

A Critical Review of Lok-Purusha Samya Siddhanta and its Application in the Brihatrayee

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DOI:10.21760/jaims.10.7.22

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Ayurveda is grounded in deep philosophical concepts that bridge the material and spiritual aspects of health. One of its foundational philosophical principles is the Lok-purusha Samya Siddhanta, which states a fundamental correspondence between the Loka (macrocosm) and the Purusha (microcosm). According to this doctrine, the human being is considered a reflection of the universe, sharing analogous structural and functional attributes. Consequently, alterations in the external environment are believed to exert direct effects on human health, influencing physiological, psychological, and spiritual states. This conceptual framework not only offers a connection between man and nature but also provides a basis for clinical application. Various classical Ayurvedic texts have elaborated upon this principle, demonstrating its relevance in diagnostic and therapeutic contexts. The present discussion explores the philosophical depth and practical implications of Lokapurusha Samya Siddhanta, highlighting its utility in contemporary Ayurvedic practice. Many classical Ayurvedic texts have explored and applied this principle in various contexts, offering numerous examples, demonstrating its utility in diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of the disease.

Keywords: Siddhanta, Lok, Purusha, Ayurveda, Samhita

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Manuscript Received 2025-05-22	Review Round 1 2025-05-30	Review Round 2 2025-06-07	Review Round 3 2025-06-16	Accepted 2025-06-28
Conflict of Interest None	Funding Nil	Ethical Approval Not required	Plagiarism X-checker 11.35	Note

Introduction

The concept of *Loka-Purusha Samya Siddhanta*—fundamental parallel between *Loka* (universe) & *Purusha* (individual /human being)—is deeply rooted in ancient Indian philosophical thought. Its earliest mention is found in *Yajurveda*, where principle is stated as “*Yat Pinde Tat Brahmande*”, which means that what exists in individual body also exists in cosmos. This analogy, also echoed in *Vedanta Dars-hana* as “*Pinda-Brahmanda Nyaya*”, sugg. that man is microcosmic reflection of macrocosmic universe.

In today’s modern world, where lifestyle disorders are prevalent and disconnection from nature is increasing, this ancient concept holds renewed relevance. The recognition that internal environment of body mirrors external world can help us reunite with nature and promote mindful living, encourage personalised & preventive healthcare. Philosophically, this Siddhanta bridges gap between material and spiritual world, establishing that a human being is not an isolated entity but part of universe. In *Charak Samhita* it is said that सर्व द्रव्यं पञ्चभौतिकतम् अस्मिन् अर्थे which means every element, force, and phenomenon that exists in outer world—*Agni* (fire), *Vayu* (air), *Jala* (water), *Prithvi* (earth), or *Akasha* (space), known as *Pancha Mahabhuta*—has its corresponding form and function within body. [1] Different *Aacharyas* have applied this principle in their classical texts such as *Charak Samhita*, *Sushrut Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya* and others.

This foundational principle not only serves as a philosophical cornerstone in Ayurveda but also holds significant clinical value. In today’s modern world, where lifestyle disorders are prevalent and disconnection from nature is increasing, this ancient concept holds renewed relevance. The recognition that internal environment of body mirrors external world can help us reintegrate with nature, promote mindful living, and encourage personalised and preventive healthcare. Thus, *Loka-Purusha Samya Siddhanta* is not merely a philosophical ideal but a living, applicable principle that guides both understanding and practice of Ayurveda, from root of disease to goal of self-realisation.

Materials and Methods

Different classical Ayurvedic texts are used which come under *Brihatrayee* i.e., *Charak Samhita*, *Sushrut Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*.

Various online databases, Ayurvedic manuscripts, and Articles are used in this study.

Literature Review

Acharya Charak used this *Siddhant* to frame the concept of *Samhita*, by giving examples of the things present in the universe to understand the concepts of human body.

एवमयं लोक संमितः पुरुषः or पुरुषोऽयं लोकसंमितः

(*Loka* = universe, *Purusha* = individual/ human being)

Acharya Charaka explains that *purusha* is similar to *Loka* or human being, or reflection of universe. [2]

यावन्तो हि लोके मूर्तिमन्तो भावविशेषास्तावन्तः पुरुषे, यावन्तः पुरुषे तावन्तो लोके इति; बुधास्त्वेवं द्रष्टुमिच्छन्ति।।

It is a philosophical statement from *Sharir Sthan* of *Charaka Samhita*, which posits that whatever exists in the universe also exists in the human body and vice versa. All the elements, emotions, functions and principles that exist in the universe are also embodied in the human body. [3]

तमुवाच भगवानात्रेयः- अपरिसङ्ख्येया लोकावयवविशेषाः, पुरुषावयवविशेषा अप्यपरिसङ्ख्येयाः

Bhagwan Aatreya states that there are innumerable specific components in the universe, likewise the components of the human body (Universe- plants, trees, birds, animals, etc. & Human being - *Sira*, *Dhamani*, *sanayu*/ arteries, veins, ligaments, etc. [4]

Existence of *Panchmahabhoot* in human & universe-

Lokgata (Universal Element) [5]	Purushgata (Individual Expression)
Prithvi (Earth)	Murti - Body structure / Solidity
Aap / Jala (Water)	Kleda - Moisture / Fluidity
Tejas (Fire)	Abhisantapa – Metabolic heat
Vayu (Air)	Prana – Vital breath / Movement
Akasha (Space)	Sushira – Body cavities / Spaces
Brahma	Antaratma (Inner Self)
Brahmi-Vibhuti	Sattva (Mental Clarity/Purity)
Indra	Ahankara (Ego)
Aditya	Adana (Ingestion/Assimilation)
Rudra	Rosha (Anger)
Soma	Prasada (Calmness/Peacefulness)
Vasu	Sukha (Happiness)
Ashwini Kumara	Kanti (Radiance/Glow)
Marut	Utsaha (Qualities & Enthusiasm)
Vishwadeva	Indriya (Sensory Organs)
Jyoti	Gyana (Knowledge)
Tamas	Moha (Delusion)
Sargaadi	Garbhadhana (Conception)
Krita Yuga	Balya-avastha (Childhood)
Treta Yuga	Yuva-avastha (Youth)
Dwapara Yuga	Vridhha-avastha (Old Age)
Kali Yuga	Atura-avastha (Diseased State)
Yuganta Kala	Mrityu (Death)

तस्य पुरुषस्य.... पृथिवी मूर्तिःआपः क्लेदः तेजोऽभिसन्तापः वायुः प्राणः वियत् सुषिराणि

Here is the list of similar entities between universe and humans as explained by *Acharya Charak* in *Purushvichaysharir* chapter of *Sharir Sthana*.

Acharya Sushruta observed numerous functional and anatomical parallels between the universe and the human body. He used these observations to explain bodily concepts in a more relatable way.

विसर्गादानविक्षेपैः सोमसूर्यानिता यथा।

धारयन्ति जगद्देहं कफपित्तानिलास्तथा।।

It explains the correlation between cosmic forces and bodily *Doshas*. Just as the *Soma* (moon), the *Surya* (sun), and the *Anila* (wind) support and sustain the universe through nourishment, transformation, and movement, respectively, likewise *Kapha*, *Pitta*, and *Vata* sustain and maintain the human body.[6]

तस्येत्यादिना पुरुषे षड्धातून् दर्शयति।

लोके षड्धातवो व्यक्ता एवेति न पुनर्विवेचिताः

The six *Dhatus* (basic elements or constituents) of the body - often *Prithvi*, *Aap*, *Tejas*, *Vayu*, *Akasha*, and *Atma/Buddhi/Manas* (depending on context) - are mentioned, and they are already well-known and observable in the world.[7]

पक्काशयगतास्तत्र नाड्यो मूत्रवहास्तु याः

तर्पयन्ति सदा मूत्रं सरितः सागरं यथा।

The *Mutravaha Srotas/ Nadis* (urinary channels) located in the region of the *Pakvashya* (large intestine) continuously carry urine, just like rivers constantly flow into the ocean.[8]

पचत्यग्निर्यथा स्थाल्यामोदनायाम्बुतण्डुलम्

It describes how the *Jatharagni* (digestive fire) in the human body digests the consumed food just like fire cooks rice and water in a pot.[9]

सप्त सिराशतानि भवन्ति; याभिरिदं शरीरमाराम इव जलहारिणीभिः केदार इव च कुल्याभिरुपसिंह्यतेऽनुगृह्यते चाकुञ्चनप्रसारणादिभिर्विशेषैः; द्रुमपत्रसेवनीनामिव तासां प्रतानाः

There are seven hundred *Siras* (veins) in the body. These nourish and sustain the body just like water channels nourish a garden, or like irrigation furrows nourish cultivated fields. Through them, the body is moistened and supported, enabling various special functions such as flexion and extension.

Their distribution resembles the network of veins on leaves.[10]

तस्मात् कौशलमन्विच्छन् शस्त्रक्षाराग्निकर्मसु

यस्य यत्रेह साधर्म्यं तत्र योग्यां समाचरेत्

Therefore, one who seeks proficiency in *Shasht*, *Kshar* & *Agni Karma* should choose and practice the appropriate method in the universe wherever there is similarity or suitability.

For example:

For practicing *Seevan Karma* (suturing) on *Mridu Charam* (any soft skin)

For practicing *Vedhan Karma* (puncture techniques), use the veins of a dead animal or the hollow stems of lotus plants.[11]

यथा स्वभावतः खानि मृणालेषु बिसेषु च

धमनीनां तथा खानि रसो वैरुपचीयते

Just as there are natural pores or hollow channels in lotus stalks and roots, similarly, the *Dhamanis* (arterial channels) in the body have internal pathways through which *Rasa* (nutritive fluid) flows and nourishes the body.[12]

व्याप्नोति सहसा देहमापादतलमस्तकम्।

निवर्तते तु कुपितो मलोऽल्पात्पं जलौघवत्

Acharya Vagbhata explains that when the *Doshas* get aggravated, they spread quickly throughout the whole body, from head to toe, like water flood.

But when they start to calm down, they go away slowly, like flood water reduces little by little.[13]

In the *Ritucharya Adhyaya* of *Ashtanga Hridaya*, it is explained that during *Grishma Ritu* (summer season), the *Bhumandal Swabhava* (nature of the earth and environment) becomes predominantly *Agneya* (fiery or heat-dominant). Due to this increase in environmental heat, it is advised that individuals consume *Sheetal Padartha* (cooling substances) and perform *Sheetal Karma* (cooling activities). Additionally, exposure to direct sunlight should be avoided. These measures help prevent the external heat from aggravating the internal balance of the body and protect it from seasonal disorders.[14] As explained in *Charak Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita* about practical application of this principle, *Ashtanga Hridaya* also believes in concept of *Tridosha*, *Panchmahabhut*, *Saptadhatu* & others.

According to contemporary science, it is said that "You are what you eat" as the food which resembles body organs are beneficial they are good for that particular organ health.

Some examples, such as -

Food	Resembles	Suggested Benefits
Carrot	Eye (Iris)	Carrots contain beta-carotene, which is converted into vitamin A, beneficial for eye health.
Walnut	Brain	Walnuts look like the brain and are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which support brain function.
Grapes	Lungs (Alveoli)	Grapes resemble alveoli in the lungs and are rich in antioxidants, which support lung health.
Mushroom	Ear	Mushrooms resemble ears and contain vitamin D, which is essential for hearing health.

Discussion

The *Lok-Purusha Samya Siddhanta* is not merely a metaphysical concept but a foundational principle that bridges the philosophical and clinical domains of Ayurveda. Its core tenet - "Yat Pinde Tat Brahmande" (what is in the body exists in the universe) - reflects a deep recognition of the structural, functional, and energetic parallels between the cosmos and the human being. The primary aim of this *Siddhanta* (theory) is to attain *Satyabuddhi* (true knowledge). It is achieved by one who understands and realises that the *Loka* (universe) and *Purusha* (individual) are essentially the same. If a person perceives that they are the cause of all *Sukha* (pleasure) and *Dukha* (pain) experienced in this world. With this realisation, the individual begins on the path toward *Moksha* (liberation).[15]

Philosophically, it encourages a holistic worldview, prompting us to see health and disease not as isolated phenomena but as manifestations of cosmic rhythms and elemental imbalances. Clinically, it helps practitioners understand the human body using analogies from nature, thereby enhancing diagnostic clarity and therapeutic precision. For instance, the analogy of rivers nourishing the ocean is employed to describe the *Mutravaha Srotas*, and the comparison of digestive fire to cooking food in a vessel brings clarity to the function of *Jatharagni*. The correlation drawn between cosmic forces - *Soma, Surya, Anila* - and bodily *Doshas* - *Kapha, Pitta, Vata* - further reinforces the view that the universe and the body are governed by the same dynamic principles of nourishment, transformation, and movement.

This is not only a theoretical construct but also offers practical guidance for seasonal regimens, daily routines, and *Doshic* management.

Modern interpretations of this doctrine resonate strongly with emerging standards in nutrition and lifestyle medicine. The contemporary idea that certain foods resemble and benefit specific organs, such as walnuts for brain function or grapes for lung health, echoes the Ayurvedic notion of natural correspondence. This underscores the timelessness of Ayurvedic thought and its applicability in modern preventive health strategies. The chart included in this article, showing such analogies, which serves as an example of how ancient insights align with current scientific findings.

Furthermore, the emphasis on the presence of *Panchamahabhutas* in both the universe and the human body forms the substratum of Ayurvedic physiology and pathology. Every tissue, organ, and function is understood in terms of these five elements, making the diagnosis and treatment deeply interconnected with the larger natural order.

The examples cited from *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita* demonstrate how Ayurvedic authors skillfully used the *Lok-Purusha* principle to construct a systematic understanding of the human body. This not only aided comprehension but also emphasised the importance of observing nature to understand internal processes. For instance, using lotus stems to explain the *Dhamnis* (veins) shows the brilliance of the *Acharyas*.

In the modern context, where disconnection from nature has led to an increase in lifestyle disorders, the application of *Lok-Purusha Samya Siddhanta* becomes even more relevant. By aligning individual routines and treatments with natural laws and cosmic cycles, we can promote sustainable health and well-being.

Conclusion

The principle of *Loka-Purusha Samya Siddhanta* offers a profound and timeless framework for understanding the human body in relation to the universe. Rooted in ancient Vedic and Ayurvedic philosophy, this concept emphasizes the intrinsic connection between the macrocosm and the microcosm, highlighting that every structure and function within the human body reflects phenomena in the natural world.

Acharyas like Charaka, Sushruta and Vagbhata skillfully employed this doctrine to interpret anatomical, physiological, and pathological concepts, using various analogies from the external world to explain internal bodily mechanisms.

Their insights continue to be relevant in modern Ayurvedic practice, especially in the areas of diagnosis, treatment, and preventive healthcare. As lifestyle disorders and disconnection from nature become increasingly prevalent, the revival and application of this ancient wisdom can guide a more holistic, nature-aligned, and personalized approach to health. By reemphasizing the unity of man and universe, *Loka-Purusha Samya Siddhanta* bridges science and spirituality, reminding us that healing lies not only in treating the body but in restoring harmony with the cosmos.

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