

INDIGENOUS GARMENTS AND ACCESSORIES OF THE G'ADDANG IN BARANGAY NGILEB: DOCUMENTATION ON PRODUCTION

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Abstract

This study was undertaken to document the production of indigenous garments and accessories of the *Gaddang* in Barangay Ngileb in Alfonso Lista, Ifugao to help preserve the culture in making such products. Using qualitative research, it explored the different product-making procedures by using the method of focus group discussion (FGD) or interview with photo-video documentation and actual observation to analyze information from five female respondents. With the results of the study, the following were gathered: main processes involved are weaving, cutting, sewing and bead designing. Tools they use are traditional and it is operated manually. It depends on what product and availability of the raw materials on how long it takes to finish. *Gaddangs* produce other products like cellphone cases, pen holder and bags. With the use of other resources like carabao horns, wild pig fangs, chicken feathers and kugon grass are also utilized, but other resources like fabric, beads and cotton threads are bought outside their community. They still have their beliefs, and colors they use are dominantly red in order for them to be distinguished among others. They use quality threads in order to maintain the best quality they have. And with just a little profit they gain, it is used to supplement their needs like foods, and other school finances for their children. And preserving this culture through this way, it will be of great benefit for the *Gaddangs*.

Keywords: *product-making procedures, photo-video documentation, actual observation, weaving, cutting, sewing, bead designing.*

1. Introduction

Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Csapo, 2007). The similarities in spoken and written language, behavior, lifestyle, customs, heritage, ideology and even technology connect the individuals to groups of people in a certain culture. Through it, there is something very common to all of the tribal peoples which they can create very uniquely and traditionally as well. In the ancient times, people used to allay their superstitious fears and attract attention mainly by beautifying themselves. Today, craftsmen mostly make products that reflect cultures' influence so as to promote their culture and add interest to costumes (Ickis, 1954). Craft exhibitions and promotional campaigns bring in tourists showing them the originality of the host community. Thus,

by making the most of the quality and diversity of the craft industry, tourism is improving its brand image, while tourists' demand for craft items energizes the craft industry (Pourafkari, 2007). Crafts made by indigenous groups are truly a distinct work. It contributes much to the people and economy as well. Thus, cultural tourism can encourage the revival of traditions and the restoration of the indigenous arts and handicrafts of the town's people, in this case, the *G'addang* garments and accessories. The *G'addang* have continuously maintained their traditional costumes adorned extravagantly with beads and exquisite stones. For example, some of the most complex and attractive ones are their traditional dress and ornamentation. Covering major parts of the clothing with ornamentations such as beads, buttons, coins, and shells is the *Gaddang's* way of beautifying their clothes, a contrast to their everyday attire which is simple. For instance, men put on g-strings either while

they are in the fields or just at home. As for rituals, they slip into cloths called *dinega*, a small beaded jacket or *koton* and cape or *tapit*.

The researchers thus, found interest on the indigenous knowledge, systems and practices (IKSP), particularly in the crafting of *G'addang* products of Barangay *Ngileb*, Alfonso Lista, Ifugao specifically on traditional garments and accessories. Though majority of the researchers are *Ilocanos* and do not reside in the said research locale, they were impressed by the colorful attires of the *G'addang*.

This study then focused on the production of arts and handicrafts of the *G'addang* of Barangay *Ngileb*, Alfonso Lista, specifically on their indigenous garments and bodily accessories. Its potential as an exchange commodity in the business world and on the other hand, the preservation of the tradition in making such products are the highlights of the research endeavor. It also sought to help the research locale improve their promotional activities. Essentially, it endeavored to gain more knowledge and understanding about this particular ethnic community through the unique garment and accessories that they produce.

Specifically, it sought to do the following: (1) describe the indigenous garments and bodily accessories of the *G'addang* of Barangay *Ngileb* in terms of production/producers, sources of raw materials, beliefs associated with the making of the said products, socio-economic opportunities provided by the products, and their promotional activities and (2) use data to create a promotional tool that will help the producers promote their products more effectively.

2. Methodology

To document the IKSP of the *G'addang* of Barangay *Ngileb*, Alfonso Lista, Ifugao on indigenous garments and bodily accessories, the qualitative type of research was used to better understand the process involved. Using the techniques of interview and focus group discussions, the researches drew information relative to the people's indigenous garments, jewelry and accessories production.

2.1. Research Locale

Alfonso Lista formerly known as *Potia* is one of the towns in Ifugao which is considered as a 3rd class municipality and is situated in the easternmost part of Mountain Province. It has an approximate land area of 43,474 hectares or about 17.27% of the total land area of the province. It is subdivided into 20 barangays such as *Bangar*, *Busilac*, *Calimag*, *Calupaan*, *Caragasan*, *Dolowog*, *Kiling*, *Laya*, *Little Tadian*, *Namnama*, *Namillangan*, *Ngileb*, *Pinto*, *Potia*, *San Jose*, *San Juan*, *San Marcos*, *San Quintin*, *Sta. Maria* and *Santo Domingo*. One of its barangays, *Ngileb*, is the research locale of the study and is classified as a rural area.

Barangay *Ngileb* is located on the northern part of *Alfonso Lista* and is bounded by Barangay *Caragasan* on the north, Barangay *Little Tadian* on the east with Barangay *Pinto* on its South and West. According to the latest barangay profile, it has a population of 766 males and 666 females totaling 1,432 people in 280 households and 403 families.

It is made up of plains, upland and mountainous areas. Since the biggest part of Barangay *Ngileb* is an agricultural area, the major source of livelihood is farm crops with corn being the primary product (Barangay Profile, n.d.).

2.2. Key Informants

The *G'addang* people of Barangay *Ngileb* comprise the respondents of the study, but only five were purposively chosen because they are the ones producing the garments, handicrafts and other pieces of jewelry directly. Some of them sew the beads or cut the fabric; while one of them directly does the weaving according to members of the community. Before they were chosen however, their informed consent was secured by the researchers.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1.1. Production

The *G'addang* of Barangay *Ngileb* are known alternatively as *Kalinga*, formerly

known as *Kakalinga*, an appellation given by the *Ilocano* which means enemy. This identity tag by the *Ilocanos* is popularly used by the people of Alfonso Lista in addressing or calling the people of Barangay *Ngileb*. Although there are also numbers of tribes like Ifugaos, Ilocanos and some Igorots, still they have the largest number and their primary language is also called *G'addang*. (Interview, 2014).

The *G'addang* are a few of the tribes in Northern Luzon that adopted weaving. Their products are predominantly made of stripes with either simple or plain or convoluted with parts that are combined artfully. Their designs are frequently symbolic and are usually nonconcrete, geometrical in character and typically decorated with beads (Anderson, 2012).

Garments are among the products this group is known for, something that is dependent upon the practice of weaving. The products are all made manually because the skill put in making the product shows that with the passing years there are some people who still maintain the knowledge that their ancestors passed on to them. With time and dedication it takes more than a week to complete a garment with a beautiful beadwork.

Agabil (Weaving) is the first major step in making *G'addang* garments. To start the weaving process, the weaver will wound the thread around a *pamakan* (some kind of spool) for one to easily get the *binola* (yarn). The *pamakan* is made of bamboo wood artistically shaped to help the weaver to obtain threads easily.

Next, the weaver prepares the *pagganayan* which is used to create the design on the threads. It is a long piece of steel with one of its side shaped into a triangle with five standing small poles while the other side has only one small pole. The *pagganayan* is where the thread is carefully set up to create designs according to the desired order of colors.

The respondents mentioned that in this step, an extra hand is necessary because arranging the threads is such a very complicated work that one cannot do it alone.

Another device used in weaving *Gaddang* garments is the *takki na bafuy*, the device where the end of *binola* or thread is tied up. It is so-called because its shape is like that of a pig's foot.

The *takki na bafuy* is attached to a belt made out of sack so as to help the maker pull the thread in the weaving process.

The *stick* is another helping tool in making *G'addang* garments; it is used to arrange the threads so as to make it organized.

After the threads have been tied to the *takki na bafuy*, the *bulo* will be used. It is a device used to keep the threads intact. It is made of wood and shaped like a *gulok* or *bolo* in Filipino.

The *baliya* is the tool used to tuck in the threads. Made of bamboo it is shaped in such a way as to draw the threads together for better output when weaving. Once the threads have been woven, the garment is ready for the next step.

Garasiban or cutting, the cloth is the next major step after the weaving process. It is the time when the *inabil* or the woven cloth will be cut into the desired size or shape, whether it will be cut and sewn into *aken* (the skirt of the women), *baag* (the covering for the lower part of the body of the male), *tsaleko* (the covering for the upper part of the body of the male or *tapit* (the cape of the *Gaddang* men).

Unlike the other garments, the *G'addang* blouse is not woven since the fabric used is bought by the producers in the market and is cut immediately into the desired size. The piece that was cut will then be sewed manually into blouses which they call *buruwasi* such as shown below.

Sewing different beads on the cloth with the desired design will be the next thing to do after the *inabil* or the woven cloth has been cut and sewn. The beading process is the final touch in making the garments of the *G'addang*.

3.1.2. The Making of Accessories

To complete the *Gaddang buruwasi* are accessories like the belt and crown which

also undergo the weaving process not different from the production of garments. The threads are simply arranged into the weaver's desired design then cut into the size and shape of the belt and crown.

Shown in this picture is an example of a crown called *singat*.

On the other hand, with the use of needle and thread, *G'addang* arrange and form beads into traditional earrings, necklaces and bracelets (shown at the right).

Traditional *Gaddang* comb production meanwhile also goes through cutting, but not the same as cutting fabrics or cloth, because the material that will be cut is the horn of a carabao. This is later formed into the shape of a traditional comb using a cutting material which they call *ragadi*. This is followed by attaching various beads of different colors into the desired design. Fastening additional types of materials like feathers and thread to the comb completes the process. The materials are from chicken or bird feathers with strands of threads of red, white or yellow.

3.1.3. Other Products of the *G'addang*

Bags, cellphone and ball pen cases make up the collection of other *G'addang* products. Like garments and accessories, the aforementioned are also made from woven cloth then cut into the desired form or style and finished with bead outlays. The makers' resourcefulness is somehow shown here, since handles for bags are often made from recycled materials (discarded old bags) or the bag itself is made of woven material obtained from other ethnolinguistic groups then decorated with beads. The production of such merchandise indicates that the makers have adapted new designs, and have changed to what is popular. Even if that were so, the materials and process have not changed.

The makers claim that the products they make are all handmade and the use of weaving gears make it easier for them to make the design needed. Since these are handmade, the more meticulous the process becomes. Usually, however, it would take them a month to finish a woven cloth; this in turn can be cut into four panels which are

transformed into a desired product. Beading takes at least seven consecutive days' work, while a skirt may take three days. Accessories require more time because of the intricate designs. It also depends upon the availability of the raw materials. Beads are mostly from Manila that is why it takes longer for them to produce cellphone and ball pen cases, as well as earrings or bracelets. To the makers however, the longer it takes, the more wonderful it becomes.

3.2. Sources of Materials

Like any other finished product, the *G'addang* garments and accessories also use basic materials to make their core product and out of this it is then utilized into different uses in order to make product variations. Their traditional garments are made from woven cloths which in turn are spun from *binola* (threads) and decorated with *bukat* (beads). Threads are bought in Manila; so are beads if these are not available in the city of Santiago. These are the main materials that comprise the products but creative skills and traditional practices are reflective in the finished products.

Cloths are yellow, black, white, and red or brown because these are colors which the informants say are distinctly *G'addang*. According to Carmelita Pedro, a 59-year-old resident of Barangay *Ngileb*, the *Gaddang* do not duplicate other groups' colors. Garments have the same colors of threads and beads, the materials of which depend on quality and beauty in that the more elaborate, the more expensive it is. As for the accessories, they also use cloths, beads, *cogon*, threads, carabao's horn for the comb, feathers of chicken, wood, wire, and the like. Materials are obtained from around the community while some are recycled making them more creative.

3.3. Symbolism and Designs

G'addang believe that the colors they use symbolize *happiness*, especially red which is the majority color of their products. Other colors include yellow, white and black; sometimes they blend in the brown color which distinguishes their products from among the other tribes. The designs they make are their own such as *nammata*,

anniyong, sabong, bullon, ansing, ampigo, ikekul and ampalakakku. These are often used to design the garments and accessories of the people. Illustrations of these follow:

The informants say that their designs are traditional that people can recognize them as *G'addang* designs when they see the products. This implies that they make their own design as they have been doing for the past generations. Virginia de Guzman, the one in-charge or does the sewing of the beads in their products noted that they adapted the designs from the *Balangao*, people living in Paracelis, Mountain Province, a place that is dominated by the *G'addang* nowadays. She further enunciated that the flower-like shape design of beads on one of their garment products and those that are beaded are truly *G'addang*, though much have been incorporated following modern designs.

It was also mentioned that if there are no red-colored beads available, they use the brown ones because it is a color that is closest to the shade of red. It means that their traditional designs also vary as the need arises. Some of their products are also being added with new styles to make them more appealing to the buyers. It does not mean however, that though the traditional designs have disappeared, that these are not significant. It only shows that as time passes by new ideas are being integrated to attract buyers, without eliminating the traditional *G'addang* design.

3.4. Beliefs *G'addang* maintain in the Use and Promotion of their Products

G'addang believe that the traditional costume gives them a sense of pride. These are sometimes used to invoke religious presence such as when there is a sick person where they would put a cloth in a plate and pray for his/her fast healing. In their culture they believe in bad spirits and ghosts. They respect the dead ones by offering foods in rituals with elders donning on traditional costumes

Colors are important to them for each color symbolizes something as mentioned earlier. Red and yellow are their dominant colors while black and white are usually the colors

they combine as primary colors for threading.

According to them, they do not want to use other peoples' color because they do not want to cause conflicts among other tribes. This is the same as they do not want other tribes to copy their color. They also believe that their products are more beautiful and they attract more people to buy their products than the others.

3.5. Socioeconomic Opportunities Provided by the Production and Sale of *Gaddang* Garments and Accessories

Their products are important to them because it helps them survive economically in that it augments their income. Farming being the number one

source of produce and given the basic necessities in life, income derived from production and sales may not suffice to support a family regularly. Informants say that food for everyday survival as well as money in support of education comprises the usual spending of most family members. As such they only have enough to meet these needs. Profit obtained from sales is also used to purchase materials to produce more. Nonetheless, they feel proud because they say that majority of their customers often demand a whole set of their products. This is made of *bakwat* (belt), *aken* (skirt), *buruwasi* (blouse), *singat* (crown), *sel-lay* (necklace), *buraway* (earrings), *laggud* (comb), and *ginalmaddan* (bracelet) for girls; while *barangal* (handkerchief), *buruwasi* (vest), *baag* (lower part covering), *tapit* (cape), *tufut* (bag) and *takkal* (armlet) are for boys. All other products are also in demand like the pen holders, cellphone cases, bags and people (buyers) are amazed of their creations.

Among the benefits that they get from making such products are: (a) they gain additional income and satisfy their needs. As mentioned earlier, it serves as supplement to their needs; (b) the intangibles are seen in the presentation and promotion of their culture as a people in that it gives them the opportunity to continue their practice and preserve it as well.

3.6. Promotional Efforts of the *G'addang*

Informants claim that the popularity of their crafts is not only because of their promotional efforts but because of the quality that they maintain. To do this, they see that they use only cotton thread. Although they make innovations on the designs, they also make sure that they still preserve the original designs. Promotion of the indigenous products doesn't differ from selling items on the market according to the producers. When they learn that some people express interest in their products, they would bring them to these people no matter how far away, like for instance in Manila or in Baguio. Regular consignments on the other hand are placed by people with whom they have contact. Opportunities for the marketing of these indigenous products also increase whenever there are special occasions like fiestas. However, one big letdown would be the change in weather conditions particularly on occasions when their crafts are on display. During harvest time, they sell more of their products rather than on periods of the year like the start of classes during the month of June. Usually people buy a set of garment and accessories. The ones that get sold most often are cellphone and ball pen cases. They also think that making these products more attractive to the eyes of the customers will lure more people to buy them especially tourists who make a huge impact on the tourism industry.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusions

Based on the interviews conducted, the following conclusions were derived:

1. Production

In the production of Gaddang garments and accessories the main processes are weaving, cutting, sewing and designing or beading. Most of the tools they use are traditional and operated manually. The duration of the production process depends on the kind of product and the availability of the raw materials as well as the time to make them;

1.1. Making of Accessories

The production of accessories follows a similar process but is focused more on designing and beading. This is illustrated in the making of the belt and the crown where needles and threads are often used to keep the beads in place. Earrings, bracelets or head dresses are made from colourful beads following unique *G'addang* designs.

1.2. Other products

Gaddang also produce other creations like bags, cell phone and ball pen cases which informants say are popular among their clients.

2. Source of Materials

G'addang use resources found within their environment like horns of carabaos, fangs of wild pigs, feathers of chicken and birds, *cogon* grass which they add to the raw materials that they buy in the market or buy outside their community like the cloth or fabric, beads, and cotton threads.

3. Symbolism and Designs

The *G'addang* being a boisterous lot believe in the use of loud colors, hence, the preference for red which they say represents happiness. Other dominant colors are yellow, black and white which they integrate into their designs. They think that their designs are traditional and that people familiar with their designs would readily recognize them when they see them in the market. Among these are *nammata*, *anniyong*, *sabong*, *bullon*, *ansing*, *ampigo*, *ikekul* and *ampalakakku*. Some of these are the same as the designs of the *G'addang* in other places but some are new and are not known by the *G'addang* in other places.

4. Beliefs Gaddang maintain in the Use and Promotion of their Products

G'addang believe that their material culture such as garments, accessories and other crafts give them such pride because these speak of their culture. As such they invest a lot of their time in its creation particularly in the use of colors and of designs. They also believe that their designs are more beautiful thus, they strive hard to maintain its quality

and see that every creation speaks of their passion and creativity.

5. Socioeconomic Opportunities Provided by the Production and Sale of Gaddang Garments and Accessories

The money they earn from production is just enough to meet their everyday needs. Part of their profit is also allotted in buying raw materials to make new products. Some of their profits serve also as allowance for their children who go to school. The one thing that they can be proud though about their products is that it is made by their own hands and their red, their trademark, is mainly highlighted in these products. The traditional products are not only patronized by the *G'addang* but also have gained the attention of other people. One proof of this is the high demand on the whole set of their traditional costume. Moreover, the benefits they get from the products are not only money or the tangible benefits, but it also gives them the opportunity to showcase or promote their culture to other people.

6. Promotional Efforts of the *G'addang*

Promotion is through direct sales or by orders, the producers being the ones who offer their products to their buyers. To maximize the promotion of the products, they maintain efficiency in offering the products in the market. They maintain the quality of their products by using original cotton threads and putting some enhancement and alterations to the designs of some of their products.

4.2 Recommendations

In view of the results of the study, the following recommendations should be given attention:

1. The production of *G'addang* material culture is very commendable inasmuch as the creations serve to promote not only their identity as a people but cultural tourism as well. The transmission of the knowledge in production must therefore, be given more attention. This is in view of the fact that while buyers demand their products, there are only a few craftsmen; as such the youth should be taught how to make

the products so that the legacy will continue to the next generations and will probably be known more not only in the city of Santiago and other nearby places but even around the world.

2. The producers must have some kind of a training or series of trainings to help them enhance their products. Though they have their own designs, unique culture and traditions reflected in them, their own colors, and own creative imagination in making such products, having the training would be of great help to them as they learn different techniques and more designs for their products to be more beautiful. Conversely, there should be more support programs from local authorities for the producers to improve the production and packaging so that more people will gain notice of their products.
3. Producers should also learn some basic skills in accounting as well as sales and inventories to enable them to manage their finances inasmuch as much of what they earn goes to satisfying family needs. In this manner, they would be able to sustain production as well as distribution.
4. Other than direct sales, the producers should learn other ways of getting their products bought and known. On-line marketing should be explored as well as developing contacts with buyers in the cities so that their products will have better mileage. Promotional tools such as brochures, tarpaulin advertisements or caravans during fiestas or events should be considered so that the beauty and uniqueness of *G'addang* material culture be made public.

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