

Design Resource

Making of Jute Products

Srikakulam - Andhra Pradesh

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Srikanth Bellamkonda

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/making-jute-products>



1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

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Introduction

Jute is a natural fiber also called The Golden Fiber for its golden luster. Jute fiber ranks next to cotton as the important natural fiber in terms of its usage, global consumption, production, and availability. It is the most versatile and cheapest raw material produced from the bast of the plant's stem. Jute twine is highly flexible, low extensibility, and ensures better breathability of fabrics. Jute is 100% bio-degradable which is being used for various purposes like packaging, textile, non-textiles, and construction, and agriculture sectors. The jute industry has been rapidly growing from a wide range of lifestyle consumer products, for its versatility and eco-friendly character. Since ancient times, jute was cultivated in Asia and Africa, which provides cordage and weaving fiber from the stem and leaves.

Towards the end of the 18th century, the British East India Company discovered that jute could be a substitute for flax which is grown abundantly in India; it was a less expensive and better source of fiber mainly used for packaging. In 1793, the first dispatch of raw jute left from India became almost vital to almost every nation worldwide in less than two hundred years. Simple handlooms and hand spinning wheels were used by the weavers, who used to spin cotton yarns as well. In the early 20th century, the company started trading raw jute with Dundee's Jute Industry, commonly known as The Jute Barons of Scotland. Margaret Donnelly 1 was the landowner in Dundee, and she set up the first jute mill in India. The rise of the jute industry in Dundee saw a corresponding increase in the production and export of raw jute from the Indian sub-continent, which was the sole supplier of this primary commodity. In the following three decades, the Indian jute industry had a remarkable experience in the rising of commanding leadership by 1939 with a total of 68,377 looms, which they focused mainly on the river Hooghly near Kolkata. After the Indian Independence in 1947, the jute map of the Indo-Bangla region experienced major changes due to the partition. Most of the jute-producing areas were in Bangladesh. Unfortunately, most of the jute mills remained in India. Due to which India aimed for self-sufficiency in raw jute to uphold their mills. Later, most of their jute mills in India were taken over by the Marwari businessmen.

Jute is a crop that thrives for rain and sunshine. Temperatures ranging from 70–100 °F and relative humidity of 70%–90% are favorable for successful cultivation. Jute requires 2–3 inches of rainfall weekly, with extra needed during the sowing period. The Indo-Bangla jute belt has the perfect natural bounty of the right kind of rain and sunshine, which continues to be the major producer of jute with the lowest investment. Ecotype of *Corchorus Capsularis* and *Olitorius* is the common type of jute plant grown in India. When the yield of the crop is directly proportionate to the height, faster growth is a desirable trait. A good crop grows up to 300 to 360 cm tall and height reached with 100 to 120 days. India is the largest producer of jute goods in the world, while Bangladesh is the largest in the cultivation of jute plants. Jute has a very important role in the Indian monopoly as it contributed 56.17% of the world output. The jute industry also contributes to exports to the tune of nearly Rs.1502 crore (2011-12) annually, which employs about 0.37 million industrial workers and livelihood to 0.14 million persons in the tertiary and allied activities. Nearly 4.0 million people derive their livelihood from jute cultivation (source:

1. Introduction

2. Tools and Raw Materials

3. Making Process

4. Products

5. Video

6. Contact Details

Design Resource

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Ministry of Textiles). In India, the cultivation of jute is mainly done in eastern states such as West Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Tripura, Orissa, and Meghalaya; southeastern regions like Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts. Srikakulam is a leading producer of jute fiber, which has two large-scale units in Rajam and Kotturu Mandal. Factories at Ponduru, Chiprapalle, Rajam, Vizianagaram, and Chilakapalem purchase raw jute from farmers for crafting products. Thus, adding value to jute and empowering women in rural areas by providing employment.

Jute fiber is used to produce bags, jute travel bags, ladies' handbags, gift folders, and clothes. The production of jute twine unit involves an investment of INR 25 lakhs. The women were trained in techniques such as macramé and braiding using jute yarn. Bejipuram is the chief craft cluster near Srikakulam, having various organizations and NGOs providing employment to the rural families and creating new crafts with their help. One such organized society in Bejipuram is called as Vivekananda Youth Club. This organization is operated for 15yrs, providing employment and capital to this industry. Mr. N. Srinivas Rao, a senior artisan, working for over 15yrs says, this organization is involved in marketing the jute products at various exhibitions across India. They have participated in exhibitions in most of the capital cities in India by the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, GOI. This organization does its business through a society called Gogi Kiranalu, which is divided into 18 groups of 325 women employees situated in different villages. The raw materials are bought from Rajam, GMR Jute Mill, and farmers who cultivate jute in the vicinity. Artisans are involved in making braided crafts, machine bags, weaving, and dyeing. Jute is bleached until they get the natural colour of jute. Later it is sent for dyeing with natural and chemical dyes as per the requirement of products like swing, decorative items, pen stand, handbags, carpets, etc. Design institutes like National Institute of Design (NID) and National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) conducted eight workshops, helping them by teaching various new designs and new technology. The various organizations like Jute Manufacturers Development Council (JMDC), Development Commission of Handicraft, MSME, NABARD, and District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) invite them to conduct exhibitions to help them for marketing and development purpose.

1. Introduction

2. Tools and Raw Materials

3. Making Process

4. Products

5. Video

6. Contact Details



Vivekananda Youth Club with a message "ENTER TO LEARN and GO OUT TO SERVE".



Vivekananda Youth Club with a message "ENTER TO LEARN and GO OUT TO SERVE".

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Srikakulam - Andhra Pradesh

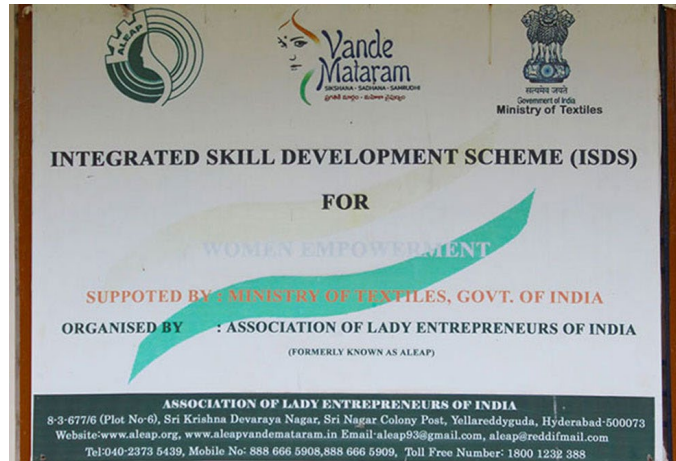
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Overview of NGO office.



Overview of NGO office.



The workspace of the NGO.



Raw Jute with its beautiful luster.

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

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Artisan braiding with jute twine.



Colorful wall decorates all made by hand.



Artisan at their workspace.

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

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Making of Jute Products

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Artisan enthusiastically presenting her work.



Color-rich coaster and table mats.



Color-rich coaster and table mats.



Jute basket, generally used for keeping laundry clothe purpose or can be used for multipurpose.

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

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Jute plants cultivated nearby.



Jute plants cultivated nearby.



Artisans intensely working on jute braiding.



A group picture of artisans working in Vivekananda Youth Club, NGO.

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Tools and Raw Materials
- 3. Making Process
- 4. Products
- 5. Video
- 6. Contact Details

Design Resource

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Tools and Raw Materials

The tools and raw materials used for making jute products are:



Jute fiber is the basic raw material.



Colourful jute fabric sheets are used for designing bags.

Needle and thread are essential for sewing the crafted merchandise.

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Design Resource

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<https://dsource.in/resource/making-jute-products/tools-and-raw-materials>



Scissor is used for cutting and shaping.



Measuring tape helps for measuring the required length of the jute.



Natural dye is obtained from natural sources such as flowers, roots, fruits, leaves, and vegetables. A chemical dye is an anionic dye substantively for cellulosic fibers, which contain either sodium chloride (NaCl) or sodium sulfate (Na₂SO₄).

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Design Resource

Making of Jute Products

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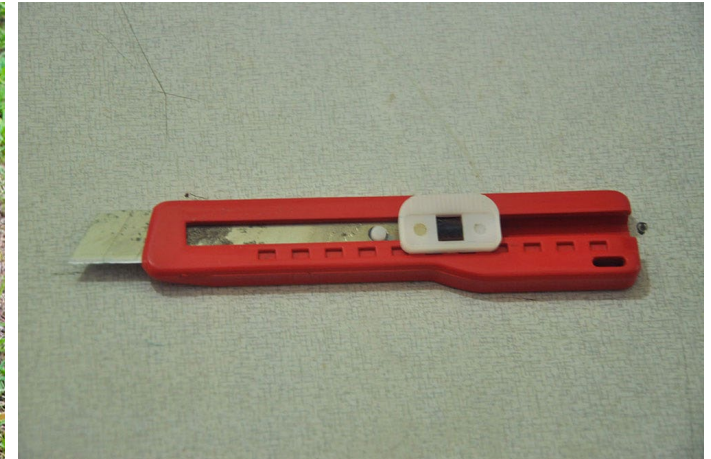
Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/making-jute-products/tools-and-raw-materials>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Hot water is required for dyeing the jute.



Paper cutter is used for cutting the jute precisely.



A comb is used for combing the jute fibers to avoid them from tangling.

Design Resource

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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Sewing machine is mainly used for sewing bags and other merchandise.



Salt is one of the seven samples of the dyeing process.

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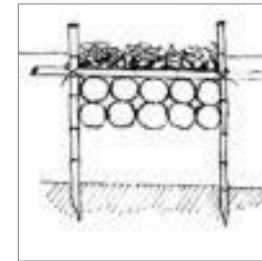
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Making Process

Jute fiber extracting comes after many processes such as harvesting, retting, extracting, washing, drying and dyeing, etc.



Harvesting of Jute Plant



The Process of Retting



Dyeing of Jute Fiber



Jute Bag Making



Jute Coaster Making



Jute Swing Making



Jute Wall Hanging

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
 - 3a. Harvesting of Jute Plant
 - 3b. The Process of Retting
 - 3c. Dyeing of Jute Fiber
 - 3d. Jute Bag Making
 - 3e. Jute Coaster Making
 - 3f. Jute Swing Making
 - 3g. Jute Wall Hanging
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Design Resource

Making of Jute Products

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Harvesting of Jute Plant

Crops are sown early, specifically in the flood-prone lowlands through June or just before the anticipated flood. On mid and upland, harvesting is being done between July and September according to the farmer's crop and convenience age. Harvesting of jute plant must be finished on the same day it is started to avoid the difference in the time lag between harvesting and steeping would be reflected in unequal retting. A group of laborers is required for cutting, sorting, and bundling, generally, a minimum of ten persons per one-third of acre crop. With the help of 'hasua' (a sharp sickle-like implement), harvesting is done by cutting the plants close to the roots. These plants are left on the ground for leaves to fall off the stem. As harvesting proceeds, a separate cluster of workers simultaneously sorts thick and thin plants into two groups. Its retting process is done separately, as thin plants ret earlier than thick ones. Sorted plants are stacked on the field for three days for defoliation and desiccation, making plants lighter. Retting is one of the most important factors governing the quality of fiber. Precise retting helps to improve the genetic class of variety as well as the crop management skill, while faulty retting can spoil the variety, stable fertilizer, appropriate spacing, etc.



The jute plant at its early stage of vegetative.



An aerial view of the field.

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
 - 3a. Harvesting of Jute Plant
 - 3b. The Process of Retting
 - 3c. Dyeing of Jute Fiber
 - 3d. Jute Bag Making
 - 3e. Jute Coaster Making
 - 3f. Jute Swing Making
 - 3g. Jute Wall Hanging
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Design Resource

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Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/making-jute-products/making-process/harvesting-jute-plant>



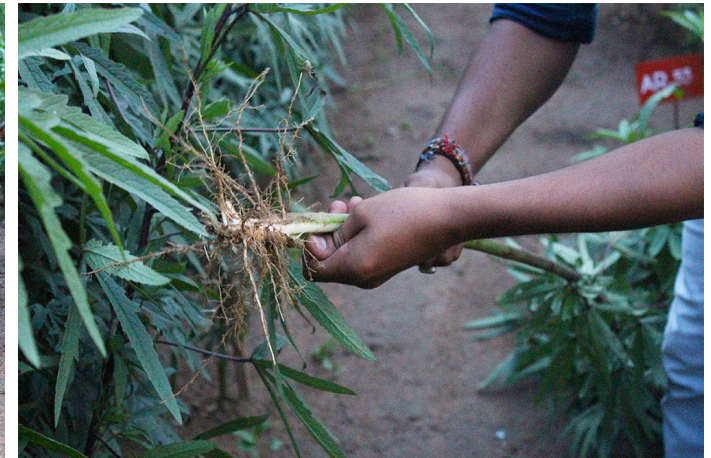
A close view of the jute plant at its budding stage.



A different perspective of the jute field.



Fully grown jute plant with its stem firm and thick enough, with a height of 300-360 cm tall, reached in 100-120 days.



A sample of jute being pulled out from the stem of a jute plant.

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
 - 3a. Harvesting of Jute Plant
 - 3b. The Process of Retting
 - 3c. Dyeing of Jute Fiber
 - 3d. Jute Bag Making
 - 3e. Jute Coaster Making
 - 3f. Jute Swing Making
 - 3g. Jute Wall Hanging
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Design Resource

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Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/making-jute-products/making-process/process-retting>

The Process of Retting

Retting is defined as the process of separating the embedded fiber from the stem through partial rotting by immersion in water; thus rotting is brought by a complex action of microbes naturally present in retting water. After harvesting, jute bundles are brought to the retting site and laid retting in water. The jute bundles normally float on water, thus, these bundles are placed side by side with bottoms all facing in one direction. The second and third layers are overlaid with bottoms facing the reverse direction. These bundles are tied up with two pieces of split bamboos to avoid them from drifting away. This process is called 'jak', which prevents it from drifting, and bamboo poles are pushed through the jak into the bottom of the retting channel or tank. To prevent the bundles from floating, they are covered with any easily available tannin-free plant materials such as paddy straws, screw-pine leaves, long-leaved grass or sedges, etc., or other logs bamboo are weighted on them. This helps the bundles to submerge 10 cm below the water. The submerging is very important as any portion of the jak or bundle that floats above the water surface will impact the retting process. The jak must remain in the water for 10 to 16 days, depending on the temperature of the retting water. Soft tissues like phloem parenchyma, sieve tubes, companion cells, medullary rays, and cambium rings lie between the wood and bark. When bundles of reed are immersed into water enzymes of aerobic, anaerobic, and facultative bacteria, react to contact with the specific medium on and in the tissues. The initiation of retting depends on the availability of nitrogen substances. The bark of the jute plant, which is freshly cut, can be split loose by splitting fiber from the wood it surrounds. The extraction should be judge by keeping in mind the age of the crop. If over-retted, the fiber becomes fragile and loses in luster. The fiber is ready for extraction only when most of the fiber is found to loosen. The wet stripes of fiber are uncoiled and stretched onto the clean water and washed thoroughly to remove gum, dirt, remains of decomposed plant, and all the retting abide by fiber. In many places, due to the scarcity of clear water, this process is skipped. The good quality of the fiber is directly linked to the accessibility of an abundance of clear water. After the fiber is washed and cleaned, it is necessary to be dried under mild sunlight. The fibers are placed on a bamboo raft and not on the ground as the wet fibers may stick to dust and dirt. These dried fibers will be bundled and tied up, and sent to the factory outlets, where the wholesalers purchase the finished product. Coloured jute is also available, which is coloured with natural and chemical dye colours.

The process of dyeing jute is very challenging because of its complex chemical component, which requires bleaching and then dyeing it with the preferred colour. Bleaching of jute can be obtained by using sodium persulphate as a peroxygen booster at ambient temperature. The process requires four variables i.e. hydrogen peroxide, sodium hydroxide, sodium silicate, and sodium persulphate, which is enhanced by using the statistical skill, central composite rotatable plan (CCRP). The method involves padding the fiber in the solution using 100% wet pick up and then batching for 2 hours followed by washing. Cellulose is the main element in jute which acts as a dyeing agent for jute fiber, suitable for jute dyeing.

1. Introduction

2. Tools and Raw Materials

3. Making Process

3a. Harvesting of Jute Plant

3b. The Process of Retting

3c. Dyeing of Jute Fiber

3d. Jute Bag Making

3e. Jute Coaster Making

3f. Jute Swing Making

3g. Jute Wall Hanging

4. Products

5. Video

6. Contact Details

Design Resource

Making of Jute Products

Srikakulam - Andhra Pradesh

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Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/making-jute-products/making-process/process-retting>

1. Introduction

2. Tools and Raw Materials

3. Making Process

3a. Harvesting of Jute Plant

3b. The Process of Retting

3c. Dyeing of Jute Fiber

3d. Jute Bag Making

3e. Jute Coaster Making

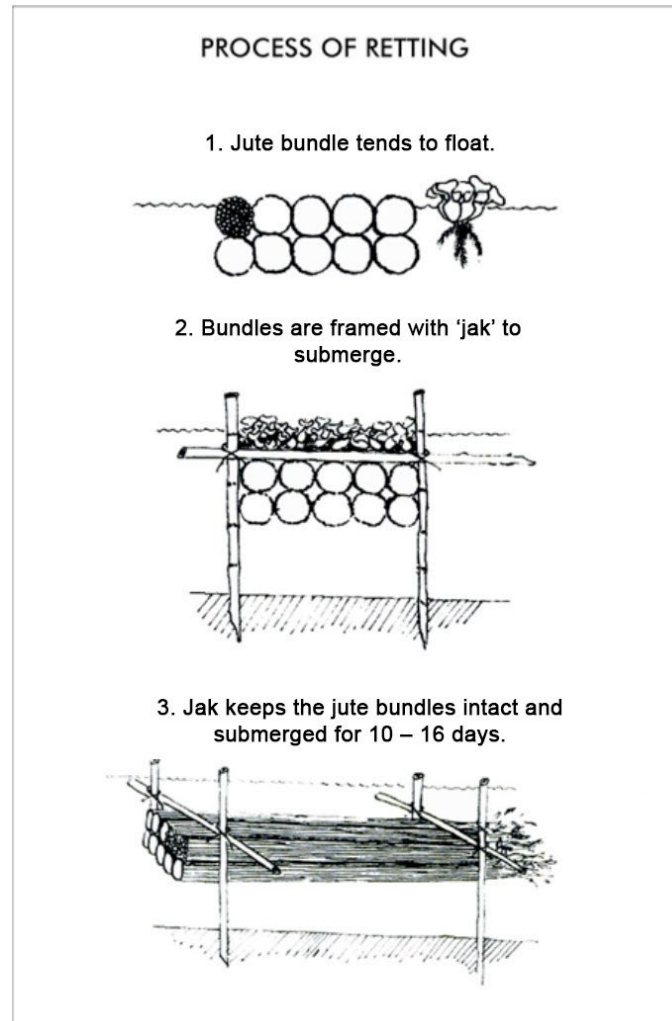
3f. Jute Swing Making

3g. Jute Wall Hanging

4. Products

5. Video

6. Contact Details



The important conditions to observe are:

1. The water must be non-saline and unblemished.
2. The capacity of water should be sufficient to let the jute bundles float.
3. When the bundles are submerged, they should not touch the bottom.
4. The same retting tank or ditch may not be used repetitively, mainly if the water becomes too foul and dirty.

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Dyeing of Jute Fiber



Jute fibers are cut at the ends, as they are imperfect and hard to be used.



Water is kept for heating.

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
 - 3a. Harvesting of Jute Plant
 - 3b. The Process of Retting
 - 3c. Dyeing of Jute Fiber
 - 3d. Jute Bag Making
 - 3e. Jute Coaster Making
 - 3f. Jute Swing Making
 - 3g. Jute Wall Hanging
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Design Resource

Making of Jute Products

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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
 - 3a. Harvesting of Jute Plant
 - 3b. The Process of Retting
 - 3c. Dyeing of Jute Fiber
 - 3d. Jute Bag Making
 - 3e. Jute Coaster Making
 - 3f. Jute Swing Making
 - 3g. Jute Wall Hanging
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Chemical dye powder is measured using a large scoop spoon. A chemical dye is an anionic dye substantively for cellulosic fibers, which contain either sodium chloride (NaCl) or sodium sulfate (Na₂SO₄).



Artisan adds little hot water to the dyeing powder and stirs it until liquefy.



Dye colour and salt are added to the hot water.

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Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/making-jute-products/making-process/dyeing-jute-fiber>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
 - 3a. Harvesting of Jute Plant
 - 3b. The Process of Retting
 - 3c. Dyeing of Jute Fiber
 - 3d. Jute Bag Making
 - 3e. Jute Coaster Making
 - 3f. Jute Swing Making
 - 3g. Jute Wall Hanging
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Artisans submerge the jute fibers into coloured hot water.



More dye colour is added.

Design Resource

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After the jute is submerged in dye water for 15-20 mins; it is taken out from the water. Artisan hangs the dyed jute on the rope.



Wet jute fibers are hung under the sun for drying.

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
 - 3a. Harvesting of Jute Plant
 - 3b. The Process of Retting
 - 3c. Dyeing of Jute Fiber
 - 3d. Jute Bag Making
 - 3e. Jute Coaster Making
 - 3f. Jute Swing Making
 - 3g. Jute Wall Hanging
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Design Resource

Making of Jute Products

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Jute Bag Making



Artisan measures the jute fabric using a measuring tape.



He then cuts the fabric with the help of a paper cutter.



With the help of sewing machine, artisan stitches picot stitch (a loop of thread created for functional purposes along the edge of lace or fabric) at the ends of the fabric to avoid it from fraying.

1. Introduction

2. Tools and Raw Materials

3. Making Process

3a. Harvesting of Jute Plant

3b. The Process of Retting

3c. Dyeing of Jute Fiber

3d. Jute Bag Making

3e. Jute Coaster Making

3f. Jute Swing Making

3g. Jute Wall Hanging

4. Products

5. Video

6. Contact Details

Design Resource

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The artisan attaches different coloured fabrics.



Artisan intensely involved in stitching the sides of the bag.



All the sides of the bag are stitched.



The final product of the Jute bag is ready.

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
 - 3a. Harvesting of Jute Plant
 - 3b. The Process of Retting
 - 3c. Dyeing of Jute Fiber
 - 3d. Jute Bag Making
 - 3e. Jute Coaster Making
 - 3f. Jute Swing Making
 - 3g. Jute Wall Hanging
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Design Resource

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Jute Coaster Making



The artisan begins with hair braiding the jute fibers.



She then starts by quilling the jute yarn.

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
 - 3a. Harvesting of Jute Plant
 - 3b. The Process of Retting
 - 3c. Dyeing of Jute Fiber
 - 3d. Jute Bag Making
 - 3e. Jute Coaster Making
 - 3f. Jute Swing Making
 - 3g. Jute Wall Hanging
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Design Resource

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The artisan attaches different coloured jute yarn.



She creates beautiful waves using the jute which resembles petals of a flower.



With the help of a needle and thread, the artisan sews it to hold firm.

1. Introduction

2. Tools and Raw Materials

3. Making Process

3a. Harvesting of Jute Plant

3b. The Process of Retting

3c. Dyeing of Jute Fiber

3d. Jute Bag Making

3e. Jute Coaster Making

3f. Jute Swing Making

3g. Jute Wall Hanging

4. Products

5. Video

6. Contact Details

Design Resource

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Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/making-jute-products/making-process/jute-coaster-making>



The same pattern is continued in the next loop.



Artisan locks the ends by stitching.



Beautifully finished coaster.

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
 - 3a. Harvesting of Jute Plant
 - 3b. The Process of Retting
 - 3c. Dyeing of Jute Fiber
 - 3d. Jute Bag Making
 - 3e. Jute Coaster Making
 - 3f. Jute Swing Making
 - 3g. Jute Wall Hanging
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Design Resource

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Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/making-jute-products/making-process/jute-swing-making>

Jute Swing Making



Artisan involved in braiding the jute fibers.



Beautiful golden luster braided jute.



Artisan knots the jute on to a wooden pole.

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
 - 3a. Harvesting of Jute Plant
 - 3b. The Process of Retting
 - 3c. Dyeing of Jute Fiber
 - 3d. Jute Bag Making
 - 3e. Jute Coaster Making
 - 3f. Jute Swing Making
 - 3g. Jute Wall Hanging
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Design Resource

Making of Jute Products

Srikakulam - Andhra Pradesh

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Srikanth Bellamkonda

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/making-jute-products/making-process/jute-swing-making>



Several strings of jute yarn are knotted evenly on a wooden pole.



The artisan continues knotting with a macramé pattern.



A glimpse of a basic macramé pattern with vibrant colour.



The skillfully designed jute swing is finished.

1. Introduction

2. Tools and Raw Materials

3. Making Process

3a. Harvesting of Jute Plant

3b. The Process of Retting

3c. Dyeing of Jute Fiber

3d. Jute Bag Making

3e. Jute Coaster Making

3f. Jute Swing Making

3g. Jute Wall Hanging

4. Products

5. Video

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Jute Wall Hanging



Artisan combs the jute fiber to avoid it from tangling.



She then starts by braiding the jute fibers.



Artisan combines six braids of jute by tying them together with the help of thread.



The artisan creates small balls using jute fiber and then places them inside the jute fibers.

1. Introduction

2. Tools and Raw Materials

3. Making Process

3a. Harvesting of Jute Plant

3b. The Process of Retting

3c. Dyeing of Jute Fiber

3d. Jute Bag Making

3e. Jute Coaster Making

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4. Products

5. Video

6. Contact Details

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Artisan ties the fibers together with the help of thread.



With the help of a scissor, the artisan cuts the extras of fiber to give it a clean finishing.



A beautifully decorated wall hanging is ready.

1. Introduction

2. Tools and Raw Materials

3. Making Process

3a. Harvesting of Jute Plant

3b. The Process of Retting

3c. Dyeing of Jute Fiber

3d. Jute Bag Making

3e. Jute Coaster Making

3f. Jute Swing Making

3g. Jute Wall Hanging

4. Products

5. Video

6. Contact Details

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2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Products

Jute is the most important and versatile raw material used in day-to-day life. It can be used in making different products like handbags, pen stand, floor mats, rugs, carpets, wall hangings, decorative, gunny bags, and ropes, etc., which are manufactured in different organizations all over India. One such organized society in Bejipuram called Vivekananda Youth Club involved manufacturing and designing various jute products by supporting rural women and empowering by giving them work opportunity. Mr. N. Srinivas Rao, a senior artisan, working for over 15yrs. The prices of products range from INR 10 to INR 15000. Timings of the organization are from morning 09.30 am to the evening at 06.00 pm. Products are sold to different parts of India, and they are manufactured according to the present market condition.



A jute laundry bag is used for laundry purposes as well as for keeping toys and other things.



Jute coasters and jute table mat generally kept on a dining table.

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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Colourful wall decorative.



Exquisitely created wall hanging.

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Source:

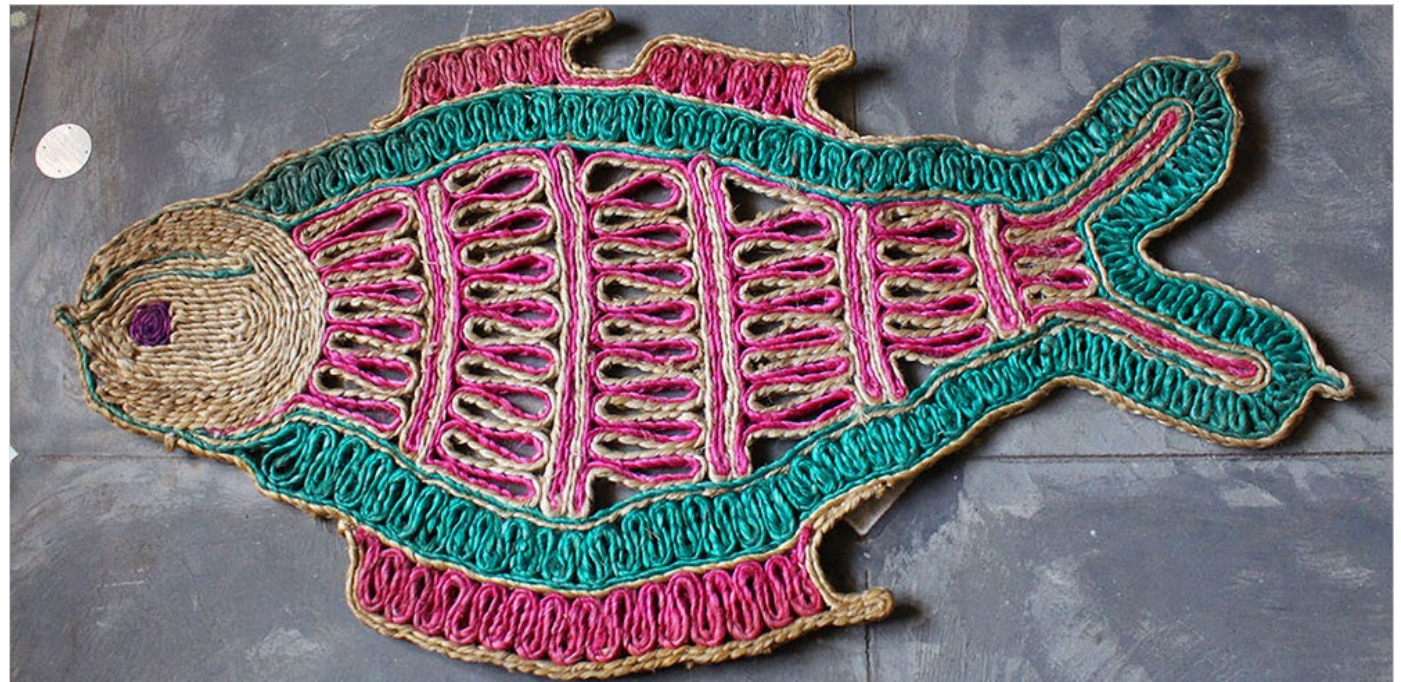
<https://dsource.in/resource/making-jute-products/products>



Jute stool is an essential need for every home.



Colourful jute bags are created for different purposes.



A mat in the form of a fish, which is artistically done.

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Hand-made Jute swing.



Jute swing designed in a macramé pattern.

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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Wall decorative depicting the tribal design.



Vibrant wall decorative with alternate design pattern.

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Video



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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

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1. Introduction

2. Tools and Raw Materials

3. Making Process

4. Products

5. Video

6. Contact Details