

Development of Additional Occupations Complied with Local Community Culture for Poverty Reduction in Talukdu Sub-district, Thap Than District, Uthai Thani

Phitoon Thongsap¹

¹Department of Design, Faculty of Agricultural Technology and Industrail Technology
398, M. 9 , T. Nakhon Sawan Tok, A. Muang , Nakhon Sawan 60000 ,Thailand.

E-mail: phitoon_315@hotmail.com

Abstract

The purposes of this research are to 1) study the state of local resource and materials in Talukdu sub-district, Thap Than district, Uthai Thani, 2) make an alternative by creating additional occupations using local materials based on former local culture, and 3) create additional occupations that are in line with the community context in a complete cycle so as to sustainably reduce poverty.

The subjects used in the research are 98 people consisting of community leaders, local scholars and local people. The research instruments used are an interview form and a questionnaire. The data were periodically collected and analyzed, i.e. after the first meeting with the villagers in the form of focus group discussion to determine what material and ways to use it to creat a additionaloccupation, after the second meeting to determine how to do it, after the third for meeting on how to distribute or promote the sale of the products, and after the last meeting after the sale for furthen improvement.

The results revealed that bamboos are the main local materials. The evaluation found that 100% of the research subject are in debt, have used bamboos found around the house area as main materials in making household products. They used bamboos to crate household products and furniture for seeing that this can be an occupation to increase income, decrease expenditure of the family, and they get the support and knowledge from educational institutions and know-how people in using local material to build family and community products as a way to solve

the poverty problem. Overall, their views on making an alternative by using bamboos as local material in creating additionaloccupations to sustainably reduce poverty are at the high level. When considered aspect by aspect, the views on the need for government support in making bamboo products as an occupation, on the aspect of adaptation to solve poverty problem, on the item of seeing that it can add and build potential and learning process of the poor in having the ability to analyze, think, do, and rely on oneself as well as promote the community economy, and on the improvement of the products that can induce knowledge conducive to solving poverty problem are also at the high level.

Keywords: additionaloccupations from local materials, local culture, poverty solving

1. Introduction

Amidst rapid social changes there exist various problems like drug trafficking, corruption in the government sectors, and poverty (Butsa, 2006:36). The Ninth Economic Development plan of the government (2540-2549,B.E.) has laid poverty solving strategies by way of increasing the poor’s potential and opportunity emphasizing grassroot economic development, community economy, community capacity building, increasing the potential and roles of the community in solving its own local poverty problem. Besides these strategies, all Rajabhat universities in the country have set their philosophy and visions at local potential development by integrating

new knowledge and technology in developing skills, wisdom, and knowledge of the community so as to be developmentally effective, useful and able to create income as a result of the co-operation between the community and the researchers through participative action researching (PAR). All this is to promote the development process and to solve poverty problem.

In general the areas of Talukdu community, Thap Than district, Uthai Thani province are plains alternating with high lands. The climate is rather arid. Most people do agricultural work mainly one-year crop farming. After the harvest and the sale of agricultural product the communities people are out of work and therefore lack income, leading to cause poverty. Furthermore, as their mature of working in the occupation mentioned above is that of assisting type, doing things in good return among themselves, so far additional occupation activities for the community were still unclear or, in other words, have not occurred yet. In fact, there are only a few careers in the form of private business such as making curry paste and clothe tailoring. However, these careers still do not correspond to the needs of the community workforce in general since they require high investment and complicated processes. Moreover, their production method can even be something of such personal knowledge, restricted within their own family circle, and therefore, has not been disseminated in the community in full scale. This then leads to the lack of necessary skills and process in developing it as a sustainable additional occupation for the low income and off-season community people.

The researcher has seen that the Talukdu community has many kinds of natural materials which have not been put in full use and can be made into products for both home use and for sale through the co-operation of community leaders, local scholars and community people in creating this as an additional occupation. And this can lead to more income, honour and fame, security and self-satisfaction

(Pranthumsin.2005:2), all of which will in the end solve poverty problem, make the people happy and the country more developed.

2. Purpose

1. To study the state of local resource and materials in Talukdu subdistrict community, Thap Than district, Uthai Thani province.

2. To make an alternative by creating additional or additional occupations using local materials based on former local culture.

3. To create additional occupations that are in line with the community context in a complete cycle so as to sustainably reduce poverty.

3. Ideas, Theoretical Framework and Related literature

3.1 Ideas about product design concerning manufacturing process and industrial environment are taken into account by analyzing the data concerning the function and the use of the product, including marketing to improve the product before mass production to be in the market trend with a reasonable price. In conclusion, product design means to specify the design and appearance basing on factors and data concerned as components for a 2-dimension or 3-dimension product suitable for reproduction according to the quantity needed. The finished designed product must also be interesting and useful for the masses.

3.2 For the idea of participation in line with community culture to specify development for the people, at least the people must participate in planning and conduct the activities concerning their ways of living and future with reference to the progress of the development project as a criterion. Doing a community culture type of work is an idea in inducing the community people to participate in community activities. Participation indicates co-operation, unification and community power to complete the many activities with success.

3.3 Sufficiency economy also comes into play. It is the initiative of King Bhumibhol Aduljadej the Great given to the Thai people. Its principles are adequacy within appropriacy, reason, proper internal immunity for the effects of both internal and external changes. All this, however, the qualities of being well-informed and circumspect are necessary when using technical matters in planning and in all steps of implementation while strengthening the foundation of the human mind to realize the value of merits, honesty and suitable knowledge to lead one's life with patience, efforts, sensibility, wisdom and care so as to be in balance and ready to face the speed and the width of material, social, environmental as well as cultural changes from the world outside.

3.4 The aspect of poverty which is the problem of the individuals with inequality in income is put into consideration as well. This inequality is the result of the development policy of the country that has emphasized the economic aspect under the influence of the superpowers, depriving the people's natural resources necessary for supporting life, making people to be unable to depend on oneself the way it used to be in the past and finally becoming the poor.

All in all the researcher has studied the theoretical framework of research within the community context including those concerning product designing followed by holding meetings with villagers and people concerned to brainstorm and make a conclusion on the feasibility in creating products from local materials. Then it leads to the process of practice, experimenting producing things together, transferring the knowledge and evaluating the process of creating an additional occupation using local materials. The results of this research accord with those of Narong Munnmuak (2008) researching on the management product, community and locality: the case of bamboo weaving group in Dok Kham Tai district, Phayao province, as well as those of Sasiwimon Joiphrom and others,(2008), investigation on product design

and development of bamboo woven products in Tambon Na Nok Kok, Lap Lae district, Uttaradit which revealed that the distributors and the consumers want 3 kinds of bamboo woven products, namely 1) that of container type, 2) that of home decoration, and 3) that of furniture. After this the selected design is brought for production designing, experimenting, prototyping, teaching the production groups to get the final prototype, collecting the data on consumers and distributors in the aspects of design, color, convenience in using, size, shape, usefulness, material used, safety while using and transporting. The product design and development this time can add more value to bamboo woven products in the country as well as overseas.

Moreover, Wiraphon Thatip and Khana-amnat Chatalongkom (2003) investigated on how to do bamboo product business: a case study of Tambon Pho-ngam, Prachin Buri province, and Lakkhana Chatupho(1998) researched on bamboo woven products of Phuthai people of Ban Phon, Kham Muang district, Kalasin province and found that these areas are fertile plains with various plants and trees to choose from when making woven products. Also the traditions and culture of Ban Phan people have been adhered to traditional arts and handicrafts. The saying that woven cloth with beautiful patterns comes from women whereas other kinds of fine woven products come from men indicates the balance of the woman's work and that of the man since their ancestors' time. Therefore, racial honesty also has an effect on building a good attitude toward making quality bamboo woven products in the male group in terms of fineness and creativeness, for examples.

4. Methodology

This participative and development research comprises 4 stages as follows:

1. Studying the community in many aspects.
 - 1.1 Arranging workshops on how to collect the data for the researcher's team.

1.2 Developing the guidelines for in-depth interviews and guidelines for group discussion by the researcher together with the team so as to get the instruments for collecting the data.

1.3 Collecting the data in the fieldwork.

2. Organizing focus group discussions with the villagers and people concerned, brainstorming to arrive at the feasibility in bringing local materials to make products.

2.1 Analyzing the problems and potentials of Talukdu community.

2.2 Studying theories related to the principles of product design.

2.3 Collecting OTOP products of every province in Thailand available anywhere (focusing on local materials).

3. Experimenting with making the product at Talukdu community.

3.1 Making study tours /inviting resource persons and local scholars to provide knowledge

3.2 Trying to make the product by collecting the data concerning problems and non-problems.

4. Evaluating the implementation of creating additional occupations by using local materials by the people concerned through brainstorming and content analysis technique by

4.1 Studying the community context in various aspects of Talukdu community.

4.2 Organizing meetings with villagers and finding the feasibility in bringing local materials to make products.

4.3 Trying to make the product.

4.4 Evaluating the implementation by way of analyzing.

5. Results

5.1 In studying the state of resources and materials existing in Talukdu community, Thap Than district, Uthai Thani province, it was found that, in terms of numbers, bamboos come first followed by rice straw and hyacinth.

5.2 In making an alternative by bringing local materials to create new occupations basing on local culture, the researcher, community people and their leaders, and local scholars choose bamboos to make the products seeing that they are easily available and can be an alternative to using synthetic materials.

5.3 As for creation additional occupations that are in line with the community context in a complete cycle to sustainably reduce poverty, focus group discussions were jointly organized. Starting from the causes of their poverty, they brainstormed and came to a conclusion that an additional occupation should be created. Since bamboos are abundant there, bamboo product groups have been set up by interested persons who share their ideas and make the products together. Local scholars and know-how people were invited to teach how to make the products. Study tours of bamboo product work in nearby provinces were made, encouraging the folks to have more ideas in creating their products of bamboos. The bamboo products made at home are allowed to be sold at the shop of the group. Prominent billboards are set up. Brochures, posters, catalogues, price lists to introduce the products are made. Besides making bamboo products as an additional occupation to get more additional income other than from rice farming, as community ways of life are now changing in terms of using more and more synthetic materials, it has been also a good campaign to induce people to use natural materials such as bamboos in their daily life again with a good co-operation from the community people causing a much better way of life.

The evaluation of making an alternative by using local material of bamboos to create an additional occupation to sustainably solve poverty revealed that, as a whole, the community people's views on all aspects are at the high level (\bar{x} = 2.33, S.D = .763). The views on bringing bamboos as a local resource to create an occupation are at the moderate level

(\bar{x} =2.14, S.D=.067). The first high level aspect is the needs for government support on the occupation of making bamboo products (\bar{x} = 2.91.S.D=.293) Second to that is the aspect of familiarity with bamboos from childhood to adulthood (\bar{x} =2.71, S.D=.556), followed by application to solve poverty problem (\bar{x} = 2.71, S.D=.559). The highest number of views falls to the building of potential and learning process of the poor to be able to analyze, think, do and depend on oneself along side with the promotion of community economy which is at the high level (\bar{x} =2.83, S.D=.147), followed by product improvement that can build knowledge conducive to poverty solving, also at the high level (\bar{x} =2.78, S.D=.515)

In Talukdu community, Thap Than district, Uthai Thani whose area is 81 sq. kilometers (50,625 rais), divided into 17 villages, we can see a lot of bamboos in every village especially in village 2 of Ban Thung Samran. Among these bamboos are Sisuk, Tong, Ruak, to name a few, and wild bamboos which partly grow naturally on the hills and elsewhere among the bushes. People say some bamboos live very long since grandparent's time. At present people like to grow them near or around the house, beside the pools, canals, swamps, roads, and even on paddy dikes.

6. Discussion

To make an alternative by using local materials in creating new occupations based on former local culture, the researcher, folk scholars, community leaders organized a meeting that everyone can vote. The majority agree to select bamboos which are abundant as local material in making products for selling with the reason that they are available in every village and they have long been familiar with bamboos. “Since the time of our grandparents we have seen many of the use of bamboos in building houses, household utensils like baskets, fans, containers, chicken coops, tables, cupboards, beds, clotheslines, TV poles, furniture, armchairs, fishing tools like hand

nets, fish traps and fish containers.” Furthermore, bamboos are used in traditions of the village such as Songkran, Bun Bang Fai, Bun Khao Sak, Bun Phra Wes (Bun Mahachat), Bun Khao Pradap Din, Bun Mae Phosop, Food and Dessert Procession, Marriage, Priest Ordination, Leaving offerings to the Priests, Thewo Alms Giving, for examples. Our findings accord with that of Yuwat Wuttimethi (2006:20) in that people participation can open the opportunity to participate in making initiatives, decision making and taking responsibilities. Chintana Sutchanan (2005:48) defined that people participation is the process of uniting the power of the people and that of the government of private sectors for the benefit of development or solving the problems of the community.

In creating additional occupations congruent with the local context in a complete cycle to sustainably solve poverty many things are taken into account. Poverty of Talukdu community people, Thap Than district, Uthai Thani arises from many causes which are for examples, the state of area which the plains alternate with the highlands. The climate is rather arid. Most folks are agriculturalists, growing rice once a year. After rice harvesting season there is no income. Some rent paddy fields to grow rice for inheriting no land of their own. When it is too dry in some year to do the paddy work, further loans are made for the next rice farming season investment which leads to their debt accumulation. Natural disasters, low price of produce, lack of money to invest in their occupation, effort, diligence, knowledge, techniques and methods are among the causes. Another cause is the expense in schooling their children far away from home in other town or province. All this contributes to poverty of the folks. This is in concordance with the finding of Somsak Sukwong(2001:1) who said that the poor are not only the people with low income to support a living but also include those in need of things like resources which are life's capital, land for making a living, education, access to information, govern-

ment service or helps, becoming the under privilege people. The problems as mentioned had prompted the researcher, folks, and community leaders, folk scholars to jointly organize meetings to brainstorm until coming to a conclusion that an additional occupation must be created by setting up bamboo product groups for interested persons to jointly think and make the products. There have been helps in studying, researching, taking the folks to study tour about products made from bamboos. It was found that similarly, people make bamboo products in almost every province in Thailand. The study tours made the folks anxious to do this additional occupation which can add more income. This supports the finding of Ua-phon Khemakon (1988:6) saying that it is an occupation using one's free time to get extra income for the family, and that of Chamnan Protheemsin (1985:2-3) indicating that it is absolutely necessary for human beings to have an occupation because it leads to having an income, honor, fame, security and satisfaction. Trainings were organized after study tours in making bamboo products by inviting resource persons, folk scholars with knowledge and ability to provide technical knowledge in making the products and how to make bamboo last long which can be done by soaking the bamboos in water for 3 days. This is consistent with the article making bamboos durable (2553: online) saying that there are many ways to keep bamboos durable such as soaking in water, extracting its oil with fire, using chemicals or coating matter. In making bamboo products that are in line with community culture, the people and the folk scholars jointly study product design theories and agree that good products must be in line with the community ways of life, durable, beautiful in appearance, colorful, safe to use and can be value added. This supports Sasiwimon Loiphram, et al (2008: abstract) stating that both product distributors and consumers want the product in the aspect of designs, colors, convenience and comfort in using, sizes,

shapes, appearance, utility, product material. Taking these into account when designing and developing the design can add value to bamboo product in the country and overseas. Bamboo product can be made into 3 categories - those for household use, those for using in village traditions or festivals, and those for selling. In sustainably solving poverty, the researcher, community leaders, and folk scholars all agree to use bamboos as they are abundant local material to make daily use products so as to lessen the use of things made of plastic, iron, paper and foam by turning to use things made from natural materials which are bamboos instead. In making bamboo products. Local identity must be retained. Development of approaches has been made in making the new products by adapting previous or old products to be up to date. In product distribution aspect, bamboo product groups are set up clearly with management method such as making books to advertise the products, set up a showroom in front of the Talukdu municipality office with advertisement billboards for passerby to see clearly. Folks may produce the products together in groups or individually at home while watching TV or listening to songs from the radio. Doing work with diligence, satisfaction, happiness will result in helping one another in solving any problem that arises. It also has a metal effect, that is when indulging with art and creating beautiful things continually, this will cause good metal health. Everybody has a smiling face with a happy life, caring one another, sharing things, living in sufficiency according to the King's initiative, and making the community strong. This goes in line with the study done by the technical department (2003:16) which indicated that sufficiency economy comprises 7 aspects, namely 1) adequacy for everyone and every family, 2) adequate mind, 3) adequate environment, 4) adequacy in community strength, 5) adequate wisdom, 6) based on adequate culture foundation, and 7) adequate stability.

In evaluating the making of an alternative by bringing bamboos as local material to use in creating an additional occupation to sustainably solved poverty it was found that, as a whole, the views on all aspects are at the high level. In terms of bringing the local resource as bamboos to use in creating an occupation, the issue with highest number of opinions is the needs for government support in promoting the occupation of making bamboo products. This is because the majority of the folks is poor. Since bamboo trees are abundant in the community while their use is not fully realized, the government should promote the occupation in full, placing the importance on local material abundant locally which are bamboos in creating products by providing resource persons and folk scholars with knowledge and ability in making bamboo products to give trainings, knowledge, and production skills. Take the folks to study tour the places that produce bamboo products for selling with success so as to take them as good examples. Promote the folks to make their bamboo products in regard to design, color, user convenience and safety. This accords with the findings of Sasiwimon Loiphrom, et al (2008) indicating that both product distributors and product consumers require the products in regard to design, convenience, and utility. In terms of poverty solving application, the top hit high level aspect is building potential and learning process of the poor to be able to analyze, think, do, and depend on one own along side with promoting community economy. In building potential and learning process, development of these aspects must be done because knowledge and ability of the folks are individualistic and diversified. Some may be good at weaving, others at making animal traps, or household utensils, home accessories. Knowledge sharing and brainstorming are necessary to have for design development and creativity to meet the demand of the market along side with community economy development to sustainably solve poverty and consistent with the

9th national social and economic development plan (2545-2549 B.E.) which aims at strengthening and stabilizing the economy system as well as solving poverty, including the urgent government policy on setting a village fund so as to be the capital to create occupations to add extra income to the community. The government also have arranged for goods or product development schemes by providing supports in the aspects of modern knowledge, management including linking community goods to both local and overseas markets with Internet shop system. One Tambon One Product emerges to promote community self-dependence and community income. Therefore each locality can be a main spearhead to help develop creativity of products from people’s wisdom to lead to a kind of development that brings about people self-dependence.

7. Summary and Suggestions

7.1 Summary

The general state of Talukdu subdistrict is that it is located 14 kilometers south of Thap Than district 33 kilometers from Uthai Thani province. It is divided into 17 villages and 21 communities, covering an area of about 81 sq.kilometers of 50,625 rais. The existing local materials of the 17 Villages are bamboos; hyacinth, rice straw, and etc Bamboos are the most abundant, followed by rice straw and hyacinth. Bamboos are in every village and mostly grow in Village 2 which is Ban Thung Samran. Mainly the people are agriculturalists. The results of creating additional occupations in line with community context in a complete cycle to sustainably solve poverty revealed that since the folks there are mainly farmers, having debts a lot and lack income, the people concerned agree to use bamboos which are abundant in the villages to make products for selling as an additional occupation for additional more income. It is obvious that bamboos in Thailand can be used in making various forms of products such as the products related to Thai ways

of life, furniture, dwelling places, decorative objects for places, toys, musical instruments, things, for religious ceremony and souvenirs created after the study tours of other places that encourage the folks to pick bamboos to make products for self use and for selling to get income and to be proud of Thai identity. After receiving trainings on how to make the products from the resource persons, the folks have knowledge about using the tools, steps of work, and techniques in making the product durable and beautiful. Seeing the finished product of each individual after the training, the folks are proud of themselves and inspired to continue to create more products.

7.2 Suggestions

1. This participative and development research can be adapted as proof that poverty solving in any locality must be systematic and the King's initiative of sufficiency economy should be taken into account.
2. More studies on having additional occupations in line with the community in Thailand should be made.
3. This study can be adapted in making products from other local materials.
4. Similar researches should be done on finding new innovation concerning rural people's potentials that lead to better quality life in the future.
5. This research can be adapted in developing a local curriculum for additional occupations.

8. Acknowledgement

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Figure 1 In studying the state of resources and materials existing in Talukdu community, Thap Than district, Uthai Thani province



Figure 2 Arranging workshops on ways to study community context, including how to collect the data for the researcher’s team



Figure 3 Building the guidelines for in-depth interviews and guidelines for group discussion by the researcher together with the team so as to get the instruments for collecting the data.



Figure 4 Trying to make the product by collecting the data concerning problems and non-problems.



Figure 5 Trying to make the product at Talukdu community, Thap Than district, Uthai Thani province

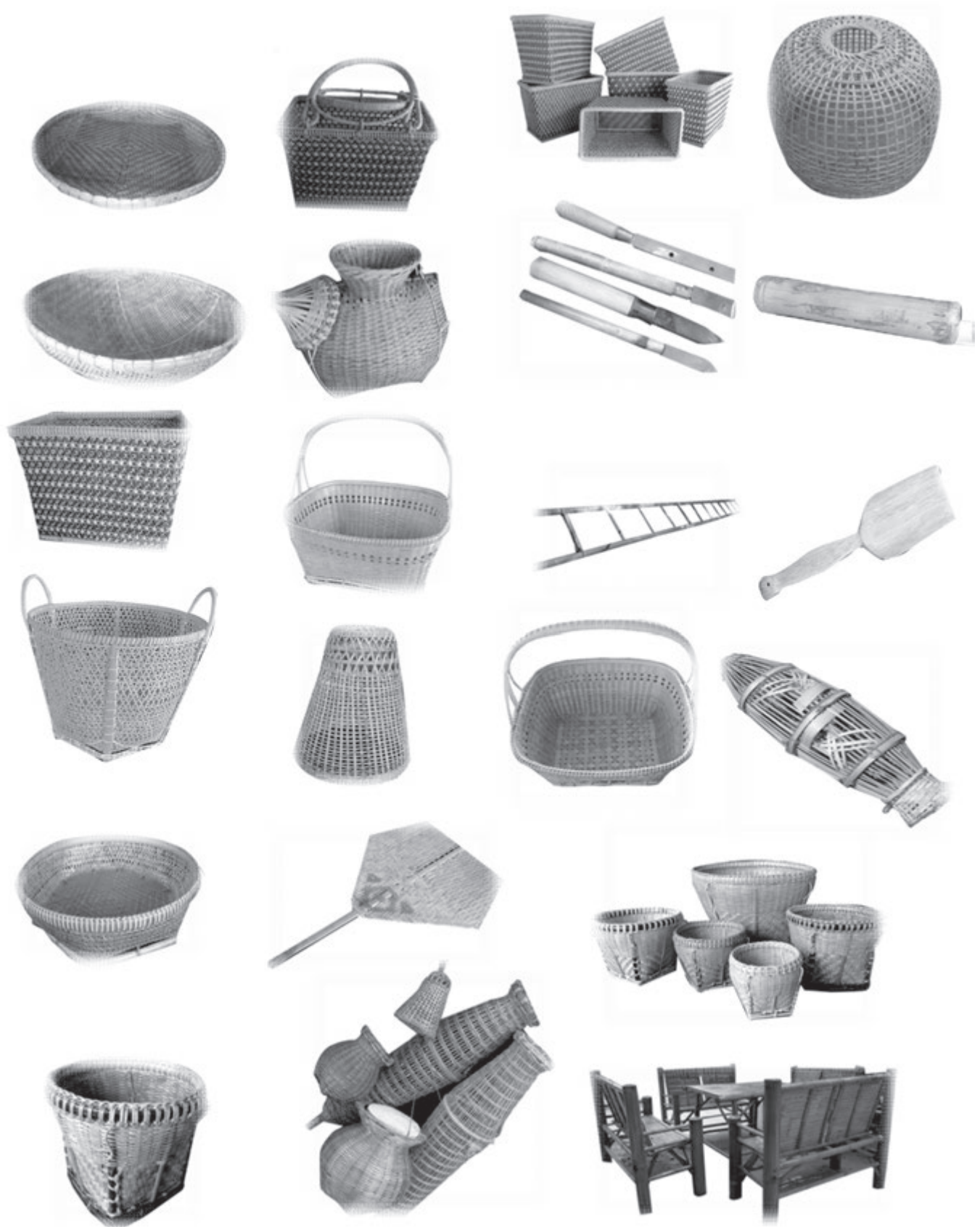


Figure 6 Example product at Talukdu community, Thap Than district, Uthai Thani province