

Weaving for Development: An Ethnographic Study on How the Ibans of West Kalimantan Determines the Color of Pua Kumbu

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Abstract: Color is a cultural expression derived from the cultural knowledge of particular social groups. Culture in the form of local tradition determine the color composition and selection can be seen in *tenun* or traditional weaving. Almost every *tenun* uses natural dyes will come-up with soft, darker, and other low intensity of colors. It is considered that local technology gives a limitation to the crafters to produce brighter colors. The changes brought by modernization today has, however, enabled them to have more choices in colors since the use of colorful thread is commonly found now. Our short ethnographic observation, conducting intensively for one month in some Iban communities in Kapuas Hulu, West Kalimantan has shown us that color composition and selection is in fact not a simple matter. Research notice that color selection is in most cases very impersonal and sacred, and is made based on dreams, symbols, and the experience of respective crafters who mostly women. When an empowerment program for women introduced by a national NGO, which encourages peoples to produce more *pua kumbu* or Ibanese *tenun*, the color selection was done by also considering the market demands. Eventually, this market-driven production produces a new cultural problem for the Iban crafters.

1 INTRODUCTION

Iban people are one of the ethnic groups that inhabit Borneo Island which is included in the generic category of ethnic Dayak people. The distribution of Iban people covers the northern part of the island's northwestern side. Most of Ibans live in Sarawak which is part of the Federation of Malaysia. In addition to Sarawak, settlements of the Ibans can also be found in several locations in Brunei and Sabah. A small group of Iban people lives in several villages in the West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia. The villages were spread from the Badau region in the west to the Putussibau area in the east. The Ibans who are living in Kapuas Hulu have strong historical and kinship ties with the Iban people who live in Sarawak. These kinship ties are formed together with the migration process for various reasons, in which economic factor is also one of that reasons. Weaving as one of the products of the Iban Dayak tradition has an essential meaning in their daily life. The presence of weaving in the whole life of the Iban community can be divided into three domains, namely (1) the momentum of

transitioning stages of human life, such as birth, marriage, and death (2) large parties of customs and devices and (3) kinship identities. The tradition of making weaving originated came from *betang* house that has been inhabited by three generations: the first generation is the grandmother, the second generation is the children and the third generation is the grandchildren. According to the first and second generation weavers, they started to learn about weaving at an early age through a gradual learning process. Weaving skills are acquired through everyday practice, the weavers got the knowledge from the previous generations and practiced the skills while helping other weavers. Weaving skills were passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition. The weaving techniques were not recorded in any written form. There is no standard pattern in studying weaving and there is no definite age to start studying it. In Iban community, there are four weaving techniques, namely *kebat*, *pilih* and *sungkit* which have not changed much from the beginning until now, while *sidant* technique has only been known for over 20 years as well.

Woven fabric made by the Iban people is included in the category of warp ikat which those ornaments are woven into their warp and this are the oldest weaving technique in Indonesia. The distribution of warp ikat area covers the Sulawesi region in Rongkong and Galumpang in TanaToraja, also Bentenan and Rantahan in the Minahasa Bantik. In North Sumatra, there is Batak. In East Nusa Tenggara there are Sumba, Flores, Sawu, Roti, Ndao, East Timor. In Kalimantan, especially in West Central and East region.

Based on the tradition of Iban weaving, there are things that have very close relations between the symbols and its functions, namely motives and color. Weaving technique means how about to weave warp threads into weft threads become motifs appropriate to design itself, including determining the color composition. Color plays a vital role in woven fabric because the tradition of ethnicity in an area is described by color. Some colors in the classic tradition have ritual symbols and functions, such as the using of black color for grieving or black color will bring bad elements, so they avoided it as dominant in Iban woven. Those motives in Iban weaving are mostly taken from the surrounding environment such as crocodiles, snakes, roots, and others where the color system used it to associate with nature itself.

Those motives in Iban woven are divided into two categories: sacred motives and profane motives. Sacred motifs (*Pusaka* and *Khusus*) are classic motifs and have certain meanings whose source of inspiration is obtained through dreams. The motives that included in the *Pusaka* Sacred category are Naga, Nabau and Antu, while those belonging to the *Khusus* Sacred motives are Humans, Beasts, Baya and Junan. Profane motives are more dynamic, not have many conditions and abstinence that must be considered as well as sacred motives. The idea of making these motives usually imitate from the motif in the woven mat, from old fabric or creates itself based on market tastes. Flower patterns, leaves and geometric patterns are also commonly used as filler motifs. These motives are mostly made by beginner weavers or market-oriented weavers with an emphasis on aesthetic concepts.

The color used in Iban weaving are produced from the processing of natural materials from the area surrounding tribe, and it produces four colors, namely red, blue, black and white. For Iban people, color and motif are an integral and inseparable characteristic of woven traditions that telling a lot of things which they had created. Color selection is also carried out with special considerations, for

example, the red color is a symbol of the courage of the Ibans and there are also restrictions on using black as a dominant color in weaving.

As time changes, there were changes in the orientation of the Iban weavers motivation in making fabrics, from weaving for the daily and cultural need to weaving for sale. Women's empowerment programs introduced by the government and NGOs had encouraged weavers to recognize consumer needs, which then resulted in the increasing production of woven fabrics according to market demand. It raises some problem that weavers are facing market demands that are no longer oriented towards preserving traditional values. The production of woven fabric is also no longer in the form of a piece of cloth, but it shifts to functional forms such as bags, wallets, and scarves. Those composition color in weaving become more diverse and has no longer taboos and symbolic meanings. Specifically, regarding coloring, NGOs have encouraged Iban weavers to return for using natural dyes which in the 1980s the use of synthetic dyes was once the primary choice of weavers. Market orientation on woven fabric has brought new values in Iban culture which has two sides, namely in the economic sector and in the original traditions of the Iban community.

A question raises from the problem stated above is: how far will the market orientation change the Iban tradition of weaving? How do Iban weavers maintain their traditional coloring system in weaving designs to suit market taste? What goals do NGOs want to which advise weavers to return to using natural dyes?

2 METHODS

Data for this documentation were obtained from interviews and observations of our informants that relevant to the topic of Iban weaving, natural dyes, ASPPUK field officers (NGOs that provide assistance to weavers), and some figures who understand the culture of Iban people in general. The research process is carried out at the level of the longhouse which is usually found in the hamlet or village.

The villages and hamlets that became the study area included sub-districts consisting of 10 hamlets or *dusun* namely Dusun Tekalong in Lanjak Deras Village, then Dusun Kampung Sawah, Dusun Sungai Sedik, Dusun Sungai Luar and Dusun Sungai Long in Desa Sungai Abau. In Desa Mensiau, includes Dusun Entebuluh, Dusun Kluin, Dusun Engkadan, and Dusun Kelawik. In Desa Labian only

one hamlet namely Dusun Ngaung Keruh. The research method used was participant-observation, immersion, interview, documentation through photos. Primary data obtained through field observation for approximately one month, while secondary data gathered through books and scientific articles.

Our observation method is done by observing the entire stages of the weaving technique starting from the preparation stage, the coloring stage to the weaving stage. We did not only document it but also participated in those stages. For immersion methods, we lived with the locals in a number of houses to get more accurate information and data by experiencing their daily life.

3 RESULTS

As quoted from Kartiwa (2007), *pua* is a cloth that functions as a blanket, a ceremony cloth that is hung in *abetang* house, used to treat sick people, and becomes a symbol of social status. The length of the fabric reaches two and a half meters and is almost one and a half meters wide. One type of *pua* is *pua kumbu*, based on our research in the field, *pua kumbu* is made of *kebat* weaving techniques and has symbolic meaning in the motif. *Pua kumbu* serves as a sacred woven cloth such as the shade of a ceremony of a newborn baby and the death ceremony also. *Pua Kumbu* also serves as a cover for offerings at custom events, as well as wall hangings to be exhibited. *Pua Kumbu* which has a high sacred value which is a woven cloth that is used to receive the head of *pengayauan* and will be used as a ceremonial center where the *pua* will wrap the central pole of *gawai* (*sandung*) together with the mat. Besides being exhibited, *pua kumbu* is also used for clothes and cloth by all Iban people. The use of the two ingredients displayed on the wall to be exhibited is also used to entertain people from *Khayangan* (*Pangau*) who go down during the *gawai*. The essence of the *gawai* itself is to thank you for the past and hope for a better fortune in the future. Gratitude is manifested in the form of offerings given to be given to demons or disturbing beings and to God. As for the devil, the Ibans give offerings outside the home to avoid disturbances in *gawai*.

Gawai or *gawa* are traditional Dayak tribal ceremonies including Iban Dayaks. *Gawa* in the Iban language dictionary written by D. William,

implicitly means "work". In the dictionary explained the word worker in the Iban language is *pengawa* (Veth, 1856). The same absorption in Indonesian for the term 'employee' from the basic '*gawai*' which also means 'worker' from the word 'work'. Although there is one big *gawai* every year carried out by Iban people, even in Malaysia it is set on June 1 as a national *gawai* day, but *gawai* is a general term for various kinds of great work done by Iban people with similar meanings as a celebration in understanding that is widely known Indonesian people. So the term *gawai* in the Iban community is done for various ceremonies including ceremonies for individuals, not just for groups. In the Iban community, there are various types of *gawai*, namely the *Penyalang gawai*, the *Ari Sandau gawai*, the *Kelingkang gawai*, *Gawai Batu*, *Puncung Tahun* and others. Different program events have special communal *gawai* held where each family can hold them.

According to our informant in Lanjak, *pua kumbu* in the past had the function to receive the head of a human. Usually the head is received with a special woven cloth, namely *pua kumbu* with *nibung barayah* motif. During their warfare and revenge, even for traditional rituals, the Iban always practice recitation. This tradition is also a step towards maturity for men to prove their courage and heroism as well as the right time to marry a woman. In the past, Iban people were once known as tribes that were feared by other tribes in Kalimantan. This is because the Iban are considered fond of fighting and expanding other tribal territories in order to open new fields and gain access to forest products. Rite beheading (*mengayau*) is part of the process which is considered a threat to other tribes. Based on searches from oral stories in the 2000s, *mengayau* rites were also carried out as a condition of funeral ceremonies of people who had socially important positions. For Iban people today, the *mengayau* rite is considered a dark history of their parents' generation which is considered irrelevant in the contemporary social context. After the *Tumbang Anoi* peace agreement took place in 1894, the life of the Dayak culture, especially the Iban, proceeded without the practice of headhunting, and it meant that some ritual and procedures involved in the *pua kumbu* had disappeared.

From our observations in the field, the *pua kumbu* fabric that used for traditional ceremonies is coming from an old fabric inherited of weavers' parents or replicas of an old cloth that is no longer

available or because of has been sold for their urgent needs. Replica of *pua kumbu* has the same color patterns as the original fabric, as well as its symbolic meaning and function. Some *pua kumbu* only used during certain events and are not traded with the aim that their next generation will have original fabric that can be replicated later. Through *pua kumbu*, the Iban people are caring for and preserving their weaving tradition that has been passed down from generation to generation.

According to the pre-history of the Megalithic era, before Dongson culture came to this archipelago, some artifacts of illustrated stones were found, and commonly it used three colors, black, red and white, which considered having a cosmological meaning. White is a color that is found in almost every tribe of Indonesia as a symbol of the *Dunia Atas* (spiritual color), black is the color of the land (human earth), and red is the earth of humans as well as its position as a category of women because white is the category of men for the *Dunia Bawah* (Sumardjo, 2001). The possibility of the old color layout still has a connection with the typical color system of Iban weaving, namely red, black and white along when it traced from the similarity of the prehistoric motives that contained in Iban woven fabrics.

Even so, there are different versions as our informant said at the Betang Enkadan in Lanjak which they say that weavers in the past did not use many colors, limited to only red (brownish red), black, blue and white. This color selection was due to limited knowledge of color in possibility. The informant from the Betang Ngaung Keruh had a different opinion that the original colors of the Iban weaving were white, black and red. According to an informant in Sungai Panjang, the original colors of Iban are red, yellow, black and white. However, the informants at Tekalong said that the original Iban color was red, black and white. The locals' opinion on the color composition of Iban is not so different from the information found in Gillow's book entitled *Traditional Indonesian Textiles* (1992) which describes that the traditional colors of Iban weaving are brownish-red, blue-black and yellow without further elaborating on the symbolism that each color carries.

The color of the Iban woven fabric its specific name in Iban language; black is *celum*, white is *burak*, red is *mansau*, green is *gadung*, purple is *belo-belo*. For blue and yellow, the Iban call it *biru* and *kuning* the same as its' Indonesian terms. The locals also named the colors based on its intensity, such as; dark red is called *mansau tuai*, light green is *gadung muda*, orange is *kuning tuai*, reddish purple is *mansau tuai*, and turquoise is called *biru tuai*. For lighter color the Ibans use the term *curak* which

means grey, for example, *curak mansau*, *curak celum* and so on.

In choosing the color of woven fabric for the *gawai*, the Iban people wear bright colors such as red and blue in connection with the implementation of the method he held after receiving a sign of the descent of the heavenly people. There are no restrictions on the use of colors, such as in a Christian ceremony, harvesting celebration, as well as a baby birth ceremony. But specifically, for the wedding ceremony, the Ibans wear clothes in bright colors. Weavers avoid the use of black as a dominant color because it is believed that it will make their eyes blind. Unless there is a grieving ceremony for the deceased Iban, then the sign of condolence is utilized in the form of a rattan-made rope that is dyed black then tied to the body.

The ban on using black color can be seen in a ceremony called *Gawai Sanawari*. This ceremony is held if there is an Iban who often get nightmares, then in the next dream, there is a sign that the person must have *gawai*. If the sign is not obeyed, then the person will go crazy or die. For the ceremony, the person who gets the nightmare must offer a pig. In this ceremony, the *pedara* is placed on a high bamboo pole, then the yellow rice made of the mixture of limestone and lime is thrown away so that the nightmare becomes tasteless. After that, the pig is killed and cooked, and to accompany it the locals will drink *tuak*. Ibans find out the meaning of the dream by using *gawai* the heart of a slaughtered pig. If the shape of the heart is good or if there is no injury, the related person will not go crazy or die. On the other hand, if its liver looks like a wound, it means a bad sign, then they should make *gawai* again in the same manner. Pork meat that has been cooked is then eaten together with the other residents of a *betang* house. When the Iban will kill the pig, a special weaving called *Pua Atap Babi* is issued. This weave is brown-colored with a hint of black and yellow with geometric plant motifs and is used for protecting pigs when cut for offerings.

The symbolic meaning of the colors applied to the Iban woven fabric was seen with a different perspective by different weavers, as quoted from our informant at the Betang Ngaung Keruh that people in the past did not tell them much about the colors of the woven fabric that they had made. One of the examples is the red color for *sungkit* cloth does not have a specific rule, it is only to extend that red is a symbol of the courage of the Iban people. While other weavers said that they have some restrictions on color, based on messages from their parents that they should not make woven fabric in a black

color, but failed to elaborate further about this.

In the process of making natural dyes, some restrictions must be held by the weavers. People are not allowed to disturb the process while its ongoing. One of the rules is the weaver should not be asked about the color they are working on; it is because the question will lead the process into failure. The result of the dying process will not be the same with the estimation of the weaver. Inability to dye the thread will also affect the result of the woven fabric.

Meanwhile, from the preparation stage of weaving on four types of Iban woven fabric consisting of *kebat*, *pilih*, *sungkit* and *sidan*, only in weaving for *kebat* requires different preparations with other weaving, namely in the final stage in designing motives there is the activity of straining or binding threads according to design motive. Then it is continued with the coloring stage which contains the preparation of coloring material, boiling, dyeing, then tightening once again or embossing, drying, and opening the thread bond. At present, not all stages of weaving are carried out. The two initial stages of spinning yarn and *nakar* have disappeared and are no longer carried out by the weavers because there are no more weavers who can spin the yarn, while the *nakar* process is considered impractical and takes too long.

To bind the yarns in forming motifs before being dyed with dyes using *Lembak* leaves. In the present, they are wearing *raffia* for practice reason. And because it is used, the binding of the thread to form a motif no longer begins with the process of drawing on the thread but directly binding. The weaving work is done as part time after farming and doing housework. The period of work cannot be ascertained when the completion, for example for a scarf with a width of 5 cm and a length of 1 meter takes about 2-3 days. For larger table sizes, it can take 2-3 months. Iban's women's work is farming, making baskets, weaving mats, taking care of the family, and weaving. While men are farming, doing carpentry work, and making looms. Men cannot weave and weave because they are considered to take women's jobs.

Nowadays, Iban weavers also use synthetic coloring as an alternative to make the product more attractive. The result of synthetic coloring is more commercial than the classical one which pays more attention to the symbolic meaning behind the colors. Here lies the interesting relationship between the desire of the Ibans to keep preserving the tradition and the desire to produce commercial fabrics to meet economic needs.

4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Changes in the natural landscape of Kalimantan occur on a massive scale, entering the mid and late half of the 20th century. The development of the logging and mineral mining industry has made forests cleared and turned them into expanses of open land. This process was followed by the expansion of oil palm plantations and various experiments to open new agricultural land on a large scale which not only changed the natural landscape but also encouraged the social changes of the people who inhabited it. One of the social changes can be seen from the characteristics of settlements with long house settlement patterns (*betang*) that turn into rural areas with the establishment of individual houses. Rivers and forests that used to be food sources and sacred sites no longer provide places to hunt, live ancestral spirits, game hunt animals, medicinal plants and important materials such as rattan, bark, leaves and fruit that are usually used to make various agricultural, household and handicraft items including woven fabrics.

Betang in the area of our research area are inhabited by three generations, namely the generation of parents, children and grandchildren. Although the statistical data states the population in one hamlet or *betang* reaches tens or hundreds of lives but the reality is not that much. Usually only parents and mothers who have children under five. More adult men go and live abroad to work in the cities of Malaysia, Puttusbau and Pontianak, while school-age children to teenagers live in locations close to schools and campuses. Some teenagers who occasionally appear in *Betang* are those who do not have a job and live while waiting for the opportunity to come to *Bakuli* outside. One of the social status of a person for Iban is measured by the knowledge of areas far from their place of residence and the number of social relations that are woven during the trip. So *bajalai* and *bakuli* become important things for Iban men when they enter the adult stage. According to Freeman, *bajalai* is a social mechanism to replace the *mengayau* tradition to improve one's social status.

Almost all family members of the Iban who settled in *Betang* ranged from children to the elderly, involved in field work. Agriculture is very important for the life of the Iban people, because agriculture is not only moving the economy but also their socio-culture. The Iban plant rice for their own consumption and for the fulfillment of traditional

ceremonies and large parties such as *gawai*. Weaving activities today are still largely part-time jobs after doing work in the fields.

In the 1980s, there was a change in the coloring technique, in which the Ibans began to use synthetic dye. The consideration was the lower price, the more natural dyeing techniques, and the capability to produce a brighter and more intense color, as opposed to the natural dying method which only has limited color variation. As in weaving techniques, the knowledge of Iban weaving dye technique also inherited from generation to generation by taking essential ingredients in the surrounding nature, for example, the red color is obtained from the processing of roots of *Mengkudu Kayu* while the blue color is taken from the leaves of *Rengat Akar*. Iban people called that synthetic dyes as *wantex*. However, the use of synthetic dyes has negative impact on the environment. It caused pollution which may threaten the perseverance of the nature around them.

Problems stated above had prompted NGOs to help the weavers to strive for betterment. It began in 2010 where World Wildlife Fund (WWF) consistently helped to revive the weaving activities that had been abandoned by the majority of the second generation of weavers who were more focused on education and preferred to do other jobs that were more promising than weaving. One of NGO's programs is a natural coloring process that supports nature conservation. This activity did not stop at that moment, NGOs also assisted local people with the procurement of yarn and to market the product which was the main problems for most of the weavers. Recently, NGOs namely PRCF and ASPPUK came to the community in 2016 and were supported by TFCA. The presence of these NGOs besides helping the locals to get the threads also aroused the enthusiasm of the other Iban women who previously were not interested in weaving. It was possible as the women began to realize the economic opportunities that emerged from weaving. NGOs also often encourage their guests to buy Iban woven fabrics and create special programs to do marketing outside the community.

The effort to train Iban weavers to use natural coloring had pushed the Ibans to return the traditions handed down from their ancestors. Even though the current implementation is not one hundred percent similar to the old techniques, but it utilized the combined methods and materials from outside Kalimantan. For example, the material of *Kapur Sirih*, *Tawas*, and *Tunjung* brought from Java as one of the basic ingredients for natural dyes, instead of

using *Tempuyung* due to physical constraints and limitations of snails taken in the river as raw material. For example, when the rainy season arrives, *tempuyung* on the banks of the riverbed will be swept away by fast flowing water so that it will be easier to find in the dry season where river water flows more calmly. *Tempuyung* was also used for Iban people who were still fond of *nyirih* not much different from the function of whitening which is also used by Javanese to *nyirih*.

For natural dyes, most of them are taken from plants in the area around the *betang* house, like *Rengat Padi* leaves that grow near the Betang Enkadan, every time they picked for coloring the woven cloth, the weavers will replant the stems to maintain the availability of natural coloring sources. Another way is through the planting program of natural coloring plants in each *betang* house that initiated by several NGOs including ASPPUK so that weavers not only learn to process about coloring but also get the ease of getting these plants. The location of planting natural coloring plants varies, some are chosen close to the *betang* house where the weavers are settled or in locations close to their fields. Most of the weavers choose a location that is close to the *betang* house with consideration of the ease of access to transportation, supervision of plant maintenance and harvesting of crops whenever necessary.

The Iban weavers aside from learning to look for new colors that are in accordance with market desires, also do not leave the original colors of Iban whose ingredients are obtained from plants that grow in the environment of their *betang* houses. For example, the weavers in Betang Ngaung Keruh studied the technique to find new colors from plants that had not been used by the old-time weavers such as *Kemunting* leaves that are growing in the yard of the Betang Ngaung Keruh. *Kemunting* is one of the plants tested and managed to get yellow when mixed with *Tawas* and *Kapur*, then become blue after fixation with *Tunjung* ingredients. To get the green color, the weavers get it by dipping the yarn in yellow then the same thread is dyed again in blue. The weavers in Betang Enkadan have been handed down for generations using *Jangau* tree bark which is chopped and pounded as color lockers in the process of making natural dyes. The other color locking material is lime (*tempuyung*) taken from the edge of the river which is processed by burning the conch shell on a bamboo base until it is destroyed using firewood until it turns white and becomes

powder, then stored in a jar or bottle. The use of this lime in dyes will produce a brighter color intensity on the fabric than betel lime. The weavers in Kampung Sawah also use *Jangau* to tie natural dyes, for example the red color produced from the *Mengkudu* plant will be better in intensity if tied with a long way, as well as the black color produced from the brush or rice whining will be stronger in color with a strange mixture. Another alternative to tie colors is to use *tempuyung* chalk. Plants that are used for natural dyes can vary in a number of *betang* houses, for example in the past, *Mengkudu* plants were not found in the area of Kampung Sedik, so for the red color they used plants and shrubs. After ASPPUK arrived, then they planted *Mengkudu* for natural coloring ingredients.

In its weaving development, there was a third generation contribution to Iban weaving which their ideas became a source of inspiration for the creation of new products design (re-invention) made by their mothers. Those designs that come from their children appear to be more modern and functional according to market tastes. The Ibans started to produce bags, wallets, pencil cases, cellphones cases and others that use woven materials. The colors used not only revolving around the original Iban colors obtained through the dyeing of natural dyes namely red, black, white and blue or variations in other colors such as green, gray-blue and dark yellow but also include the colors obtained through threads like pink, green and purple.

The orientation of market taste for Iban weaving production has indeed forced some weavers to take compromise position so that the woven fabric is quickly formed and has the power to sell by dyeing colors according to consumer orders. For example, Malaysian consumers prefer bright colors that cannot be obtained from natural dyes but from finished yarns or the process of dyeing synthetic dyes, while the original Iban weaving colors do not have bright color intensity but tend to be soft and dark. As time went on, weaving began to attract the attention of Iban adult women because weaving was considered to have economic value. The position of the weaver begins to shift from weavers who have the ability to make weaving through customary conditions to be in the quantity of production and sales that are able to adjust to market demands. The weavers who are able to sell large quantities of woven cloth will receive praise from fellow weavers which has an impact on the creation of successful weaving and sales methods for other weavers. Prestige for weavers is no longer in terms of the

courage to make sacred weaves but also in bringing in money for children's education and meeting other living needs.

In fact, Iban weavers cannot be said to be smart traders and are successful in marketing woven fabrics from their production because they are new to making woven fabric as a potential business. Weavers still seem stuttering towards buyers and have not met at a balanced point between the quality of their production and market demands. They seemed a bit awkward in fixing prices so that it seemed difficult to compromise in this matter. On the other hand, the market still seems to be less appreciative of woven fabric because of minimal knowledge of the manufacturing process which is difficult, complicated and requires a long time. The purchasing power of the market is still limited, so the economy of the weaving business has not been able to spin smoothly.

The market taste for Iban weavers have some dilemmas. Woven fabrics that meet market tastes will sell faster and automatically bring economic benefits but the other hand, if the market tastes are not in the mission of caring for the Iban weaving tradition, it is feared that it will threaten the continuity of woven fabrics.

These dynamic have brought changes to Iban weaving which initially produced as a cultural tool for the fulfillment of customs, so this orientation begins to shift into products that have economic value. For example, *pua kumbu* is no longer only used for traditional purposes which have symbolic meaning, but it becomes products that can be sold and used by anyone. The motives and colors on the *pua kumbu* have undergone a shift in symbolic and functional values, such as in fashion week events where the fabrics as *pua kumbu* are processed into fashion items, ranging from hats, shoes, bags to more clothes prioritizing the concept of aesthetics with high selling power.

The target of consumers is the primary parameter for the production of Iban woven fabrics in the present and to determine the composition of colors which no longer focus solely on the characteristics of the sacred colors and values of woven fabrics. Thus, weaving Iban has entered the realm of design that takes into account the products that have selling power and competitiveness, but on the other hand, it is expected to still have traditional characteristics as a force that makes Iban weaving different from other local products.

5 CONCLUSION

Today, some knowledge about woven fabric continues to grow, including color, because the Iban people are open to change itself. Iban weaving is currently compromising with the market, looking for the equilibrium of price and quality of products that are feasible. The balance between fulfilling economic needs and cultural preservation is the primary concern of the development of woven fabrics carried out by related parties ranging from government to NGOs. Iban weaving today is no longer seen as a local product that contains traditional values but also included in design products that are trying to balance between local values and commercial value as well as preserve the traditional characteristics with a blend of modern style. Thus, Iban weavers with the helping of NGOs need an adaptation process so that new cultural problems do not arise while at the same time maintaining natural sustainability by using natural dyes.

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