

## Study on consumer buying behaviour towards jute products in Coimbatore city, Tamil Nadu

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### ABSTRACT

The main focus of the present study was to analyse the buying behaviour, satisfaction level and awareness level of consumers towards jute products, the factors influencing the purchase and the constraints faced by the customers while purchasing jute products. The study was conducted in Coimbatore city, Tamil Nadu on 120 sample respondents with specific jute stores in Coimbatore city. The respondents were mainly below 35 years of age; the maximum awareness among jute products was about handbags; most of the respondents were occasional purchasers (72.50%); had retail shops their preferred channel (73.33%); spent 15-30 min at jute shops (51.66%); got information from friends and family (47.50%); wives were the decision makers (68.33%); purchased jute products as these were eco-friendly (92.50%); main purpose was shopping (39.16%); 74.16 per cent respondents showed their willingness to pay for jute products and majority (49.16%) were ready to pay 0-10 per cent premium. As the source of jute products, from quality and handling point of view, retail and trade fairs and from eco-friendly point of view, trade fairs were the preferred sources; overall satisfaction level of the jute products was excellent (31.66%); the jute products were purchased due to easiness in handling (average 114.37) and higher cost was the major constraint (average 64.08).

**Keywords:** Jute products; consumer; buying behaviour; awareness; satisfaction; constraints

### INTRODUCTION

Jute is a real star performer among eco-friendly fibres and the usage of jute bags plays a vital role. The reasons for jute being eco-friendly are jute being entirely biodegradable, recyclable, renewable and compostable. The jute bags are hard wearing and can be used for longer period ie can be used again and again. These bags meet standards for safe packaging. Jute can be grown without or with minimum use of pesticides and fertilizers. The UNESCO has specifically recommended the use of jute fibre for food packaging materials. The jute fibre is strong and durable and jute products stand test of time and are resistant to wear and tear. Jute is known as 'golden fibre' because of its shiny golden appearance and its financial worth. Jute, a natural vegetable fibre is made from outer stem and skin of the jute plant. Fibre is produced from two plant species which are *Corchorus*

*capsularis* (white jute) and *C otitoruus* (tossa jute). The plant species *Hibiscus sabdariffa* var *altissima* yields mesta fibres.

Jute is recognized as the second most important vegetable fibre in the world behind only cotton in terms of global consumption and production. India and Bangladesh produce the greatest amounts of jute in the world and global production is estimated at more than 3.3 million tonnes each year. India is the largest jute producing country in the world with annual production estimated at more than 1.968 million tonnes. The prominence of India in the global production of jute is attributed to improvements in the crop cultivation process as well as the use of technology in jute farming. The majority of jute produced in India is consumed domestically as the country is also one of the largest consumers of jute and jute products in the world. Strict laws in India regarding allowable types of packaging

materials is a primary cause of the country's demand for jute. West Bengal accounts for as much as 50 per cent of the country's total jute production. Other major jute producing regions in the country include Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Meghalaya, Assam and Orissa (<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/top-jute-producing-countries-in-the-world.html>). Being the preferred sector in raw jute production due to suitable topographical conditions, emphasis now needs to be placed on modernization of the jute sector with a view to developing a viable and efficient jute manufacturing sector in the country (Bag et al 2016).

Global marketing of jute is increasing day by day, so it should also develop jute marketing in accordance with global marketing process. A huge potential market of these products is created in the developed countries. To convert this potential market into real market, comprehensive market promotional activity is highly needed (Mohiuddin 2015).

Jute can be successfully grown in Coimbatore, Cuddalore, Villupuram, Vellore, Tiruvannamalai, Chengleput and parts of Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Tiruchirapalli, Perambalur, Karur, Pudukkottai, Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts where assured supply of irrigation water is available for its cultivation and retting for fibre extraction (Anon 2014). Jute is a fast growing industry for starting an eco-friendly business. Different products of jute are available such as jute shopping bags, jute twine (jute rope), gunny bags, jute garments, jute yarn, hessian cloth weaving, jute Sutli, cables, handbags, horse covers, filter cloths, wrappings, aprons for all heavy types, fuse yarns, sacks, bedding foundations, roofing felts, covering fabrics, fabric laundry baskets, jute textiles (geo textiles), jute furnishings (jute mats, jute cushion covers, carpets, jute rugs), jute apparels (footwear, jackets, fashion accessories), industrial jute goods like jute felt, jute webbing etc.

Sudha and Mahalakshmi (2012) conducted a study on the customer opinion and satisfaction level of jute products with special reference to Coimbatore city. Their opinion and satisfaction level about the jute products were good. Most of the customers were highly satisfied with the existing products and few of them faced certain problems in their usage.

The present study was conducted to examine the awareness level, buying behaviour and satisfaction level of consumers towards jute products, identify the

factors influencing the purchase of jute products and suggest measures to jute retail stores for improving awareness among consumers in Coimbatore city, Tamil Nadu.

## METHODOLOGY

Quantitative research design (ex post facto) was used for the study. Convenient sampling was done with the sample size of 120 respondents. Survey was exclusively taken in retail stores. The secondary data were collected from various journals and websites. Percentage analysis, five-point likert scale, Garrett's ranking (Garrett and Woodworth 1969) and multi-dimensional scaling were done.

## RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The data given in Table 1 show that among respondents 52.0 per cent were males followed by 48.00 per cent females; mostly they were below 25

Table 1. Socio-economic profile of sample respondents

Component	Category	Respondents	
		Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	58	48.0
	Female	62	52.0
Age (years)	<25	69	57.5
	26-35	33	27.5
	36-45	3	2.5
	46-55	13	10.8
	>55	2	1.6
Family size (number)	2-3	27	22.5
	3-4	76	63.3
	5 and above	17	14.1
Educational level	High school	7	5.8
	Intermediate	1	0.83
	Graduate	48	40.0
	Post graduate	58	48.3
Occupation	PhD	6	5.0
	Student	42	35.0
	Private employee	48	40.0
	Government job	4	3.33
	Business	10	8.33
Monthly income (Rs)	Homemaker	16	13.33
	>10,000	13	10.8
	10,000-30,000	41	34.1
	30,000-50,000	37	30.8
	50,000-1,00,000	23	19.1
>1,00,000	6	5.0	

years of age (57.5%) followed by 26-35 years (27.5%), having family of 3-4 members (63.3%), post graduates (48.3%), private employees (40.0%) and with monthly family income of Rs 10,000-30,000 (34.10%).

Table 2. Awareness level of the consumers towards jute products

Jute product	Highly aware	Moderately aware	Not aware	Weighted score	Rank
Shopping bag	63 (52.50)	48 (40.00)	9 (7.50)	2.46	III
Handbag	79 (65.83)	35 (29.16)	6 (5.00)	2.80	I
Gift bag	54 (45.00)	32 (26.66)	34 (28.33)	2.16	VIII
Travel bag	43 (35.83)	27 (22.50)	50 (41.66)	1.94	X
Mat	68 (56.66)	42 (35.00)	10 (8.33)	2.52	II
Table mat	61 (50.83)	35 (29.16)	24 (20.00)	2.29	VI
File	58 (48.33)	32 (26.66)	30 (25.00)	2.23	VII
Purse/wallet	65 (54.16)	30 (25.00)	25 (20.83)	2.33	V
Dress	43 (35.83)	34 (28.33)	43 (35.83)	2.00	IX
Decorative/crafts	63 (52.50)	46 (38.33)	11 (9.16)	2.41	IV
Watch	11 (9.16)	24 (20.00)	85 (70.83)	1.30	XII
Bangles	24 (20.00)	32 (26.66)	64 (53.33)	1.60	XI

The respondents were mainly below 35 years of age which shows that the craze for jute products was more among youngsters. Educated people knew the importance of the jute products therefore the majority of them were post graduates. At the same time it was also found that people working in private sector and having lower income were the customers of jute products.

The data given in Table 2 show that the maximum awareness of respondents among jute products was about handbags with weighted score of 2.80 that ranked first. This was followed by mats (Rank II) and shopping bags (Rank III) with weighted scores of 2.52 and 2.46 respectively. This shows that people knew more about handbags, mats and shopping bags.

The data given in Table 3 depict that most of the respondents were occasional purchasers (72.50%); had retail shops their preferred channel (73.33%); spent 15-30 min at jute shops (51.66%); got information from friends and family (47.50%); wives were the decision makers (68.33%); purchased jute products as these were eco-friendly (92.50%) and purpose was shopping (39.16%). Jute products were mainly purchased from retail shops and the main information source for the respondents was family and friends. Females were mainly deciding what product was to be purchased; they were aware about the environment and purchased the jute products mainly for shopping.

Of the total respondents, 74.16 per cent respondents showed their willingness to pay for jute products and majority (49.16%) were ready to pay 0-10 per cent premium whereas 32.50 per cent were not willing to pay for these products (Table 4). Thus people were willing to pay for the jute products.

The data given in Table 5 show that as the source of jute products, from quality and handling point of view, retail and trade fairs and from eco-friendly point of view, trade fairs were the preferred sources with mean score of 5.0 each. For price and availability it was trade fairs and for variety it was retail with mean scores of 4.8, 4.7 and 4.3 respectively. It shows that minimum preference was given to online source. The findings thus show that respondents were satisfied only if they purchased from retail shops or in fairs and did not feel satisfied with the online purchase.

Overall satisfaction level of the jute products was excellent (31.66%) followed by great (52.50%). There was no one who was not satisfied with these products (Table 6). It shows that in overall the rate of satisfaction was high among the respondents wrt to the jute products.

Among the factors influencing the purchase of jute products first, second and third ranks were given by the respondents to easiness in handling (average 114.37), quality (average 103.22) and eco-friendliness (average 73.61) respectively. However the least

Table 3. Distribution of respondents based on frequency, preferred channel, time spent at jute shop, source of information, decision making, reason and purpose for the purchase of jute products

Component	Respondents	
	Number	Percentage
<b>Frequency of purchase</b>		
Occasional	87	72.50
Regular	27	22.50
Rare	6	5.00
<b>Preferred channel</b>		
Retail shops	88	73.33
Online purchase	9	7.50
Trade fairs	15	12.50
Wholesale shops	8	6.66
<b>Time spent at jute shop (min)</b>		
<15	28	23.33
15-30	62	51.66
30-45	24	20.00
45-60	4	3.33
>60	2	1.66
<b>Source of information</b>		
Internet/social media	23	19.10
Friends and family	57	47.50
In-store wall posters	26	21.60
Newspapers/magazines	6	5.00
Trade fairs	8	6.66
<b>Decision making</b>		
Husband	9	7.50
Wife	82	68.33
Children	15	12.50
Siblings	6	5.00
Others	8	6.66
<b>Reason for the purchase</b>		
Eco-friendly	111	92.50
Prestige	3	2.50
Government rules	6	5.00
<b>Purpose for the purchase</b>		
To gift	31	25.88
Shopping	47	39.16
Decoration	19	15.83
Own use	18	15.00
All the above	5	4.10

influencing factor was prestige/social status (average 26.99) having ranking XI (Table 7). The findings show that easy handling, quality and environment were the main factors which influenced the purchase.

Table 8 shows that for the respondents high price of jute products was the major

Table 4. Willingness to pay and percentage of premium for the jute products

Component	Respondents	
	Number	Percentage
<b>Willingness to pay</b>		
Yes	89	74.16
No	31	25.83
<b>Percentage of premium</b>		
0	39	32.50
0-10	59	49.16
11-20	19	15.88
21-30	7	5.83
>31	4	3.33

Table 5. Satisfaction level regarding jute products at the source of purchase

Attribute	Mean score		
	Retail	Trade fair	Online
Quality	5.0	5.0	2.7
Price	4.2	4.8	3.1
Availability	4.3	4.7	3.2
Variety	4.3	3.8	3.3
Handling	5.0	5.0	2.5
Eco-friendly	4.19	5.0	4.2

Table 6. Overall satisfaction level of the respondents towards the jute products

Rating	Respondents	
	Number	Percentage
Excellent	38	31.66
Great	63	52.50
Good	17	14.16
Fair	2	1.66
Poor	0	

constraint (average 64.08) that was ranked I followed by limited jute shops in the area (Rank II, average 56.33). Washing (average 37.33) was the least important constraint for them. Higher price was thus considered as the main constraint by the respondents while purchasing the jute products.

Table 7. Factors influencing the purchase of jute products

Factor	Average	Garrett's score	Rank
Eco-friendly	73.61	83	III
Health consciousness	64.45	72	VI
Multiple use	61.02	65	VIII
Recyclable	68.7	59	V
Durability	71.68	55	IV
Repeated use	62.89	50	VII
Attraction	48.13	45	IX
Prestige/social status	26.99	41	XI
Affordable price	33.01	35	X
Quality	103.22	28	II
Easy to handle	114.37	17	I

Table 8. Problems faced by the respondents with respect to jute products

Constraint	Average	Rank
Higher cost	64.08	I
Limited jute shops	56.33	II
Limited varieties	52.54	III
Less awareness	39.91	IV
Washing	37.33	V

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