and obesity can be managed using *Samanya* and *Vishesh* principles:

- **Diabetes (Madhumeha):** Avoiding sweet and heavy foods (*Vishesh*).
- **Obesity (Sthoulya):** Regular exercise and low-calorie diet (*Vishesh*).
- **Hypertension:** Consumption of cooling and calming foods (*Vishesh*).

Discussion

The concept of similarities and differences, known as *Samanya Vishesh Siddhanta* in Ayurveda, significantly aids in managing various pathological conditions. The *Samanya Vishesh* principle assists physicians in formulating treatment protocols while selecting specific foods, activities, lifestyles, and medicines, among other factors, for particular diseases. This idea played a crucial role in the selection of *Shodhan* and *Shaman* therapies.

The similarities and differences in substances or activities respectively enhance and diminish the properties of Bhavpadarth. These effects influence the therapeutic responses of substances and hinder the pathological progression of diseases. *Samanya* and *Vishesha* are essential in maintaining the balance of vitiated *Doshas*. The six stages of disease progression are *Sanchaya*, *Prakopa*, *Prasara*, *Sthanasamshraya*, *Vyakti*, and *Bheda*.^[8] All of these stages occur due to the increase (*Samanya*) of aggravating factors, prompting the use of opposite (*Vishesha*) treatments to prevent the disease's pathological progression. *Abhyanga* and *Vyayama* are employed as treatment methods for *Vata* and *Kapha* diseases as *Karma Vishesha*. *Srotasa Vikruti* can be treated using *Ahara* and *Vihara* that counteract the causes of *Srotodusti*.

Conclusion

Samanya Vishesh Siddhant is a universal principle that governs the body's physiological and pathological processes. It provides the foundation for diagnosis, treatment, and prevention in Ayurveda. By understanding and applying these principles, one can maintain health and prevent diseases effectively. This timeless concept continues to be relevant in today's world, offering a holistic approach to health and wellness. Through proper application of *Samanya* and *Vishesh*, Ayurveda provides individualized treatment that aligns with nature's principles.

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