

STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCED AND SUSTAINED LAC PRODUCTION –A VIABLE OPTION OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

A.K. Jaiswal¹, J.P. Singh¹ and B.K. Dwivedi²

Received October 4, 2010 and Accepted January 12, 2011

ABSTRACT : Lac is produced by a tiny insect called lac insect, *Kerria lacca*. The insects produce three products namely- resin, dye and wax of great commercial importance. The resin commonly called lac, is the only product of animal origin and is commercially available in the market as shellac or seedlac or button lac. In fact, this lac is the hardened secretion or outer protective covering of lac insect and is cultivated on several trees, which are abundantly available in the country. Mostly tribal of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa and Gujarat, generating about 4 million man-days every year to carry out the lac cultivation. India meets about 55-60% of the world requirement. The lac is thus an export-oriented commodity as more than 65% of lac produced in the country is exported mainly in refined/semi-refined form. In many areas, it is a major source of livelihood specially in sub-forest and forest areas. It has got versatile uses in various sectors like Paints, Inks, Micanite, Pharmaceuticals, Cosmetics, Electrical, Automobile, Defense, Railways, Marine and Postal department, wooden furniture varnish and sealing wax. Besides, the dye produced by lac insect also finds use in fabrics and food industry. The lac-wax is a substitute for imported Carnuba wax used in manufacture of costly wax polish.

Key Words : Lac, *Kerria lacca*, resin, dye, wax commercial importance, economic viability.