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JUTE IN NORTH-WESTERN INDIA 311

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THERE has been a considerable increase in the area and production of jute in India in the post-Independence period. In the year 1948-49 the total area under jute was 340,000 hectares in contrast to 171,800 hectares during 1940-41 and stood at 738,600 hectares in the year 1976-77. As a result of this increase in the area, there has been a substantial increase in the production which was 53.47 lakh bales in the year 1976-77 as compared to 20 lakh bales in the year 1948-49.

The increase in area under jute cultivation has been to a great extent confined to the periphery of the traditional jute areas. West Bengal, Assam, Bihar and Orissa contribute

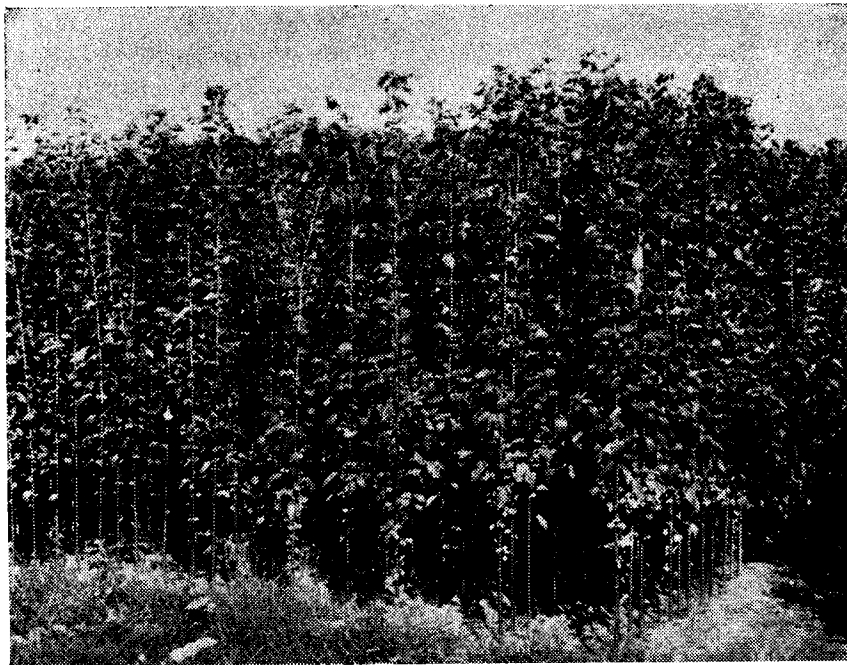
the largest share of the area under jute cultivation. It has also extended to small areas in Uttar Pradesh, Tripura and Meghalaya. It could not make any renewed impact in regions other than eastern India. In fact all the expansion has taken place during the period between 1948-49 and 1956-57, when the area extended to 753 thousand hectares with a production of 42.21 lakh bales. During the period after 1956-57, the jute area remained constant with minor fluctuations between 700 to 800 thousand hectares. This was still less than half of the area over which jute was being grown before the partition of the country. Although there

has been significant increase in the production primarily due to the use of improved varieties as is evident from the data for the year 1956-57, the production was 42.21 lakh bales from 753,000 hectares and in the year 1976-77 the same was 53.47 lakh bales from an area of 738,600 hectares which is comparatively less area than the base year 1956-57.

The sudden check in the expansion of jute area perhaps came primarily due to the fear that with the introduction of synthetic fibres the importance of jute fibre has diminished and it has no future. Retting of the fibre, labour and marketing problems have also contributed to its non-acceptance in the new areas. The unfounded conviction that jute is suited only to the condition of the eastern India has also been a factor inhibiting farmers from adopting jute in non-traditional areas.

Unfounded Fear

Though synthetic polypropylene fibres posed a challenge to jute crop and for quite a long time it was feared that it might replace the use of jute fibre yet this has proved to be unfounded. Jute fibre has its own merits over the synthetics. The most important advantage with jute fibre is that its products can easily be mended when damaged, while this is not possible with the synthetic fibre products. Its quality having woolly nature and silky lustre



Field view of 'JRO-632' variety of jute grown at I.A.R.I., New Delhi

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provides a feeling of comfort when used in garments and is an added advantage. During the recent past there have been efforts to explore new avenues of jute fibre utilization of more economic importance as a result of which it has regained its consumer position. Its prospects have further brightened with its utilization in clothing, including those mixed with wool as well as cotton. The large amount of fibre which is consumed by the farmers themselves in the form of ropes and threads, goes unmentioned.

The market price during 1977 ranged from Rs 105 to Rs 222 per quintal in traditional jute areas. This is expected to fetch still higher price in non-traditional areas where it is scarce and is in growing demand in developing handicraft industries. There is no doubt about its bright future in North-western India with its utilization in textile industries besides the export values of raw fibre as well as manufactured products.

Jute crop does well in temperatures ranging between 60°F to 110°F or more with humidity as low as 60 per cent. In North-western India it can be sown during the later half of May to the end of June depending upon the availability of land after the preceding crop and would be ready for retting by the end of August to the end of September after about 90 to 100 days from the date of sowing. A small portion can be left unharvested for collecting seeds which will be ready in the month of October if sown early. Late-sown jute cannot be used for seed production because of poor fertility due to the low temperatures prevailing during the last phases of flowering.

Recent experiments conducted at IARI New Delhi, revealed that jute can be grown successfully in North-western India with as high a fibre yield as in any traditional jute growing area. This conclusion is based upon a comparative yield

study made at different locations during 1972 and 1973 seasons.

High Yield at Delhi

In the year 1972, a trial of 10 varieties with four replications was conducted at two locations (i) Pusa, a traditional jute growing area (ii) Delhi, a non-jute area. Fibre yield was estimated from ten randomly harvested plants from each replication and the mean 10 plant yields at two locations was compared (Table 1). The results revealed that the yield at Delhi was highly encouraging as this was either equal to the yield at Pusa or was better. Out of 10 varieties only two varieties, namely 'JRO 878' and 'JRC 7447' (50 Kr) yielded less at Delhi.

In the year 1973 a yield trial with four replications was conducted at Delhi and the results were compared with the results obtained from the evaluation trials conducted by the All-India Co-ordinated Research Project on Jute and Allied fibres, at different locations in the traditional jute-growing areas during the same season (Table 2). This result too revealed that the yields obtained at Delhi are quite comparable to the

best yields obtained in any location in the traditional jute-growing areas.

These results provide ample evidence to conclude that jute can be grown as successfully in North-western India as in any place of the traditional jute growing areas. This can profitably be grown on all the lands where irrigation facilities for 15-20 days before the onset of monsoon are available. Though it would not be advisable to go for large scale commercial production using it as major crop at the beginning, the farmers can profitably grow it on a limited scale adjusting it to the relay crop production. They can also have more fibre by growing jute instead of sunhemp, for their farm and domestic requirements. With the advent of high-yielding varieties of wheat and paddy, the Punjab farmers have reached a level of crop production in food crops and are highly looking for an alternative cash crop especially in the low-lying waterlogged areas. Earlier trials with jute varieties conducted by Iyer (unpublished) in the Karnal and Gurgaon Districts of Haryana and Punjab respectively have clearly indicated the great potential of this crop in North India, and thus would

TABLE 1. COMPARATIVE YIELD OF JUTE FIBRE OF DIFFERENT VARIETIES AT TWO LOCATIONS IN THE YEAR 1972 (i) PUSA, TRADITIONAL AREA FOR JUTE (ii) DELHI, NON-TRADITIONAL AREA FOR JUTE. THE RESULTS ARE THE MEAN OF FOUR REPLICATIONS

Sl. No.	Variety	Yield of 10 plants (kg)	
		Pusa	Delhi
1.	JRO 878	105.2	103.2
2.	JRC 7447	105.2	103.2
3.	JRC 212	105.2	103.2
4.	JRC 7447 50 Kr	105.2	103.2
5.	JRC 878 60 Kr	105.2	103.2
6.	JRC 212	105.2	103.2
7.	JRC 7447	105.2	103.2
8.	JRC 7447 50 Kr	105.2	103.2
9.	JRC 212 1 Kr	105.2	103.2
10.	JRC 212 0.01 NMU	105.2	103.2

ABSTRACT OF COMPARATIVE YIELD OF JUTE AND OTHER CROPS OBTAINED FROM THE ALLOCATION TRIALS CONDUCTED BY ALL-INDIA COUNCIL OF JUTE RESEARCHERS IN THE JUTE AREAS DURING 1957

Treatment	Jute		Other Crops		Total
	Area (hectare)	Yield (kg/ha)	Area (hectare)	Yield (kg/ha)	
JRO 652	29.74	22.02	22.98	29.47	21.80
JRO 620	—	—	—	—	22.00
Foliaceous	22.79	21.58	23.85	27.88	24.59
White	23.92	16.52	—	24.47	22.40
JRO 782	22.25	18.22	22.28	23.42	25.98
JRO 678	—	—	—	—	26.11
JRC 782	27.89	—	22.25	28.51	21.44
JRC 782	20.93	—	22.25	27.82	24.55
D16	21.25	—	22.25	28.51	24.88
Control	22.25	—	22.25	28.51	24.88
JRO 678	22.25	—	13.12	16.12	20.11

been based on the monopoly of Eastern jute growing in India. American jute is grown in the South, particularly in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. In India, the jute crop is grown in the Eastern States, where the rice-fallow system is prevalent. The adequate residual moisture can be utilized for jute and other crops. The jute crop is grown in the Eastern States, where the rice-fallow system is prevalent. The adequate residual moisture can be utilized for jute and other crops. The jute crop is grown in the Eastern States, where the rice-fallow system is prevalent. The adequate residual moisture can be utilized for jute and other crops.