

The Function of Kelingkan in Malay Society

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Abstract

Kelingkan, an old Malay needlework art form is an artistic legacy created and utilised by olden Malay society. It is an intricate embroidery technique used to embellish textiles which was pioneered by Malay women. The intricacy of such embroidery art demands high precision and the unique expertise of embroiderers, who utilise gold or silver coated metal tape threads sewn on the surface of soft fabric. The beauty of the structure and variety of ornaments are accentuated in the case of *kelingkan* for ladies' head covering, which consists of the scarf and shawl, in the shape of a square and rectangular. The question is, how is the *kelingkan* design created? What is its design purpose? As a result, the author conducts qualitative descriptive research through fieldwork, including observation, interviews with embroiderers, and collection analysis. According to the study's findings, *kelingkan* embroidery activities in Malaysia have increased since the establishment of Malaya's trading system. There are still active embroiderers in only three states: Sarawak, Selangor, and Kelantan with the square and rectangular designs on the shawl and scarf used as headgear, clothing, rehal lining, bedsheets, *takbir* decorations, souvenirs, dowry mats, events, wedding ceremonies, a groom's cab and "nasi temuan" ceremony. Cultural functions, aesthetic functions, religious functions, social functions, and symbolic functions are just a few of the identified functions. Through this study, it is also possible to draw the conclusion that the utilitarian component can highlight the distinctiveness and clarify the significance of this needlework art. Implications: The study's findings can be used as a source of information to ensure that this form of art is kept alive in the Malay community.

Keywords: Heritage, Malay, Kelingkan, Function, Meaning, Structure and Ornamental Variety.

Introduction

The word "kelingkan" or "keringkam" is derived from the Balinese words "Keling," which refers to a particular kind of fabric, and "Kam" and "Kham", denote beauty (Azran, 2010). According to Febriyandi (2011) and Sarkawi & Abd. Rahman (2014), it is known as *manto* in Indonesia. France, Turkey, India and Egypt have their own terms for the art. Aziz (2009) asserts that the terms "kelingkan" and "keringkam" are derived from the French word "cliquant," which means "glittering," and that they are referred to as "tel kirma" in Turkey, "Makaish" in India, and "Tally" in Egypt. Tally from Egypt differs from that of other nations because, in contrast to much of Asia or Central Asia, where traditional motifs are used more frequently, tally frequently incorporates themes from local folklore and fairy tales. This variety demonstrates how Egyptian metal embroidery is distinctive from that of other nations (Messir, 2009; Abdul Ghani & Zakaria, 2013). The use of the unique *kelingkan* term from other countries demonstrates the influence of trade due to the use of the same material. The *kelingkan* assemblage displayed in Malaysian museums reflects the delicacy and beauty of the Malay community, which reflects the meticulousness and precision of the *kelingkan* embroidery art and is distinct from other countries, despite similarities in materials or mediums. The first privilege in Malaysia is discernible by the different pronunciation that yields the same meaning. The term Keringkam is more widely used in Sarawak (Ismail, 2010, 1996; Josmani et. al., 2012; Pawi, 2010; Unin, 2014; Sarkawi & Ab. Rahman, 2014, 2016). Terengganu uses the term teringkam or terekam (Ismail, 1994; Shawal, 1994; Sarkawi & Ab. Rahman, 2014, 2016) while in Selangor and Kelantan, *kelingkan* is used (Jamal, 1992; Rusli et.al., 2015) and kelengkan (Sarkawi & Ab. Rahman, 2016). Kelingkam dan kelengkang are however, widely used in Kelantan (Sarkawi & Ab. Rahman, 2016).

Kelingkan embroidery is a type of needlework used to decorate fabrics that was pioneered by Malay women and is known as Malay handicrafts. The art of *kelingkan* embroidery employs gold and silver coloured metal tape thread, and only three states, namely Sarawak, Selangor, and Kelantan, still have active embroiderers, albeit on a small scale. The distinctiveness of the *kelingkan* embroidery art results from the diversity of culture and language of the Malaysian community, which is evident in the variations in pronunciation, or better known by the term; in Sarawak is known as Keringkam, Terengganu is known as Teringkam, Selangor and Kelantan are known as Kelingkan. Through needlework techniques that may define its identity, each of these states creates its unique identity to ensure that the *kelingkan* embroidery art is produced perfectly and tastefully, high levels of precision and attention must be used during the creation process. The *kelingkan* produced especially for the scarf, which hones on the *selayah* (*head scarf*) and shawl, the beauty of the structure as well as the decorations are evident in only two designs; the square and the rectangular shape. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to evaluate the distinctiveness of the keringkam art form and debate its beauty in relation to its purpose.

Research Objective

- To describe the development of *kelingkan* art in Malaysia.
- To analyze the *kelingkan* embroidery art design in Malaysia.
- To discuss the beauty and function of *kelingkan* embroidery art designs in Malaysia.

Aesthetic Theory

The term "beauty" describes the perception made by the human eye when it perceives or verbalises the beautiful emotion resulting from something being observed and assessed. God's creation is beautiful, and this is evident. Al-Ghazali claims that the definition of beauty encompasses not only the satisfaction of the senses in a visual sense, but also the enjoyment of the soul, including morality and religion, as components of the beauty that is produced.

The theory of beauty is used to express the implicit concept of art. The intended beauty is aesthetics. The word aesthetics is derived from the Greek language which is 'Aesthetic' which means "perceived". The concept of aesthetics is something related to the science of art that explores the effect of beauty referring to the appreciation, impression, affection, moved, comforting and impressed by history, humanity, society, nature, religion and so on (Din, 2016). The theory of beauty that is meant in this study refers to the process of experience and knowledge that is the appreciation of a person in producing a work of art.

According to the world of western philosophy, aesthetics is a philosophy within the field of art. The introduction of the theory by a German philosopher Alexander Gottfried Baumgarten, who published *Aesthetic* in 1750, further developed by another German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1772–1804). These two philosophers' ideas lead us to the conclusion that aesthetics is a study of beauty that serves a function.

Beauty for the Malay society is strongly based on the teachings of Islam, not beauty per se. Islam is a beautiful religion that is revealed to all people, regardless of race. In comparison to other creatures, humans are endowed with a variety of privileges, one of which is the ability to think. Humans are inherently drawn to beauty, whether it comes from a man or a woman. As a result, unlike beauty in art, beauty in Islam has its own significance. It is not dependent solely on aesthetic appeal. Al-Farabi (257H/870M-339H/950M), a musically talented individual, defined art as a creation that produces beauty. Artistic creation based on human emotions that cannot be represented verbally or linguistically and must instead be heard and felt by a person's soul (Mahdi, 2001). Islam serves as the primary source of inspiration for all works of art created by the Islamic Malay community. Al-Ghazali, who elucidated the beauty in the creation of a work of art, is the Islamic thinker credited with inventing the idea of aesthetics. He asserts that beauty is not just external beauty but also inner beauty, which is characterised by spiritual, ethical, and religious values. He asserts that there is a connection between art and life. The relationship between art and the world and the hereafter in Islam can be summed up by saying that Islam itself is separated into two goals, namely the relationship for mankind to find some happiness in both the world and the afterlife. According to the second goal, art is a value that is intended to be an adventure in this world leading to the afterlife (Claude Field, 2007).

In this study, the art in question is the artwork produced by the Malay community. Therefore, the works of art and the Malay community are guided by the Islamic religion. The art work done by the Malay community has its own concept of art including the theory of beauty. In Malay art, emphasis is placed on subtlety, sculpture, balance, harmony, beauty and tranquillity (Ahmad 1986) but according to Din (2016), Malay art today is not bound to beauty, whether it is meant to be beautiful or not, because in this day and age artworks resulting from rough, non-harmonious works are valued as art by the Malays. As a result, this study

emphasises the value of beauty that is felt behind the designs of *kelingkan* embroidery art, which has its own distinct identity as a result of the production of implicit meaning.

Research Methods

The primary and secondary research methods will be used to conduct a qualitative descriptive study. Fieldwork, including observation, interviews with embroiderers, and collection analysis, was carried out in Malaysia, specifically in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Kelantan, and Terengganu, as well as in Sarawak, specifically in Kuching. In the peninsula i.e. at the Museum of Malay World Ethnology, Kuala Lumpur National Museum Department, Textile Museum, Selangor Indigenous Malay and Heritage Association (PADAT), Malaysian Handicraft Development Corporation, National University of Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) and Universiti Malaysia Kelantan while in Sarawak it is at the Sarawak Textile Museum, the Sarawak branch of the Malaysian Handicraft Development Corporation and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). Interview method with embroiderers who are still active in the state of Sarawak, Selangor, and Kelantan. A collection of *kelingkan* that permits study on the role of *kelingkan* in the Malay community can be acquired via the interviews and observations made. Only three states in Malaysia retain *kelingkan* art entrepreneurs, and the purpose behind its creation is revealed by research on the evolution of *kelingkan* embroidery art.

Research Findings and Discussion

The development of kelingan embroidery art in Malaysia.

The art of *kelingkan* embroidery is one of the decorative techniques in textiles which refers to 'texere' which means 'to weave' which is weaving or the weaving process. According to Ismail (1990), the textile process has evolved to produce unique and colorful handicrafts, which are textiles that are not only woven but also painted, dyed and embroidered. The embroidery process produced the art of *kelingkan* embroidery that has enriched the lives of the Malay community. Written studies that record the history of *kelingkan* embroidery art are not recorded but through previous studies, notes from western colonialism, embroiderer collections, journals and oral research data tell the history of *kelingkan* during trade in the Malay islands. In her travelogue "My life in Sarawak" (1986), Lady Margaret Brooke discusses textiles and clothes that show how the Sarawak community practises the skill of *kelingkan* embroidery. Margaret Brooke describes the wearing of *Selayah kelingkan (Keringkam)* and *songket* Sarawak. A photo of Lady Margaret Brooke sporting a *kelingkan* scarf among the wives of officials from Sarawak serves as proof that *kelingkan* embroidery existed and is still on display at the Sarawak Textile Museum. According to Suwati (1989), the Malays are known to have manufactured embroidered as early as the 14th century AD, when they were actively trading textiles with Arab nations like Persia, Portugal, China, and India. The trade that took place marked the beginning of the introduction of raw materials from China and India, including thread, metal tape, and silver (Robyn, 1994). The history of *kelingkan* embroidery art activities in Malaysia has evolved since the existence of the trading system in Malaya, according to research and writing by earlier researchers (Ismail, 1995; Rusli et.al., 2015; Sarkawi & Ab.Rahman 2016; Amri et.al 2017). The technique of gold embroidery was formed during the 15th century Malay sultanate of Melaka, according to Din (2016), and it developed in accordance with a commerce system that connected together two lines or bands, namely the west and the east (Ismail, 1995). According to Amri et.al (2016) there are three factors - factors that influence the development of the *kelingan* embroidery art in Malaysia, which are

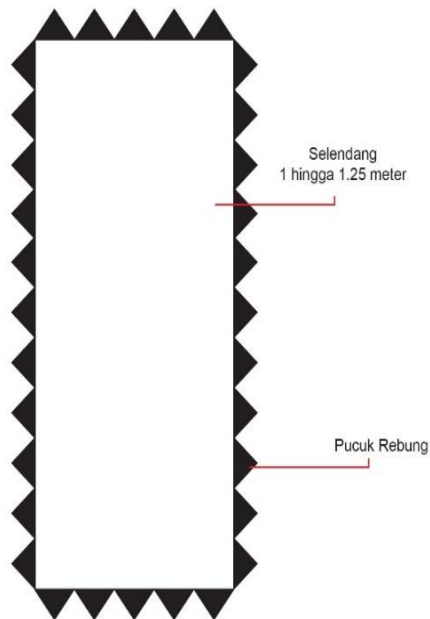
“trade and colonialism”, “the government and the rulers” and “the modernization process of the country”. These were noted by western researchers especially in relation to clothing, namely the researcher Crawful (1967) in relation to clothing which is “useful art” in (History of Indian Archipelago, 1967). The Malay: His Custom, Prejudice, Art, Language, and Literature in British Malay: An Account of the Origin and Development of British Influence in Malaya in 1929 by Sir Frank Swettenham did not specifically discuss clothes but rather the utilisation of materials, shapes, functions, and symbols. Several other earlier publications that discuss clothing and textiles mention Leonard Wrap (1908); Skeat (1902); Sheppard (1976 & 1980), while Rane Margaret (1913); Robyn (1994), who is significant authorities on related textiles, and discuss the Malaysian tradition of the *kelingkan* embroidery. Looking at how the *kelingkan* embroidery evolved in the past, it all began in the palace, and the embroiderers who are still active now are largely descended from royal families, and they are the ones who have contributed information to the general public up until this point.

While the *kelingkan* embroidery technique has changed in Malaysia, the technique was once reserved for the elite and used to reflect grandeur. According to Ismail (1995), the development and production of *kelingkan* needlework within the palace has made it an essential component of cultural events. Because of this, even though the price of *kelingkan* embroidery is expensive, costing one thousand and beyond, and was formerly solely used by the noble class, it is now also used by the common people. According to demands from clients and *kelingkan* aficionados, teachers and *kelingkan* embroiderers in Sarawak mentioned in interviews that cost depends on pattern design and the difficulty of completing *kelingkan* embroidery.

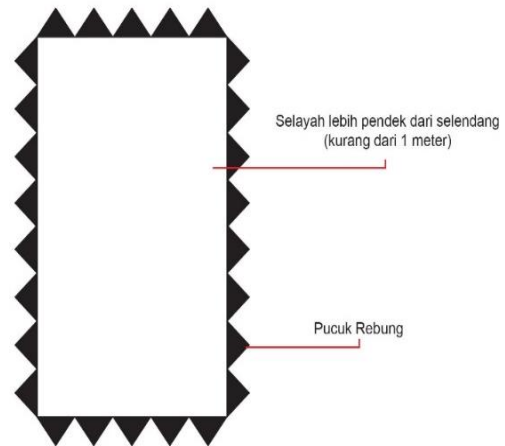
Analysis of *Kelingkan* Embroidery Art Design in Malaysia

The beauty of the structure and the variety of ornaments that are only found in two designs, square and rectangular, are highlighted in the production of a *kelingkan*, especially for the head covering, which is the shawl and the scarf. This raises the question of the purpose of the design. Consequently, a description of the design analysis for the Malaysian *kelingkan* embroidered art is provided. There are two types of *tudung kelingkan* in Malaysia: *Selayah (veil)* and *shawl (Shawal)*. *Selayah kelingkan* is a piece of cloth that is typically draped over the shoulder or worn on top of the head. The veil measures 95 centimetres in length and 55 cm in width. *Selayah* is shorter than a shawl, which typically has measurements of 158 x 77 cm. The image below displays a sketch of a *selayah* and a shawl with an illustration to demonstrate the size difference.

Selendang



Selayah



Researcher with Sarawak state embroiderers wearing the *selayah kelingan*.
Source: 2016 field study



Researcher with Sarawak state embroiderers wearing the *selayah kelingan*.
Source: 2016 field study



The researcher along with the Kelantan state embroiderer wears a *kelingan* shawl.
Source: 2017 field study

The beauty and function of *kelingkan* embroidery art designs in Malaysia.

This function value provides an overview of the function value in terms of the design employed in the *kelingkan* embroidery technique. The results of the meaning of the value of beauty, which is the value of function in *kelingkan* embroidery, are shown in Table 4.30. In the Malay society, each art form, particularly those that are connected to art, has a certain purpose. The fulfilment of vital daily functions. In the fourth edition of the Hall Dictionary, "function" or "functional" refers to something that has or is assigned certain tasks. In this context, the term "function" refers to the usage of an art in daily life. In order to preserve and further the tradition, Ismail (1990) stated that the production and use of textiles that refer to the embroidery art suggests that textiles are clothing materials that are not only seen in clothing but also in terms of functionality, symbols, and the beauty of the tradition.

Table 4.30

The meaning of the value of beauty which is the value of function in Kelingkan Embroidery

No	(Representation/Symbol) Refers to representing what is found in the art of <i>kelingkan</i> embroidery	Object	Meaning
1.	Shape	Shawl and Selayah	Culture
2.	Shape	Shawl and Selayah	Religion
3.	Shape	Shawl and Selayah	Aesthetic
4.	Shape	Shawl and Selayah	Social
5.	Shape	Shawl and Selayah	Symbolic

Source: Field Studies 2016 and 2017

In order to demonstrate the significant value of the function of the art of *kelingkan* embroidery, which has developed and should continue now so that this art does not perish this study discusses the function of the craft in the past and present. Rectangles and squares created by the *kelingkan* embroidery technique are used for a variety of purposes, including head coverings, clothing, rehal pads, bed sheets, takbir decorations, souvenirs, dowry mats, gatherings, wedding ceremonies, groom's cab, and the "nasi temuan" ceremony.

Written notes by Aziz (2009) titled Selayang Kenangan and western written notes on the functions of cloth or textiles related to Malay-Bugis by J.F.A. Mc Nair, first published in 1878 in "Perak and the Malays", explain about the functions of clothing as an element of Malay tradition that should be protected and preserved for the continuation of the tradition. Cultural function, aesthetic function, religious function, social function, and symbolic function are the five main facets of Malay society.

One can learn about *kelingkan* in Malaysia by highlighting elements of the structure's beauty and the variety of ornamentation via the description of patterns and designs. The making of *kelingkan* raises the question of what purpose lies behind its design, particularly for *selayah* and shawls. As a result, research is conducted on the role of *kelingkan* in society. In order to determine their use, this study only examines square and rectangular scarves and *selayahs*, which are used as head coverings.

It was possible to analyse the function of *kelingkan* in Malaysia through field research by placing categories of use to discover the function in the art of *kelingkan* embroidery in Malaysia. Table 4.31 depicts an analysis of the *kelingkan* function in Malaysia.

Table 4.31

Analysis of Kelingkan Function in Malaysia

NO	DESIGN	USAGE CATEGORY	FINDING/FUNCTION
1	Square and rectangle	Head covering	Cultural Function
2	Using <i>kelingkan</i> motifs on clothes that are baju kurung and kebaya	Clothes	Cultural Function
3	Square	Rehal pad	Religious Function
4	Square	Bed sheet	Aesthetic Function
5	Square	<i>Takbir</i> decoration	Aesthetic Function
6	Square	Dowry mat	Aesthetic Function
6	Square and by product	Souvenirs	Aesthetic Function
7	Square and rectangle	Events	Social Function
8	Square and rectangle	Wedding ceremony	Social Function
10	Square	Groom's cab	Social Function
11	Square and rectangle	"Nasi Temuan" ceremony	Symbolic Function

Source: Field Studies 2016 and 2017

Table 4.32 shows two designs in the shape of a square and a rectangle that refer to *tudung kelingkan*, which are *selayahs* and shawls that are used as head coverings, clothing, rehal pads, bed sheets, *takbir* decorations, souvenirs, dowry mats, social gatherings, wedding ceremonies, the bridegroom's cab and the ceremony of eating "nasi temuan". Eleven uses of the *kelingkan* embroidery technique were identified, and results indicate that these uses serve the cultural, aesthetic, religious, social, and symbolic functions in the Malay society.

a) Cultural Function

The term "cultural function" describes how clothing and scarves serve a particular cultural purpose in a society. In this research, emphasis is placed on *selayah kelingkan* and the shawl as head coverings. The primary purpose of clothing, including scarves, is to conceal the body, thus Malay people of all ages wear clothing. In the past, *tudung kelingkan* embroidery, a form of *kelingkan* embroidery, was used to cover the head during royal ceremonies. When participating in a ceremonial or a big ceremony during the Malacca Malay sultanate's rule, *kelingkan* embroidery was employed. Before approaching the Sultan, the ceremony of royal magnificence must be conducted in ceremonial attire. To cover the head, this *kelingkan* embroidery is employed. It is deemed disorderly if the dress code is not adhered to by not covering the head (Ali, 1990). The shawl and *selayah*, also known as the *keludung* or headscarf worn by Malay women in the past and now, are two different types of headwear made with *kelingkan* embroidery. In the state of Sarawak, *selayah* is more well-known, and on the peninsula, scarves are more popular. A *selendang kelingkan* is typically worn on the shoulder or just next to the shoulder. A photograph of Rane Margaret Brooke and a Malay woman—Rajah Puteh's wife—who was an upper-class Malay woman who covered her head

with the traditional kelingkan embroidery with gold thread—was discovered during field study at the Sarawak State Textile Museum. According to Margaret, the accessories, the selayah and the kelingkan scarf, came from Mekah, which are pieces of thin cotton fabric placed on an oval frame that is firmly embroidered with gold thread. In the Sarawak Textile Museum, there is information that states that most of the motifs found in the art of kelingkan embroidery are borrowed from textiles that have been woven or printed. The finishing of the side of the scarf or selayah also has a finishing with needle lace or better known now as the bamboo shoots. In the past, baju kurung and baju kebaya were also made with the needle lace motif. Nowadays, the majority of Malay people choose to wear scarves and selayah kelingkan.



Picture 4.29: This illustration of a Malay woman wearing a long kebaya and sarong songket was taken from a book in the Pahang State Museum board's official photo. The photograph of this woman can be seen on page 65 of Siti Zainon Ismail's book, "Malay Woven Textiles: The Beauty of Traditional Nusantara Culture" (1994)



Picture 4.30: Various Malay women wearing different-coloured *selayahs* and *selendang kelingkans*

Source: Field Research

b) Religious Function

In terms of attire, the kelingkan embroidery has a lot in common with the Islamic faith. To cover the head, or more precisely the “aurat”, a selayah kelingkan is worn. In the past, the art of kelingkan embroidery was used to cover the head and as a rehal lining or mat. For instance, there is a record through photographs that depicts the Sarawak Malay community participating in the Al-Quran khatam ceremony in 1950 while covering their heads with a shawl and a selayah by wearing “sarong jong” in the book of Malay woven textiles, The Beauty of Traditional Nusantara culture by (Ismail, 1990). Only photographs from the past can truly capture the beauty of wearing shawls and selayah, unlike today.



Picture 4.31: The Sarawak Malay community in the Al-Quran khatam ceremony in 1950 wearing a head covering with a shawl and *Selayah kelingkan* and wearing a sarong jong on page 11 of the book titled Study of Traditional Malay Textiles

Source: the book of Malay woven textiles The Beauty of Traditional Nusantara Culture by Ismail (1990).



Picture 4.32: Women in the olden days wearing *selayah kelingkan* at the Al-Quran khatam ceremony

Source: Picture taken from website

c) Aesthetic Function

According to Din (2016) aesthetics is aesthetics that refers to a technical term that brings a 'sense of beauty' or beauty in an art. Aesthetics also refers to the theory of aesthetics in the field of art in western thought. This aesthetic function refers to aesthetics in the design of apparel, shawls or *selayah*, bed decorations, decorations for drumming activities, and souvenirs, such as home wall decorations. All of this use aesthetics to demonstrate the use of *kelingkan* embroidery as a decoration that heightens the beauty of something or an event. As a result, it can be said that the *kelingkan* embroidery technique is employed to impart attractiveness and beauty. The art of *kelingkan* embroidery is also discovered in the form of

sheets, which are a personal collection of Kelantan embroiderer Nik Marhammah Binti Nik Idris, through field research done in Kelantan with Kelantan embroiderers. This aesthetic value can be observed in ornaments like sheet-based bed decorations.



Picture 4.33: Picture of a bedroom using a *kelingan* in 1965

Source: Field Study

When a public ceremony is held, the ornamentation of the *takbir* (drumming) in the stripes serves an aesthetic purpose. According to an official from the Sarawak Branch of Malaysian Handicraft Development Corporation., the practise of *kelingan* embroidery was once employed for *takbir* adornment in addition to Malay women's clothes. It is typically used to adorn the *takbir* when Malay community events, such as the drumming ritual, are held.

Kelingan embroidery is applied throughout the event with the goal of beautifying the stage, particularly the square-shaped shawl cloth used as a decoration behind the *takbir*. The stage is covered with *songket* fabric in addition to the *kelingan* scarf. A lot of *kelingan* is used to make the stage appear magnificent and opulent. However, with the advancement and modernity of Malay society today, the aesthetic function is also highlighted in the decoration of souvenirs such as home wall decorations. Souvenirs related to the art of *kelingan* embroidery are one of the innovations carried out by embroiderers to preserve the art of *kelingan* embroidery.

The *kelingan* embroidery that is created is similar to a wall decoration for a home, complete with a little kebaya clothing decorated with *kelingan* embroidery, a *kelingan selayah*, or *kelingan* scarf. The goal of this souvenir is to spread *kelingan* embroidery art throughout the Malay community. The cost of souvenirs is less than that of *selayah*, shawls, or clothing embroidered with *kelingan*, all of which are exclusive to the wealthy Malay population. The cost of *kelingan* embroidery depends on the complexity and intricacy of the pattern and can range from one thousand and more.



Picture 4.34: Souvenir items such as home wall decorations, tissue containers and small decorative pillows

Source: field study

d) Social Function

The term "social function" refers to the employment of the kelingkan during a ceremonial event to demonstrate status, wealth, beauty, and Malay customs. Because only family and wealthy people wore kelingkan in the past, the art of kelingkan embroidery also represents a person's status. With time, there have been adjustments, such as the ability for non-relatives or, more commonly, regular people, to wear kelingkan. This is due to the kelingkan symbolic meaning of the wearer's wealth and its limited use. Even though they are being created on a limited scale, the Malay people developed many Malay artworks in the past that are still in existence today. Women gathered for the celebration and engaged in embroidery-related activities. A collection of images depicting Malay women weaving, with particular reference to Picture 4.35, (Aziz, 2009). While this practise is still carried out now in a different way, kelingkan needlework is taught to the next generation through programmes or seminars, or it is used to boost the revenue of the Malay community. This may also help preserve embroidery as a craft and prevent it from being swept away by the tide of modernity.



Picture 4.35: Malay women doing embroidery activities

Source: Aziz, 2009. Appearance and Style of Malay Clothing. UKM: Bangi

The wedding, which includes the bridal gown and the ritual of visiting the in-law's home, is the second social event. The most well-known social function of the *kelingkan* embroidery craft is still practised today, whether it is for weddings by donning a *kelingkan* scarf in Malaysia or a Sarawakian Malay bridal gown. For the people of the state of Sarawak, the bride wears a *selayah kelingkan* as a head covering or a wedding dress called a "Gajah Olen" during the wedding. The *selayah* is pinned to the bride's shoulders and is only seen on the bride's shoulders and back. The Semanjung Malay community wears either a conventional *baju kurung* or a *songket* attire while using a *kelingkan* scarf as a head covering for weddings. Typically, there will be a visit to the in-law's residence after the wedding, and to appear more courteous, the community also wears *kelingkan* embroidery to look more opulent and distinctive than on regular days.

Carrying the bride and groom to the marriage ceremony, is a social duty based on custom, particularly in the Malay community of Sarawak. A "cab" on which the groom is carried to the wedding ceremony serves as a "door opener". The groom should provide the bride her "cab". A fight or a martial arts fight will take place here to capture the bearer, and the man must defend and hand it over to the woman, and the wedding will then continue with the ceremony of eating "nasi temuan". According to an official at the Malaysian Handicrafts Development Corporation, Sarawak Branch, one of the unique aspects of *kelingkan* embroidery art in Sarawak is the nasi temuan ceremony found at Sarawakian Malay weddings, which is passed down from generation to generation. This ceremony is only performed by wealthy people who performed the "makan bersuap" known as adat. In olden days, it was believed that if the woman "feeds" first in the rice-eating ceremony, the man would be controlled by his wife, and if the man "feeds" first, the man would become the head of the family. This was the belief of our forefathers in the past, but there is no such belief in Islam.



Picture 4.36: Wedding photos that Malay women wearing *kelingkan* in the past and now. *Kelingkan* is worn by the bride and the guests attending the wedding ceremony
Source: field study.



Picture 4.37: Pictures of the groom's "cab" for the wedding ceremony

Source: field study

e) Symbolic Function

The final function is a symbolic function, in which the art of *kelingkan* embroidery can be associated with certain symbolic meanings such as suppleness, delicacy, splendour, and femininity. These symbolic values are closely related to clothing because the art of *kelingkan* embroidery is very important in Malay society, particularly among Malay women. Historically, society did a variety of things that each had their own meaning and symbolism. For example, wearing *selayah* to cover the head symbolises wealth because the art of *kelingkan* embroidery costs RM1000 and more today, and in the past, only the king's relatives wore the art of *kelingkan* embroidery. This demonstrates that only people with high incomes can own the art of *kelingkan* embroidery because it is a very valuable and expensive art.

Conclusion

To summarise the art of *kelingkan* embroidery, it is a Malay community art with unique characteristics. The production of *kelingkan* embroidery emphasises many aspects of the structure's beauty and the variety of decoration. The analysis of the function of the *kelingkan* in the Malay community should be studied in order to provide knowledge that the Malay community in the past created a handicraft art that had its own purpose and function because the Malay community has a soul and a high level of expertise in everything it creates. The privilege of *kelingkan* embroidery art should be preserved through a variety of programmes, such as holding *kelingkan* embroidery seminar classes for the Malay community as a source of income rather than just to gain knowledge, because the *kelingkan* embroidery art can be done at home and can also be used as an activity or hobby in the spare time. A *kelingkan* scarf can cost up to a thousand ringgit or more. If this proposal is implemented, it has the potential to eliminate poverty, fill free time, generate income, and serve as a part-time job for the young generation, SPM graduates, single mothers, the unemployed, and the elderly. All of the efforts made allow the art of *kelingkan* embroidery to live on and give birth to a new generation of embroiderers throughout Malaysia, not just in the states of Sarawak, Selangor, and Kelantan.

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