



TECHNIUM
SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL

Vol. 35, 2022

**A new decade
for social changes**

www.techniumscience.com

ISSN 2668-7798



9 772668 779000

Women and the Mbojo Weaving in Nusa Tenggara Barat: Position and role

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Abstract. This study aims to explain the problems has related to the aesthetics of Mbojo weaving at West Nusa Tenggara and also related the position and role of women in its development. Women are considered to have very strong interactions with the latest aesthetic elements and the continuity of Mbojo's weaving. To obtain results of this research, the author uses qualitative analysis methods with a multidisciplinary approach, the cultural theory, aesthetic approaches, and the concepts of gender. The results showed that Mbojo weaving has never been separated from the role of women. This is because all activities related to the production process, starting from determining aesthetic elements, product management and distribution of weaving products, are fully managed and become the authority of women craftsmen. Triggered by the cultural paradigm of society that weaving is indeed a job that is only done by women. When viewed from the point of view of the slow development of the motives, it shows that Mbojo weaving still follows the traditional pattern. This indirectly becomes its own character and uniqueness for Mbojo weaving, so that its shape can be distinguished from weaving in other areas.

Keywords. Aesthetics, Mbojo Weaving, Role, Women

1. Introduction

Mbojo's weaving is one of the many distinctive cultural forms that exist in the archipelago. The appearance of this Mbojo woven cloth cannot be separated from the events and phenomena of cultural history at that time. In Mbojo, West Nusa Tenggara, handicrafts are closely related to religious customs and ceremonial. Likewise, the woven cloth, which is one of the handicraft products of the Mbojo community, is still widely used for traditional ceremonies. Therefore, the decoration has its own meaning and philosophical value for the people of Mbojo. This distinguishes Mbojo's weaving motifs from those of other regions. The selection of aesthetic elements in Mbojo woven fabrics is limited to certain colors, because only a few aesthetic elements have philosophical meanings in the view of the Mbojo people which are then applied to woven fabrics. The Mbojo woven motif only features one of the nine decorative motifs in a sarong or garment.

In this area, weaving are very closed with every women. This is inseparable from the role of women who are very intimate with the formation and conservation development of Mbojo weaving, West Nusa Tenggara. Since long times ago, the women are worked to built the weaving and girls has been used as a symbol of womanhood. From an early age, every girls are

guided and trained to become weavers of *Ma Loa Ro Tingi*, which means they have skilled and artistic spirit, so that when they enter their teens they can produce and be able to make clothes from their own weavings. When she is married later, she becomes a housewife who can improve her family's welfare and economy from her weaving skills. Therefore, if a woman is to be married off, she must first be able to produce a piece of woven cloth.

Mbojo's weaving has gone through a long journey, development and change continues. There is socio-cultural contact between the craftsmen and the community and cultural support institutions that can make changes. This condition demands the role of the local government to develop mbojo weaving. This paper aims to explore the aesthetics of the form, function and meaning of Mbojo weaving in relation to the position and role of women craftsmen. In addition, it is also to explore the role of the government and institutions that support the development and existence of Mbojo weaving in West Nusa Tenggara.

2. The Research Method

Starting from that cultural phenomenon, this qualitative analytical research tries to find as much data as possible in the field. In this study, the authors used data collection methods through literature study, reviewing several written sources and documents related to the history of the origin of Mbojo weaving. In addition, this study also uses the method of observing and reviewing statistical data relating to the Mbojo tribe. Researchers observe the position of women on the development of Mbojo weaving. Researchers can also ask questions to representatives of natives or natives about the habits and customs of the community through direct interviews, either structured or unstructured.

Every data has been analyzed with descriptive analytical method. It means that a data during the study are reported based on critical analysis to be interpreted in order to draw conclusions carried out with the inductive principle. Inductive data analysis is to analyze specific data from the field into units then proceed with categorization.

3. The Aesthetics and Philosophy of Mbojo's Weaving

Talking about the textual form of Mbojo's tenun, means seeing the aesthetic elements in it. Basically, Mbojo woven fabrics are divided into three types, namely Tembe kafa na'e, Tembe nggoli and Tembe Songke, what distinguishes between the three types of woven fabrics is the material used. Tembe Kafa Na'e has a rough and thick texture. This Tembe kafa na'e woven fabric is made from original threads made by weaving craftsmen from cotton as raw material and using traditional spinning tools. The coloring process uses natural dyes from plants and takes a long time because it is done repeatedly to get a thick result. Because it uses natural dyes, so there are not many types of colors to choose from and combine. Based on the motive, Tembe kafa na'e can be divided into several types, namely Tembe Bali Mpida, Tembe Bali Race, and Tembe Me'e.

The three types of woven fabrics were well known by the Mbojo community in the 1970s. Actually, the manufacturing process and the basic motifs and colors are almost the same as the Tembe Kafa Na'e. What distinguishes it is the thread used. Tembe nggoli is woven from colored yarn made in rolls. The people of Mbojo called this factory thread *kafa nggoli*.

Tembe songke weaving is used by women or female dancers of the Mbojo tribe when participating in traditional ceremonies, religious ceremonies and wedding ceremonies, this is because the dominant and striking color and shape of flower motifs are considered more suitable for use by women. The threads used to make the songke tembe motifs are known as masrais threads with the basic colors of heart red, brown, blue, green and black combined with the main

decoration in the form of a flower woven from gold or silver masrais threads. At this time, along with its development, songke woven cloth has been widely used by men for certain events such as wedding ceremonies, traditional ceremonies and religious ceremonies. Even though the flower motif on the Tembe Songke woven cloth still dominates and is maintained.

In selecting the motifs used as decorative motifs in Mbojo weaving, the weavers of the past were guided by Islamic customary norms, as an illustration of the Mbojo tribe's identity who adhered to their religious teachings. In the teachings of Islam, it is not recommended to use pictures of humans and animals to be used as decorations. The ban refers to the Sultanate (1640-1950), against the backdrop of concerns that the Mbojo people will return to the old religious teachings, namely animism, which believes that in the image of humans and animals there are spirits that can be worshiped. In the beginning, the color creation for Mbojo woven fabrics was made by using natural dyes that were found in the vicinity of the Mbojo tribe community, West Nusa Tenggara. so that to make colors on Mbojo woven fabrics, requires special knowledge and experience that not everyone has. This knowledge is hereditary from the previous family. The social function of the Mbojo woven cloth is related to religious rituals. The development of the art of Mbojo weaving began with the needs of the community for rituals, customs and use objects.

The rituals carried out by the Mbojo tribe are the procession of child birth, salvation, circumcision, marriage processions, to death ceremonies. This is based on the belief that the symbols in the Mbojo weaving are a manifestation of human nature itself in building its relationship with the creator.

The creation of Mbojo weaving as something that can be seen and has a physical form provides an opportunity for art to be used as a medium, where the presence and touch of art on a piece of woven cloth makes it a decoration tool for the wearer. In addition, physical function also refers to the use of Mbojo weaving as a clothing material that can protect the body from external disturbances such as weather and foreign objects.

The idea of creation, which grew out of the Mbojo people, forms a distinctive feature of the motifs and decorations in Mbojo weaving. At this time Mbojo woven fabrics are widely used for women's clothing such as party wear, scarves, formal wear, blazers for work wear and accessories such as various forms of bags. Most of the Mbojo weaving, West Nusa Tenggara is not used as everyday clothes. This indicates that the woven cloth has a meaning and symbolism that is reflected by the wearer and is indirectly represented by the viewer.

The application of floral motifs to almost every Mbojo woven fabric of West Nusa Tenggara as the main motif indicates a very close relationship between the Mbojo woven cloth and women and for women. In the discussion of the aesthetic elements of the motifs, colors and meanings of Mbojo weaving, which highlight the reflection of the nature and elements of women, are of interest to Mbojo weaving and show that there is a strong involvement and dominance of women in it. The activity of Muna ro Medi, in Indonesian means the activity of weaving, which is an activity that is carried out by most Bima women between their jobs as housewives.

4. Woman Position and Role Between Mbojo's Weave

The art of Mbojo weaving is a woman's job, this can be seen from the fact that in every village or area that develops Mbojo weaving crafts, art is done by women, housewives play a dominant role, as producers as well as managers, this makes women's position as a potential and productive workforce in the process of meeting the economic needs of the family. According to records and data from the Department of Industry and Trade of the City of Bima, the number

of small non-formal industries engaged in weaving is 41 industrial centers involving 1300 female workers, while the small formal industries are 36 company units with 313 female workers. According to the agency, this data does not include individual private entrepreneurs in every well-known resident's house in Bima.

Almost all construction of Mbojo looms are made of teak, that is, the equipment is durable and can be used for a long time, teak is known as wood that has a high level of durability and good quality. Using teak wood, the weaving equipment is also combined with several iron and bamboo rods which have a very small diameter. The equipment is designed in such a way that it is easy to use and has a light weight because it will be used for the weaving process which requires a long time to process. In addition, the equipment is invincible with the posture of the weavers, who are women. therefore, the manufacture of loom sizes and materials that are tailored to the body structure of adult women

Apart from the role of women, the development of Mbojo weaving cannot be separated from the support of various parties, including cultural institutions that play an important role in the continuity of Mbojo weaving. This is in line with the ideas put forward by Raymond Williams regarding three important components that influence the development of a cultural product. Raymond explained that cultural institutions such as craftsmen, government, sponsors and the market also played an important role in the advancement of Mbojo weaving.

The government, which is one of the main supporters through the industry and trade office of the city of Bima, has made efforts to hold a coaching, counseling and training program aimed at improving human resources, quality of production and welfare of craftsmen. Coaching materials include promotion, including facilitating the public to access markets in order to facilitate product distribution activities. Activities are also directed at the implementation of a total quality control management system. The office of cooperatives, small and medium enterprises, industry and trade in the city of Bima also empowers crafters by forming women's cooperatives to provide assistance in the form of loan funds and providing costs for the procurement of raw materials and weaving equipment in order to open opportunities for craftsmen to improve the Mbojo weaving industry.

5. Conclusion

The people of the Mbojo tribe recognize the gender-based division of labor. Weaving work is considered as women's work because based on the division of work areas, weaving is a job in the domestic area or home work while men's work is outside the home. In addition, from an economic point of view, weaving is considered a job to generate additional income for the family, because men are the main breadwinners. Therefore, weaving work is absolutely the responsibility of women and women as weaving craftsmen have full authority to determine the selection of motifs, patterns and colors that are applied in their woven fabrics. Starting from the preparation of tools and materials, the process of making woven fabrics to the marketing and distribution of Mbojo woven fabrics, it is done by women.

In a women's cooperative organization formed by weaving craftsmen, who act as head of the organization are also women. This shows that there is an important position played by women in the effort to preserve tenun as a cultural product of the Mbojo tribe.

Since its inception, Mbojo tenun has had a strong connection and relationship with women. This is evidenced by the existence of customary regulations in the sultanate era which obliged Mbojo women to be able to make their own woven fabrics before marriage. Weaving activities must also be taught to girls. Even though the motifs and colors of Mbojo weaving worn by women are the same as those worn by men, and women have a main position in the

group organization that is formed, this does not necessarily mean that the position of women is equal to or higher than that of men in the structure. social community of the Mbojo tribe.

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