



INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES AND INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

(Peer-reviewed, Refereed, Indexed & Open Access Journal)

DOI : 03.2021-11278686

ISSN : 2582-8568

IMPACT FACTOR : 5.71 (SJIF 2021)

Therapeutic Potentials of Gairika with Special Reference to Charaka Samhita

Dr. Renuka M. Suryawanshi

MD, Ph.D., Associate Professor,
P G Department of RSBK,
PMT's Ayurved College and Shri Eknath
Ayurved Hospital, Shevgaon,
Dist. Ahemadnagar (Maharashtra, India)

Dr. Santosh D. Pawale

MD, Ph.D. (Scholar), Associate Professor,
P G department of RSBK,
PMT's Ayurved College and Shri Eknath
Ayurved Hospital, Shevgaon,
Dist. Ahemadnagar (Maharashtra, India)

DOI No. **03.2021-11278686** DOI Link :: <https://doi-ds.org/doilink/12.2021-26731585/IRJHIS2112012>

Abstract:

The Ayurvedic system of medicine has great antiquity, dating back to about 5000 years B.C. Concept of Ayurveda crepts into the mind of creature much before the emergence of creation which can be well understood. The curiosity and advancement of mankind, single drug treatment was over ruled by multiple combinations containing numerous ingredients, containing minerals too. During the medieval period, with the advent of Rasashastra, use of certain heavy metals and minerals in Ayurvedic therapeutics increased. Before the evolution of Rasashastra, in ancient ayurvedic classics like Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita, references of some metals and minerals were found in various therapeutics. Out of them Gairika (Red Ochre), a mineral found very abundantly, affordable to all and safe drug which had been used in practices as single drug and in combination since ancient times. So here a humble attempt was made to collect and review references from Charaka Samhita regarding therapeutic potential of Gairika.

Keywords: Gairika, Charaka Samhita, Rasashastra, Therapeutics.

Introduction:

The Ayurvedic system of medicine has great antiquity, dating back to about 5000 years B.C. Vedas are the actual origin of knowing the literature of the traditional medicines and Ayurveda is the Upaveda of Atharva Veda. The single drug treatment was the base which was being fulfilled by the plant origin drug. The curiosity and advancement of mankind, single drug treatment was over ruled by multiple combinations containing numerous ingredients, containing minerals too.

Application of ingredient (Dravyas) is very cautiously made in various combinations depending on their Rasa, Guna, Veerya, Vipaka characteristics. By observing low potency and less durability of herbal medicines, the Minerals, Metals were included giving birth to a new field of Ayurveda naming Rasa-Shastra.

During the medieval period, with the advent of Rasashastra, use of certain heavy metals and minerals in Ayurvedic therapeutics increased. Rasashastra, an integral part of Ayurveda, deals with the drugs of mineral origin, and details of their varieties, characteristics, processing techniques, properties, therapeutic uses, possibilities of developing adverse effects and their management etc. in a comprehensive way. Although the roots of this science (Rasa Shastra) exist in the ancient texts of Indian civilization, its development as an independent system of therapy started around the 8th century A.D. Ayurvedic classics written before that time, like Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita etc. contain descriptions of metals and minerals, their processing techniques and their utilization in therapeutics etc.

Rasa Chikitsa is an important branch of Ayurvedic treatment which consists of mainly minerals, metals and poisonous drugs processed with highly specialized pharmaceutical techniques. Rasaushadhies are very potent Rasayana in addition to their therapeutic values.

Gairika is a mineral described in Various Rasashastra text under “Uparasa” class and its methods of purification and therapeutic actions. It is a drug which can be used in therapeutics only by its purification (No need to incineration). Also it is found very abundantly in India with low cost. Gairika is one of the sources of Iron.

This paper attempts to screen Ayurvedic classics for references emphasizing the utilization of such a miraculous drug (Gairika) for its medicinal and other purposes. Charaka Samhita was scrutinized and found to contain referred frequent references of Gairika used for medicinal purposes with external and internal application.

The references found in the classic were grouped into different categories with an intension to give an insight about the frequency of usage of the Gairika. The categories are as under:

- Utilization in therapeutics
- Internal administration
- External application
- Other

External application:

Reference was found in Charak Sutrasthana Aaragvadhya adhya. Here Gairika is used as local application in various skin diseases like Leucoderma, Alopecia, Psoriasis, Ringworm, Scabies¹ (Table 01)

In the treatment of nasal bleeding Charaka had advised use of Gairika along with other drugs

in the form of snuff (Avapida Nasya)²

In Vata-Pitta predominant dosha in Visarpa vyadhi, Charaka had mentioned the use of Gairika as local application (Pradeha)³

In the poisoning due to nails and teeth bite of animals, paste of Gairika was applied at bite site to reduce poisoning effect.⁴

By dusting the powder of Gairika in wound, restores the normal colour of skin.⁵

In Vataja and Pittaja eye diseases Gairika was used in the form of Rasakriya and applied as Bidalaka Netrakalpa (Application of drugs in paste form on closed eye lid excluding eye-lashes)⁶

Internal application:- In internal haemorrhage, faintaining, thirst and burning sensation Gairika was used internally as Sharkar prepared with rice water.⁷ (Table 02)

Haemorrhagic disorders get alleviated by the use of water in contact with Gairika.⁸

In the treatment of Pittaja Chardi there are two formulations of Gairika were mentioned which were taken along with Rice water.⁹

In the second stage of Visha, protection of heart should be done (Hruday raksha). For this purpose Gairika was used as one of the heart protecting agent.¹⁰

Gairika is one of the ingredient of Mahagandhahastinama agad.¹¹

This Agad comprises of total 60 ingredients. It was taken internally in the form of drink (by diluting with liquid) or applied in the form of collyrium in the eyes or applied externally in the form of a paste to achieve success in all therapeutics. If used regularly along with wholesome diet, it cures eye diseases like Pilla, Kandu, Timira, Kacha, Arbuda etc. It cures Vishama Jwara, Dadru, Pama. It instantly cures the ailments caused by the poisons of rats, spiders, all types of snakes and poisons from all types of root and rhizomes. Gairika is one of the content of Ksharagada also.¹²

In this recipe Gairika was renamed as Lohitmuda. The regimen was used in all types of Visha Vikara, all types of inflammation etc.

Gairika is one of the ingredients of Khadiradi Gutika and Khadiradi taila.¹³ These pills should be kept in mouth and sucked. This is a good remedy in all diseases of teeth, mouth and throat.

Gairika is one of the ingredients of Pushanuga churna.¹⁴ It is a famous remedy used in various menstrual disorders, bleeding piles and diarrhoea. It was taken along with rice water.

Other:

In Charaka Samhita Gairika was described under Bhaumya dravya. There are three types of drugs mentioned according to their source of origin as Jangama, Audbhida and Parthiv.¹⁵

All the metals like Suvarna, Loha, Hartala Mansila etc. Were included in this Parthiv class of drug. Acharya Sushruta also mentioned Gairika under Parthiv dravya. While in most of Rasashastra classics Gairika was included in Uparasa class. (Table 03)

Charaka mentioned Gairika in Shonitsthapana Mahakashaya.¹⁶ In Ashtanga Samghraha,

Gairika included in Rudhirsthapana Gana.

Discussion:

Charaka had mentioned Gairika as Bhauma drug and in Mahakashaya. It is a content of “Shonitsthapana” gana. Gairika renamed as “Kanchanagairika” and “Lohitamruda” in the same text. In Charaka Samhita, various references of Gairika were found in context of Internal as well as external use.

It becomes clear from screening the classic Charaka Samhita that Gairika was used to treat a wide range of diseases. A fine powder of this mineral was prescribed for both internal and external applications. In various skin diseases like Psoriasis, Scabies, Visarpa, Leucoderma etc. Gairika was used as topical medicine. References also traced where the powder of Gairika was applied to the eyes and snuffed in nose for various haemorrhagic disorders. Acharya Charaka suggests use of Gairika to reduce poisonous bite effect through local application. To make normal complexion of skin after wound, Gairika was used in the form of paste.

It is one of the content of famous formulations like Khadiradi gutika and Pushayanuga churna which was used in the treatment of Kushtha, Raktapitta, Chardi, Vishavikar, Dantaroga, Kshudraroga and Pradara. Reference also traced that Gairika was one of the content of formulation naming Mahagandhhasti Agad and Ksharagad which were used in treating various poisoning cases.

Close scrutiny makes it clear that, Gairika is one of the types of Mruttika, as Charaka also mentioned it as Lohitamrida, due to its red colour. Due to its Tikta, Kashaya rasa and Sheeta property it was used as Sthambaka in bleeding disorders, vomiting and diarrhoea. Though Gairika is a mineral, Charaka had not mentioned its purification or any toxic nature; rather he suggested its role in snake bite and other poisoning.

Reviewing the Ayurvedic literature reveals that ancient scholars had considered the effectiveness of therapeutics by including Metals and minerals increased significantly. And due to this later on the special branch for treating ailments with metals and minerals i.e. Rasachikitsa was evolved.

In recent era some scholar made research on Gairika for its Panduhar effect.¹⁷ Charaka had not mentioned the drug Gairika in treating Pandu; rather he used it to cure Raktapitta. So from reviewing text it can be said that Gairika will be useful in treating haemolytic anaemia. There is also scope for new scholars to study the anti-poisonous activity of Gairika, as Charaka had mentioned its role in symptoms occurred due to various poisons.

Conclusion:

Reviewing Charaka Samhita it can be reveals that Ayurveda utilized Gairika for various therapeutic purposes. The text emphasizes the use of Gairika in the form of Nasal snuffing, collyrium, paste at eye and concerned ailment site, as external medicaments. Some formulations of

Gairika used internally to cure diseases. In addition, Sharkar and Pana kalpana of Gairika had been applied in therapeutics. In the recent past, some researchers have suggested that this mineral have safety and efficacy profile and have haematinic property.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of Ayurvedic medicines is not usually due to single active ingredients, but, usually to complex mixtures of compounds which target the pathological manifestation in several different ways. Therefore, Ayurveda differs from systems of medicine using single ingredients. The concepts, practices and products of the Ayurvedic system of medicine are unique, and its therapeutic values are needed to be explored by utilizing and adopting sophisticated technology, only then can ailing humanity benefit from its age-old remedies.

Table 01:- Showing references of Gairika from Charaka Samhita used for external application

Sr.No.	Reference	Term used	Application	Disease
1	Ch.su.3/5	Gairika	E- Pradeha	Kushtha
2	Ch.chi.4/99	Gairika	E-Nasya	Raktapitta
3	Ch.chi.21/81	Gairika	E-Lepa	Visarpa
4	Ch.chi.23/79	Gairika	I&E- Mahagandahasti Agad	Visha
5	Ch.chi.23/220	Gairika	E-Lapa	Visha
6	Ch.chi.25/117	Gairika	E-Lepa	Varnya
7	Ch.chi.26/232	Gairika	E-Rasakriya	V. Netraroga
8	Ch.chi. 26/235	Gairika	E-Rasakriya	K .Netraroga

Table 02:- Showing references of Gairika from Charaka Samhita used for internal application

Sr. No.	Reference	Term used	Application	Disease
1	Ch.chi.4/73	Gairika	I	Raktapitta
2	Ch.chi.4/79	Gairika	I – pana	Raktapitta
3	Ch.chi.20/32	Kanchangairika	I	Chardi
4	Ch.chi.20/33	Gairika	I	Chardi
5	Ch.chi.23/46	Gairika	I-Pana	Visha- 2 nd Vega
6	Ch.chi.23/79	Gairika	I&E- Mahagandahasti Agad	Visha
7	Ch.chi.23/101	Lohitamruda	I - Ksharagada	Visha
8	Ch.chi.26/210	Gairika	I-Khadiradigutika	Dantaroga
9	Ch.chi. 30/91	Gairika	I-Pushayanugachurna	Pradara

Table 03:- Showing references of Gairika from Charaka Samhita used for other purposes

Sr.No.	Reference	Term used	Application	Use-Other
1	Ch.su.1/70-71	Gairika	Bhauma drug	-
2	Ch.su.4/18 (46)	Gairika	Mahakashaya	Shonitsthapana

Table 04:- Showing references of Gairika from Sushruta Samhita

Sr.No.	Reference	Term used	Application	Disease
1.	Su.su. 1/32	Gairika	Parthivdravya	
2.	Su.su.13/23	Gairika	Lepa	Samyakadagha
3.	Su.su.14/21	Gairikodakapratikash	-	Kaphadushta Raja
4.	Su.sha.10/57	Gairika	Leha	Garbhapatan
5.	Su.chi.5/8	Gairika	Pradeha	P. vatavyadhi
6.	Su.chi.17/10	Gairika	Parisheka	P. Nadivisarpa
7.	Su.chi. 19/30	Gairika	Lepa	P .Vruddhi
8.	Su.chi.19/40	Gairika	I	Upadansh
9.	Su.chi.20/20	Gairika	Lepa	Padadari
10.	Su.chi.20/35	Gairika	Lepa	Nyacha -vyanga
11.	Su.chi.26/38	Gairika	Tailabhyanga	Nilika
12.	Su.ka.3/51	kanakagairika	I	Dushivisha
13.	Su.ka.5/67	kanchanagairika	Tarkshagad	visha
14.	Su.ka.5/77	Gairika	Mandalvishar A.	Visha
15.	Su.ka.6/16	Gairika	Mahasugandhi A.	Visha
16.	Su.U.9/15	Gairika	Gutikanjana	Vatabhishanda
17.	Su.U.10/8	Gairika	Anjana	Pittabhishanda
18.	Su.U.12/16	Gairika	Anjana	Raktabhishanda
19.	Su.U.12/41	Gairika	Anjana	Raktabhishanda
20.	Su.U.17/6	Gairika	Anjana	Pittavidagha Drushti
21.	Su.U.17/11	Gairika	Anjana	Dinratrandhya
22.	Su.U.17/87	Gairika	Lepa	Akshiroga
23.	Su.U.19/15	Gairika	Anjana	Kukunaka
24.	Su.U.31/4	Gairika	Pradeha	Shakunipratishedh
25.	Su.U.39/311	Gairika	Niruhabasti	P. Jwara
26.	Su.U.44/21	Kanchanagairika	I	Pandu
27.	Su.U.45/39	Gairika	Niruhabasti	Raktapitta
28.	Su.U.51/19	Gairika	Leha	Hikka
29.	Su.U.51/27	Gairika	Leha	Hikka

References:

1. Pt. Kashinath Shastri & Dr. Gorakhanatha Chaturvedi, Charaka samhita with Vidyotini hindi commentary, Part I, Sutrasthana 3/05, Chaukhamba Bharati Academy, Reprint 2008- Pg.No.- 59
2. Pt. Kashinath Shastri & Dr. Gorakhanatha Chaturvedi, Charaka samhita with Vidyotini hindi commentary, Part II, Chikitsastana 4/99, Chaukhamba Bharati Academy, Reprint 2007- Pg.No.-184
3. Pt. Kashinath Shastri & Dr. Gorakhanatha Chaturvedi, Charaka samhita with Vidyotini hindi commentary, Part II, Chikitsastana 21/81, Chaukhamba Bharati Academy, Reprint 2007- Pg.No.- 603
4. Pt. Kashinath Shastri & Dr. Gorakhanatha Chaturvedi, Charaka samhita with Vidyotini hindi commentary, Part II, Chikitsastana 23/220, Chaukhamba Bharati Academy, Reprint 2007- Pg.No.- 663
5. Pt. Kashinath Shastri & Dr. Gorakhanatha Chaturvedi, Charaka samhita with Vidyotini hindi commentary, Part II, Chikitsastana 25/117, Chaukhamba Bharati Academy, Reprint 2007- Pg.No.- 715
6. Pt. Kashinath Shastri & Dr. Gorakhanatha Chaturvedi, Charaka samhita with Vidyotini hindi commentary, Part II, Chikitsastana 26/232,235, Chaukhamba Bharati Academy, Reprint 2007- Pg.No.- 757
7. Pt. Kashinath Shastri & Dr. Gorakhanatha Chaturvedi, Charaka samhita with Vidyotini hindi commentary, Part II, Chikitsastana 4/73, Chaukhamba Bharati Academy, Reprint 2007- Pg.No.-189
8. Pt. Kashinath Shastri & Dr. Gorakhanatha Chaturvedi, Charaka samhita with Vidyotini hindi commentary, Part II, Chikitsastana 4/79, Chaukhamba Bharati Academy, Reprint 2007- Pg.No.-190
9. Pt. Kashinath Shastri & Dr. Gorakhanatha Chaturvedi, Charaka samhita with Vidyotini hindi commentary, Part II, Chikitsastana 20/32,33, Chaukhamba Bharati Academy, Reprint 2007- Pg.No.- 584
10. Pt. Kashinath Shastri & Dr. Gorakhanatha Chaturvedi, Charaka samhita with Vidyotini hindi commentary, Part II, Chikitsastana 23/46, Chaukhamba Bharati Academy, Reprint 2007- Pg.No.- 633
11. Pt. Kashinath Shastri & Dr. Gorakhanatha Chaturvedi, Charaka samhita with Vidyotini hindi commentary, Part II, Chikitsastana 23/79, Chaukhamba Bharati Academy, Reprint 2007- Pg.No.- 638

12. Pt. Kashinath Shastri & Dr. Gorakhanatha Chaturvedi, Charaka samhita with Vidyotini hindi commentary, Part II, Chikitsastana 23/101, Chaukhamba Bharati Academy, Reprint 2007- Pg.No.- 640
13. Pt. Kashinath Shastri & Dr. Gorakhanatha Chaturvedi, Charaka samhita with Vidyotini hindi commentary, Part II, Chikitsastana 26/210, Chaukhamba Bharati Academy, Reprint 2007- Pg.No.- 754
14. Pt. Kashinath Shastri & Dr. Gorakhanatha Chaturvedi, Charaka samhita with Vidyotini hindi commentary, Part II, Chikitsastana 30/91, Chaukhamba Bharati Academy, Reprint 2007- Pg.No.- 854
15. Pt. Kashinath Shastri & Dr. Gorakhanatha Chaturvedi, Charaka samhita with Vidyotini hindi commentary, Part I, Sutrasthana 1/70, Chaukhamba Bharati Academy, Reprint 2008- Pg.No.- 42
16. Pt. Kashinath Shastri & Dr. Gorakhanatha Chaturvedi, Charaka samhita with Vidyotini hindi commentary, Part I, Sutrasthana 4/18-46, Chaukhamba Bharati Academy, Reprint 2008- Pg.No.- 95
17. Comparative study of Shuddha Gairika and Mandura bhasma on panduroga by Vd. Archana P.Sonane, Department of R.S. & B.K., Govt. Ayurved College, Nanded- 2002.

