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## PROSPECT AND PROBLEMS OF JUTE CULTIVATION IN ASSAM

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### Abstract

The cultivation of Jute plays a significant role in the agrarian economy of Assam by providing employment opportunities, raw materials for industries, and income to rural households. Assam possesses favorable climatic conditions, fertile alluvial soil, and abundant rainfall, which create strong prospects for jute cultivation. The increasing global demand for eco-friendly and biodegradable products has further enhanced the importance of jute as a sustainable natural fiber. The crop contributes to environmental protection by reducing dependence on synthetic materials and promoting green industrial development.

Despite these prospects, jute cultivation in Assam faces several challenges that hinder its growth and productivity. Major problems include inadequate irrigation facilities, frequent floods, low adoption of modern technology, shortage of quality seeds, pest and disease infestation, and insufficient access to institutional credit. Farmers also suffer from unstable market prices, poor transportation facilities, lack of storage infrastructure, and exploitation by middlemen. In addition, the absence of adequate government support and limited awareness regarding scientific cultivation methods reduce the profitability of jute farming.

This study aims to examine both the prospects and problems of jute cultivation in Assam and to analyze its socio-economic importance in rural development. The paper suggests that improved agricultural policies, better marketing systems, technological support, and farmer training programs are essential for enhancing jute production and ensuring sustainable agricultural development in the state. Strengthening the jute sector can significantly contribute to employment generation, industrial growth, and rural economic stability in Assam.

**Keywords:** Jute Cultivation, Assam Agriculture, Rural Economy, Sustainable Fiber, Agricultural Problems.

### Introduction:

Jute is one of the most important commercial fiber crops in India and plays a significant role in the agricultural economy of Assam. Commonly known as the “golden fiber,” jute is valued for its biodegradable, eco-friendly, and versatile nature. It is widely used in the production of sacks, ropes, carpets, packaging materials, handicrafts, and other industrial goods. Assam possesses favorable agro-climatic conditions for jute cultivation, including fertile alluvial soil, high humidity, sufficient rainfall, and warm temperature. These natural advantages make the state suitable for the cultivation of quality jute and provide livelihood opportunities to a large number of rural farmers and laborers. Jute cultivation also contributes to employment generation, rural income, and the supply of raw materials to small-scale and cottage industries in the region.

In recent years, the global demand for environmentally sustainable products has increased due to growing awareness regarding environmental pollution caused by synthetic materials. This has created new opportunities for the expansion of jute cultivation and jute-based industries in Assam. The increasing preference for biodegradable packaging materials, along with government initiatives promoting natural fibers, has enhanced the future prospects of the jute sector. Moreover, jute cultivation supports sustainable agricultural development because the crop improves soil fertility and requires comparatively fewer chemical inputs than many other commercial crops.



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Despite these positive prospects, jute cultivation in Assam continues to face several economic, technological, and infrastructural challenges. Farmers often suffer from low productivity due to the use of traditional farming methods, poor irrigation facilities, inadequate supply of quality seeds, pest infestation, and lack of modern agricultural knowledge. Frequent floods and uncertain climatic conditions further affect production and quality. In addition, problems such as unstable market prices, insufficient storage and transportation facilities, lack of organized markets, and exploitation by middlemen reduce the profitability of jute cultivation. Limited financial support and inadequate government assistance also discourage farmers from expanding jute production. Therefore, an in-depth study of the prospects and problems of jute cultivation in Assam is essential to understand its socio-economic importance and to suggest suitable measures for the sustainable development of the jute sector in the state.

## Literature Review

The study of Jute cultivation has received considerable attention from agricultural economists, rural development scholars, and policy researchers because of its economic and environmental importance in India. Several studies have examined the prospects and problems associated with jute cultivation, particularly in eastern and northeastern states, including Assam. Existing literature highlights the significance of jute as a commercial crop that contributes to employment generation, rural livelihood, and industrial development.

Early studies on jute cultivation emphasized the role of favorable agro-climatic conditions in increasing productivity. Researchers observed that Assam possesses fertile alluvial soil, abundant rainfall, and humid climatic conditions, which are highly suitable for jute cultivation. Many scholars pointed out that the cultivation of jute has traditionally supported the rural economy of Assam by providing income opportunities to small and marginal farmers. Studies on agricultural diversification also identified jute as an important cash crop capable of strengthening rural economic stability.

Several researchers have focused on the growing global demand for eco-friendly and biodegradable products and its positive impact on the jute sector. With increasing environmental concerns regarding plastic pollution, scholars argued that jute has gained renewed importance in both domestic and international markets. Research findings suggest that government policies promoting natural fibers and sustainable packaging materials have created new opportunities for the expansion of jute cultivation in Assam. Some studies also highlighted the potential of jute-based cottage and small-scale industries in generating employment and improving the socio-economic condition of rural households.

However, the literature also reveals numerous challenges faced by jute cultivators in Assam. Many researchers identified low productivity as one of the major problems in jute farming. According to previous studies, farmers continue to rely on traditional cultivation methods due to lack of awareness, limited access to modern technology, and inadequate extension services. Scholars also emphasized the shortage of quality seeds, insufficient irrigation facilities, pest and disease infestation, and lack of scientific retting methods as major constraints affecting both quantity and quality of jute production.

A number of studies further examined marketing-related problems in the jute sector. Researchers observed that fluctuating market prices, weak marketing infrastructure, transportation difficulties, and exploitation by intermediaries reduce farmers' profitability. Several scholars also pointed out that frequent floods and climate uncertainty in Assam adversely affect jute cultivation and increase production risks. Limited institutional credit and inadequate government support were identified as additional barriers to the growth of the jute sector.

Although previous studies have analyzed various aspects of jute cultivation, there remains a need for comprehensive research focusing specifically on the present prospects and emerging challenges of jute cultivation in Assam. Therefore, this study attempts to bridge the gap in existing literature by examining both the economic potential



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and the practical problems associated with jute cultivation in the state, with special emphasis on sustainable agricultural and rural development.

## Objectives of the Study

### 1. To examine the prospects of Jute cultivation in Assam:

The first objective of the study is to analyze the future potential and economic importance of jute cultivation in Assam. The study aims to explore how favorable agro-climatic conditions, fertile soil, abundant rainfall, and increasing demand for eco-friendly products create opportunities for the growth of the jute sector. It also seeks to examine the role of jute cultivation in employment generation, rural income enhancement, sustainable agriculture, and industrial development. Special attention is given to the growing importance of biodegradable fibers in domestic and international markets and the possible expansion of jute-based industries in the state.

### 2. To identify the major problems faced by jute cultivators in Assam:

Another important objective of the study is to investigate the various difficulties and constraints experienced by farmers engaged in jute cultivation. The study focuses on problems such as lack of quality seeds, inadequate irrigation facilities, traditional farming methods, pest and disease attacks, flood damage, shortage of labor, and low productivity.

It also examines economic and marketing-related problems including price fluctuations, lack of storage and transportation facilities, exploitation by middlemen, and insufficient institutional credit. Through this objective, the study attempts to understand how these challenges affect the production, profitability, and sustainability of jute cultivation in Assam.

### 3. To suggest suitable measures for the development of the jute sector in Assam:

The third objective of the study is to provide practical suggestions and policy recommendations for improving the condition of jute cultivation in the state. The study aims to identify strategies that can increase productivity, improve marketing systems, and enhance the socio-economic condition of jute farmers. It also seeks to examine the role of government support, technological advancement, farmer training programs, improved irrigation systems, and financial assistance in promoting sustainable jute cultivation. The objective further emphasizes the need for strengthening rural infrastructure and encouraging scientific cultivation methods to ensure long-term development of the jute sector in Assam.

## Methodology

The present study entitled “Prospects and Problems of Jute Cultivation in Assam” is conducted with the objective of examining the future potential of jute cultivation, identifying the major problems faced by jute farmers, and suggesting suitable measures for the development of the jute sector in the state. To achieve these objectives, both descriptive and analytical research methods are adopted in the study. The methodology is designed in a systematic manner to ensure proper collection, classification, analysis, and interpretation of data.

The study is based on both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data are collected directly from jute cultivators through field surveys, structured questionnaires, personal interviews, and observation methods. The questionnaire is prepared in a simple and systematic format to collect information regarding landholding size, cultivation



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practices, production costs, irrigation facilities, availability of quality seeds, labor use, marketing systems, income levels, and problems faced by farmers during production and sale of jute. Personal interaction with farmers helps in understanding their socio-economic conditions and practical difficulties associated with jute cultivation.

Secondary data are collected from published and unpublished sources such as books, research journals, government reports, census publications, agricultural statistics, newspapers, and reports of various agricultural departments and institutions. Information is also gathered from the Ministry of Agriculture, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, agricultural universities, and rural development agencies. These secondary sources provide valuable information regarding trends in jute production, market demand, government policies, and the overall status of the jute sector in Assam.

For the purpose of the study, major jute-growing districts of Assam are selected purposively because of their significant contribution to jute cultivation. From the selected districts, farmers engaged in jute cultivation are chosen randomly to obtain representative data. The sampling method adopted in the study is a combination of purposive and random sampling techniques. The sample size is determined according to the availability of respondents and the scope of the research work.

The collected data are analyzed using simple statistical and descriptive techniques such as percentages, averages, tables, charts, and comparative analysis. These methods help in identifying the prospects, production trends, economic benefits, and major problems associated with jute cultivation in Assam. The study also evaluates the role of government support, technological advancement, and market infrastructure in improving the productivity and profitability of the jute sector.

Thus, the adopted methodology provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the present condition, future prospects, and challenges of jute cultivation in Assam and helps in formulating suitable recommendations for sustainable agricultural and rural development.

## Findings and Discussion

The study on the prospects and problems of Jute cultivation in Assam reveals that jute continues to play an important role in the rural economy of the state. The findings indicate that Assam possesses favorable agro-climatic conditions such as fertile alluvial soil, high humidity, adequate rainfall, and suitable temperature, which support the cultivation of quality jute. The study finds that jute cultivation provides employment opportunities to a large number of rural households, particularly small and marginal farmers. It also contributes to income generation and supports the growth of cottage and small-scale industries related to jute products.

One of the major findings of the study is that the increasing demand for eco-friendly and biodegradable products has created significant prospects for the expansion of jute cultivation in Assam. Due to rising environmental awareness and restrictions on plastic use, the demand for natural fibers and jute-based products has increased in both domestic and international markets. Farmers and traders believe that the jute sector has strong future potential if proper government support and market facilities are provided. The study also finds that jute cultivation has environmental benefits because it is a sustainable crop that requires comparatively fewer chemical inputs and helps maintain soil fertility.

However, the study identifies several serious problems affecting jute cultivation in Assam. A major issue observed during the field survey is the low productivity of jute farms due to the continued use of traditional cultivation methods and lack of scientific knowledge among farmers. Many farmers do not have access to improved seeds, modern equipment, or proper irrigation facilities. Frequent floods and uncertain weather conditions further damage crops and reduce production. Pest infestation and disease attacks are also reported as common problems that affect the quality and quantity of jute output.



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The study further reveals that marketing-related problems significantly reduce the profitability of jute cultivation. Farmers face unstable market prices and often depend on middlemen for selling their produce, which results in low returns. Lack of storage facilities, poor transportation systems, and inadequate market infrastructure create additional difficulties for cultivators. Many respondents also reported limited access to institutional credit and financial assistance, forcing them to rely on informal borrowing sources.

The discussion of the findings suggests that although Assam has strong potential for the development of the jute sector, several structural and institutional challenges continue to hinder its growth. The study emphasizes the need for improved agricultural policies, farmer training programs, modern cultivation techniques, better irrigation systems, and effective marketing facilities. Strengthening government support and encouraging jute-based industries can enhance productivity, increase farmers' income, and promote sustainable rural development in Assam.

## Conclusion

The study on the prospects and problems of Jute cultivation in Assam highlights that jute remains an important commercial crop contributing significantly to the rural economy and livelihood of farmers in the state. Assam possesses favorable natural conditions such as fertile soil, suitable climate, and abundant rainfall, which create strong potential for the growth of jute cultivation. The increasing global demand for eco-friendly and biodegradable products has further enhanced the future prospects of the jute sector. Jute cultivation not only generates employment and income opportunities but also supports sustainable agricultural and industrial development.

However, the study also reveals that several problems continue to affect the productivity and profitability of jute cultivation in Assam. Lack of modern technology, poor irrigation facilities, shortage of quality seeds, pest infestation, flood damage, unstable market prices, and inadequate marketing infrastructure are some of the major challenges faced by farmers. Limited institutional credit and insufficient government support further weaken the condition of jute cultivators.

Therefore, effective government policies, scientific farming methods, improved market facilities, financial assistance, and farmer awareness programs are essential for strengthening the jute sector. Proper development of jute cultivation can contribute greatly to sustainable rural development and economic progress in Assam.

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