

Jute Industry in India, Production, Cultivation, Distribution

September 11, 2025 • vajiramandravi.com



The Jute Industry in India is one of the most valuable industries as this fibre crop is known for its wide range of applications and its economic value. The crop is used in producing gunny bags, ropes, carpets, rugs and tarpaulins and is highly in demand due to its affordability, softness and durability. In this article, we are going to cover the Jute crop, its growth conditions, production and distribution in India.

Jute Crop

The Jute crop is the second most important fibre crop in India after cotton. It is used in multiple ways like for making ropes, gunny bags, rugs, carpets, tarpaulins and many other products. The demand has traditionally been strong due to its low price, softness and strength. However, the arrival of synthetic substitutes has highly impacted its demand. Jute continues to remain an important part of India's agricultural economy and rural livelihood, despite facing stiff competition from synthetics. Its role as a revenue generator, employment provider, and export earner highlights its enduring relevance.

Jute Conditions for Growth

- Jute is grown in a hot (24°C–35°C) and humid climate, with annual rainfall of 120–150 cm and relative humidity of 80–90%.
- Requires abundant water. Sowing and nursery raising are usually done in the pre-monsoon months, with rainfall ranging between 25–55 cm.
- This timing helps maximise the benefits of the monsoon rains.

Jute Cultivation in India

The ideal Jute Cultivation conditions include:

- Generally sown in February and harvested in October; the crop matures in 8–10 months.
- Best suited to fertile alluvial soils, especially light sandy or clayey loams.
- Rapidly exhausts soil fertility, like cotton, making annual replenishment through silt-laden floods necessary.

Jute Production in India

- After Partition, nearly 75% of jute-growing areas went to Bangladesh, while most mills remained in India.
- Between 1950–1980, the area under cultivation, production, and yield rose significantly.
- From 1981 onwards, declining trends have been observed due to erratic weather, expansion of rice farming, and synthetic fibre competition.
- India still leads globally, contributing about 56% of world jute output, followed by Bangladesh with 25%.

Jute Distribution in India

Over 99% of India's jute is produced in five states including West Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh.

- West Bengal (81% share): favourable climate, fertile alluvial soil, dense labour availability, and the Hugli industrial belt with numerous mills.
- Bihar (8.67%)
- Assam (7.78%)
- Odisha and Andhra Pradesh (delta regions are important contributors).

Jute Trade in India

Jute is an important crop in terms of both imports and exports of the country:

- Imports raw jute from Bangladesh to feed domestic mills, as internal production is insufficient.
- Exports processed products like hessian cloth, bags, carpets, and ropes, boosting its international market reach.
- Export surpluses in processed items help balance raw jute imports, strengthening foreign exchange earnings.

Jute Development and Promotion Industry

Jute crop plays an important role in the economy of eastern India, especially West Bengal.

- India is the world's largest producer of both raw jute and jute goods.
- The National Jute Policy has been extremely important in modernisation, technology upgradation, and improving competitiveness.
- Rising awareness of eco-friendly products has accelerated the demand for biodegradable jute goods such as carry bags and packaging.

Jute Crop Economic Importance

- An important revenue-generating crop, Jute strengthens agricultural **GDP** and serves as a major cash crop.
- The crop supports allied industries producing bags, ropes, rugs, and tarpaulins, thus stimulating rural economies.
- Export value of jute products contributes positively to trade balances.
- Provides extensive employment to farmers, labourers, and industrial workers across the jute belt.
- Acts as a stable source of income for millions of farmers, improving rural standards of living.

National Jute Board (NJB)

- The National Jute Board was set up as an Act in 2008, as an apex body that was responsible for overseeing jute development.
- The organisation operates under the Ministry of Textiles and manages competitiveness through schemes on productivity, market expansion and innovation.
- The board promotes eco-friendly products and particularly biodegradable jute items, aligning jute industry with global sustainability trends.

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