Strategies to Meet the Demand-Supply Gap of Certified Jute-Kenaf Seeds in Nepal, Bangladesh and India

Jute fiber is obtained from two cultivated species, Corchorus capsularis known as white jute and Corchorus olitorius known as tossa jute. Kenaf and mesta fibers are obtained from two cultivated species Hibiscus cannabinus and Hibiscus sabdariffa var. altissima respectively. Jute is normally grown in the tropical and subtropical regions of the world with area and production (94%) confined in India and Bangladesh. World production of jute and allied fibers (JAF) is about 3.5 million tons. Of which India and Bangladesh produce around 3.3 million tons. Annual requirement of certified/quality seed in Bangladesh and India is about 10,000 tons. In India only 2400 tons of certified/quality seeds are available as against the requirement of 5000 tons per annum. As the coverage of certified/quality seeds in India is about only 48% then it is questionable to get 100% of exported jute seeds in Bangladesh and Nepal is certified. Sometimes, it has been observed that the introduced seeds (not all) have failed to attain the desired standard. Bangladesh is importing almost total portion (600-700 tons) of its kenaf seed requirement from India. Organized seed production of good quality seeds in kenaf-mesta has not been taken up in India and Bangladesh and this needs immediate attention in order to keep both quantity and quality of kenaf. It may be mentioned here that, seed certification system of kenaf-mesta is absent in India.

Jute/kenaf Seed Status in Nepal, Bangladesh and India

Jute production in the major jute producing countries is characterized by stagnant yield and traditional cultural practices.

Nepal: Jute covers about 5.1% (12 thousand ha) of total cropped area of Nepal. The quantity of seed currently being produced in Nepal is only about 9-10% of its total required seed of 60-70 tonnes. Non-availability of quality jute seeds is one of the constraints of jute cultivation in Nepal. Major portion of the requirement is fulfilled by importing seeds from India. Some farmers use their own seed which is of poor quality.

India: The conservative estimate for the requirement of certified jute seed in India is around 5000-5500 tonnes to grow jute crops in around 0.8 million hectares of land. Annually about 2500 of kenaf-mesta seeds are required to saturate 0.2 million hectares of land. The main seed producing agencies are (certified) National Seeds Corporation (NSC), Maharashtra State Seed Corporation (MSSC), West Bengal State Seed Corporation (WBSSC), Andhra Pradesh State Seeds development Corporation (APSSDC) and State Farms Corporation of India (SFCI). Besides, some private organizations are also producing certified seeds. The certified jute seeds production is mainly done for tossa jute. The demand of white jute is very less and the production of kenaf seeds from organizational source is negligible. A small quantity of quality seed is produced by APSSDC. It is reported that certified seed production by the private sector organizations is limited and they are mostly producing Truthfully Labeled Seeds (TLS).

Bangladesh: Jute is the leading cash crop of Bangladesh. Though cultivation of jute in the country has been reduced from earlier but for the last 3-4 years, the situation has conspicuously improved and recorded an increasing trend. Presently, the average area under jute cultivation is about seven lakh hectare with production of 75-80 lakh bales and seed requirement is about 3000 tonnes. Of the cultivated jute area 85% tossa jute, 10% white jute and 5% is of kenaf. The seeds of white jute totally produced in the country. There is no organizational source of kenaf seeds and about 75% of the requirement of tossa jute seeds are importing from India. About 20% of the requirement of jute seeds are distributing by the private sector through production of seeds in the country. Though major portion of seeds are handled by the private sectors but none of their seed is producing in the country. Due to this seed shortage farmers of Bangladesh especially in the border areas sometimes use low quality seed which reaches to them through informal ways.

Issues:
The major issues are as follows:
- A Single variety of jute is mostly (80%) cultivated all over the jute growing areas of Bangladesh and India which is undesirable.
- Public sector’s contribution in jute seed sector in India is hardly 30% of the total requirement. It is reported that private sector is normally producing TLS but the 100% of imported seeds from India to Bangladesh are certified which are mostly coming from private sectors.
- In India there is no system of certification of mesta seeds.

Table 1: Jute and kenaf seed import of last five years (tonnes) in Bangladesh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tossa</th>
<th>Kenaf</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>3980</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>4530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>4361</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>5017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>3617</td>
<td>772</td>
<td>4389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>3141</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>3327</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>1928</td>
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<td>1928</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
But the requirement of mesta-kenaf seeds in Bangladesh and India is more than 3000 tonnes. Organizational source of production of quality mesta-kenaf seeds in India is negligible.

- Generally, jute seed has no alternate uses. Every year a substantial amount of jute seeds becomes unsold. As the major portions of the seed are in private sectors, their storing facilities are inadequate. Moreover, information regarding these carry over seeds is unknown especially in the private sector. This carry over seeds are entering in the market in the following year.

- Jute seed is mainly produced in far of places of the jute growing areas, i.e. Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra etc. From this area jute seeds are distributed to the jute growing areas of India, Bangladesh and Nepal. It is often observed that quality seed does not reach to the jute growing areas well in time.

- Bangladesh jute sector is mostly export oriented. About 90% of world’s raw jute market and 55% of jute products are captured by Bangladesh. Quality seed is directly related with the productivity and quality of the fiber. Supply of adequate quantity of quality seed in time will reduce cost of production and will improve quality of the fiber.

- Illegal and sub-standard introduction of jute and kenaf seeds. Insufficient coordination among jute and mesta-kenaf seed related organizations of both seed producing and importing countries.

- Like other crops, i.e. rice, maize etc. no real breakthrough has yet achieved in the sector of jute hirshandry. Though few varieties have been developed but R&D activities for development of HYV with quality fiber and seed production are not well supported considering the demand.

- Global consciousness towards “Green Growth” and potentiality of jute and kenaf to cater the situation.

- There is a huge demand and strong likings of Bangladeshi farmers to cultivate Indian jute seeds of the variety JROS24 developed by CRIJAF.

**Strategies**

By considering the issues the following measures to be taken to minimize the supply demand gap of certified quality jute-kenaf-mesta.

**Development of High Yielding Varieties (HYV)**

Though productivity of jute has been increased to some extent but lot more need to be addressed to minimize cost of production with quality fiber and to withstand the competition thrown by cheaper synthetic fibers. Moreover, cultivation of jute is increasingly shifting to less productive land, thus creating challenges in dealing with new emerging production constraints. As an eco-friendly crop the demand of jute is increasing day by day. To meet up this demand variety development program was observed that extension HYV, having drought/flood/salinity tolerance and early maturity.

**Extension services need to be strengthened**

Extension machinery needs to be activated for popularization of different varieties along with their potentialities. This will minimize the risk of dependence on single variety as well as will increase the production and productivity of jute through exploitation of newly developed varieties. It is noticed that even the results of research and development achieved so far have not been fully utilized for want of adequate extension facilities. It was observed that extension workers took more interest in cereal crops, which are assigned higher priority by the Governments, and hence jute is not properly addressed. This situation needs to be corrected by strengthening jute-specific extension services.

**Identification of new areas for production of jute seeds in fiber growing areas.**

Too much dependence on a few conventional jute seed production areas may affect the entire jute production in case of any large scale damage. Besides, developments of HYV of jute, identification of ideal seed production zones nearer to the marketing areas deserve much attention. If the jute growing areas produce at least some quantity of jute seed in the identified areas of their own, farmers may be benefited by availing the seed at an appropriate time and a moderate price.

Mesta-kenaf seed production should be under seed certification system in India

Mesta (including kenaf) production in India constitutes around 10-11% of the total raw jute production (jute+mesta) with an average productivity of 11-12 quintal/ha which is much less than other mesta-kenaf producing countries of the world. On the other hand mesta varieties released by CRI-JAF are having the yield potentialities of 27-30 g/ha. One of the major reasons for this yield gap is non-availability of seeds of improved varieties to the farmers. The kenaf production of Bangladesh is entirely dependent on Indian seeds. Organized/certified system of production of mesta-kenaf seed has to be taken up and this needs immediate attention.

**Following the seed multiplication chain in the production system**

After formal release and notification of a variety, the process of seed production and distribution is followed. Breeder, Foundation and Certified seed production is done for all notified varieties of jute in order to get quality seeds. The regeneration process from breeder to certified seed stage takes three years in jute and kenaf. This production cycle has to be ensured specially in India from where seeds are originated.

**Strengthening of Seed certification agencies of India and Bangladesh**

India is the producer of 80% of jute seed of the world. In India only 30% seeds of the requirement is producing under public sector, the rest are under private sectors. Altogether about 48% of the required seed is certified. Certified seed production has to be increased and to be made available on time, and in adequate quantity at reasonable price.

**Buffer stock of jute and kenaf seeds**

A conditioned seed storage facility with capacity of at least 25% of the requirement in jute growing areas is necessary to overcome the adverse effect of natural calamities.

**R and D activities for alternate uses of seeds along with their biomass**

Jute and kenaf-mesta seeds have no alternate use other than as propagating materials. Through value addition jute and mesta seeds may be marketed as important commodity other than propagating materials. These seeds are reasonably rich in oil content and these oils may be used industrially. Research interventions may yield useful result.

**G to G supply of at least one fourth of the requirement between Bangladesh and India**

In both India and Bangladesh a part of the total requirement of jute seed is supplied by the public sector. Major portion is done by private sector. At least 25% of the requirement may be supplied through govt. to govt. of Bangladesh and India. This may ensure price, availability and quality of seeds. Seed distribution in Bangladesh is mainly done by the BADC. As there is a huge demand of Indian seed to Bangladeshi farmers and about 80% of seeds are coming from India, so BADC may be allowed to grow and distribute at least a certain percentage of the seeds of the Indian variety JROS24. This will ensure the immediate need of the farmers at the beginning of the season as well as will ensure quality and prices to some extent. Policy support will be needed in the seed management system of India and Bangladesh.

**Monitoring in marketing and storing of carry over seeds**

Monitoring of seeds in the market by the competent authority/Seed Certifying Agency of both the countries to prohibit the mixing of different quality seed either jointly or country basis may be arranged at the time of marketing of seeds.

**Increasing participation of private sector in production, certification and distribution of certified seeds**

Since the private sector organizations are producing major quantity of jute and kenaf mesta seeds, efforts are necessary to strengthen their production capacity of good quality seeds to cater to the need of the jute seed sector.

**Author:** Dr. Chandan Kumar Saha, Projects and Operations Officer
Bumper Jute Production in Northern Region of Bangladesh

Officials of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) are predicting a bumper production of jute in the northern region despite the cultivated area being less than that targeted for the year, reports BSS. The department’s horticulture specialist, Khandker Md. Mesbahul Islam, said, “Excellent jute production is expected following favourable climatic conditions and adoption of the latest farming techniques.” The DAE data showed that for the current season, the farmers have cultivated jute on 220,333 hectares of land in the region, which is 4,910 hectares less than the targeted. The production target was 2,400,127 bales of which 2,203,371 bales were to be of Toshpa variety to be grown on 202,144 hectares; 174,291 bales of native variety from 20,376 hectares and 22,465 bales of Mesta jute from 2,723 hectares of land. DAE sources also said the farmers did not face any problems in procuring quality jute seeds as Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation and other concerned organisations ensured sufficient supply. Associate Director Agriculture of BRAC International (South Asia and Africa) Dr. MA Mazid said jute farming had gained a new dimension following increased exports, revival of closed jute mills, disbursement of incentives and other effective steps taken by the government. “The farmers have started adopting the latest line sowing jute technology using seed sowing machines, resulting in savings of the quantity of seeds required and reducing farming costs to get bumper production and increased profits in recent years,” he added. DAE sources said farmers are cultivating jute using the six-line pick up jute seeding method that requires only 2kg seeds to cover an acre of land. The traditional method required sowing 2.5-3.5kg of seeds for the same area.

Source: Tribune online report, July 08, 2013

Jute Yarn Exports See Tough Time in FY13 for Eurozone Crisis

Despite an increase in the prices of raw jute as well as the manufacturing cost of jute yarn in the fiscal 2012-13, the Bangladesh’s jute yarn exporters are facing losses as the international prices keep falling due to unrest in the Middle East and the Eurozone crisis. Although the total earnings from jute yarn export are expected to stand higher than in the previous fiscal, the price per unit has been in the downtrend over the same period, observed industry insiders. Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) data showed the export earnings from jute yarn remained at the same level as previous fiscal year, at about $465m. The industry insiders, however, noted that the figure looks high due to the huge increase of export in India and China at a lower price compared to the prices obtained while exporting yarns to the Middle Eastern and the Eurozone countries.

The demand from the most valued buyers of Bangladeshi yarn and twine, that include Turkey, Syria and Iran, have come down sharply over the last couple of years, leading to the partial relocation of the country’s export to Indo-China, but with a lower profit, they observed. Bangladesh Jute Spinners Association (BJSA) Secretary Shahidul Karim told “We’ve not been able to finalise the figures of the total yarn exports in the immediate past fiscal. But the export to Syria is expected to stand at 10,000 to 15,000 tonnes, while to Iran at 30,000 to 35,000 tonnes,” He also added that the figures were much higher just four years back – about 30,000 tonnes for Syria and about 60,000 tonnes for Iran.

Source: Dhaka Tribune, July 6, 2013

Jute Fair in Mangalore, India

A 5day (July 31 to August 04, 2013) jute fair was organized by National Jute Board (NJB), India in Mangalore to promote environmental friendly biodegradable product. This is the sequence of previous year’s fair with a lot more jute products in store. From the handmade eco-friendly jute pots and laptop bags to the trendy and fashionable foot wears and accessories for women, the 25 stalls at Jute fair were displayed eye-catching lifestyle products and drawn the attention of jute lovers. Entrepreneurs from six states including West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala are taken part in the Jute exhibition from July 31, 2013. [Source: Business Line, July 31, 2013]

Tk 5.0b SoB Credit for Jute mills

Government-run jute mills are supposed to get Tk 5.0 billion in cash credit in last week of July from four state-owned commercial banks (SoBs) to buy raw materials for the current fiscal year and meet other needs. The Sonali Bank and the Janata Bank will provide Tk 1.5 billion each while Agrani Bank and Rupali Bank will provide Tk 1.0 billion each to the mills run by the Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC). The BJMC will repay all its debts to the banks on receipt of Tk 10 billion from the Ministry of Finance which is expected to be released by August, 2013. BJMC officials sought Tk 16.10 billion in cash credit for the jute mills. After threadbare discussion, bank officials agreed to pay Tk 5.0 billion at the request of the minister. The state-run jute mills earned Tk 13.63 billion by exporting jute goods in the just-concluded fiscal year (FY) against Tk 10.64 billion in FY 2011-12 and Tk 9.38 billion in FY 2010-11. [Source: The Financial Express, July 31, 2013]
Plastic Ban Sought for Talisay city

Talisay City Mayor Johnny V. De los Reyes wants to have an ordinance banning the use of plastic in his city. He ordered city legal officer Alfredo Sipalay to study the ordinance passed by the previous administration which imposed the ban. The mayor plans to implement the ordinance from the month of September, 2013 and introduce reusable “green bags” to market goers, said Vincie Mon- terde, city information officer.

Avoiding the use of plastic reduces the risk of clogging drainage, a common cause of flooding, and reduces the volume of non-biodegradable waste that ends up in dumpsites. Talisay City’s plastic ban ordinance was approved last Feb. 1, 2011 but has not been implemented. The mayor plans to create task force to enforce the ban.

[Tanzania: Sisal Board Calls for Tax Relief]

Tanzania Sisal Board (TSB) has asked the government to review taxes imposed on sisal plantations to make the sector run smoothly. TSB said that from the last financial year the government raised a number of taxes including land rent from 200/- per acre to 10,000/-, the Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) levy from 5,000/- to 35,000/- per a plantation worker. Other charges that shoot up include fire services that now stand at 2m/- per sisal plantation.

TSB Quality and Assurance Officer, Mr Simon Kibasa said that sisal sector has been for a number of years contributing a lot to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the exports was higher thus giving country foreign exchange. Statistics shows that in 2012, Tanzania exported sisal fibres and other sisal products that recorded 30 million US dollars, while internal sale stood at about 25.8bn/-.

Tanzanian sisal fibres are exported to Unite Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, China, Kenya, South Africa, India and Morocco. Some of the notable challenges that draw back sisal efforts to fully contribute to GDP, according to Mr Kibasa, include inadequate labour supply and inaccessibility of loans. In its effort to improve sisal sector, TSB appealed for more support in terms of loans accessibility, subsidy and offering more extension services to sisal plantation.

[Upcoming IJSG Events]

- China International Trade Fair for Textiles and Accessories, August 27-29, 2013, Shanghai, China
- Natural Fibre Fair 2013, September 7-8, 2013, Arcata Community Centre, Arcata, California.

[Source: http://www.naturalfiberfair.com/]

[Upcoming JGT project and meeting with Standardization committee, Kolkata, India, August 27, 2013]

Workshop on Revisit the Roadmap for Jute, IJSG Secretariat, Dhaka, Bangladesh, September 02, 2013

Training of Jute mill workers from jute producing counties, September 15-18, 2013 and September 22-26, 2013, IJSG Secretariat, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Rural Road from Natural Fibre

The rural development ministry of India has asked state governments to start using waste materials and locally produced fibres to build rural roads—a cost-cutting measure that is seen giving a fillip to the local economy. The plan, to be implemented under the government’s Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana scheme to improve connectivity of villages, is expected to result in savings of 5%-30%, according to a senior official. Construction of rural road costs anything between Rs 25 lakh and Rs 80 lakh per km. While jute and coir will be used for strengthening roads in the northeast, waste materials like steel slag, sludge and slurry will be used in industrially developed states like Maharashtra and Karnataka.

[Source: The Economic times, July 16, 2013]