Natural Pigments for Leather Finishing: Role of Biocolourants from *Monascus Purpureus*

Swarna V Kanth*, A. Tamil Selvi, N. Usharani, N. Anandhi, R. Venba, B. Chandrasekaran

*Corresponding author, Email: swarna@clri.res.in, Tel: +91-44-24911386, Fax: +91-44-24416889

Abstract: The worldwide requirement for colorants from natural origin is rapidly increasing in the leather sector due to environmental apprehension. Biocolorant obtained from Monascus purpureus, which yields red coloured pigment extract has been used in the finishing process of leather. The effect of varying conditions of the biocolorant on the levelness of the colour, shade brightness, color intensity and rub fastness have been studied and the conditions optimized. The change in colour shade obtained has been quantified by reflectance measurements and compared with the visual assessment data. The reflectance spectra for the colour have been obtained. The bulk properties viz, surface smoothness, softness, handle, change in colour, uniformity, covering have been found to be improved in the biopigment finished leathers. The strength properties of the finish films are not significantly altered by the use of this natural colorant in the finishing tanning process.

Key words: natural pigments; leather finishing; biocolourants