



**A BRIEF REVIEW ON GAIRIKA WITH RESEARCH UPDATES & ITS SIMPLE  
RECIPES IN RASA TARANGINI**

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Article Received on 25/08/2020

Article Revised on 14/09/2020

Article Accepted on 04/10/2020

**ABSTRACT**

Rasashastra is a branch that deals with alchemy. Substances like metals, minerals, marine products, gemstones, etc. are dealt in this branch and formulations employing minerals, metals are described in detail. The minerals enlisted in the treatise of rasashastra are grouped as maharasa, uparasa, sadharana rasa, etc. based on their application in the processing of mercury (parada samskara). Gairika is a mineral ore grouped under the category of uparasa that is indicated in various disorders and has wide therapeutic applicability. It is a simple and easily available ore that has wide therapeutic value. A literary review in Rasa Tarangini has put light that Gairika with combination with other herbs is used in an array of diseases and is mentioned as amayika prayoga at the end of the description of gairika. These recipes are indicated to be administered both internally and externally. Although it is a simple mineral that is used directly after shodhana and is also easily available seldom researches are carried out. Very few research works on the single drug has been carried out, thus, it opens wide avenues for research in future.

**INTRODUCTION**

Gairika is termed as Red ochre, a mineral that is easily available. It is categorized under uparasa group and is mainly indicated in disorders relating to pitta dosha. It is

a mineral that is used directly after shodhana (purificatory process). In Rasa Tarangini- a treatise of rasashastra, various simple combinations of gairika with other drugs is given as amayika prayoga.

**Table 1: Properties of Gairika.<sup>[1]</sup>**

| Sl. No. | Attributes     | Details  |
|---------|----------------|--|
| 1       | Rasa           | Madhura (sweet), Tikta (bitter), Kashaya (astringent)  |
| 2       | Guna           | Snigdha (unctuous), ruksha (dry), kathina (hard), vishada and hima (cold)  |
| 3       | Veerya         | Sheeta (Cold)  |
| 4       | Vipaka         | Madhura  |
| 5       | Doshaghnata    | Pittahara (alleviates pitta dosha)   |
| 6       | Karma          | Chakshushya (beneficial to eyes), tapaharana (reduces body temperature), vishapaha (anti- toxic), balya (strengthening), kandughna (anti- pruritic), vrana ropana (wound healing)  |
| 7       | Vyadhiprabhava | Raktapitta (bleeding disorder), hikka (hiccup), vami (vomiting), visharoga (poisonous condition), kandu (itching), udara (ascites), netraroga (eye disorders), vrana (wound), daha (burning sensation), asrugdara, jwara (fever), agnidaha (burning sensation) |

Dose: 2- 4 ratti (250mg to 1g)

A literary review through Rasa Tarangini has put light on the use of gairika that are very simple combinations useful in various disorders.

**Table 2: Gairika for internal use.**<sup>[2]</sup>

| Sl. No. | Compound mixture  | Indications  | Mode of administration |
|---------|---|--|------------------------|
| 1       | Gairika, saindhava lavana, yashti ( <i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> ), haridra ( <i>Curcuma longa</i> ) churna                                | Netrabishyanda (conjunctivitis)                                | Internal use           |
| 2       | Gairika with madhu (honey)  | Sheetapitta (urticaria)  | Internally             |
| 3       | Gairika with chandana ( <i>Santalum album</i> ), ushira ( <i>Vetiveria zizanioides</i> ), dhanyaka ( <i>Coriandrum Sativum</i> ) kwatha | Raktapitta (bleeding disorders)                                | Internally             |
| 4       | Gairika with Ela ( <i>Elettaria cardamomum</i> ) and sita churna  | Raktapitta (bleeding disorders)                                | Internally             |
| 5       | Gairika with rasasindura  | Jeernajwara (fever) or jwara due to aggravation of pitta dosha | Internally             |

**Table 3: Gairika for external use.**<sup>[3]</sup>

| Sl. No. | Compound mixture  | Indications                            | Mode of administration          |
|---------|---|--|---------------------------------|
| 1       | Gairika, haridra ( <i>Curcuma longa</i> ), amrabeeja majja ( <i>Spondias mombin</i> ), vidanga ( <i>Embelia ribes</i> ), khadira sara ( <i>Acacia catechu</i> ), rasanjana churna                     | Yonikandu                              | As lepa (anointment) with water |
| 2       | Gairika, shunti ( <i>Zingiber officinale</i> ), aragvadha ( <i>Cassia fistula</i> ), khatika, katpahala ( <i>Myrica nagi</i> ) churna- grind with kanji (sour gruel prepared by fermentation process) | Karnamula shotha (inflammation of ear) | As lepa (anointment)            |
| 3       | Gairika with haridra churna ( <i>Curcuma longa</i> )  | Sheetapitta (urticaria)                | As lepa (anointment) with water |
| 4       | Gairika, kshara of jati or Gairika with chandana churna ( <i>Santalum album</i> )   | Netra vrana (ulcer of eye)             | As lepa (anointment)            |
| 5       | Gairika alone or Gairika with Kaseesa churna with ghrita  | Visarpa (erysipelas)                   | As lepa (anointment)            |
| 6       | Gairika with coconut oil  | Dagdha vrana (burnt wound)             | As lepa (anointment)            |

### Research updates on Gairika

In a review article on Gairika it is said that it is an important mineral told in Rasashastra and explanation of it is found in Keraleeya text books like Chikitsa Manjari, Yogamrutam, Arogyakalpadrumam in Chikitsaparakarana. It is said as a safest naturally occurring mineral mostly known for its pittashamaka properties; and the presence of ambiguity regarding its naming as Red ochre or Haematite.<sup>[4]</sup>

Another review article highlights the use of gairika in samhitas where it is said that Charaka classified this mineral under Parthiva Dravya and grouped under Shonitasthapana Gana, while Sushruta has used this drug in formulating Maha Sugandhi Agada, which is said to be potent Vishahara (anti-poisonous) agent. Rasa Vagbhata classified Gairika into two basic varieties viz. Swarna and Pashana, the former being the acceptable one.<sup>[5]</sup>

An analytical study of shuddha and ashuddha Gairika concludes that the raw Swarna Gairika has presence of water and oxygen molecules that increase the chances of having free ferrous ions. The body must protect itself from free ions which is highly toxic and participates in

chemical reactions that free radicals. By Godugdha bhavana, it is said that the free Fe (II) converts into Fe (III) ions, and Fe (III) ions are absorbed easily. Thus, the process of shodhana is said to increase the absorption rate of Gairika in the body.<sup>[6]</sup>

An article highlighting the clinical study conducted on 30 women with a mixture of Talisa patra with Gairika has shown significant contraceptive activity. It is said to be effective, safe, acceptable and less expensive.<sup>[7]</sup>

Another review article mentions gairika as a rasa dravya that is said to be anti-poisonous.<sup>[8]</sup>

### DISCUSSION

Gairika is an ore grouped under uparasa and is used directly after shodhana. It is indicated in various disorders mainly of pittaja roga. Various simple recipes are given in rasa tarangini, where gairika with different ingredients is used in several disorders that are used for both internal and external usage. Combination of gairika with different herbs is indicated in raktapitta and sheetapitta. Use of Gairika for external applications highlights the sheeta property where it is said to be applied in cases of dagdha vrana and visarpa. The anti-

pruritic property of gairika makes it a drug of choice in conditions of sheetapitta, yoni kandu, etc.

A review on Gairika has opened to two literary reviews where gairika is said to be a safe naturally occurring ore possessing pittashamaka property and another puts light on the references of it in various ganas (groups) and uses in the samhita. An analytical study highlights the benefit of shodhana; and the process of bhavana is said to increase the absorption rate of Gairika in body. A clinical study has highlighted the contraceptive effect of it.

### CONCLUSION

Gairika is a simple ore, easily available and is cost effective. It is used directly after shodhana to be incorporated in designing of formulations. Many formulations containing gairika are available in treatises of rasashastra. In the text of Rasa Tarangini simple recipes for various disorders have been elucidated for various disorders both for internal usage as well as external application at the end of the description of gairika as amayika prayoga. It is an ore that can be explored to the limit owing to its guna and easy availability.

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