

# Traditional *Kinulung* Craft Weaving of the Dusun Tindal of Kota Belud, Sabah

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**Abstract.** Arts and cultural heritage is a potent reflection of the identity of a community. The art of traditional handicraft weaving in any society is dependent on the resources available in his environment and the needs of the particular community. The Dusun Tindal of Kota Belud is rich in weaving craft traditions with *kinulung* as one of its distinctive products. *Kinulung* is unique with its own specific purpose and simple design, and has been able to withstand modernisation and change. However the factors of adaptation, environmental change, and modern technological transformation could pose as threats to the traditional and heritage elements in the production of the *kinulung*. This study is important as a platform for the promotion of continuity and resilience of the Dusun Tindal heritage. Kinulung documentation will clarify various aspects of the design and purpose elements of this traditional craft. The study focuses on the design and meaning presented in the *kinulung* weaving tradition as an object of culture in the community. Material for this study was derived from field work through observations, interviews and notations. The findings of the study indicate that the design and motif of the *kinulung* reflect the cultural values and local knowledge of the Dusun Tindal.

## 1 Introduction

This study on the *kinulung* craft aims to provide insights into an aspect of the cultural heritage of the Dusun Tindal, a majority ethnic group located predominantly in the district of Kota Belud, Sabah. Among the objectives of this study are: i) to present the local terms related to *kinulung*, and ii) to document the process and technique in the making of the *kinulung*. Basic materials used in this craft are *poring* (big bamboo, *gigantochloa levis*) and *tulu* (small bamboo, *schizostachyum brachyladum*).

In the past, *kinulung* was actively produced in villages around the Kota Belud district. However, although such craft is still produced nowadays, these no longer feature predominantly in the Dusun Tindal kitchen; the modern day *kinulung* serves a more decorative purpose rather than its original function as a food cover or food receptacle. There remains three ways to ensure the sustainability of this Dusun Tindal craft tradition: (1) by introducing the local terms and concepts related to the weaving of *kinulung*, (2) by the continuous production of the *kinulung* based on market demand, and (3) by documenting and publishing the aspects of design, technique and materials used for *kinulung* weaving. To ensure its continuity, the *kinulung* craft needs to be revitalised and made popular to the public, and the weaving techniques taught to the younger generation.