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Class : Deg. I (Subs.)

Topic : General characters of Lichen

Lecture No. - 88

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### Economic Importance of Lichen :

Lichens are pioneer in colonization of rocky habitat by plants (xerophytes). It also work as soil builders by breaking down the hard rock surface.

Economic importance of lichens are following:

#### (i). Food for man and animals :

In iceland Cetraria islandica, commonly known as Iceland moss is ground up and mixed with wheat flour and taken as food by travellers.

In our country, the species of Parmelia in Madras is famous for its delicacy.

Several species of lichens are consumed by insects and larvae as food.

#### (ii). Medical Value :

Several lichens are used in the preparation of medicines. It is also ingredients of salves, puddings and cultural media. Many lichens were used as medicines in older time.

Lobaria pulmonaria was used in lung's disease,

Xanthoria parviventina in Jaundice, Cladonia

pyxidata in whooping cough.

(iii) Chemical uses :

The species of lichens are used in tanning and perfumery industries. Species of Rocella and Lecanora are used in preparation of dyes.

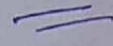
(iv) Ecological importance :

Many crustose lichens growing on rocks dissolve and disintegrate into soil.

Limestones are dissolved by the action of certain chemicals secreted by lichens.

When lichens die and decay, they form humus soil together with rock particles, and mosses, ferns and other plants grow on it. Thus they prepare ground for succession of vegetation.

- Usnic acid (an antibiotic) is obtained from Usnea and Cladonia.
- Orchil (a dye) is prepared from Rocella.  
~~Or~~ Orcein is a purified product of orchil.
- Litmus is obtained from Rocella tinctoria.
- Cladonia rangiferina (Reindeer moss) serves as food for reindeer.
- Ramalina and Evernia are used in the preparation of Dhup and havan samagris.
- Lichens act as an indicator of air pollution because no lichen can be found in the area of heavy industrial pollution.



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