

A Study of “Kouna” Products in Manipur and Their Marketability

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ABSTRACT

The research sought to ascertain the increment in production and marketability of water reed “kouna” products. This study examined kouna production by groups of people belonging to Meitei communities in two districts of Manipur, Thoubal and Imphal East. Khangabok village in Thoubal District and Kongba village in Imphal East District are the two leading areas for the cultivation of kouna plants. Kouna is a naturally occurring fibre that is gathered three times a year and is used to create mats and other creative products. This research examined the capabilities of indigenous craftspeople, especially indigenous women artisans. This very local business of Manipur requires Government’s attention for its growth and development. It could provide job opportunities to the local artisans as well as could become a good source of income for the state.

Key Words : Kouna, Marketability, Indigenous, Artisans, Skills

INTRODUCTION

Manipur, one of India’s most isolated states, is quickly globalising. The market has regularly penetrated traditional cultures since 1991. Small-scale producers of indigenous goods are gaining ground in the marketplace. Manipur is a highland state in the northeast of India, 23.830N to 25.680N latitude, 93.030E to 94.780E longitude (www.manipur.gov.in). It is home to the Meitei, Meitei-Pangal, Naga and Kuki tribes. This study focuses on one Meitei *kouna* village. A product is a manufactured or refined object or substance intended for sale or use. Climate change, excessive resource use, and increasing waste production have been warned about for years. Today’s culture demands eco-friendly, sustainable, and biodegradable products.

Water Reed “Kouna”:

Schoenoplectus Lacustris is a Cyperaceae aquatic plant that is referred to in Manipuri as “*kouna*.” The name “*kouna*” originates in the Japanese word “kou,” which translates as “mat” (Singh, 2016). It thrives in

swamps and marshes, reaching a height of eleven feet with 515 mm thick stems. The stem is a deep green colour, cylindrical in shape, unbranched, and tapering at the tip. The mature plants have little white to yellowish flowers, and the fruit is a small triangular nut with single spikelet-shaped flowers. It is mostly cultivated in Imphal’s muddy valley. *Kouna* products are non-toxic and biodegradable, sound and heat insulating. It is stated that sitting on a *kouna* mat or stool (moorah) cures piles (Current Science, 2005). The centuries-old *Kouna* treasures are garnering worldwide prominence. *Kouna* employs craftspeople from the state’s indigenous peoples.

Pakhangba, the deity, is inextricably linked to *Kouna*. As a result, the soil in which it thrives must be maintained clean. Women are not permitted to grow or harvest *kouna* plants on Fridays, out of concern for the plant’s survival or the harvester’s safety. As a result, the plant is sometimes called Lady Friday (Irai – Leima) (Current Science, 2005). *Kouna* mats are always used by the priest and community elders. The majority of households have *kouna*-based products, mainly mats. *Kouna* mats must be placed on the right side of the

verandah since it is regarded as a place for the ancestors. Additionally, the bride must bring one *kouna* mat to weddings. On the bride's *kouna* mat, a pre-wedding puja is done (which she will carry). She removes her wedding gown and changes into a new one on the same mat upon her arrival at the groom's house. As a consequence, these mats have an important cultural, social, and religious significance. The indigenous name for a floor mat is phak. Phak is categorised into four distinct categories:

Phamen Phak :

It is a fairly frequent one found in every Meitei home. It is stretched across the right side of the house's veranda during the day and rolled up at night. It is also employed in religious rites and ritual

Lai Khurum Phak:

It is smaller in size than the phamen phak. Only one person can sit on this mat. It is used in religious ceremonies and rituals. Priests sit on this and perform *pujas*.

(a) Phak Sang (Long Mat):

It is a long mat used in religious ceremonies, social gatherings, and rituals, for the guests to sit on.

(b) Phak Aronba (Patterned Mat):

It is a mat which is triple in height of the phamen phak. It is used by royal people in earlier days to sit on, nowadays normal people also use this as a luxury.

Review of Literature :

Handicraft is "the skill of handcrafting decorative items." Traditional and modern designs may be made by hand alone. People are increasingly interested in products that used to be regionally exclusive. In their book 'Bamboo and Cane Crafts', Ranjan *et al.* (2004) thoroughly noted the distinctive properties of bamboo and cane. The book's main goal is to show how design can assist this vital industry to grow. Bamboo and cane, two well-known North-Eastern raw materials, offer distinct economic possibilities. "Handmade in India: A Geographic Encyclopaedia of Indian Handicrafts" has been published by Ranjan and Ranjan (2009). It addressed how materials used in various crafts evolved through time, as did knowledge of tools, methods, and procedures. The book

discusses how emerging digital technologies may help connect these historic capabilities to new prospects for the country's creative economy. These abilities and resources must be reinterpreted by planners, companies, and rural and urban artisans. Stenman (2008) describes the common reed, its construction uses, and its components in his study. He researched the Reeds' usage in Finland, Estonia, and Latvia. Additionally, it refers to reed buildings like churches, canary grass shelters, and reed-roofed homes. Despite its concentration on water reed, the book's examination of conventional and modern reed constructing methods is critical to the subject. Singh (2016) has done a cost-benefit analysis of the production of Paddy and *Kouna* products in his study. His research was based in villages of the Imphal District. He tells that *Kouna* is a sustainable plant, once planted it can produce more than 30–35 years if properly managed; requires less investment and labour besides less fertilizer. On the other hand, the longevity of the paddy plant is one year and requires regular fertilizers and expensive labour and it is a seasonal crop, *Rabi* and *Kharif*. The annual cost and outcome of *kouna* are more profitable than the paddy plant. Datta and Banerjee (2019) examine the elements that are likely to forecast the qualities and uniqueness of *kouna* crafts in Manipur when adopting a Geographical Indication Certificate in their study. Given that GI is often agricultural, natural, or manufactured products that originate within a certain geographical area, it ensures quality and uniqueness. They discussed Manipur's potential in *kouna* craft. They stated that handicrafts, which originated as traditional pastimes in rural areas with limited market demand, have evolved into a booming enterprise. Jena (2010) examined how globalisation impacts craftsmen. His primary objective was to establish connections between traditional craft and design. He said that Indian handicrafts are a critical component of the decentralised economy, and their export has grown dramatically in recent years. Jena is concerned about the ability of producers and inhabitants to preserve their 'localness' in the face of global influence. This article aided the current study by providing background for analysing the condition of a local product or firm after exposure to a bigger market. Each item is meticulously made by hand and takes hours to finish. Additionally, one may notice that products are sold at a premium price outside of the region. It is uncertain how much of this perk reaches workers. Khurana (2015) throws insight into the consumer-product interaction in his thesis. She

cited some research to substantiate her assertion that consumers make their purchases. Additionally, this demonstrates that consumer choices have a significant impact on the production process. According to her, businesses encounter many challenges when it comes to selling their products. Many consumers (35.33 %) purchased handmade items as gifts, and many more (21.33 %) utilise them regularly. As a consequence, these products, notably the *kouna*, are excellent gifts. According to the idea, diverse consumer groups stimulated the development of unique styles. Suhas (2002) asserts that women account for 40% to 50% of all craftspeople. Women often work on carpets, fabric printing and painting, bleaching and dyeing, crocheted products, embroidered and zari work, laces and fringes, and traditional painting, he said. He added that women labour alone in this area and get pitiful wages. Their enterprises are smaller, less profitable, and decentralised, including several families and work sites. The sector is in high demand, and women are critical to the continued survival of traditional crafts. He remarked that complete female empowerment is necessary in order to contribute adequately to sector and national growth.

Rationale of the study :

Kouna products are uncommon, and few individuals are familiar with their application. However, due to the familiarity and simplicity of use of *kouna* products, distinctive products manufactured using *kouna* things are in great demand both domestically and globally. It is, however, popular in just a few places of the nation. The purpose of this study is to characterise the growing market for and demand for *kouna* products in and around Manipur. A crucial component was seeing how this business benefits Manipuri women in terms of employment and financial security, as well as how NGOs and the government collaborate to promote *kouna*'s marketability both inside and beyond the state.

Objectives :

1. To understand the process of production of *kouna* items starting from its plantation and making various crafts from it.
2. To study the role of *kouna* industry in providing skills and employment to Manipuri people, especially the women.
3. To study the role of NGOs and government in enhancing the marketing of *kouna* products inside and

outside the state.

METHODOLOGY

Locale of the study:

The study was conducted in Imphal, the capital of Manipur is a popular place for *Kouna* (water reed) products. The field is spread in two districts of Manipur namely Thoubal District and Imphal East District. Two sites from Thoubal and one from Imphal East were selected.

The places selected for the study were:

- Kongba, Imphal East District
- Khangabok, Thoubal District
- Odeshcrafter, Khangabok Bazaar, Thoubal District

Kongba and Khangabok sites are home run industries and Odeshcrafter is an NGO where *kouna* products were made.

Profile of the selected locales:

Khangabok, Thoubal district:

One of the sixteen districts that comprise the state of Manipur in northeastern India. This district is flanked on the north by the Imphal West and Imphal East districts, as well as Kakgokpi, on the east by the Kangpokpi and Tengnoupal districts, on the south by Kakching, and on the west by Imphal West. Thoubal town, the district's administrative centre is famous for the Khongjom conflict.

Kongba, Imphal East district:

The Imphal East district occupies the north-eastern corner of the Manipur (Imphal) Valley but one of its sub-divisions namely Jiribam sub-division is geographically located on the western state border about 222 km away from the district Headquarters, Porompat. It was bifurcated as a distinct district from the Imphal district under Manipur Government Office Order No.6/1/73-R (PT-VIII) dated the 17th June 1997. The district lies between latitudes 24° 39' 49.09" N and 25° 4' 5.45" N and longitudes 93° 55' 30" E and 94° 8' 42" E approximately. And Kongba is a locality in Imphal East District.

Sample

Selection of samples and sample techniques :

The sample was divided into three categories.

1. Producers: Included people who cultivate, harvest and make the water reed products.
2. Sellers: Included people who sell the water reed

products to the market (online and offline).

3. Consumers included people who bought finished products from the market.

Data were collected from a total of 100 samples.

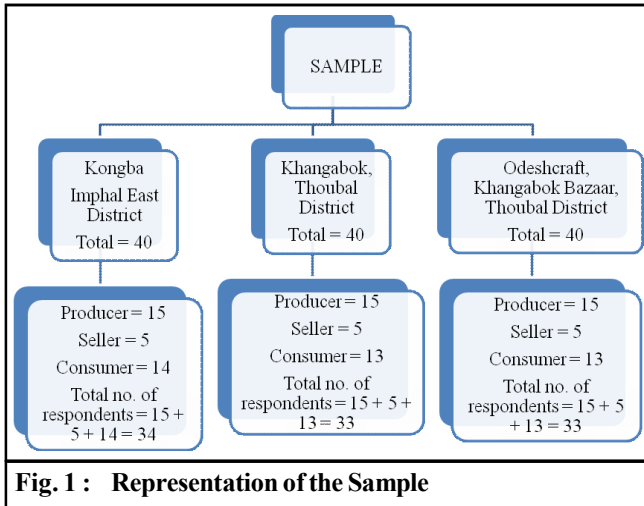


Fig. 1 : Representation of the Sample

Sampling technique :

The sample was stratified into three strata *i.e.* producers, sellers and consumers. Respondents were randomly selected from the three strata and hence, the study adopted a stratified random sampling technique.

Tools for data collection :

Multiple approaches were employed to gather data to get reliable information. **Interview schedule:** Open and closed-ended questions were asked to producers, NGOs, and sellers. Gather information on *kouna*

production, collection, processing, best-selling commodities, seller issues, money earned and skills taught by the NGO and the marketability of *kouna* items inside and outside Manipur. **Questionnaire:** Consumers were surveyed on their satisfaction with the products, their pricing, and quality. Additionally, to ascertain the usability of the product, its unique design, and whether they desired additional features. **Observation :** It aided in gathering pertinent information on the designs and marketability of *kouna* products. **Photography and videography:** helpful in revising the field notes and getting acquainted with the process of product manufacturing.

Method of data collection :

Informal dialogues were established with producers, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), merchants, and consumers to establish rapport and increase responder trust in the confidentiality of information. The whole process of interviews, surveys, observations, photography, and filming required around four to five trips to each location.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Producers and NGO, Sellers and Consumers :

Table 1 shows the information of producers and NGOs interviewed for the study.

Female producers (66.66 %) manufactured the majority of *kouna* products, whereas men tends and harvest *kouna* plants. 80% of the producers were adults aged 20-50. They were primarily married women who

Table 1: Background Profile of Producers and NGO, Sellers and Consumers

Sr. No.	Information	Producers and NGOs N = 45		Consumers N=40		Sellers N=15	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
A. Gender							
1.	Male	15	33.33 %	13	32.5%	6	40%
2.	Female	30	66.66 %	27	67.5%	9	60%
B. Age							
1.	Below 20 years	5	11.11 %	5	12.5%	-	-
2.	20 – 50 years	36	80 %	23	57.5%	12	80%
3.	Above 50 years	4	8.88 %	12	30%	3	20%
C. Educational qualification							
1.	X passed	6	13.33 %	2	5%	2	13.33%
2.	XII passed	20	44.44 %	6	15%	3	20%
3.	Graduate	15	33.33 %	18	45%	8	53.33%
4.	Post-Graduate and above	4	8.88 %	14	35%	2	13.33%

subsisted by making *kouna* products. Nearly 11% of producers were under the age of 20, assisting businesses while earning pocket money. Approximately 8.88 per cent of producers were above 50 years. They are professionals who help educate younger producers. 13.33 per cent were X passed, 44.44 per cent had passed XII, 33.33 per cent had graduated, and 8.88 per cent were postgraduate and above. Odeshcrafft is a non-governmental organisation teaching women the *kouna* craft. The majority of sellers were female (60%), with 40% being male. 80% of responders were aged 20-50 and make a living by selling *kouna* products. Three out of 20 sellers were above the age of 50. Two of the three work full-time selling *kouna* products, while the third does so part-time. 53.33 per cent of sellers were graduates, 13.33 per cent were X passed, 13.33 per cent were post-graduates, and 20% were XII passed. 67.5 % of consumers were female and 32.5 % were male. The majority of consumers were aged 20 to 50, 30% were over 50, and a minority were aged under 20. 45 per cent of consumers were graduates, 35 per cent were post-graduates, 15% are XII passed, and 5% are X passed

Cultivation and Harvesting of *kouna* plants:

Table 2. : Phases of *kouna* Cultivation and Harvesting

Sr. No.	Phase	Cultivation	Harvesting
1.	1 st Phase	March	June
2.	2 nd Phase	June	September
3.	3 rd Phase	September	December

Kouna plant cultivation and harvesting are separated into three stages. It begins in March and lasts through December. While cultivating, a distance of 12 feet is maintained between two plants to ensure that they develop smoothly and healthily. *Kouna* is plentiful in the first and second phases, and its characteristics are stronger, superior, larger, and taller than those in the third phase *kouna*. Due to the larger size of the *kouna* generated during the first two processes, it is more difficult to create beautiful things. In the third phase *kouna* are smaller in size and are not common.

Table 3 : List of Fertilizers Used

Sr. No.	Fertilizer	Amount (In 1 Acre)
1.	Diammonium phosphate	20 – 25 kg
2.	Potash	20 – 25 kg
3.	Urea	20 – 25 kg
4.	Superphosphate	20 – 25 kg
5.	Cow Dung	20 – 30 kg

Farmers cultivate *kouna* only using cow dung as fertiliser. Due to population growth, the majority of wasteland lands have been developed into residences, diminishing available space for *kouna* cultivation. The majority of *kouna* fields in Kongba, Imphal East District, have been exterminated. On the other hand, individuals in Manipur, neighbouring states, and even beyond the nation are discovering *kouna*'s eco-friendly and biodegradable properties. As a result of the aforementioned issues, demand for *kouna* products has grown while raw material output has decreased. As a result, farmers began utilising these fertilisers to keep up with consumer demand. These fertilisers increase the height, size, and prolificacy of *Kouna* plants, but deplete the soil's fertility and harden it.

Participation in *kouna* plantation and designing *kouna* products:

According to respondents, around 10-15 men, including family members, were engaged in *kouna* plant cultivation and harvesting, whereas roughly 20-30 females, including family members, were involved in *kouna* product making. Around 150 craftsmen at Odeshcrafft, Khangabok Bazaar, Thoubal District, transform raw materials such as *kouna* from nearby farmers into finished products. The goods are manufactured at Kongba, Imphal East District, using raw materials sourced in Langmeithek, Chikong, Kongba, and Thoubal, and employ between 20 and 30 artisans.

Equipment used in planting and designing *kouna* products

Equipment used in cultivating and harvesting *kouna* plants includes a spade, knife, sickle, jute rope, pleyer, scissors, long needle, wooden blocks and weaving frame. There is no need to clean the land since *kouna* just has to be planted once and lasts for 20-30 years. Weeds are the farmer's nemesis and must be eradicated twice or three times a year. A *kouna* plant produces between three and four young plants. A knife or spade is used to remove the new plants while constructing a nursery. The mature *kouna* stems are harvested with a sickle and tied together with jute rope. A pleyer is used to design the *kouna* products. Scissors are required to get the desired and beautiful outcome. Wooden blocks are used to form the products. On a frame, a *kouna* mat is weaved.

Skills for making *kouna* products:

Making *kouna* products does not need any special

abilities. Since the inception of *kouna* manufacturing in ancient Manipur, producers have learnt how to create *kouna* products, particularly mats, via family tradition. Demand for *kouna* products has increased as more people become aware of the advantages and beauty of *kouna*. To educate producers on how to develop *kouna* products other than mats, designers and trainers from inside and outside the state were employed.

Benefits from making *kouna* products:

Manipur has a high rate of unemployment, and these individuals do not wait for government jobs. The vast majority of responders produce *kouna* products. Men grow and harvest *kouna*, while women make the bulk of *kouna* products because the *kouna* industry values women's empowerment. In Kongba, Imphal east district, training for the development of knowledge, skills, and technologies in the production of *kouna* products was conducted. Additionally, they earn money on a daily basis by completing training products. Additionally, they may acquire raw materials from industry and work from home, receiving money based on the number of products made. Around 150 individuals work at odeshcrafft in the Khangabok market in the Thoubal District. Sixty-five craftsmen out of one hundred and fifty are extremely skilled. As part of odeshcrafft, women were taught and paid to manufacture *kouna* products. To manufacture *kouna* products, trainers and designers from Manipur and beyond were employed. Making *kouna* products may help improve poor people's lives and assist groups in achieving inclusive development by participating in and contributing to national poverty and unemployment reduction efforts.

Market for *kouna* products:

Residents and tourists alike appreciate its ecologically friendly, sustainable, and biodegradable features. Producers have produced new types to meet the increased demand for *kouna* products. The painters coloured the products in a range of colours. The colour is achieved by the importation of pigments from other states. Colour is blended with sulfuric acid and salt before dyeing and dying products. Additionally, some artists use natural dyes to colour their products. Locals like vividly coloured *kouna*, whilst visitors prefer *kouna* in their natural hue. Intermediaries' involvement was formerly more frequent, but has declined as technology and transportation infrastructure have improved. The products

of *Kouna* are readily accessible in the local market. Exhibitions, trade shows, and handicrafts shows are critical platforms for showcasing the beauty and superior quality of *kouna* products to the rest of the world. *Kouna* products are shipped to a variety of other states, including Guwahati, Nagaland, Delhi, Kolkata, Hyderabad, and Bangalore, as well as to other nations, including London and Bangkok. With the advancement of technology, *kouna* businesses are increasingly using social media to showcase and promote their products. They have begun uploading products to the internet marketplace. It enables residents of other states to purchase *kouna* products. Amazon, Indiamart, www.unfactory.in, www.giskaa.com, and www.odeshcraft.com are just a few of the online retailers selling *kouna* products. Women of Manipur play a big role in the production of *kouna* products in Manipur. 95% of the artisans are women.

Table 4 : Prices of *kouna* bundle

Sr. No.	Season	Price of 1 Bundle (Rs.)	
		Wet	Dry
1.	Summer	150 – 180	250 – 300
2.	Autumn	140 – 160	230 – 250
3.	Winter	120 – 130	200 – 230

Summer *kouna* are strong, long, attractive, and plentiful, making the wet and dry *kouna* bundle more costly than the autumn and winter bundles. Autumn *kouna* are smaller and have fewer traits than summer *kouna*. Winter *Kouna* are small, weak, and produce less than summer and autumn. Summer *kouna* is also preferred by craftsmen over winter *kouna* because it is stronger, more beautiful, and more lasting. Farmers used a single 95-centimetre jute rope bundle.

Roles of NGOs and Government

NGOs like Odeshcrafft, Shristi, and others helped improve *kouna* products. They held multiple workshops to empower women and teach them how to manufacture handcrafted products and gain economic independence. These females hailed from economically impoverished areas of society. For *kouna* farmers, the government also offers training and financing.

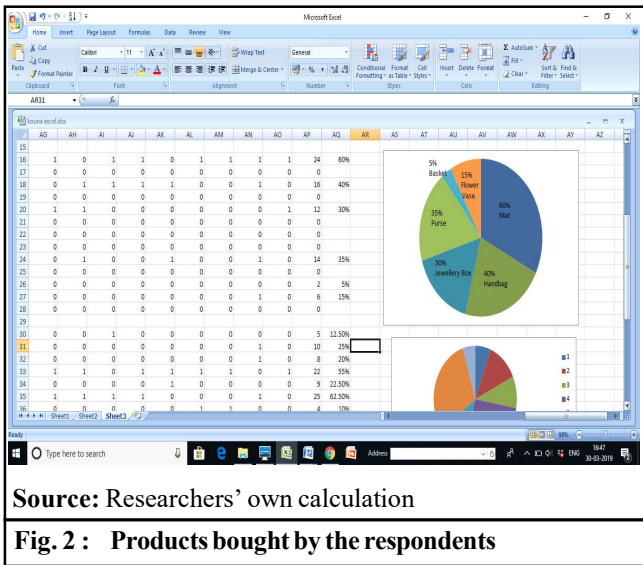
Products made from *kouna*:

Most respondents bought mats as it is a must on a meitei home. Handbags, purses, and jewellery boxes are attractive to females. Outside the state, they bought mats

Table 5 : List of Products

Sr. No.	Products	Price (Rs.)	
		Market	Online
1.	Mat	250 – 1000 above	1000 – 2000 above
2.	Cushion	450 – 550	700 – 2000
3.	<i>Moorah</i> (stool)	500 – 1000	800 – 1500 above
4.	Laundry Basket	400 – 800	500 – 1000 above
5.	Handbag	230 – 650	500 – 1000 above
6.	Purse	50 – 150	200 – 500
7.	Jewellery box	150 – 300	300 – 1000 above
8.	Coaster	100 – 170	150 – 200
9.	Hat	200 – 500	300 – 600
10.	Book Holder	200 – 400	300 – 700 above
11.	Tissue box	100 – 300	200 – 500 above
12.	Towel Tray	200 – 400	300 – 500 above
13.	Slipper	100 – 300	200 – 700 above
14.	Flower base	150 – 200	200 – 500 above
15.	Pen holder	50 – 150	100 – 300

Source: www.odeshcraft.com, www.giskaa.com, www.unfactory.in, indiamart, amazon and personal interview conducted by researcher



Source: Researchers' own calculation

Fig. 2 : Products bought by the respondents

as well, but producers and merchants said that handbags, purses, jewellery boxes, and laundry are more well-known and in high demand in other Indian states and nations.

The lifespan of *kouna* Products :

According to responses, the longevity of *kouna* products is dependent on their care and upkeep. Some last between 5 and 10 years, while others endure between 15 and 20 years. Certain products are short-lived due to the seller's deception. They sprinkle water over the products to darken their colour and make them more

attractive to buyers. Their products are susceptible to spoilage by fungus. Products that are lighter in colour are of higher quality and have a longer lifetime. To extend the life and preserve the quality of the plants, it is recommended to keep them in a warm environment with enough sunshine. Allow it to dry in the sun twice or thrice a week.

Problems Related to Production and Selling of *Kouna* Products:

Kouna fields are disappearing as a result of population growth, home building, and the development of wastelands. *Kouna* plant output has also decreased. Because rice is the major meal in Manipur, farmers prioritise rice growing over *kouna*. Another issue that farmers encounter is flooding during the summer rainfall. Deep stagnant water is more prevalent at this time in low-lying marshy areas and newly built ditches. Inadequate drainage infrastructure and prolonged summer rains flood the field, drowning the vegetation. When *kouna* products are manufactured in big quantities, they are kept in a chamber for extended periods (days/months). When products are stored for extended periods (days/months), they develop fungus due to a lack of heat and sunshine and are consequently destroyed. This results in a loss of revenue from the sale of *kouna* products. As a result, they employ artificial light to keep it fungus-free.

Findings of this research study:

Kouna cultivation and harvesting are divided into three stages. Summer-harvested *kouna* are more robust, flexible, gorgeous, and durable than autumn- and winter-harvested *kouna*. Farmers supplemented plants with diammonium phosphate, potash, urea, super phosphate, and cow dung. Around 10 – 15 males are needed to cultivate and harvest *kouna* plants on a one-acre plot. Farmers utilise tools such as a shovel, knife, sickle, and jute rope to cultivate and harvest *kouna* plants. Plier, scissors, long needle, and various forms of wooden blocks. The weaving frame, for example, is used to design the *kouna* products. Some artisans acquired how to make *kouna* products from their forebears, while others undergo training programmes organised by some NGOs and Government institutions, to increase their knowledge and ability to make *kouna* products. Planting *kouna* will provide revenue throughout the whole year. Unemployed individuals, particularly women, benefit from training and are involved in producing *kouna* products to supplement their income. Summer *kouna* products are very durable, lasting up to 15 to 20 years. The products offered in the neighbourhood by street sellers who walk door to door are not durable. *Kouna* has a significant market share in Manipur's handicrafts sector. *Kouna* products are readily accessible in the state's local markets. Exhibitions, trade shows, and handicrafts fairs are all critical platforms/opportunities for showcasing the beauty and attributes of *kouna* products to the globe. Online marketing has allowed sellers to offer *kouna* products, hence expanding the market for *kouna* products. NGOs and the government could make significant contributions to the production of *kouna* plants and products. *Kouna* mats are quite popular in Manipur since they are a crucial item for people's social and cultural life. Handbags, purses, laundry bags, and baskets are fashionable in other countries and on the worldwide market. While producing *kouna* products on a big scale the producers/ sellers of *kouna* products faced one main problem is that when products are stored for extended periods (days/months), they develop fungus due to a lack of heat and sunshine and are consequently destroyed.

Conclusion:

The goal of this study was to analyse and investigate *kouna* plant production in Manipur, the products made from them, and the marketability of the products both inside and beyond the state. The *kouna* fields are

diminishing as Manipur's population expands. Local producers are mostly engaged in rice cultivation. This traditional art form will disappear if the government and non-governmental organisations on a local level do not pay it sufficient attention and support. The government should recognise that this *kouna* will provide employment to local artists, especially women artisans, and has the potential to contribute significantly to the state's GDP. This demands an accurate assessment of the most effective techniques for boosting *kouna* and *kouna*-related output, as well as the marketability of *kouna*-related products locally, in other states, and on the global market. The number of *kouna* producers and artisans should be increased to guarantee that products may be created on a larger scale and sold to other Indian states as well as internationally.

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