



Muntal: Traditional Indigenous Hand Embroidery in Namarabar, Peñarrubia, Abra

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ABSTRACT

Hand embroidery (muntal) is a traditional Indigenous Knowledge System and Practice (IKSP) in Namarabar, Peñarrubia, Abra, reflecting the community's cultural heritage, creativity, and connection to its environment. This study aimed to document and describe the practice of traditional hand embroidery, including the materials, approaches, techniques, designs, and cultural meanings associated with the practice. A descriptive-ethnographic research design was employed, using purposive sampling and key informant techniques. Data were gathered through observation, interviews, and document analysis and were analyzed through descriptive interpretation to identify significant themes related to the practice. The findings revealed that hand embroidery requires patience, dedication, and hard work, with accessibility of materials contributing to efficient production. Traditional timbey thread is commonly used, while Monaco thread is preferred for bulk orders. Various approaches and techniques are employed depending on the embroidery design. The most common design is kuko dekket, while other designs include the scarecrow, sun, rice plant, mountain, flower, lizard, frog or tadpole, river, star, horse, eye or diamond, and dancing prince or princess. These designs embody symbolic, historical, and cultural meanings, with some representing geographical features of Namarabar, Peñarrubia, Abra. The study concludes that traditional hand embroidery is an important cultural practice that contributes to the preservation and transmission of Indigenous knowledge and cultural identity. It is recommended that a specialized curriculum be developed under the Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) program or the Technical-Vocational and Livelihood (TVL) track to facilitate the transmission of IKSP on traditional hand embroidery. Further research is also recommended to document the approaches and techniques associated with different patterns and designs and to communicate the findings to relevant agencies for further evaluation and validation.

Keywords: hand embroidery; muntal; Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices; cultural heritage.

INTRODUCTION

The Philippines boasts a rich cultural heritage, particularly in the Cordillera region, where traditional knowledge, skills, and practices remain integral to community life. Among these are traditional weaving and embroidery, which historically served as forms of clothing and cultural expression but are increasingly reserved for special occasions. The preservation of these traditional crafts is important not only for maintaining cultural identity but also for sustaining the knowledge and skills passed down through generations. However, modernization, changing lifestyles, and the availability of commercially produced textiles have contributed to the decline of some traditional embroidery and weaving practices.

Several studies have emphasized the cultural and economic significance of preserving traditional embroidery and weaving. Berondo (2023) and Madrid (2017) examined the decline of panubok embroidery and traditional textiles, associating their diminishing practice with industrial and social changes and proposing strategies such as cultural education and market promotion. Similarly, Olapane et al. (2021) highlighted the importance of training programs and financial support in sustaining traditional embroidery practices. Salvador-Amores et al. (2021) examined the revitalization of Cordilleran weaving and emphasized community-driven initiatives, including the Cordillera Textiles Project (CordiTex), as mechanisms for sustaining and promoting indigenous



textile traditions. In another study, Arce et al. (2024) explored the experiences of young male embroiderers in Lumban, Laguna, highlighting the socio-economic value of embroidery and its continuing relevance despite the increasing use of modern and computerized embroidery techniques.

Embroidery, referred to as muntal in Tingguian and burda in Ilocano, is a traditional craft involving ornamental needlework. Historically, embroidered clothing and textiles have served not only functional purposes but also as expressions of social status, identity, and cultural meaning. Across the Philippines, various indigenous communities continue to practice traditional embroidery and textile-making, including Itneg communities in Abra and the T'boli of Mindanao. These practices reflect the creativity, history, environment, and cultural values of the communities that produce them.

Despite the cultural significance of traditional embroidery, the continuity of the specific muntal tradition practiced in Namarabar, Peñarrubia, Abra, raises concerns. During the conduct of the study, only a limited number of practitioners were identified as practicing this particular form of embroidery, with the two key informants serving as important sources of knowledge and skills transmission. Other embroidery practitioners exist in Abra; however, the designs and patterns documented in Namarabar differ from those practiced elsewhere in the province. This distinction highlights the importance of documenting the localized techniques, patterns, and cultural meanings associated with Namarabar's embroidery tradition. The limited number of identified practitioners underscores the need to document the practice and support opportunities for its transmission to younger generations.

In response to this concern, this study aimed to document and describe the traditional hand embroidery practice in Namarabar, Peñarrubia, Abra, particularly its processes, materials, techniques, patterns, and cultural meanings. Through interviews, observation, documentation, and review of relevant publications, the study sought to establish a body of knowledge that may contribute to the preservation and transmission of this Indigenous Knowledge System and Practice (IKSP).

Education may serve as an important strategy for sustaining traditional embroidery by communicating knowledge about its processes, cultural significance, and symbolism to younger generations. Through appropriate educational integration, learners may develop greater awareness and appreciation of their local cultural heritage. Thus, the findings of this study may provide a basis for exploring the integration of traditional hand embroidery into basic education, particularly in Junior High School under the Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) program and in Senior High School as an elective or specialized offering under the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) track. Ultimately, the study seeks to contribute to the continued preservation, appreciation, and transmission of the traditional muntal embroidery practice from one generation to the next.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-ethnographic research design. The descriptive component provided a systematic account of the traditional hand embroidery (muntal) practices in Namarabar, Peñarrubia, Abra, while the ethnographic approach facilitated the documentation and interpretation of observable embroidery processes, techniques, designs, and cultural meanings.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The study employed purposive sampling to select key informants with direct knowledge and experience of the traditional hand embroidery (muntal) practiced in Namarabar, Peñarrubia, Abra. The key informants were Mrs. Norma A. Mina and her daughter, Josephine A. Mina, who were identified through community leaders. During the conduct of the study, they were the only practitioners identified as actively practicing this particular embroidery tradition in the locality. Mrs. Norma A. Mina is also a respected elder and culture bearer whose knowledge and experience contribute to the documentation of the tradition's materials, techniques, designs,



and cultural meanings. Both informants provided detailed accounts and demonstrations of the embroidery practice. Although their familial relationship and the limited number of participants restrict the diversity of perspectives represented, their specialized knowledge was directly relevant to documenting this localized cultural practice. The findings are therefore interpreted within the context of Namarabar rather than as representative of all embroidery traditions in Abra.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using an interview guide, observation, and document analysis. The interview guide focused on the processes, materials, techniques, patterns, designs, and cultural significance of traditional hand embroidery. Audio and video recordings were used, with the consent of the key informants, to accurately document the interviews and embroidery demonstrations. A smartphone was used as the recording device. The recorded interviews served as the basis for transcription, translation from Ilocano to English, coding, and subsequent analysis.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data-gathering process was conducted in several stages. First, the necessary research approval and informed consent were secured before the conduct of the study. Approval was obtained from the Schools Division Superintendent, while Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) was secured from the appropriate authorities and participants.

The initial interview was conducted during an ethnographic research seminar at Mt. Carmel, Pidigan, Abra, where Mrs. Norma Mina shared her knowledge and experience in traditional hand embroidery. A follow-up interview and one-day immersion were subsequently conducted in Namarabar, Peñarrubia, Abra, with Josephine Mina. During the immersion, the researcher observed the embroidery process and documented relevant practices, materials, designs, and techniques. Additional interviews were conducted to clarify information and ensure the accuracy and consistency of the gathered data.

Following data collection, the recorded interviews were transcribed and translated from Ilocano into English. The responses and observations were then organized and coded to facilitate the identification of recurring concepts and significant themes.

Data Analysis Procedure

The study employed thematic analysis to examine the qualitative data obtained from interviews, direct observation, and document analysis. The recorded interviews were transcribed and translated from Ilocano into English, after which the responses and observation notes were organized according to the research objectives. The analysis involved repeated reading of the transcripts and field notes to identify information relevant to the materials, processes, techniques, patterns, and cultural meanings of traditional muntal embroidery. Significant statements and descriptions were assigned initial codes, which were subsequently reviewed and grouped into related categories. These categories were examined to identify recurring concepts and develop the major themes presented in the Results and Discussion. Observational documentation of embroidery demonstrations was used to describe the procedures and physical characteristics of selected designs. The resulting interpretations were organized into a narrative account of the embroidery practice in Namarabar, Peñarrubia, Abra. Because the study relied on two related key informants, the findings were interpreted within the context of their accounts and the available observational documentation, with recognition of the limitations these places on the diversity of perspectives represented.

Translation and Preservation of Cultural Terminology

The interview responses were translated from Ilocano into English for analysis and presentation. Original local terms were retained where culturally appropriate, particularly for embroidery materials, techniques, and designs, and English explanations were provided to convey their meanings within the context of the practice. Following the analysis, the study's findings were presented to a group of elders from the Municipality of



Peñarrubia and a group of Indigenous Peoples (IP) experts for review and discussion. This process provided an opportunity to examine the documented practices, cultural interpretations, and significance of the embroidery tradition in relation to local and Indigenous knowledge. Although the study did not employ a separate formal translation-validation procedure, the presentation of the findings to these groups provided an opportunity for community-based and expert review. Interpretations of culturally specific terminology and symbolic meanings should nevertheless remain grounded in the informants' accounts and be subject to further validation where necessary.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the conduct of the study. Research approval and informed consent were secured before data collection, including approval from the Schools Division Superintendent and Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) from the appropriate authorities and participants. The key informants were informed of the purpose of the study and consented to participate in interviews and embroidery demonstrations, including the recording and disclosure of their identities. Participation was voluntary, and the information gathered was used for educational and research purposes.

As the study documents Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices, particular consideration was given to the cultural context of the knowledge shared by the informants. Local terminology, embroidery techniques, designs, and cultural interpretations were documented with recognition of the knowledge holders who communicated them. The use of the documented information for educational materials, cultural promotion, or other dissemination activities should respect community ownership and be undertaken in consultation with the relevant cultural practitioners and appropriate community authorities. Further use or dissemination of culturally sensitive knowledge should follow applicable community protocols and the scope of the permissions obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of interview, observation, and document data generated three major themes describing the traditional hand embroidery (muntal) practice in Namarabar, Peñarrubia, Abra: (1) the materials and processes involved in hand embroidery, (2) traditional patterns and designs, and (3) the cultural, historical, and symbolic meanings associated with these designs. The findings demonstrate that muntal is not merely a decorative craft but an Indigenous Knowledge System and Practice (IKSP) that reflects the community's skills, environment, agricultural activities, history, and cultural beliefs.

Materials and Processes of Traditional Hand Embroidery

The practice of traditional hand embroidery begins with the preparation of materials needed for the activity. The key informants identified the commonly used materials as a needle (dagum), thread or traditional timbey (sinulid), bee wax (al-lid), fabric (abel/inabel), and scissors (get-teng/kartib). These materials are essential in producing the identified embroidery patterns and designs.

The use of bee wax helps prevent the thread from becoming loose and facilitates its movement through the needle. The informants also indicated that the size of the needle is considered when selecting materials, as a needle with an appropriate opening makes threading easier without damaging the abel. Traditional thread is commonly used because of its appearance and suitability for the fabric. However, Monaco thread is also used, particularly for bulk orders, because producing traditional thread from cotton or kapasanglay involves a lengthy and delicate process.

Table 1. Materials Used in Traditional Hand Embroidery

Material	Local Term	Purpose/Use
Needle	<i>Dagum</i>	Used to pass the thread through the fabric
Thread	<i>Timbey/Sinulid</i>	Main material used to create embroidery patterns

Bee wax	<i>Al-lid</i>	Used to prevent the thread from becoming loose and to facilitate stitching
Fabric	<i>Abel/Inabel</i>	Base material on which the designs are embroidered
Scissors	<i>Get-teng / Kartib</i>	Used for cutting thread and other materials

The use of these materials demonstrates that traditional hand embroidery involves practical knowledge developed through experience and repeated practice. The selection of appropriate materials, particularly the application of bee wax and the consideration of needle size, reflects the practitioners' familiarity with the properties of the materials and their effects on the quality of the finished product.

The use of Monaco thread for bulk orders further demonstrates the practitioners' ability to adapt traditional practices to current production demands. While traditional timbey remains valued for its appearance and suitability for abel, the availability of commercially produced thread provides an alternative when larger quantities are required. This adaptation suggests that the continuity of muntal involves both the preservation of traditional techniques and the practical adjustment of selected materials.

The informants described hand embroidery as a labor-intensive activity requiring patience, skill, and careful execution. The degree of difficulty varies according to the pattern and design. Embroidery is generally produced according to customer preference rather than being prepared in large quantities. Samples are instead prepared for display, trade fairs, and marketing purposes to minimize material waste.

These findings indicate that muntal requires more than the ability to produce decorative stitches. It involves knowledge of materials, hand coordination, pattern execution, and production decisions. The labor-intensive nature of the practice also emphasizes the importance of the practitioners' time and skill in maintaining the quality of the finished embroidery.

The findings are consistent with Berondo (2023) and Madrid (2017), who documented challenges faced by traditional embroidery and textile practices due to modernization and changing production systems. Olapane et al. (2021) likewise emphasized the importance of training and support in sustaining embroidery traditions. The present study reinforces these observations by showing that the continuity of muntal depends not only on the availability of materials but also on the continued transmission of practical knowledge and skills.

Step-by-Step Procedure for Selected Designs

The key informants demonstrated the procedures used in creating selected embroidery designs. Video recordings and direct observation were used to document the sequence of stitches and techniques. The documentation revealed that each design has an identifiable arrangement of stitches and a particular sequence of execution.

Dancing Princess (Agtadtadek)

The dancing princess design is created from the reverse side of the abel. The embroidery begins with the head, followed by the left and right arms, body, legs, and skirt. The head and body are formed in a diamond-like shape with a central longitudinal line. The arms and legs are embroidered symmetrically. For the female figure, a palda is added, while the corresponding male figure uses a baag.



Figure 1. Dancing Princess (Agtadtadek)

Kuko Dekket

The kuko dekket, or fingernail design, is commonly embroidered along the edges or seams of the inabel. The design begins with a central backstitch, followed by progressively shorter stitches on both sides of the central line. The side stitches are repeated alternately to form the fingernail-like pattern. The thread is secured at the back of the fabric after completing the design.



Figure 2. Kuko Dekket (Fingernail Design)

River (Karayan)

The river design is created using diagonal stitches. The thread is inserted from the back of the fabric and pulled through before diagonal stitches are made at relatively even intervals. The stitches are connected to form a continuous zigzag pattern representing the river.



Figure 3. Karayan (River Design)

Rice Plant (Paggey)

The rice plant design uses a technique similar to the kuko dekket, but the stitches are longer and more widely spaced. The resulting pattern represents a rice plant.



Figure 4. Paggey (Rice Plant Design)

Lizard (Aluti-it)

The lizard design begins with the head, followed by the body, arms, legs, tail, and central line. A looped stitch is used to form the head, while vertical, horizontal, and diagonal stitches are used to create the body and limbs. The thread is secured at the back of the fabric after the design is completed.



Figure 5. Aluti-it (Lizard Design)

The documented procedures demonstrate that traditional hand embroidery involves established techniques that are learned through observation, demonstration, and repeated practice. The informants' ability to explain and demonstrate the sequence of stitches indicates that the practice contains organized knowledge that can be documented and transmitted to other practitioners.

The use of distinct stitching techniques for each design also supports the understanding of muntal as an Indigenous Knowledge System and Practice. The knowledge is not limited to the finished patterns but includes the procedures, materials, and skills required to produce them. Documenting these procedures is therefore important for preserving practical knowledge that may become difficult to recover if fewer practitioners continue the tradition.

Patterns and Designs

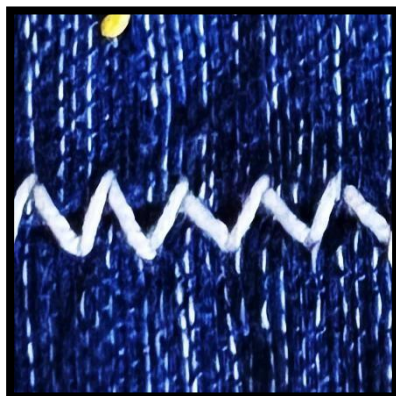
The informants identified several traditional embroidery patterns and designs used in Namarabar. The most frequently embroidered design is the kuko dekket. Other identified designs include the scarecrow, sun, rice plant, mountain, flower, lizard, frog or tadpole, river, star, horse, diamond or eye, and dancing prince or princess.

Table 2. Traditional Embroidery Designs Identified in Namarabar

No.	Design	Local Name	Description/Representation
1	Fingernail	<i>Kuko Dekket</i>	Fingernail-like pattern
2	Scarecrow	<i>Parabugaw ti billit</i>	Scarecrow in the field
3	Sun	<i>Init</i>	Sun-shaped pattern
4	Rice plant	<i>Paggey</i>	Rice plant
5	Mountain	<i>Bantay</i>	Mountain
6	Flower	<i>Sabong</i>	Flower
7	Lizard	<i>Aluti-it</i>	Lizard
8	Frog/Tadpole	<i>Tokak/Bayyek</i>	Frog or tadpole
9	River	<i>Karayan</i>	River
10	Star	<i>Bitwen</i>	Star
11	Dancing prince/princess	<i>Agtadtadek</i>	Dancing male or female figure
12	Diamond/Eye	<i>Matamata/Salaknod</i>	Diamond or eye
13	Horse	<i>Sinankabayo</i>	Horse-like design

The variety of designs demonstrates that muntal serves as a medium through which community knowledge and experience are expressed. The identified patterns include representations of agricultural activities, geographical features, animals, celestial objects, and human figures. This variety suggests that the surrounding environment and everyday experiences have influenced the visual forms incorporated into the embroidery tradition.

The frequent use of kuko dekket also indicates that some designs have become more established in the community's embroidery practice than others. Its placement along the edges and seams of inabel reflects its continued practical and decorative use. In contrast, the other designs provide a broader range of representations that may be used according to the purpose of the fabric, customer preference, or the practitioner's familiarity with the pattern.



River (karayan)



Stars (bitwen)



Tadpole (bayyek)



Dancing Prince/Princess



Lizard (Alluti-it)



Rice Plant (pagey) (agtdadek)

Figure 6. Selected Traditional Embroidery Designs in Namarabar

These findings support Salvador-Amores et al. (2021), who emphasized the relationship between Cordilleran textile traditions, community identity, and cultural knowledge. The findings also complement Berondo (2023) and Madrid (2017), who recognized traditional textile practices as important components of cultural heritage requiring conscious preservation and revitalization.

The documentation of these designs is significant because it preserves both the visual forms and the local terminology associated with them. Recording the names and representations of the designs provides a reference for future cultural education and documentation activities while recognizing the knowledge of the practitioners who continue to maintain the tradition.

Cultural and Symbolic Meanings of the Designs

The findings showed that the identified embroidery designs are associated with specific cultural, historical,



environmental, and symbolic meanings. The meanings were described by the key informants based on their knowledge and experience of the traditional embroidery practice.

The dancing prince or princess (agtadtadek) represents celebration and thanksgiving, particularly in relation to rainfall and agricultural activities. The star (bitwen) is associated with light at night, while the tadpole or frog (bayyek) represents fertility and abundance, including fertility of people and the capacity of the soil to produce a plentiful harvest.

The key informants associated the matamata/salaknod design with the eye of a goddess who observes good actions. This interpretation reflects the cultural understanding communicated by the practitioners during the study. The design may therefore be understood as carrying a cultural meaning related to observation and moral conduct, as explained by the informants.

The meanings associated with agtadtadek, bitwen, bayyek, and matamata/salaknod demonstrate that traditional embroidery carries cultural beliefs and values beyond the physical appearance of the designs. The association of the dancing figure with celebration and thanksgiving reflects the importance of rainfall and agricultural activities in community life. Similarly, the association of the tadpole or frog with fertility and abundance connects the design with the community's understanding of reproduction and agricultural productivity.

Table 3. Cultural and Symbolic Meanings of Selected Designs

Design	Cultural/Symbolic Meaning
<i>Agtadtadek</i>	Celebration, thanksgiving, and joy associated with rainfall
<i>Bitwen</i>	Light and guidance at night
<i>Bayyek/Tokak</i>	Fertility and abundance
<i>Matamata/Salaknod</i>	Eye of a goddess that sees good actions
<i>Bantay</i>	Mountainous geographical features
<i>Karayan</i>	Sinalang River
<i>Paggey</i>	Rice and agricultural production
<i>Sinankabayo</i> (Horse)	Historical transportation, dignity, and social status
<i>K u k o D e k k e t</i>	Traditional decorative pattern commonly used on <i>abel</i>

The interpretation of the diamond or eye as the eye of a goddess that observes good actions further demonstrate the symbolic dimension of the embroidery practice. The design represents a cultural belief concerning moral conduct and observation. These meanings indicate that muntal functions as a form of cultural expression through which beliefs and values are represented in material form.

Several designs correspond to geographical and environmental features of Namarabar and Peñarrubia. The mountain (bantay) represents the mountainous terrain, the river (karayan) represents the Sinalang River, and the rice plant (paggey) represents rice as an important agricultural product of the community.

The relationship between the designs and the local environment suggests that embroidery serves as a means of representing places and resources that are familiar to the community. The Sinalang River, mountainous terrain, and rice production are not only physical features but also part of the community's everyday experiences and livelihood. Their inclusion in the embroidery tradition demonstrates how environmental knowledge may be expressed through cultural materials.

The sinankabayo or horse represents transportation during earlier periods when motorized vehicles were not yet available. It is also associated with dignity and social status during that period. This finding demonstrates that traditional embroidery preserves historical memories of transportation and social life. The horse design provides an example of how changes in community conditions may be reflected in the meanings attached to traditional patterns.



The findings further indicate that embroidered inabel was historically associated with economic status. Possession of abel was considered an indication of wealth, while more elaborate embroidery increased the value and cost of the fabric.

These historical and socio-economic meanings demonstrate that traditional embroidery provides insights into the social and economic conditions of the community across generations. The designs preserve not only artistic techniques but also memories of livelihood, transportation, agriculture, social status, and community experiences.

The findings are consistent with Arce et al. (2024), who highlighted the continuing economic value of embroidery. The present study suggests that maintaining the practice may provide opportunities for cultural entrepreneurship while strengthening recognition and appreciation of local heritage. However, the cultural meanings and community ownership associated with the designs should remain central to any effort to promote or commercialize the products.

Implications for Cultural Preservation and Education

The findings demonstrate that traditional hand embroidery in Namarabar consists of established materials, techniques, patterns, and meanings that are transmitted through practice and experience. The documented designs incorporate representations of the community's environment, agricultural activities, historical experiences, and cultural beliefs.

Since traditional embroidery involves identifiable materials, procedures, techniques, patterns, and cultural meanings, these components can potentially be organized into learning activities for younger generations. Integrating local embroidery into Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) or the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) track may provide learners with opportunities to acquire practical skills while developing awareness of their community's cultural heritage.

Such educational integration may also address the concern that embroidery knowledge is concentrated among older practitioners. Rather than treating traditional embroidery solely as a craft for production, an educational approach can position it as a source of cultural knowledge and identity. This is consistent with previous studies that identify cultural education and skills training as potential strategies for sustaining traditional embroidery and textile practices.

The documentation of the identified designs may also serve as a reference for future cultural preservation programs. Local government units, schools, cultural institutions, and other relevant agencies may collaborate with cultural practitioners to develop documentation materials, skills-training activities, exhibitions, and community-based learning programs.

However, curriculum integration and preservation initiatives should be undertaken in consultation with cultural practitioners and appropriate community authorities. The documented designs, techniques, terminology, and meanings should be validated by knowledgeable members of the community before they are formally incorporated into instructional materials. This can help ensure that the transmission of IKSP remains culturally accurate and respectful of community ownership and knowledge.

Preservation efforts should also avoid focusing solely on the commercialization of the designs. Cultural meaning and community ownership should remain central to any program involving the reproduction, teaching, marketing, or promotion of Namarabar embroidery. Providing opportunities for younger practitioners to learn directly from cultural knowledge holders may help facilitate intergenerational transmission and reduce the risk of losing traditional knowledge.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study involved two key informants, Mrs. Norma A. Mina and Josephine A. Mina, who were selected because of their direct knowledge and practice of the traditional hand embroidery (muntal) documented in



Namarabar, Peñarrubia, Abra. During the conduct of the study, they were the only practitioners identified as actively practicing this particular embroidery tradition in the locality. Mrs. Norma A. Mina's role as a respected elder and culture bearer further contributed to the documentation of its techniques, designs, and cultural meanings. Nevertheless, the limited number of informants and their familial relationship may restrict the diversity of perspectives represented. The findings primarily reflect their knowledge and experiences and should not be generalized to all embroidery practitioners or community members in Namarabar.

The study focused specifically on the muntal tradition documented in Namarabar. Although other embroidery practitioners exist in Abra, their designs and patterns may differ from those documented in this study. Consequently, the findings are intended to describe and preserve the specific practices and cultural knowledge associated with Namarabar rather than provide a comprehensive comparison of embroidery traditions throughout the province.

Some of the information relied on the recollections and explanations of the key informants. Historical interpretations and symbolic meanings may therefore reflect the knowledge transmitted within their families and community and may require further validation through additional cultural documentation and consultation with other knowledge holders. Furthermore, the study documented selected embroidery procedures and designs but did not conduct a comparative analysis of techniques across different practitioners or communities. Future studies may examine variations in embroidery techniques, changes in designs over time, and the perspectives of younger generations regarding the continuity of the practice.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that traditional hand embroidery (muntal) in Namarabar, Peñarrubia, Abra is a significant Indigenous Knowledge System and Practice that reflects the community's cultural heritage, creativity, history, and connection to its environment. The practice requires patience, skill, meticulous effort, and dedication, with the proper organization and accessibility of materials contributing to efficient production. Traditional timbey thread remains commonly used, while Monaco thread is preferred for bulk orders, demonstrating the practitioners' adaptation to practical production needs while maintaining the essential practice of hand embroidery.

The study further documented various approaches and techniques associated with different embroidery designs, with kuko dekket identified as the most common design. Other documented designs include the scarecrow, sun, rice plant, mountain, flower, lizard, frog or tadpole, river, star, horse, eye or diamond, and dancing prince or princess. These designs are not merely decorative; they convey cultural, historical, and symbolic meanings. Several patterns represent elements of the community's environment, livelihood, beliefs, and historical experiences, including the mountains, Sinalang River, rice cultivation, traditional transportation, and cultural concepts of celebration, fertility, guidance, and social status.

The findings emphasize the importance of documenting and transmitting traditional hand embroidery knowledge, particularly as specialized knowledge and skills may become increasingly concentrated among older practitioners. Integrating this local IKSP into appropriate educational and community-based programs may provide opportunities for younger generations to learn the skills, techniques, designs, and cultural meanings associated with muntal. Such efforts should be undertaken in consultation with cultural practitioners and community authorities to ensure cultural accuracy, respect, and community ownership of the knowledge.

It is therefore recommended that a specialized learning program be explored under the Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) program or the Technical-Vocational and Livelihood (TVL) track to facilitate the transmission of traditional hand embroidery knowledge and skills. Community-based documentation, demonstrations, exhibitions, and training activities may likewise be undertaken to support cultural preservation. Further research is recommended to document the specific techniques used for other embroidery designs, examine variations in patterns and meanings among practitioners, and explore the perspectives of younger generations regarding the continuity of the practice. The documented findings may also be shared



with relevant cultural, educational, and government agencies for further evaluation, validation, and possible support for the preservation and transmission of this local cultural heritage.

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