

# **KAIN TENUN PAHANG DAN KAIN TENUN SULAWESI: SATU KAJIAN PERBANDINGAN AWAL**

***(KAIN TENUN PAHANG AND KAIN TENUN SULAWESI:  
A PRELIMINARY COMPARATIVE STUDY)***

Habibah Abdul Jabbar  
Nor Azlin Hamidon  
Muhammad Ismail Ab Kadir  
Abdul Razak Abdul Jabbar  
Akademi Pengajian Melayu  
Universiti Malaya

## **Abstrak**

Sejarah telah memerihalkan akan hubungan Tanah Melayu dan Indonesia berlaku oleh banyak faktor. Hubungan serumpun antara masyarakat Melayu dan Bugis telah terjalin sejak dari kurun ke-17. Kemelut politik di bumi Sulawesi menjadi faktor penolak pada pelayaran orang-orang Bugis untuk menerokai destinasi baru. Keamanan dan kemakmuran urusan perdagangan yang terkenal menjadikan Tanah Melayu daya tarikan utama penghijrahan ini. Orang Bugis dari tanah Makassar terkenal dengan kemahiran pelayaran yang telah membuka lembaran baru pada hubungan Melayu Bugis. Penghijrahan ini memberi impak dalam semua aspek sosiobudaya masyarakat sesuai dengan sifat keterbukaan orang Melayu. Tidak terkecuali belakunya perkembangan kesenian tenunan masyarakat Melayu dan Bugis sesuai dengan kepesatan hubungan dagang dari bumi Arab, China dan India sebagai penyumbang besar bahan mentah. Kedatangan bangsawan Bugis (Keraing Aji) ke negeri Pahang

telah menyemarakkan lagi seni bertenun yang sedia ada apabila berjaya memperkenalkan teknik, gaya dan reka corak baru. Justeru, wujudlah satu kesinambungan reka corak antara tenunan Sulawesi Selatan dan Pahang hingga hari ini. Walau bagaimanapun, dengan kemajuan kesenian global, kedua-dua pusat pengeluraan (Sulawesi dan Pahang) kain tenunannya turut mengalami perubahan sesuai dengan cita rasa dan kehendak pasaran. Perubahan ini merangkumi reka corak, warna dan teknik penghasilan. Oleh itu, bagi memastikan kelangsungan seni warisan ini langkah penubuhan institut dan pusat latihan serta penggunaan teknologi terus disemarakkan oleh kedua-dua belah pihak.

**Kata kunci:** Tenun Pahang Diraja, kain tenun Bugis Wajo, sejarah, reka corak, pemuliharaan.

### *Abstract*

*The relationship between Malaya and Indonesia was established a long time ago in history and it was built due to many factors. Thus, since the 17<sup>th</sup> century AD, the allied relations between the Malays and Bugis have existed. Political crisis in the land of Sulawesi became a boost factor for the Bugis sailors to search and explore new destinations. The main attraction of this migration to Malaya was due to the fact that it was a peaceful and prosperous country, which was very conducive for trading activities. The Bugis people from the land of Makassar who were famous for their sailing skills, economically opened up a new chapter in the relationships between the Bugis and the Malays. Indeed, their migration to Malaya gave a socio-cultural impact on the Malay society and this was a reciprocal phenomenon with the sincerity of the Malays in accepting the Bugis. The supply of raw materials from The Middle East, China and India was directly affecting the development of weaving among the Bugis and the Malays. The arrival of Keraing Aji, a Bugis aristocrat, to Pahang had brightened up the existing weaving art when eventually he successfully introduced new techniques, styles and patterns. Thus, it triggered a continuity of woven designs and patterns between South Sulawesi and Pahang which remain until today. However, with the expansion of global art, both in Sulawesi and Pahang, which were the centres for the production of this traditional woven fabric, named kain tenun, were experiencing*

*changes in line with the preferences and demands of the market. These changes include the designs, colour and production techniques. Hence, to ensure the survival of these heritages, both parties in Makassar and in Pahang, needed to co-operate and focus on the establishment of institutions and training centers as well as the use of modern technology.*

**Keywords:** *Tenun Pahang Diraja, Bugis Wajo woven fabric, history, patterns, conservation.*

## **Introduction**

It is believed that art of weaving existed approximately 500 BC in Mesopotamia and Egypt. Then it spread throughout to Europe and Asia, including Malaya Peninsular and Indonesia. Kelantan, Pahang and Terengganu, which are located in the east coast of Malaya, where as Sabah and Sarawak, have become the centre of traditional weaving activity in Malaya.

Kain Tenun Pahang Diraja (TPD) or Royal Pahang Weaving cloth is a traditional woven fabric and its production flourishes in the state of Pahang. This fabric possesses its own unique characteristics and produced only by local weavers. Indonesia, a neighbouring country is also known for its wearing cloth and in South Sulawesi, there are two kinds of distinguished woven fabrics by Bugis of Sengkang and Mandar tribes. The Bugis traditional woven silk is known as *kain tenun sutera Bugis* whereas *kain tenun sutera Mandar* is the traditional woven silk fabric of Mandar tribe. Although both fabrics are produced using silk as a basic material, there are differences in their motifs. This paper discusses the general historical connection between two traditional weaving centres in Pahang (Malaysia) and the area of Wajo which is located in Sengkang, South Sulawesi (Indonesia). This paper also deals with the development of patterns which have been amended in accordance with the evolution of global textiles. A further area of discussion is on the conservation efforts undertaken by both countries to ensure the sustainability and continuity of this woven art.

## **Brief of Historical Connections**

Fraser-Lu (1998), Maxwell (2003) and Pelras (2006) stated that the diversity of weaving is the most valuable art reflected in the history of textiles in the Malay world or Malay Archipelago. Historically, Melayo-Polynesian produced yarns from natural sources such as bark, pineapple and abaca fiber (from the banana stem) prior to the use of cotton and silk (Maxwell, 2003). The production of this art form of textiles dated back to the time before Christ, using various invented weaving equipment and continued to evolve with human civilization. Trading activities which took place during monsoon season had turned ports into places where people from different countries connected and socialized. Historically the developments of traditional woven textiles in Malaya is closely related with the entrance of traders from neighbouring countries of Maluku island, Borneo and Makassar. The strategic geographical location of Malaya opened the best route, especially for traders from India, China and Arabia to hold direct trade relations in the 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> century AD (Lotfi Ismail, 1978). The main trade items were fabrics and threads (silk, cotton, gold and silver).

History has proven that Malays and Bugis had established their alliance since the 17<sup>th</sup> century AD. The migration of Bugis to Linggi, Kuala Selangor and Johor-Riau was written in *Salasilah Melayu dan Bugis dan Tuhfat al Nafis*, by Raja Ali Haji (Muhlis Hadrawi, 2012). Politics, marriage, trading, society and culture were among the factors that influenced the relationship between Malayys and Bugis (Norhayati, 2016). These factors have contributed to major implications in the history of Indonesia-Malaysia especially between Malay and Bugis communities.

The migration of Bugis from Sulewasi to Malaya brought various skills including weaving skills. The intrusion of Netherlands in 1669 at the Makassar port had changed and created a new surrounding on the island. Bugis people became refugees in Kepulauan Riau, Sumatra and Borneo. They brought together expertise in manufacturing technology, fleet construction, sailing-navigation, trading as well as Bugis military skills. Then, they dispersed throughout Southeast Asia.

Internal political crisis has caused the people to be insecure, which directly affected the household's economic downturn, it became a strong reason for them to migrate to the new settlement. The prosperity of Malaya in the mid of 17<sup>th</sup> century was the reason why it is a good place to live and start anew. Foreign policy in Johor by the British government in enhancing the economic development of the country created opportunities for those who wished to explore the land (Rasyid, 2009).

The Bugis sailed over the South China Sea to Malaya to take the opportunities. The socio-cultural relation between Bugis and Malay had coined the term Melayu-Bugis and Bugis-Melayu. Thus, the term "Malay-Bugis" and "Bugis-Malay" has arisen. Generally, "Malay-Bugis" refers to the residence of Bugis in Malaya; while "Bugis-Malay" refers to the Malays who resided in the land of the Bugis i.e. Makassar of South Sulawesi. The term "Malay-Bugis" is translated as the Bugis in Malaya undergoing the socio-cultural process of integration with the Malay community. Malay characteristics have inspired and united to bring forth the Malays with Bugis blood. The same goes with the term "Bugis-Malay" (Muhlis Hadrawi, 2012). According to Kesuma (2004), Bugis migration philosophy is '*tiga ujung*' (three tips or ends) which represents the tip of the tongue (diplomacy), the tip of the dagger (war) and the tip of the genitals (marriage). Based on this concept, the Bugis began to spread their power and generation throughout Malay Archipelago and up to the European continent (Norhayati, 2016).

Documents in *Malay History and Malay Johor Historical Commemoration* revealed that social relationships and Bugis had existed in Malay Peninsula since early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The texts written by Raja Ali Haji Text depicted many stories of family and genealogical links between Bugis-Malay especially the throne of Johor and Selangor (Muhlis Hadrawi, 2012). During this period, Bugis were very influential in trading, political and social aspects. Along with an atmosphere of political turmoil caused by the war of VOC-Makassar in Sulawesi in 1667, Keraing Aji known as Tok Tuan, had migrated

with his followers to the state of Pahang. Tok Tuan (title given by locals in Pahang) was a Bugis aristocrat who came with his followers, who were skilled in weaving. An elite background community allowed them to establish good relations with the ruling class, thus securing a place and position in the local community. In 1722, royal village along the banks of Sungai Pahang was even named as Kampung Mengkasar, in conjunction with the name of their home village in Tanah Bugis (Yaakub Isa, 2009).

This craft rapidly spread and practiced by locals since they were already engaged in weaving skills even before the arrival of Tok Tuan in Pahang. However, Pelras (1996) found that the Bugis had learned their weaving skills from the Malays based on the similarity of the term used for fabric rollers which is called *pesa* in Bahasa Melayu and *passa* by the Bugis. On the other hand, Javanese term for that equipment is *apit*. Similarly, in 15<sup>th</sup> century, the weaving equipment were also said to be adapted from the Malays, who settled in the trading area of the western coastal city of South Sulawesi. However, Wajo community was more serious in weaving silk fabric compared to Malay community. The presence of Bugis had managed to enrich and boost the art with new ideas and designs. Hence, the art was constantly scattered not only in the town but also to other areas such as Pulau Keladi, Benta, and Jambu which was located within the district of Langgar.

Sulewasi is a large island in the middle of Indonesia. This allowed it to be a booming commercial centre for western and eastern Indonesia. Silk yarns used to produce silk fabric in South Sulawesi were brought by traders from China. Similarly, Malay Peninsula had a strategic port for traders. Being the largest state in Malay Peninsula, Pahang was rich with natural resources from the forest and attracted new immigrant settlements. During this decade, weaving arts activities was expanding in the east coast states of Malay Peninsula such as Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang.

## **Common Characteristics**

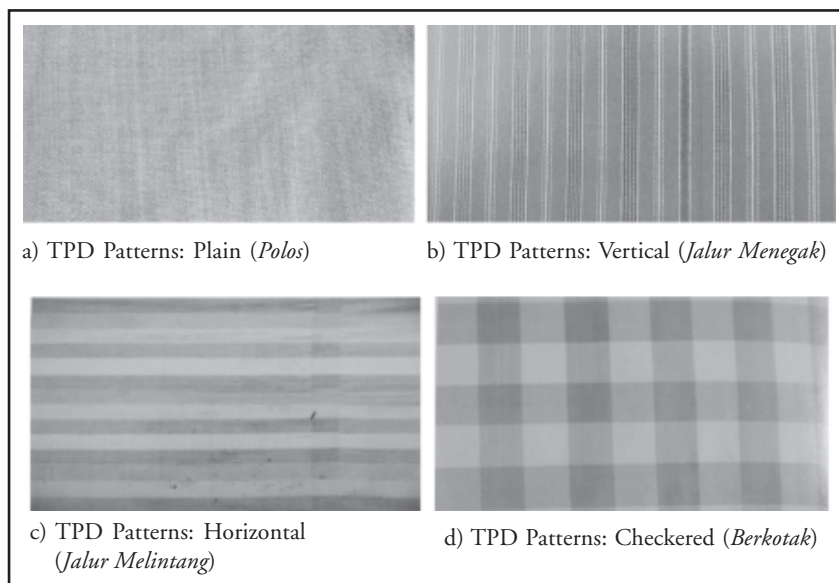
Weaving skills among the Malays is believed to have been inherited from a Malay Kingdom called Langkasuka since the first century (Sheppard, 1972). Initially, woven fabrics were intended to be used to cover human body but it had evolved to become part of the artwork. People in every corner of the world generally has its own textile art and this considered to be part of human civilization. Starting with simple production techniques using materials from surrounding, textiles continues to grow along with trading process. According to Pelras (2006), clothing artifacts made from bark was discovered in Bugis land since 13<sup>th</sup> century. The importing of raw and basic materials through exchange system between locals and foreign traders had opened up the path for this art to have its own styles (Siti Zainon, 1997). The quality of the fabric produced were based on weaver's skills and creativity. This condition influenced the dynamism and openness of Malay weaving art.

## **Patterns and Motifs of *Kain Tenun Pahang Diraja* (TPD) and Bugis Silk Fabrics**

### **i) *Kain Tenun Pahang Diraja* (TPD)**

The original patterns of the Royal Pahang Weaving (TPD) were different from the patterns which are available in the current market. Originally, plain woven fabrics were made of cotton yarns without any motifs and patterns. Normally, natural dye was used and single coloured fabrics were woven. However, during the migration in the Malay world, refugees brought together some skills which were suitable with activities by the local community. As a result, socio-cultural and artistic relationships were developed based on creative brainstorming. When weavers knew how to dye warp and weft yarns, aesthetic value of woven fabric produced are in the highest form (Zainal, 2009). Striped pattern (horizontal and vertical) was introduced through this evolution process. The structure of TPD shows a combination of geometrics and lines elements. Checkered patterns (large, medium or small in sizes) are obtained automatically from the

meeting of the horizontal and vertical patterns. These patterns are shown in Figure 1 as the basic patterns of the earliest TPD.



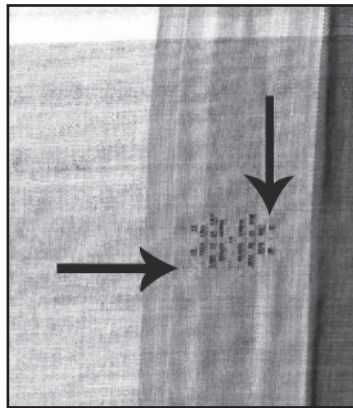
**Figure 1:** (a,b,c,d) The Basic Patterns of the Earliest TPD (Farid, 2013).

The patterns of TPD can be classified according to the basic pattern (*corak asas*), noble pattern (*corak bangsawan*), traditional pattern (*corak tradisional*) and refined patterns (*corak olahan*). Noble pattern is a typical pattern specifically for the dignitaries and the government officials. The name given to a pattern depends on the wearer such as Tengku Ampuan pattern (*corak Tengku Ampuan*), Tun Razak pattern (*corak Tun Razak*), Datuk Mahmud pattern (*corak Datuk Mahmud*), Tok Muda pattern (*corak Tok Muda*), mayor pattern (*corak Datuk Bandar*) and VIPs pattern (*corak Orang Kenamaan*). The patterns of TPD whether noble, traditional or refined are based on the basic pattern which became a fictitious identity of the fabric. Refined pattern is more independent and contemporary due to the arrangement of horizontal and vertical stripes of different size and composition. The traditional pattern size and number of stripes are independently exhibited as for *corak Tapak Catur Berlapis*, *corak Bugis*,



*corak Tubuk Sekampung, corak Beragi, corak Geremut Berdiri, corak Pakan Usik dan corak Ikat Bersilang.* The application of the yarn tie (*ikat yarn*) is the variation in the production of the fabric to meet the current demand.

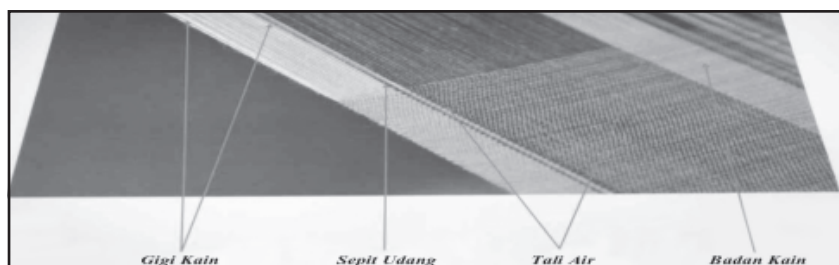
With the influx of gold and silver threads, the minimum insertion on woven fabric contributes to major impact on the visual of the fine woven fabric and makes the fabric look luxurious. However, the use of gold and silver thread in TPD is limited in comparison with songket textile. According to Fatimah Ismail (2009), the *colek* motifs of Pahang in TPD from gold and silver threads are small in size and arranged in scattered and repeated forms. Although using the same motifs as songket such as *bunga pecah lima, tampuk manggis, bunga tanjung, tampuk kesemak biji peria, etc*, TPD has its own identity with the presence of a tail at the top and bottom of each *colek* motif and the size of the motif is smaller in comparison with motif from Wajo (Figure 2). The existence of synthetic dyes to replace natural dyes contribute to alternative and bright colours. Thus, the demand of TPD has increased.



**Figure 2:** *Colek* Motif (*Bunga Pecah Lapan*).

Similar to songket fabric, TPD is produced separately in short pieces to be used as *sampin* which is composed of “head” and “body” of the fabric to fit their function. Each piece usually has a size of about 2 to 2½ metres long. The layout and structure of TPD are slightly

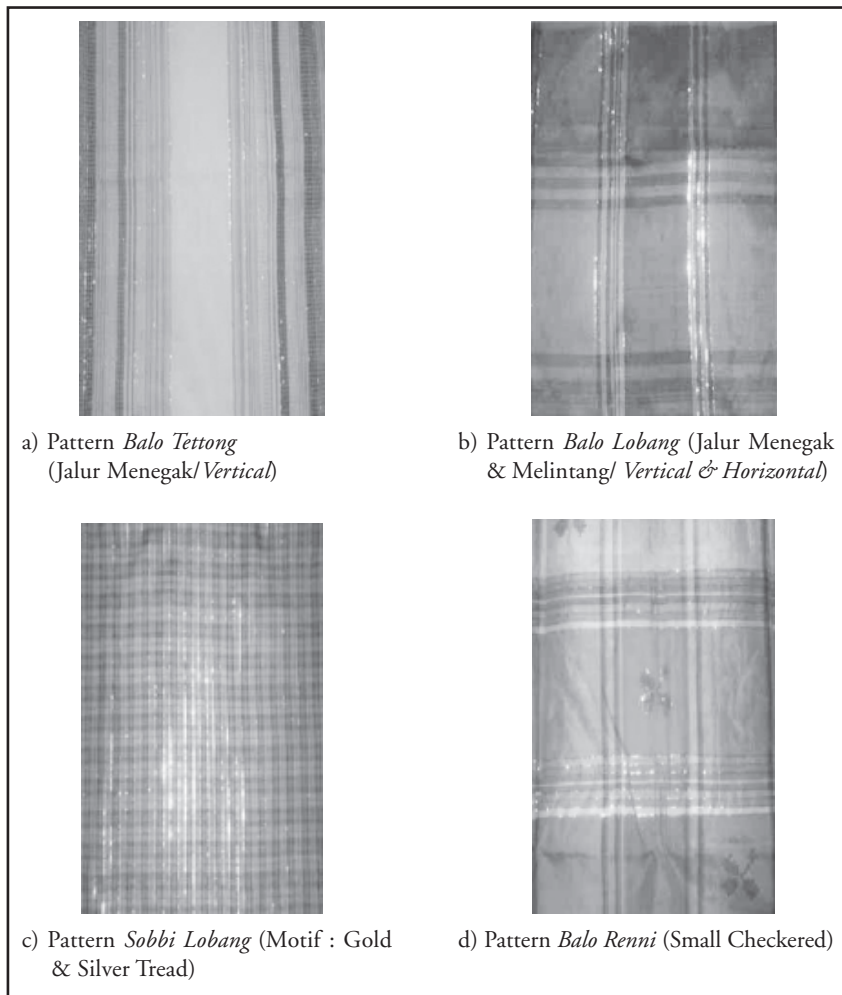
different from songket. Its structure is very simple; it only has a panel or head cloth and is not bound by the clamping head from the left and right side. Therefore, this has become an attractive factor because the head cloth can be replicated in other parts of the body fabric. It also does not have the edge of the fabric along the border for both ends of the fabric edge. Instead, it has a quarter inch selvedge offering a fine line called shrimp clip (*sepit udang*) as shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3:** TPD 'Sepit Udang' (Farid, 2013).

## ii) Bugis Wajo Silk Fabrics

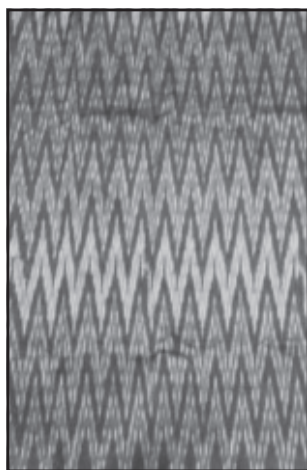
Historically, the relationship between, Pahang and South Sulawesi was established due to the exploration of new settlements. Up until now, the effects of this cross-cultural phenomenon are the similarities of the patterns in their weaving art. Kahdar (2009) in Mursyidin (2014), stated that the patterns of woven fabric of Bugis Wajo (Figure 4) can be classified in three categories: (1) plain patterns (2) checkered pattern and (3) motif or figured pattern. All three categories of patterns have evolved according to the phases that are affected by the state government of Wajo (1438), the Netherlands (1669) and the phase of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until today. According Kahdar (2009), the transition to figured patterns occurred during the trade relations with China, as silk, gold and silver threads were brought in. This period has seen to be the same time with the developments taking place in the TPD. In the era of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the pattern began to be decorated with floral motifs with the help of technological developments. The use of more conducive loom produced more dynamic patterns and the adaptation of surroundings were translated more quickly and easily.



**Figure 4:** Bugis Wajo Patterns.

Thus, the changes in both the weaving centres are clearly influenced by the political environment and trade activities. However, based on field study in 2015 in the city of Makassar and Wajo, the researcher found that *ikat pakan* (weft tie) with the zig-zag (Figure 5) motif dominates the current market, whilst, TPD is retaining the dominance of the basic pattern and *ikat lungsin* (warp tie) pattern.

Weavers' creativity is the tool which the decorative and attractive patterns to fulfill the current market demand. It can be seen from the quality and aesthetic value of the resulting fabric with a blend of colours to meet the requirements of the local market.



**Figure 5:** *Ikat pakan* (weft tie) with the zig-zag pattern.

### **Conservation Effort by Both Countries**

Conservation efforts have been ongoing since pre-independence to ensure the survival of weaving arts activities which can be inherited by the next generation. Global political background such as internal factors or war has led to the fluctuation of weaving activities. In early 1900s, G.M.Laidlaw, the District Officer of Pekan undertook conservation works to give a new life to the weaving arts industry in Pekan. These great works are continued by Pahang Chief Minister Dato' Mahmud bin Mat. In 1948, he provided training and allocated financial support to resume the weaving industry that stopped due to the Second World War (Yaakub Isa, 2009). Also, in the 1950s the British Government gave recognition to the famous weaver Puan Selama Sulaiman by inviting her to London to organize an exhibition. Thus, creating a new market segment for the cottage industry at international level. Rural and Industrial Development Authority

(RIDA) in 1963 established the Silk Weaving Centre in Pulau Keladi and in 1974, Pahang Tenggara Development Authority (DARA) was given a mandate to revitalize the local weaving industry. In addition, the Malaysian Handicraft Development Corporation and the Pahang State Museum also play an important role over time to provide a training program to the young generation.

The involvement and role of the Pahang palace is the backbone in order to ensure that the weaving of TPD exists and is sustained. This prestige woven fabric still exists due to the strong support given by the Pahang royal family, first by HRH Tengku Ampuan Meriam since 1903 and today continued by HRH Tengku Puan Pahang, Tunku Hajah Azizah. HRH Tengku Puan Pahang has established Institut Kemahiran Tenun Pahang Diraja Tengku Ampuan Besar Meriam (IKTPD) in 2010 at the Kompleks Budaya, Pulau Keladi, Pekan. This systematic and dynamic institute provides two years training to the younger generation and certifies them. Moreover, in order to preserve this authentic fabric of Malay heritage, two prisons in the state of Pahang (Kompleks Penjara Penor and Kompleks Penjara Bentong) were directly involved. Prisoners who trained in the weaving skills are recognized and certified (Ku Mohamad Nasir, personal interview June 11, 2015). Furthermore, the Pahang state government had also approved 20 acres of land for the establishment of Perkampungan Tenun Pahang Diraja (the Village of Royal Pahang Weaving) as a platform for the skillful post-prisoners to continue their weaving activities (Razak Ab Rani, personal interview June 11, 2015).

The application of modern dobby and jacquard looms is seen to be in line with the current scenario of the textile world. These types of looms are located in Pusat Tenun FELDA in Chini and Pusat Pengembangan Tenun Pahang Diraja Sultan Hj. Ahmad Shah, Kampung Soi, Pekan under the patronage of Pahang State Development Corporation (PKNP). The production becomes faster at lower prices and can cater for a broader market. With the new marketing strategy, these woven fabrics are produced to fulfill the demand of all levels of community. Nowadays, Tengku Puan Pahang is looking forward to give exposure to the local weavers on the development in weaving art from the neighboring countries. This type

of motivation will hopefully increase the confidence level of the weavers to maximize their creativity and expertise. Representatives of employers often take short-term courses in Thailand and Indonesia so that they can follow the development of the textile industry in the region. The new branding exercise with the conferment of the status of 'Royal' in all its products has shown the status and quality of the queen of fabrics. Indirectly, the quality of TPD fabric is protected due to 'Royal' status and this award conferred as recognition from the palace to the weavers' arts and creativity.

In the 1900s, Malay Archipelago was still under colonial regime. During the Dutch colonial rule in 1905, traditional weaving activities in Wajo gained attention from India Dutch colonials. Then again, in the 1920s the traditional weaving industry mushroomed. So, the government sent their representatives to develop indigenous textile industry (New Rotterdamse Courant, November 5, 1929). During this period, the semi-auto loom was introduced to the people who were still using traditional looms (*gedogan*) including the solution on the needs of raw material. According to Sitorus (1999) in Syukur (2014) the weaving industry in 1950 experienced a boom and a revolution from traditional looms to handloom (*alat tenun bukan mesin* (ATBM)). Subsequently in 1965, the use of handloom is intensifying with the help of a Bugis noble named Datu Hj. Muddariyah Petta Balla'sari (*Ranreng Old Wajo*). He brought in handlooms from Thailand together with the instructors to train the people of Wajo. Thus, improve the skills and expand the weaving industry. The local girls were brought to the village of Petta Balla'sari to master the handloom, so that more people can master these weaving tools. It is important that knowledge (technology) is transferred to the community in which it is to be used, so it can be adapted to existing equipment (Stankard, 2010). The role played by Petta Balla'sari is similar with the role of HRH Tengku Ampuan Meriam in supporting the existence of this industry.

During and after the Second World War, the whole world experienced a tougher time because of the economic down turn. Most of the industry was paralyzed because of difficulties in obtaining raw materials. This difficulty led locals to begin planting cotton to meet

the needs (Syukur, 2014). Imported silk yarn from Palembang was also limited due to low productivity which could only accommodate local needs. Hence, silkworm breeding is the only business to support the demand of raw materials. The suitable climate and soil fertility allowed mulberry trees to be planted to feed the silk worms which originate from Palembang (Kurnia Sham, personal interview, 16 March 2015). Kurnia also said that the demand of white fabric for batik production permitted a boost in the weaving industry, which overcame the dependency of plain white fabric imported from China.

The establishment of the institute seems to be significant since it became a center to collect and educate the community in a more scientific and systematic manner. Institut Kemahiran Tenun Pahang Diraja Tengku Ampuan Besar Meriam (IKTPD) plays an important role in the weaving industry in Pahang. Whilst, Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat Wadjo Institut is the institute which is taking care of the weaving industry in Wajo. This institute was founded in Makassar on December 11, 2008 with the goal of making Wajo as a potential district for the manpower and resources for local cultural awareness. It can be seen that the initiatives taken by the various parties from both countries are the efforts to the survival and sustainability of the weaving industry.

## **Conclusion**

This study gives a special awareness on cross-cultural relations through the arts of weaving between the two countries. Malay-Bugis relationship which tied through their nation's history provide a policy of openness and easy to adapt the incoming culture. Among the aspects that can be adapted are trade relations, political, socio-cultural and marriage. However, this study focuses on the variety of the arts of weaving between Malay community in Pahang and Bugis community in Wajo, South Sulawesi. The diversity can be clearly seen in their original pattern of woven fabric which had been suited in accordance with local and international market demand. The survival of the art of weaving is retained due to the efforts and hard work from various parties, including the ministerial, the royalties and local arts

activists. Therefore, this collaboration needs to be improved between Pahang and South Sulawesi so that younger generation are aware of the importance to sustain the culture and arts.

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## **Interviews**

Mohd Mazlan Dolah

Vocational and Industrial Officer at Bentong Pahang Prison.

Abdul Razak Ab Rani

Vocational and Industrial Officer at Bentong Pahang Prison.

Ku Mohammad Nasir

Weaving Workshop Officer at Penor Pahang Prison.

Kurnia Syam

Employers Weaving & Spinning, Sengkang Sulawesi.