



Packaging in Jute Bags Made Mandatory

Recently the Government has mandated the packaging of **100% of foodgrain** and **20% of sugar** in jute bags for 2018-19.

- The decision aims to benefit farmers and workers in the Eastern and Northeastern parts of the country like West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Meghalaya and Tripura.
- The jute industry is predominantly dependent on the government sector, which purchases jute bags worth more than Rs 6,500 crore every year for packing food grains.
- Initially 10% of the orders of jute bags for packing foodgrain would be placed through reverse auction on the GeM (Government e-Marketplace) portal that would facilitate price discovery.
- The order follows the **Jute Packaging Materials (Compulsory Use in Packing Commodities) Act (JPM), 1987** to protect the jute sector from the plastic packaging segment.
- The Act mandates compulsory use of sacks in certain areas to bring buoyancy to the raw jute market.
- Initially there was reservation for sugar, cement, fertiliser and foodgrain packaging. However, certain sectors have been taken out of the ambit due to market demand for alternative synthetic packaging as there was seepage of materials through jute sacks.

About Jute

- Known as the **'golden fibre'** jute is one of the longest and most used natural fibre for various textile applications.
- It thrives in **tropical lowland areas** with **humidity of 60% to 90%**. Jute is a rain-fed crop with little need for fertilizer or pesticides.
- **Retting of Jute** is a process in which the tied bundles of jute stalks are immersed in water by which fibres get loosened and separated from the woody stalk.
- **World's leading jute producing** countries are **India , Bangladesh , China and Thailand . India** is the **world's largest producer** of raw jute and jute goods , contributing to over 50% and 40% respectively of global production.
- The cultivation of jute in India is mainly confined to the eastern region of the country . The jute crop is grown in seven states - West Bengal , Assam , Orissa , Bihar , Uttar Pradesh , Tripura and Meghalaya . **West Bengal** alone accounts for over **50% of the total raw jute production**.
- To promote and popularize jute diversification work, **National Jute Board**, Ministry of Textiles, acts as the **apex body for promotion of the products** in India and abroad.
- The **first jute mill** was established at **Rishra (Bengal - now in West Bengal)**, on the **river Hooghly** near **Calcutta** in the year **1855**, by Mr. George Aclend. In 1959, the first power driven weaving factory was set up.

Potential of Jute Industry

- Jute Geotextile is (a variety of jute available in woven and non-woven fabrics) used in **erosion control**, separation, **filtration and drainage in civil engineering work**, and agricultural uses. It also has application in rural road pavement construction and agro plant mulching.
- **Diversification of jute products** has opened up large opportunity for **employment**

generation. Examples of diversified jute products include fancy jute bags, soft luggage, footwear, door panels, check sarees, wide range of furnishing, gift items, table lamps, floor decor, wall decor and many more items.

- Jute bags have porosity, easily withstand the high temperature and are much stronger than poly sacks. Jute bags can be recycled and reused and can be easily repaired.

Government Initiatives for Promoting Jute Industry

- **Jute Corporation of India (JCI) procures raw jute at Minimum Support Price (MSP)**, fixed on the basis of recommendation of the commission for Agricultural Cost and Prices (CACP), from jute growers to safeguard their interest.
- **Incentive Scheme for Acquisition of Plants and Machinery (ISAPM)**: Launched in 2013, it aims to facilitate modernization in existing and new jute mills and up-gradation of technology in existing jute mills .
- **Jute-ICARE (Jute: Improved Cultivation and Advanced Retting Exercise)**: This pilot project launched in 2015 is aimed at addressing the difficulties faced by the jute cultivators by providing them certified seeds at subsidized rates, and by popularizing several newly developed retting technologies under water limiting conditions.
- The **National Jute Board** implements various schemes for market development, workers' welfare and promotion of diversification and exports.
- In order to boost demand in the jute sector, the Government has also imposed **anti-dumping duty on import of jute goods** from **Bangladesh** and Nepal.

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