

THE STUDY OF MATERIAL CULTURE OF THE IBAN COMMUNITY IN SARAWAK: *NGEPAN*

Noria Tugang

University Malaysia Sarawak

Gregory Kiyai @ Keai

University Malaysia Sarawak

Corresponding Author

gregory_kiyai@yahoo.com

Cultural identity is a specific word that refers to individuals and communities in distinguishing themselves from others. One of the most dominant identities in a community culture is traditional clothing. In Sarawak, the traditional dress for the Iban is commonly known as *Ngepan Indu*. The *Ngepan Indu* is often worn during the Gawai Dayak celebration season as well as several other ritual ceremonies such as the *Miring* ceremony (Offerings) and *Melah Pinang* (Marriage). The Iban community believes that the *Ngepan Iban* is an identity and cultural icon in today's customs. Apart from that, *Ngepan Iban* is one of the treasures and legacies of *Petara* (God) who inhabited a kingdom called *Panggau Libau, Tinting Gawai Gasing Gerah Layang* so that Iban always remembered *Petara* and the origin of *Iban's* ancestors. This paper aims to analyze and understand the *Ngepan Indu* in the context of the custom and culture of the Iban community by using the qualitative research method based on the collective memory of the Iban cultural experts in Sarawak. Through this research, it is expected to have an effective and progressive impact to regenerate the spirit of Iban culture to continue persistently preserve the *Ngepan Iban* as a cultural heritage from the ancestors of the past, so that it will continue to be preserved for the future.

Keywords: Culture, costume, identity, Iban, *Ngepan*, heritage.