

From Wage Labour to Lakhpati: The Inspiring Lac Success Story of Salem Guriya

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A Story of Transformation

Farmer Mr. Salem Guriya from Sumigbeda village in Bano Block of Simdega district of Jharkhand is an example of how scientific knowledge, technical guidance and sustained hard work can change a rural livelihood. Earlier he was a poor man depending on daily wage labour but today he is a successful lac farmer earning lakhs of rupees every year. He has a steady income and provides employment for dozens of people in his village.

A Modest Beginning

Salem Guriya comes from an economically backward farming family. He had about 70 Kusum (*Schleichera oleosa*) trees but these valuable host trees remained almost unexploited due to lack of scientific knowledge and proper training in lac cultivation. His family was mainly dependent on rain-fed paddy farming and income from agriculture was unpredictable and insufficient. This made him work as a daily wage labourer to earn his livelihood. He first tried his hand at lac cultivation in 2010, inoculating only four Kusum trees, using traditional methods. The harvest was only 75 kg

of lac and the income was about Rs. 25,000. It was a start but not quite enough to support the family. He therefore continued to rely on wage labour and his financial situation remained pretty much the same until he sought formal, scientific guidance which would eventually change the course of his life.

The Turning Point: Scientific Training

The turning point came in 2018 when Salem's elder brother, Shem Guriya, was trained in scientific lac cultivation by the ICAR-National Institute of Secondary Agriculture (ICAR-NISA), Ranchi. The program covered advanced technologies of lac cultivation like the coup system of inoculation, pruning of host trees, brood lac inoculation, use of insecticides and fungicides, crop management and methods for obtaining quality lac. The family's approach to lac farming has been transformed by the knowledge acquired in this training.



Steady Expansion

Buoyed by this success, Salem Guriya expanded his lac cultivation every year, following expert advice, and enhanced his crop management and gradually boosted his production capacity. By 2026 he had achieved another milestone: inoculating 200 kg of brood lac and harvesting close to 1,000 kg of lac. His produce was of a superior quality and he was able to get better prices in the market. Today, he makes nearly Rs. 9 lakh a year from lac cultivation, a near 300 per cent jump since 2018 and a dramatic shift from where he was in 2010. This success has come from his dedication, his

scientific training and his willingness to adopt modern agricultural technologies.

Creating Employment in the Village

Salem accomplishments are not confined to his own household. As his enterprise grew, he started to hire people in his village and in the surrounding area. In each production cycle, about five labourers are employed for 15 days for inoculation of brood lac, three labourers for 10 days for the spray of insecticides and fungicides and fifteen labourers for 15 days for harvesting and collection, creating almost 330 man-days of employment every year. It has become a reliable source of income for many rural households with limited employment opportunities and has made Salem Guriya an important contributor to rural employment and local economic development. He still works as a wage labourer in Ranchi for about four months in a year and earns an additional amount of Rs. 50,000 along with lac cultivation. He spends the extra income on household expenses and children's education. He strongly believes that education is the best investment a family can make in the next generation.

A Transformed Life, A Wider Impact

Salem Guriya and his family's life has been transformed beyond recognition. From a household that had difficulty with poverty, uncertain income and dependence on wage labour to a household that is economically secure and

self-reliant. Higher earnings have improved their standard of living, opened up educational opportunities for the children and strengthened their confidence in the future. Encouraged by his example, many farmers in his village and the adjoining areas have taken up scientific lac cultivation, thus spreading the modern methods of lac farming in the region.

His story is an example of how scientific use of natural resources, technical knowledge, modern farming practices and relentless hard work can change the livelihood of a small farmer. The turning point came with the training and technical guidance provided by ICAR-NISA, Ranchi, which gave him both the knowledge and the confidence to adopt scientific lac cultivation. Today he is not only a prosperous and economically empowered lac farmer, but also a role model for fellow farmers and a source of employment for his community.

His journey from struggle to success clearly shows that lac cultivation can be a strong tool for rural economic development, employment generation and poverty alleviation if the right technical knowledge, scientific guidance and sustained institutional support are provided. This is an inspiration not only for the lac growers of Jharkhand but also for the farming communities across India, as it demonstrates the huge potential of scientific lac cultivation to uplift the rural livelihoods and strengthen the rural economy.
