Original Research Paper

Ayurveda

CONCEPT OF SAMANYA AND VISESHA IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT Samanya and visesha are discussed among shadpadarthas of Ayurveda. This topic has been incorporated in Ayurveda from the Vaiseshika darshana. Samanya or generality and visesha or peculiarity are described as expressions based on similarly and dissimilarity respectively. Samanya is the understanding of objects based on its commonness with other similar objects and this generates a notion of oneness in different things. Whereas visesha is the understanding of an object based on its uniqueness when compared. Samanya causes increase, aggregation and analogy while visesha causes reduction, distinction and dissimilarity. Though samanya and visesha are entirely different attributes, they cannot work independently. Since both acts simultaneously at a time, it rightly makes the backbone of treatment. Chikitsa administered properly simultaneously brings both the reduced and increased doshadis to their normalcy, thus maintaining optimal health.

INTRODUCTION

Samanya (generality) and visesha (peculiarity) are discussed among six padarthas of Ayurveda. Generality and peculiarity are often described based on similarity and dissimilarity respectively. These are explained as the factors causing increase and decrease respectively, there by making changes in living organisms.

This topic seen in Ayurveda has been taken from the then prevalent philosophy like Vaiseshika darshanas; but in Ayurveda it is incorporated in such a way to suit its necessities in achieving its objects, so that it has rightly formed the backbone of treatment principle in Ayurveda.

Materials And Methods

Literature review of the concept of samanya and visesha in Ayurveda and Darshanas.

Samanya

Samanya is the understanding of an object based on its commonness with other similar objects. In other words, objects which belong to the same class have something in common which is called generality. This common characteristics generate a notion of oneness in the different substances. The reason for using the same term to group of objects of a certain variety is that all these objects have some property in common. For example, all cows are represented by the same features they possess with the word 'cowness'.

Definition

In philosophy, samanya is described as eternal and is the oneness among many objects. It exists in three categories viz- substance (dravya), quality (guna) and actions (karma). It coexists in more than one thing. According to Saptapadarthi, generality is considered as a single individual category which is inherent in more than one thing, causing the knowledge of continuity and this knowledge of continuity generates unity, increase and similarity. That similar thing which is present in many entities is called as samanya.

According to Charakacharya, always, for all existing things generality is the cause of increase, it generates the notion of unity and imparts equality to the members of the group having a particular generality.

Classification

According to Tarkasamgraha, samanya is classified into two as parasamanya and aparasamanya. Parasamanya is the extensive generality ie, generality in relation to a bigger class. Apara samanya is the limited generality ie, generality pertaining to a smaller class. In the case of a cow, it carries generality of cowness. At the same time, it has another generality called animality, the cow being an animal. Among these two, cowness is less applicable than animality, since cow is one among many animals. Thus, here cowness is limited generality or apara samanya and animality is extensive generality or para samanya.

Chakrapani dutta, while explaining samanya, has mentioned three classifications. But he mentions this as the opinion of others as:
1. Dravya gochara samanya (generality of substance), guna gochara samaya (generality of property) and karma gochara samanya (generality of action).

Dravyagocharasamanya: The similarity seen in substances is represented by this. Increment in muscle tissue by the flesh eaten is an example of dravyagocharasamanya.

Gunagocharasamanya: This type of samanya produces oneness. Example for this is, though milk and semen are dissimilar, both has similar properties that causes increase of semen by milk intake.

Karmagocharasamanya: Though there is no similarity and oneness of dravya and guna, the result of the actions belongs to this type of samanya. For example, continuous sitting etc increases kapha, excessive exercise causes vata.

2. Chakrapani also states that others consider samanya is of three types viz atyantasamanya, madhyamasamanya and ekadeshasamanya.

In atyantasamanya, always for existing things, generality is the cause of increase. Madhyamasamanya creates notion of unity and ekadeshasamanya imparts equality to the members of the group having a particular generality.

3. Some scholars also classify samanya into two as ubhyayavritti samaya and ekavritti samanya. Ubhayavrittisamanya is applicable where there is similarity in both the things - like in the nourishing agent and thing to be nourished. Example for this is the increase in muscle bulk by intake of meat; and the increase of dhatus by the use of substances having similar properties. Ekavrittisamanya is applicable when the nourishment of particular element is not based on similarity of the causative agent. For example, ghrita increases agni and walking increases vata. Here the agent and the effect are dissimilar.

Visesha

Visesha is the second category among padarthas according to Charakacharya and the fifth one according to Vaiseshika darshana. This category has given the name to the vaiseshika philosophy. Vaiseshikas consider that though all atoms are of one kind and are identical, there must be some difference between one atom and the other. Thus each atom is different from the other in being an unique individual. For example, there are innumerable number of cows in the world and cowness is unique to them. Even then, each cow is different and can be distinguished from one another. This uniqueness of each entity is called visesha.

DEFINITION

According to Tarkasamgraha, speciality or visesha exists in eternal substances and are infinite and is not applicable to perishable things.

According to Saptapadarthee, speciality is defined as the cause of notion of differentiation, is multiple, inherent in each substance; and is

the cause for reduction, distinction and dissimilarity.

In Ayurveda, speciality is that which is opposite to generality. Charakasamhita has the following considerations about visesha - it is the cause of reduction, it causes the notion of distinction or separation and is the opposite of samanya.

Chakrapanidatta defines visesha as that which is special or different.

Classification of visesha
In philosophy, visesha is not classified, as each speciality is unique. In Ayurveda, it is classified into three as dravya visesha, guna visesha and karma visesha.

Dravya visesha is the speciality of substance. This is the viseshatwa with respect to dravya. Chakrapanidatta states the following example in this context that gavedhuka (wild wheat) is used for karshana. Mamsatwa is not present in gavedhuka and mamsa is not having samanyata with gavedhuka. Hence gavedhuka has viseshatwa in relation to mamsa and due to this, mamsa of body is reduced on consumption of gavedhuka. This viseshatwa with respect to dravya is known as dravyavisesha.

Guna visesha is the speciality with respect to property. This is the most important speciality in Ayurveda. Ayurvedic treatments are mainly based on this. When a particular dosha is increased, we use measures having opposite properties to reduce them. For example, as vata is lakhu, ruksha etc; in vatavridhi, we utilise dravyas having opposite guna like guru, snigdha etc to reduce vata. The same principle is applied in the case of pitta and kapha too.

Karma visesha is the speciality with respect to action. Here, the desired effect is achieved by karma or action. The actions that reduce dhatus and doshas are considered to do so by the speciality of action. For example, running, jogging etc will reduce kapha, medas etc and inaction causes the increase of these.

Discussion And Results
Utility Of Samanya And Visesha
Samanya helps in the understanding of increase, aggregation and analogy.

1.Samanya as an increasing factor:
As samanya is a factor that brings about similarity it is used in Ayurvedic treatment in the following ways:

In dravya samanya the substances having similarity are used to increase the similar ones and this forms the important treatment principle in Ayurveda. For example, In rajayakshma chikitsa, charaka states that, consuming the meat of flesh eating animals will be brimhana to dhatus. Here the meat as dravya causes samanya to the mamsadhatu in the body.

In guna samanya, the properties in a substance increases the similar properties. Use of ksheera, ghrita etc in sukrakshaya is an example. The properties in ksheera, ghrita etc is the cause for sukravridhi.

In karma samanya, The actions or karma causes increase in similar attributes. Example, divaswapna and ekasthanaasana (which are karmas) increase the kapha and are hence adopted in karshyachikitsa.

2. Samanya as an aggregating factor:
Similarity or samanya causes the aggravation of similar substances in Ayurveda. The similar substances can be grouped in aggregates and this proves useful in treatment aspect. Examples are- classification of substances based on dravya, guna and karma into madhuradi gana, ksheera varga, vamanadi gana, etc.

3. Samanya as a factor in analogy:
Here, the analogy or similarity between two things are specified. For example, in lokapurusha samya, the analogous things in universe is compared to those in man and vice versa. Thus, these also helps in Ayurvedic treatment modalities like satwavachaya chikitsa.

Visesha or the variant factor is very important in the Ayurvedic treatment, especially in the light of treatment of lifestyle disorders. Its applicability in Ayurveda in understanding reduction, segregation and contrary factors.

3. Visesha as reducing factor:
The increased doshas, dhatus and malas are brought under normalcy using this principle. Here, the use of gavedhuka as a karshana dravya, drugs like guggulu causing medoharatwa, shodhana chikitsa for letting out the increased doshas etc are made use of in treatment. The shadvidhopakramas are classified on the basis of guna visesha. Measures like swimming in urustambha and vyayama, vyavaya etc in atisthoulya are based on karma viseshata.

2. Visesha as segregating factor:
This principle is made use of in the classification of rasas into 63 types and doshas – vata, pitta and kapha into 63 vikalpas. This helps in understanding the state of doshas correctly and in adopting the right treatment and regimen.

3. Visesha as contrary factor:
The variance or difference between prakriti and purusha, jivatma and paramatma are based on variant factor of visesha. The dual attributes like, akunchana – prasarana, utkshepana – apakshepana, guru – lakhu, sheeta – ushna etc are based on the variant factor with respect to each other. Use of apatarpana in santarpanotha vikara and the opposite is the application of this knowledge.

Samanya And Visesha In Treatment
This principle has a very important role in treatment as well as in the maintenance of health. Action of both samanya and visesha are aimed at dhatusamya pravrtti, since pravrtti is treatment in Ayurveda. Both samanya and visesha helps in understanding pathology and to decide the remedy accordingly. Hence samanya and visesha are the factors on which treatment principle of Ayurveda rests.

Since the increase and decrease of doshas and dhatus accounts for diseases, the substances having opposite attributes are administered to bring the doshas and dhatus to normalcy. Charakacharya states, if chikitsa is properly administered, it simultaneously brings both the reduced and increased dhatus to their normalcy by reducing the increased ones and increasing the decreased ones. For example, if madhurarasa dravya is administered, it simultaneously reduces the aggravated vata and increases the reduced kapha. But if administered longer than required period, the kapha aggravates, pitta decreases and vata is reduced. Thus samyagavacharana of medicines should always be kept in mind while administering medicines in the view of this.

CONCLUSION
Thus samanya causes similarity, generates notion of oneness and exists in many objects at a time. Visesha causes variation, creates particularity and exists only in one object causing dissimilarity.
Samanya and visesha as discussed above forms the treatment principle of Ayurveda rightly, since the aim of Ayurvedic interaction is the maintenance of health and curing the diseased. In achieving both these aims, one should resort to those measures that either brings the body elements to normalcy or those that doesnot disturb the equilibrium of healthy state. This is possible by a thorough understanding of samanya and visesha with respect to substance, properties and actions that one resort to.

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