



## REVIEW THE ARTICLE ON GAIRIK

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<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj3911072023>

(Published Online: July 2023)

## Open Access

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Article Received: 08/06/2023 - Peer Reviewed: 03/07/2023 - Accepted for Publication: 12/07/2023.



## ABSTRACT

Rasashastra is a branch of ancient Indian traditional medicine that incorporates principles of alchemy and pharmacology. It involves the preparation and utilization of therapeutic formulations by combining medicinal herbs, minerals, and metals. The objective of Rasashastra is to promote overall well-being by balancing the body, mind, and spirit. Practitioners of Rasashastra believe that certain minerals and metals possess unique healing properties when properly processed and administered. These formulations, known as Rasayanas, are believed to enhance vitality, promote longevity, and strengthen the body's natural defenses. Rasashastra also emphasizes the purification and detoxification of metals to eliminate any potential toxicity and maximize their therapeutic benefits. In this article we will be looking upon one such substance Gairika is hematite or red iron ore.

**Keywords:** *Gairik, Rasashastra, Ayurveda*

## INTRODUCTION

Gairika is hematite or red iron ore. It is an iron oxide having red colour. Chemically the mineral is  $Fe_2O_3$  corresponding to Fe- 70% and O - 30%. In addition to these hematite often contains some

magnesium and Titanium. The crystals are either thin or thick tabular, Pyramidal rhombohedral, and occur more abundantly in compact, granular, column or, fibrous, micaceous, and earthy masses. It has no well-

defined cleavage but a rhombohedral part- ing, which is nearly cubical, conchoidal, and earthy to uneven fracture. Its crystals are black, glistening, and opaque except in very small splinters. These are red and transparent or translucent. Earthy varieties are red, and the streak of all varieties is brownish red or cherry red. The hardness of crystallized hematite is 5.5- 6.5: Earthy varieties are soft. Sp. Gr. 4.9-5.3, metallic splendent to dull lustre. Opaque except in very thin scales, commonly steel grey, reddish brown, or iron black in colour. Sometimes slightly magnetic owing to the presence of a small amount of magnetite. Good conductor of electricity. Infusible before blow pipe. Becomes, magnetic when heated on char- coal. When powdered it is slowly soluble in acids. Hematite has many varieties, of which red Hematite is compact in which fibrous structure is not very pronounced. Red ochre is a red earthy hamatite that is very soft and has a dull lustre and often contains a considerable amount of clays, sand, and other impurities. About 20% of iron produced in North America comes from hematite. Deposits of the ore lie near Lake Superior in Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Alabama, and Tennessee. In India, Red Ocher, an earthy form of hematite occurs in Singbhoom (Bihar), Mayurbhanja, Sundargarh (Orissa), Bettari, Chikmanglore, Chithradurga, Shimoga (Karnataka), and Kurnool, Adilabad. It is an iron oxide having red colour. Chemically the mineral is  $Fe_2O_3$ . Geologically, hematite forms in a variety of environments, ranging from hydrothermal veins and sedimentary rocks to metamorphic formations. Its distinct red color, derived from iron oxide, has made it a recognizable and sought-after mineral for scientific study and identification. Its presence in rocks and geological formations provides valuable insights into Earth's history and processes.

#### Physical Properties

1. Gairika, is supposed to be a subsidiary metal of iron, as it is a mineral of iron.
2. It is insoluble in water.
3. It is soft to touch and colours red.
4. Few varieties of haematite contain water for crystalization.

5. Specific gravity is 4.9-5.3.

6. Hardness is 5.5-6.5.

Synonyms: Gairika (Hematite): Gaireya, Girimrittika, Raktadhatu, Loha- dhatu, Girimridbhava .

Varieties :

पाषाणगैरिकं चैकं द्वितीयं स्वर्णगैरिकम् । स्वर्णगैरिकं श्रेष्ठं  
द्वितीयात् गैरिकात् परम् ॥ (र.चू. ११/८५)

Its two varieties are mentioned:

1. Pasana Gairika

2. Swarna Gairika.

1) Pasana Gairika- It is called Pasana Garika because it is hard just like stone. It does not contain clay or sand. The per- centage of iron is more in this variety whereas in Swarna Gairika the % of iron is less as it contains clay and sand and hence it is smooth, soft, and glistening due to the presence of impurities its colour is not so bright.

2) It is called Sarvadaihika due to its Golden red colour. Besides it is also used by Goldsmiths for making the colour of Gold brighter and more beautiful hence it is called Sarvadaihika although it does not contain Gold even in traces. Swarna Gairika is 'Raktatara' (deep red) in colour whereas Paṣaṇa Gairika is Tamra varna (copper colour) and hard on the touch. In properties also it is inferior. It does not contain clay and sand. In this iron percentage is more. In ancient texts, Gairika is claimed as Satva rupa.

Purification:

गव्याज्येन तु सम्भृष्टं यत्नतो मन्दवह्निना । सुवर्णगैरिकं शीघ्रं  
शुद्धिमाप्नोत्यसंशयम् ॥ (रसतरंगिणी 22:115)

Fine powder of Suvarna-gairika is mixed with 1/4 to 1/8 parts of cow's ghee and roasted on low flame. It gets purified without a doubt.(Rasatarangini 22:115)

Another method of its purification is to process Suvarna- gairika with cow's milk. But it has to be used immediately, as it becomes rancid after a few hours. Hence, gairika is purified and used immediately. Like Gandhaka, Gairika is used directly after it is purified. There is no mention of incinerating Gairika to prepare a bhasma of it.

Pharmacological and Therapeutic Properties:

1)Rasa- Madhura. Tikta. Kaṣaya

- 2)Guna- Snigdha, Kathina. Rūkṣa and Hima
- 3)Virya- Sita
- 4)Vipaka- Madhura
- 5)Karma- Caksusya, Visapaha, Balya, Netrya, Kandughna, Vrana ropana, Dahahara, Raktadhara, Alakshmihari.
- 6)Dosa Prabhava- Pittapaha (Pitta Samana) Kaphapaha, Vatajit.

#### Discussion :

Gairika, also known as red ochre, is a naturally occurring pigment composed mainly of iron oxide. In traditional medicine, it has been used for various purposes, including as a topical treatment and in certain cultural practices. In traditional practices, hematite has been used externally, often in the form of powders or pastes applied to the skin. It is primarily used for its perceived benefits in promoting wound healing, reducing inflammation, and alleviating pain. However, the specific pharmacological actions of hematite on the body have not been extensively studied or well-documented.

गैरिकद्वितयं स्निग्धं मधुरं तुवरं हिमम् । चक्षुष्यं दाहपित्तास्त्रकफहिक्काविषापहम् ॥ अतिकण्डूहरं रूक्षं तथा प्रोक्तमुदरदनुत् ॥ पाषाणगैरिकं त्वन्यद्विक्का लक्ष्मीविषापहम् ॥ (आ.प्र. २/ २७०-२७१)

Gairika is sweet and astringent in taste, pungent in the post-digestive effect, and has cold potency. As it contains iron, it increases the body's strength. It alleviates Pitta dosha and detoxifies the toxins.

Vyadhi Prabhava - Rakta- Pitta, Hikka, Vami, Visadosa, Atikanda, Udararoga, Netra roga, Vrana, Daha, Asrigdara, Jwara. Udara.

Purified Gairika mitigates vomiting and hiccup. It is useful in anaemia, menorrhagia, and bleeding diathesis. Externally, it is used as an ointment for

promoting wound healing. It also relieves itching in urticaria, when its paste is applied topically.

Dosage: 240 to 480 mg, with butter or milk with sugar.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, we can say that Gairik(hematite)is the most important and one of the finest quality iron ore in the world. It is harder than pure iron. It occurs from volcanoes. As such, the colour of this ore is red. Due to its Pharmacological and Therapeutic Properties is commonly used for the diagnosis or treatment of anemia due to folic acid deficiency, folate deficiency, increased requirement of folate in the body during pregnancy, menorrhagia, bleeding diathesis, Hikka, Vami, Visadosa, Atikanda, Udararoga, Netra roga, Vrana, Daha, Asrigdara, Jwara. Udara. Further research regarding this topic is crucial and must be conducted in order to expand our understanding. Moreover, further research aids in promoting evidence-based decision-making.

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**Source of Support: Nil**

**Conflict of Interest: None Declared**

How to cite this URL: Sucheta Kamalakar Pilankar & Arati P. Dubewar: Review article on gairik. International Ayurvedic Medical Journal {online} 2023 {cited July 2023} Available from:

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