

Women Empowerment through the Preparation of Jute Diversified Products and Efficient Marketing

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ABSTRACT

The results of the research outputs or trials will get less importance if the technology is not transferred to the grass root level of the community where the product development is done, may it be the large industry or small scale industry. As, Krishi Vigyan Kendra Burdwan working with the aim of transferring and refinement of technologies to the field level and to the rural communities, it has an important role to play in this context. Krishi Vigyan Kendra Burdwan under Central Research Institute for jute and Allied Fibres (ICAR) is working with respect to transfer of technologies in the context of jute production, post harvest and diversified product preparation from jute fibre through field level demonstrations and training programmes. Initiative has been taken for cultivation of jute in Keten and Garamba-Bhasapur villages of Burdwan district, where farmers were made aware and then motivated towards the cultivation of jute in the year 2007-08 through the field level demonstration where they were not aware much. In the very next year 2008-09 thirty five farmers of the villages started cultivation of jute in an area of 25 ha and got production @ 25 – 30 q/ha. The jute fibre produced in the village was utilized for preparing different handicraft items. Seven days training programmes for 30 trainees in each comprising of rural women and school drop out girls were organized at different villages to prepare diversified handicrafts from jute fibre. Then most of the trainees formed Self Help Groups and Mahila Mandal started preparing different items from fibre where they found good acceptance of their products in different agricultural fairs, exhibitions and shops. These help the rural women and youth giving some additional income and empowering the weaker section of rural folk and increase the small scale industries in the particular area. Thus, the small entrepreneurs have not only attracted but have also opened cheaper options for the poorer section of the society living in difficult terrain.

Key words : Jute; Demonstration; Training; Handicrafts; Women entrepreneurship;

Jute is a truly versatile fibre gifted to man by nature. With the growing concern over the damage to environment that synthetic goods may cause in various fields jute has served to be the best alternative. Its abundant availability at very cheap price and inherent characteristics like good strength, moisture absorption and dimensional stability made it widely used. Other than the conventional usage as packaging material the diversification of jute has to be implemented with a much wider perspective. Along with the efforts for innovating new products, technology and aggressive marketing for them now a day's adequate attention has also been given towards upgradation of the technology for conventional products to improve quality, reduce cost and make them more competitive.

Today jute is looked upon not only as a major textile fibre but also as a raw material for manufacturing different products, which may be proved to be useful to protect environment and to maintain ecological balance. While our age old jute industry is not flexible enough to undertake diversification programme in a big way. The decentralized sector can play a meaningful role in augmenting the process of diversification of jute in India. As a new hope for the future of jute all out efforts for diversification and intelligent attempts to develop more number of new jute products suitable for diverse application are made by the different research and development sections. The jute diversified products that so far been produced by numbers of small and micro level entrepreneurs and production units in the

decentralized sectors including SHGs, NGOs and rural area women groups have founded good acceptance in the market (De, 1995; Verma, 2007; Sinha and Chakraborty, 2007). Woven products, low cost blankets, value added household utility items produced by SHGs, NGOs and small entrepreneurs have not only attracted but also opened cheaper options for the poorer section of the society living in difficult terrain. Thus the effort for popularize jute cultivation and develop diversified products from the fibre in the grass root level would show a ray of hope to the farm families which may provide them a better livelihood.

Traditional jute products occupy a dominant share in both the production and exports. Over all it is seen that this marvelous fibre is cultivated almost exclusively in developing countries of East Asia and in some parts of Latin America. Bangladesh, India and Thailand account for over 90 per cent of world production. The jute export scenario, India is the world's largest producer of raw jute as well as jute goods. It almost produces world's 50 per cent of raw jute and 40 per cent of finished jute products. It is found that employment of approximately 40 million farmers and 0.5 million factory workers in India depends upon this golden fibre. The Indian jute sector comprises organized jute industry as well as large numbers of cottage units. Approximately total number of jute mills in India is 73 out of which 59 of them are in West Bengal. West Bengal is the largest jute and jute goods producing state in the country accounting for 71 per cent of the production.

Jute constitutes a low proportion of the value of world trade, but its cultivation and processing is labour intensive and therefore provides a livelihood and an important source of food security for many farmers and farm-families in India. After the synthetic goods came to market the demand of jute goods is slowly declining. Jute mills are also closing day by day leaving millions of farm families and factory workers in trouble. Assuming that weather conditions and yield of jute follow their normal patterns, world production of jute is projected at 2.4 million tonnes by 2012. India is projected to increase its dominance of global jute production, accounting for 66 per cent of the world production by 2012, compared to 58% in the past. Export trend as seen by experts reveals that USA, Belgium, Syria and UK, Turkey had been the 5 major importing countries for Indian jute goods which accounted for about 51 per cent of total value of jute goods. Other many more countries like Japan, Egypt, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Germany and

China are next major countries importing jute goods from India (Roy, 2008). So now it is the perfect time to increase the production of raw jute and to increase the diverse application of jute by motivating and providing the advance technologies starting from the farmers, rural people to the industrial level.

As jute is a versatile, eco friendly and economic fibre, technological advancement and continuous research finding by the research institutions has changed the profile of jute. Jute fibre being a strong fibre, renewable and abundantly available provides ample scope for its application in the manufacture of products for diverse use. Utilization of jute for manufacture of market worthy products has open up large opportunity. In view of challenge faced from cheaper prices of synthetic substitutes, more thrust have been given on diversification of jute products. Now the thrust areas of value added diversified jute products are: Jute handlooms, jute handicrafts and novelties, non-woven and industrial applications, jute rigid packaging, and reinforced plastic, composite jute and decorative and Geo-jute etc. (Sur and Aditya, 2008)

METHODOLOGY

Initiative has been taken to strengthen the grass root level activities of jute production, post harvest and product diversification by transferring and refinement of different technologies developed by the CRIJAF (ICAR) and BCKV working in this field. Technology related to jute production and post harvest activities are provided to the farmers and farm labours by field level demonstrations and through different on farm trials where as technology related to product diversification is provided through different training programmes (Agarwal, 2006).

Field Demonstration on jute cultivation : Farmers of Keten and Garamba - Bhasapur villages Burdwan District were made them aware about the cultivation of jute and motivated for cultivation in the year of 2007-08 through the field level demonstration where they were not aware much. In the next two years 2008 - 09 and 2009-10 thirty five numbers of farmers, out of these 15 in Keten village of Kanka block and 20 in Garamba-Bhasapur of Galsi 2 block started cultivation of jute in total area of 25 ha. Jute was cultivated with improved management practices like line sowing by seed drill, balanced fertilizer and water management. In the Farmers' practice they broadcast the seeds without

proper fertilizer and water management. The jute cultivar was JRO 524.

Training on jute handicrafts preparation : Jute fibre is conventionally used in making of Hessian, sacking, carpet backing cloths which contribute significantly to the national exchequer through import earnings (Table 1).

Table 1. Item-wise export of jute goods

Period	Hessian	C.B.C.	Sacking	Others	Total*	Value**
1962-63	518.0	—	269.0	56.5	843.5	233.8
1972-73	256.4	162.4	91.0	68.4	578.4	249.1
1982-83	214.1	51.4	36.0	28.1	329.6	201.8
1992-93	102.9	20.1	27.7	45.1	195.8	351.7
2002-03	100.8	28	6.1	116.3	226.0	913.3
2005-06	171.6	0.9	33.2	80.1	285.8	1186.2

* in '000 Mt, ** in Crores

(Source: Saha and Hazra, 2008)

Of late emphasis has been given in manufacture of jute diversified product (JDPs). Being a bio-degradable and renewable natural fibre jute handicrafts and novelties are in great demand both in domestic and as well as foreign market. Keeping in priority of the felt need and affordability of the rural farm families of Keten, Jagulipar, Garamba-Bhasapur six training programmes were conducted for preparing beautiful handicrafts, novelties and gift items from jute fibre. Each training programme was of seven days for thirty trainees comprising of rural women, school drop out girls and rural youth. They were trained with different skills for the preparation of jute diversified products. The techniques used for jute handicrafts preparation were Braiding, Weaving, Knotting, Coiling, Plaiting, and Dyeing etc. For preparation of handicrafts products with jute fibre different combination of materials used which are Cane and Bamboo, Jute Stick, Local Wood, Fabrics/Yards, Glass etc. With the combination of different techniques and materials a good range of products were prepared by the trainees:

- *Storage containers for food and domestic use:* Fruit basket/tray, hanging containers, cylindrical containers, Newspaper containers.
- *Kitchen products:* Hand gloves, handle covers, dusters, cylindrical containers for spoons, fork, and knives.
- *Furnishings:* Rugs, floor coverings, door mat, curtain holders
- *Small furniture items:* Magazine rack, lampshades, hanging baskets for pot

- *Office stationeries:* Pen stand, pencil pouches, pin holder, waste paper basket.
- *Bags and pouches :* Hand bags, shoulder bags, shopping bags, hanging purses, mobile carrier, bottle carrier, purse, spectacle case, butwa
- *Table top accessories :* Flower vase, table mat
- *Decorates and novelties :* Dolls, hanging dolls, keyring, wall hangings, gift items

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The fibre yield obtained in both the villages along with the economics has been presented as pooled data in the Table 2 and Table 3.

Input cost, both in improved practice and farmers' practice were calculated for the marked farmer and since it did not vary beyond 1 per cent so it was taken as constant for all farmers. Results of the Table 2 showed that the jute fibre yield has been obtained 26.0 to 29.5 q/ha with an average of 27.68 q/ha in the improved agronomic practices against the yield range of 23.50 to 28.0 q/ha with an average of 25.10 in the farmers' practice in Keten village of Kanksa block. The average increase of yield showed the value of 10.32 per cent. The B:C ratios varied from 2.19 to 2.49 and 1.58 to 1.76 in the improved practice and farmers' practice, respectively.

Perusal of the data presented in the Table 3 indicated the jute fibre yield has been obtained 26.0 to 29.5 q/ha with an average of 27.69 q/ha in the improved agronomic practices against the yield range of 23.25 to 28.0 q/ha with an average of 25.45 in the farmers' practice in Garamba-Bhasapur village of Galsi 2 block. The average increase of yield was 8.85 per cent. The B:C ratios varied from 2.19 to 2.48 and 1.56 to 1.81 in the improved practice and farmers' practice, respectively. The comparatively higher yield could be achieved with higher B:C ratio in both the villages due to imposition of improved practices. Very low B:C ratio in farmers' practice was attributable to the consideration of family labour into the cost of cultivation. It has been observed that as much as 50 per cent of the total labour cost is met from family labour.

Post Training Effect : After the trainings few groups as Shelf Help Groups (SHG) has been formed for the smooth running of the work and started prepare different items from the jute fibres. The SHGs have coordinated with NABARD and other banking sectors for getting funds and the rural women started their activities in preparing different jute handicrafts and selling in different

Table 2. Results of demonstration conducted for jute cultivation at Keten village of Kansa block of Burdwan (Pooled data of 2008 - 09 and 2009-10)

Demo No.	Yield (q/ha)		% increase	Gross return (Rs/ha)		Input cost (Rs/ha)		B:C ratio	
	IP	FP		IP	FP	IP	FP	IP	FP
1	29.50	26.00	13.46	45725	40300	18394	23063	2.49	1.74
2	26.50	24.50	8.16	41075	37975	18394	23063	2.23	1.65
3	28.00	25.00	12.00	43400	38750	18394	23063	2.36	1.68
4	27.00	24.00	12.50	41850	37200	18394	23063	2.28	1.60
5	26.50	23.50	12.77	41075	36425	18394	23063	2.23	1.58
6	26.00	25.00	4.00	40300	38750	18394	23063	2.19	1.68
7	29.50	28.00	5.36	45725	41075	18394	23063	2.48	1.78
8	27.50	25.00	10.00	42625	38750	18394	23063	2.31	1.68
9	27.50	25.00	10.00	42625	38750	18394	23063	2.31	1.68
10	28.00	26.00	7.69	43400	40300	18394	23063	2.36	1.74
11	26.50	24.00	10.42	41075	37200	18394	23063	2.23	1.61
12	27.00	24.50	10.20	41850	37975	18394	23063	2.27	1.64
13	29.25	26.25	11.43	45337.5	40687.5	18394	23063	2.46	1.76
14	28.50	24.35	17.04	44175	37742.5	18394	23063	2.40	1.63
15	28.00	25.50	9.80	43400	39525	18394	23063	2.36	1.71
Avg.	27.68	25.10	10.32	42909	38760	18394	23063	2.33	1.67

IP: Improved practice, FP: Farmers' practice; Price of jute fibre was Rs. 1550/q in both the year

Table 3. Results of demonstration conducted for jute cultivation at Garamba-Bhasapur village of Galsi 2 Block of Burdwan (Pooled data of 2008 - 09 and 2009-10)

Demo No.	Yield (q/ha)		% increase	Gross return (Rs/ha)		Input cost (Rs/ha)		B:C ratio	
	IP	FP		IP	FP	IP	FP	IP	FP
1	27.66	25.08	10.36	42873	38874	18394	23063	2.33	1.69
2	26.00	25.00	4.00	40300	38750	18394	23063	2.19	1.68
3	28.50	25.00	14.00	44175	38750	18394	23063	2.40	1.68
4	29.50	26.50	11.32	45725	41075	18394	23063	2.48	1.78
5	27.25	25.00	9.00	42237.5	38750	18394	23063	2.29	1.68
6	26.00	23.25	11.83	40300	36037.5	18394	23063	2.19	1.56
7	28.25	26.50	6.60	43787.5	41075	18394	23063	2.38	1.78
8	26.25	23.25	12.90	40687.5	36037.5	18394	23063	2.21	1.56
9	27.50	25.00	10.00	42625	38750	18394	23063	2.32	1.68
10	26.00	24.25	7.21	40300	37587.5	18394	23063	2.19	1.63
11	29.00	26.00	11.53	44950	40300	18394	23063	2.44	1.74
12	27.25	25.50	6.86	42237.5	39525	18394	23063	2.29	1.71
13	28.00	26.00	7.69	43400	40300	18394	23063	2.36	1.75
14	27.66	26.00	6.38	42873	40300	18394	23063	2.33	1.75
15	29.50	28.00	5.35	45725	43400	18394	23063	2.49	1.88
16	28.00	26.25	6.67	43400	40687.5	18394	23063	2.36	1.76
17	29.50	27.00	9.26	45725	41850	18394	23063	2.49	1.81
18	27.00	24.50	10.20	41850	37975	18394	23063	2.27	1.65
19	27.00	26.00	3.85	41850	40300	18394	23063	2.27	1.75
20	28.00	25.00	12.00	43400	38750	18394	23063	2.36	1.68
Avg.	27.69	25.45	8.85	42921.05	39447.5	18394	23063	2.33	1.71

IP: Improved practice, FP: Farmers' practice; Price of jute fibre was Rs. 1550/q in both the year

Table 4. Average Monthly Income of some rural women through jute handicrafts (Rs.)

Name of Rural Women	Name of SHG	Income before training	Income after training
Jyotsna	Navadaya SHG	200	2200
Jyotsna Roy	Naba Milan Goshthi	300	2000
Amina Khatoon	Naba Milan Goshthi	250	2000
Sabina Khatoon	Alo Gosthi	200	2000
Nagera Khatoon	Poomima Goshthi	150	1800
Raj Kumari	Alo Gosthi	Nil	1600
Soma Das	Alo Gosthi	Nil	1800
Golbahar Begum	Ananda Gosthi	150	1700
Sephali Khatoon	Ananda Gosthi	150	1800
Jyotsna Ruidas	Jeevika Goshthi	200	1800
Namita Lohar	Ma Durga SHG	Nil	1500
Tanushree Majhi	Ma Kali SHG	Nil	1600

agricultural fairs, exhibitions and shops. Farm women often do not have access to the secondary and terminal market. They only have access to the primary market like village fairs, women fairs etc., but still have to bear some cost of giving stall, transportation etc.

Various marketing options has been explored for the marketability of the products through the different ways through NGOs working in nearby areas and through farmers Clubs of KVK and NABARD. Ten Mahila Mandals were formed comprising 150 members and most of them are actively engaged in preparing diversified products of jute. Few NGOs like *Meghdhoot Welfare Society Panagarh, Ujjiban Barddhaman*

etc. and Farmers Clubs like *Sonar Bangla Farmers Club, Pragati Farmers Club* etc. have been involved in preparing and marketing for the jute diversified products.

Till date these groups attended twenty six agricultural fairs and exhibitions conducted locally in Budbud, Galsi, Durgapur and other places of Burdwan district and also in Kolkata. Most of them are regularly preparing different items and selling in local shops and found good response. Six shops/rural mart at Durgapur, Burdwan town have been opened so far with the help of NABARD where their product are being sold.

Most of the rural women of the SHGs or Mahila Mandals had negligible income even no income before the trainings. Now they are getting a good income ranging from Rs. 1500-2200 per month after this type of intervention. The results of average monthly income of some members of few groups are presented in Table 4. This is showing a ray of hope to the farm families for the additional income.

CONCLUSION

This attempt help the rural women and youth giving some additional income and empowering the weaker section of rural folk and increase the small scale industries in the particular area. Thus, the small entrepreneurs have not only attracted but have also opened cheaper options for the poorer section of the society living in difficult terrain.

Paper received on : January 23, 2012

Accepted on : April 13, 2012

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