

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

THE USE AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF '*LOWEGYA*' CLOTH  
AMONG DAGARA IN THE NANDOM TRADITIONAL AREA



THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL  
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DEGREE IN HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION.

JUNE 2020



## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature ..... Date .....

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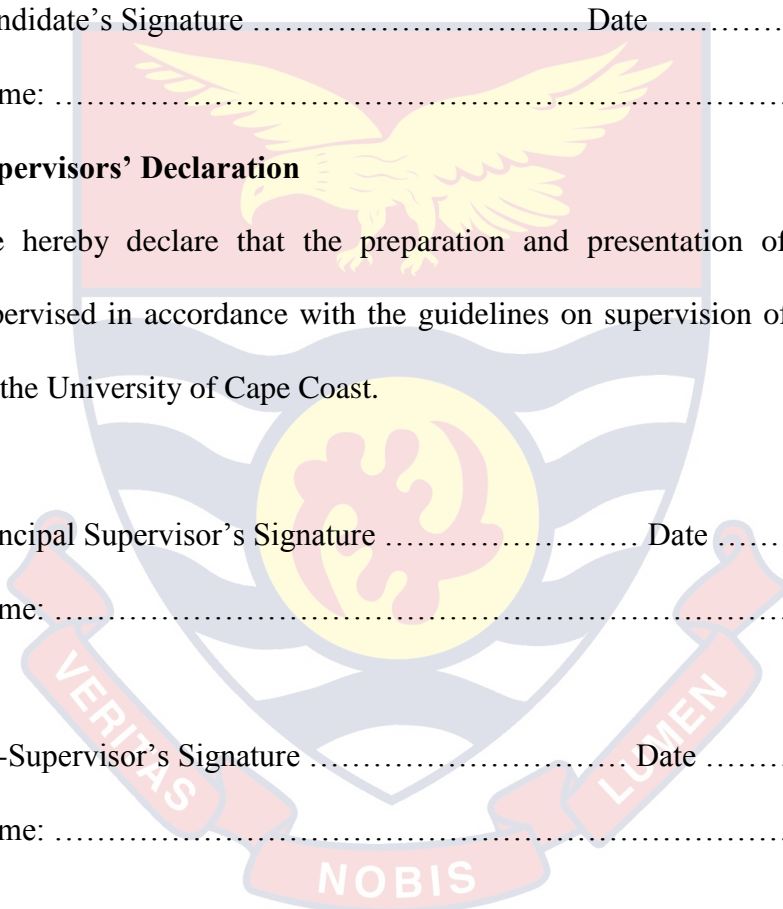
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## ABSTRACT

*'Lowegya'* as a traditional cloth in the Nandom district of Ghana has been introduced decades ago and passed from generation to generation. Through its use on ceremonial occasions, information about the cloth is communicated to observers. Using the qualitative method of study, an interview guide was used to investigate the cultural significance of Dagara traditional cloth *'Lowegya'* in the Nandom district of Ghana, and the factors inhibiting its recent use during ceremonial occasions in the district. The study made involved Dagara people in the Nandom district using multi-stage methods of sampling techniques; lottery random sampling was used to select the communities for data collection, purposive and convenience sampling were used to select the participants. The study showed that *'Lowegya'* as a traditional cloth is an ancestral cloth produced by their ancestors and due to its history and numerous significance, the people of Nandom district of Ghana deem it necessary to use this cloth during their occasions. It was also revealed that due to technology, migration and taste in modern fashion, the traditional cloth is losing its cultural value. Modern techniques of weaving were also noticed to have affected the strips, colours used in weaving, and loss of some of the *'Lowegya'* cloths; *Kpognali, kaakublu* among others as they seem to be archaic. With regard to the above, it was recommended that *'Lowegya'* as a traditional cloth should be used at all ceremonial occasions in the district. It was also recommended that as part of the educational curriculum, traditional cloth as in culture should be taught in schools so that the younger ones will get to know of their traditional cloths.

## KEY WORDS

Culture

Dagara

Dagara Traditional cloth

Occasions requiring traditional cloth

Significance of Dagara traditional cloth

Symbolism of Dagara traditional cloth



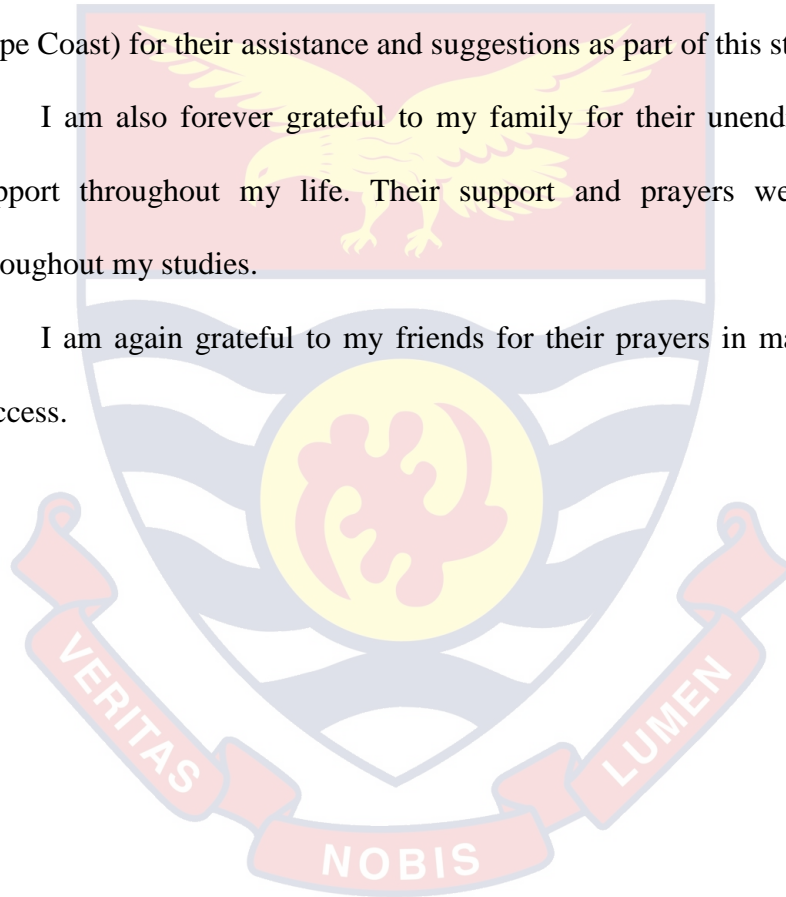
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## DEDICATION

To my family



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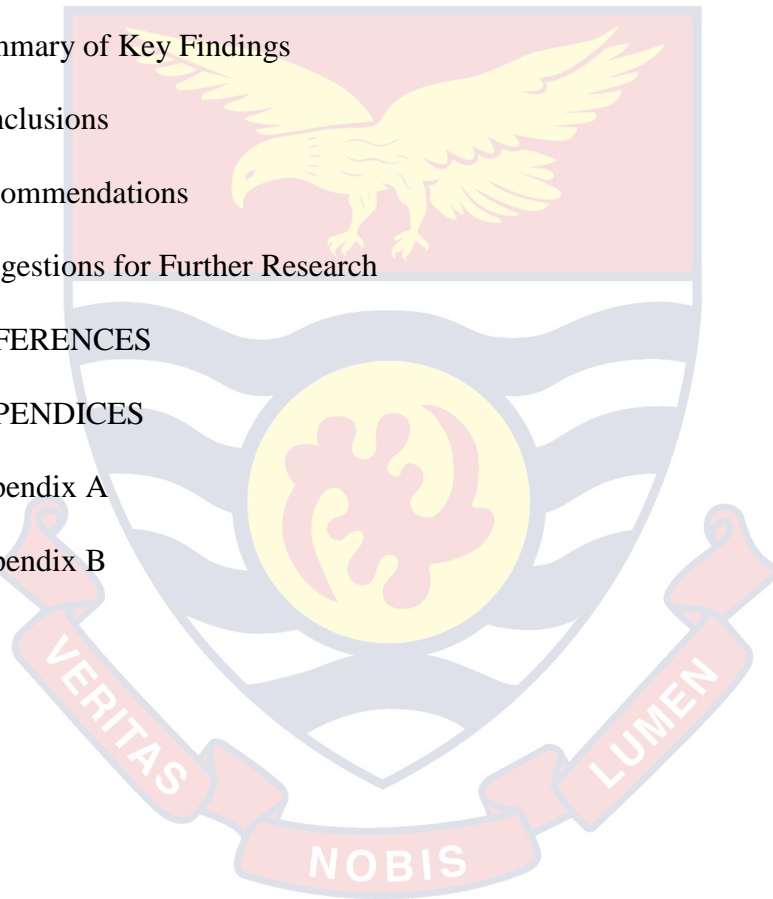


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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background to the Study

Traditional cloth is an ancestral cloth used in preserving and protecting the cultural identity/heritage of a particular group or society. Bohn (2004) states that, cloth is a valuable material which whether we like it or not demands our attention in all occasions and prompting our cultural knowhow. Traditional cloth should therefore be of historical link as they root from our ancestors and are used during special occasions such as; marriage ceremonies, chieftaincy activities, festivals and casually in few areas among various cultures in Ghana and other countries but different from those used for daily activities (Adjei & Osei-Sarfo, 2016; Abdulai, Mohammed & Kwadwo, 2018). A traditional cloth may possess features which differ from those used casually and for daily activities and for this reason, they are often treated with special care and attention. Worldwide, every culture has a cloth used in remembering their ancestors and history and this could be woven or printed.

Traditional cloth acts as a medium of communicating cultural values, norms and identity of a particular society or group of people (Crane & Bovone, 2006) to other tribes or their observers. This cloth also reflects our class or status associated with the society (Dzramedo, Ahiabor & Gbadegbe, 2013). Traditional cloth as Akinbileje (2014, p-627) states “symbolizes the cultural practices of people in the society bounded by the same geographical location, sharing the same cultural values and norms”. Traditional cloth is a valuable fabric which in its

historical sense will forever remain as part of our life due to its significance and cultural identity-making (Essel & Amissah, 2015). Generally, it can be seen from the above that traditional cloth portrays excitement during festival, chieftaincy, marriage celebration and sorrow during funerals for the loss of a dear one.

Culture can be static or dynamic and this implies that the use of a traditional cloth can either change or remain unchanged. As the society grows, new knowledge and pattern of lifestyles might be adopted from other cultures and this is inculcated into the culture of the society and it affects the state and use of their traditional cloth. As Alenuma (2002) alludes, the culture of a particular society undergoes changes due to migration, education and Christianity. Okpokunu, Agbontaen-Eghafona and Ojo (2005) also added that, in Nigeria for example; Benin had a rich traditional dress used for their occasions but recent factors have delineated such rich culture and they have so far been unable to revive this dress form. These factors affect the pattern of weave, designs and continuity in the use of traditional cloth for various occasions (Dzramedo, 2009). These factors are either external or internal and they exist in every culture, and this depends on the inhabitants to deal with them as they are the agents who allow these factors to exist among them. These factors could be either external or internal and may not affect only the cultural use of the traditional cloth but can delineate their cultural heritage.

Culture is the study of a group of people or an organization, their language, norms, rites, values, and togetherness as one society (Gregory, 1983). Traditional cloth becomes a basic necessity in the lives of *Dagara* people as it forms part of



their culture. It is then a norm among *Dagara* to use Traditional cloth (*lowegya*) for their cultural celebrations. *Dagara* are a homogenous group of people located in the Upper West Region of Ghana who celebrate various cultural occasions using their traditional costumes made from the traditional cloth. Traditional cloth has its underlying symbolism and significance which stem from the people's values, norms and belief system (Omatseye & Emeriewen, 2012). Traditional cloth for the people of Nandom district is similar among the four northern regions of Ghana but differs in the pattern of weave, design and nature of the fabric.

Upper West Region is one of the leading cultivators of cotton and they use the fibres from it to twist and weave the traditional fabric (Abdulai, Mohammed, & Kwadwo, 2018). The cloth comes with different colours depending on the dye used. Frimpong and Asinyo (as cited in Acquah, Amissah, & Yankson, 2017) explained that traditional cloth (*lowegya*) of *Dagara* people is woven on a horizontal loom into strips using cotton fibres and sewn together either by hand or machine to form the cloth. The cloth is then used to sew clothes of different styles depending on the occasion. In the performance of funerals, for example, both deceased male and female are dressed in a smock with a trouser and a hat. This does not mean that this style of dress is for only dead people, it can be worn for other occasions by only males. The females mostly use *Kaba* and *slit* with a piece of cloth (*lowegya*), some also use only a blouse sewn from the traditional cloth with two pieces of cover cloths tied around their waste (*se ke lob*).

Sources revealed that traditional cloth produced in the Nandom traditional area of Ghana, was cheaper and affordable. Darimoah (2009) accepted that the

cost of producing traditional cloth and smocks is low in the Nandom district as well as the four northern regions. Due to its low price, everyone can afford this cloth for their ceremonial occasions. There is much one can say about the traditional cloth (*kente*) of the southern people of Ghana in terms of the kind of fibres, fabric, dyes, and stencils used in their construction (Boateng, 2014) and this made the cloth expensive for some people to afford financially for their ceremonial occasions (Dzramedo, 2009; Akinbileje, 2014). Every culture has its cultural cloth for ceremonial activities but not everyone can afford. Traditional cloths are used for occasions but possess various reasons and symbolisms pertaining to the occasions celebrated. These significance and symbolisms of the traditional cloths are peculiar with each tribe.

People in the southern part of Ghana still use their original *kente* cloth with their traditional symbols during celebrations and even outside Ghana to portray their culture (Akwetey, 2007). This was instituted by their ancestors and is still in existence. Unlike Dagara people of Ghana, though they still use woven cloth as the traditional cloth to do their celebrations, their original traditional cloths seem to be non-existent. *Lowegya* has gone through a lot of modifications, thereby resulting in diminishing of the original cloths produced by their ancestors. Dzramedo et al. (2013) testified that in Ghana, each culture has its historical traditional cloth as their costume used during celebrations as a means of identifying themselves and also show-casing the symbolism of their dressing. Traditional cloth in its broader sense symbolizes cultural identity and togetherness.

Traditional cloth has always played a strong role in projecting history, values and ethnic identities of cultures (Acquaah et al., 2017). The culture of Dagara people can be seen in their traditional cloth through their traditional symbols mostly designed on some of the cultural costume. The people of Nandom district use their traditional cloth for occasions such as funerals, marriages, festivals and chieftaincy ceremonies. Though this cloth is popular to the people of Ghana, its use and significance are not well known due to lack of education and literature on the traditional cloth (*Lowegyia*) of Dagara people. Various studies have been carried out on smock which is produced from the '*Lowegyia*' fabric and its significance in the Northern Region of Ghana (Tamale) by (Acquaah et al., 2017; Essel & Amissah, 2015) meanwhile they have not been able to cover the *Lowegyia* cloths produced in Nandom district. Further, whiles smock is associated with males, yet during funerals female corpses are also adorned with smocks in the Nandom district. However, many of these female-views are frequently ignored in studies of the traditional smock. It is therefore important to include females in the use of this fabric as a way of expanding knowledge.

### **Statement of the Problem**

A study carried out by Gbal (2013) in the Nandom District, revealed that Dagaras' total involvement in Christianity and adoption of the western and southern lifestyles have resulted in the relegation of cultural practices. This shows that the use of Dagara traditional cloth could be affected due to factors such as cost, weather conditions, migration, and fashion change including Christianity. The use of a traditional cloth may not be effective due to the limited knowledge

people have about '*Lowεgya*' cloth. There is limited or no prudent literature on the use and significance of Dagara traditional cloth as a costume in the Nandom traditional area as compared to *Kente* as a traditional cloth in the southern part of Ghana. *Kente* for example; significantly, promotes cultural life of the people, creates wealth, preserves their heritage, and alleviate poverty (Asmah, Daitey, & Gyasi, 2015; Boateng, 2014; Tyler, 2016). It is therefore necessary to verify the use and significance of Dagara traditional cloth for both males and females in the Nandom district during celebrations and also assess the historical use of the locally woven cloth as well as the reasons for any shift that may be observed in the use of the traditional cloth.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the use and cultural significance of Dagara traditional cloth (*Lowεgya*), its symbolism and the recent change in use of the traditional cloth in the Nandom District of Ghana.

#### **The Specific Objectives of the study were to:**

1. Describe the background of Dagara traditional cloth (*lowεgya*).
2. Investigate the use of the traditional cloth (*lowεgya*) during occasions in the district.
3. Explore the symbolism of the '*lowεgya*' traditional cloth in the Nandom district.
4. Find out the cultural significance of Dagara traditional cloth in the district.

5. Identify the factors influencing the choice of traditional/non-traditional cloth in the district.

### **Significance of the Study**

The study would contribute to existing knowledge on the cultural significance of Dagara traditional cloth for celebrations in the Nandom district of Ghana. Literature from this study, will therefore broaden the minds of people in the Nandom district of Ghana or Africa on the use of 'Lowɛgya' cloth.

Knowledge on Dagara culture will also be spread among other cultures. Through this study, there would be available literature outlining the cultural significance of Dagara traditional cloth in Ghana. Other people from different cultures will get to know more about the culture of Dagara people in the Nandom District.

Indigenes especially the youth of Nandom district, who barely know the origin and purpose of their traditional cloth (lowɛgya) will be enlightened. This will improve their interest in using their own woven cloth to portray their identity as Dagara.

Through this study, purchase of Dagara traditional cloth will also increase, thereby improving the manufacturing industries economically. Other tribes are also anticipated to be encouraged through this research to purchase clothes made from this fabric through the availability of literature.

Our traditional cloths are seen as the social skin of every society. These communicate the culture of Dagara people to the larger society. The use of Dagara traditional cloth symbolizes their togetherness and unity. Through this

study, their culture of unity will continue to exist for other tribes to cherish the culture of Dagara people. '*Lowegya*' seems to be a binding agent in the lives of Dagara people, and revoking its historical origin and usage through this study, will revive some people to strengthen their relationships.

This study will also enlighten people that, there is no division among the people of Nandom district. They act as one family without differences on the type of cloth that should be used by the rich and poor.

### **Delimitations**

The study was delimited to the cultural significance of Dagara traditional cloth (*lowegya*) used during occasions among Dagara in the Nandom District. *Lowegya* as a woven cloth in the Upper West region has gained physical popularity among people whilst its cultural aspect does not seem to show. Digging into this cloth, creates much interest though there are other cloths used among the people in the district.

Dagara can be found in every part of Ghana but the researcher delimited herself to only those in the Nandom district of Ghana. This is because Nandom district is the area where majority of Dagara people can be found and they use this cloth a lot for their ceremonial occasions than the others. During the field work, it was only those present in the District that were allowed to participate in the study.

Aside the participants and the topic under study, three sampling techniques were used. The lottery random sampling, purposive sampling and convenient sampling techniques.



## Limitations

With a research of this nature, there will always be some hindrances in obtaining information from participants. The limitations that were encountered during the field work were at the initial stage of data collection as some participants were not willing to provide some information due to secrecy. I then explained further to their understanding before they could open up to give the required information.

There was a breakdown of the recording instrument, during the time of fieldwork but I was able to repair it for the data collection to continue. There was also delay during data collection as some participants were busy with their schedules.

## Definition of Terms

**Dagara:** They are people located in the Upper West Region of Ghana. They are called Dagara and speak the language Dagara in Ghana.

**Culture:** It is the knowledge of the traditional cloth that have been passed down from Dagara ancestors to their present generation.

**Smock (*Daga kparu*):** It is a close loose shirt worn by the people of the Northern Region of Ghana. It is sewn loose downward. There are various types of this costume; *gyiiwaa*, *vaapew*, *kpar nu-voru* and *kpar nuru*.

**Traditional cloth (*Lowεgya*):** It is an ancestral woven fabric among Dagara people in the Upper West Region as a traditional cloth used during their ceremonial occasions. It is woven from either kapok or cotton fibre. '*Lowεgya*' as explained literally means a covering.

**Tradition:** It is the transmission of customs, norms or beliefs from one ancestral generation to the other. Tradition in this sense is the use of '*Lowegya*' cloth by Dagara people to portray their culture, norms and many more.

**Festival (tigri):** It is an organised celebration that occurs annually with a specific dressing costume to show the history and identity of the people.

**Costume:** Is a symbolic and historical communicative set of clothes worn by a particular group of people during an occasion.

**Adinkra:** It is a funeral or ritual cloth worn by the Akans in the southern part of Ghana.

**Paala (bier):** It is a designed stand where the dead is seated during funeral celebration in the Nandom district of Ghana.

**Kurlan:** This is a loose pair of trousers used by the people of Northern region in Ghana. It has a wide waist with a string pulled to fit the waist and loose from the waist below the knees and fitting down to the ankles.

**Nandom:** It is an area in the Upper West Region of Ghana where Dagara people reside as their ancestral home.

**Value:** It is the degree to which '*Lowegya*' cloth is held in importance in the Nandom district in the Upper West Region of Ghana.

**Dress:** It is the costume that is sewn from the '*Lowegya*' cloth and is used to clothe themselves when needed.

**Enskinnment:** The act or a process to enthrone a chief using an animal skin as a symbol of authority.



## Organization of the Study

This study has been segmented into five chapters. The first chapter covers the general introduction to the study, background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, significance of the study, delimitations, limitations, definition of terms and organization of the study. This chapter gives a general overview of the problem under study and points out how it can be solved.

Chapter Two is the related literature of the study. This chapter comprises of similar studies that have been carried out by other researchers and theoretical and conceptual framework related to the study including physiological theory, cultural theory, structural functionalism and symbolic interactionism. There was also a review on the over view of Dagara people, culture, culture diversity, and occasions in the district such as marriage (*kultaa*), chieftaincy (*Naalu*), *kakube* festival, funeral rites (*kuor*) which require the use of traditional cloth.

Chapter Three talks about the methods that were employed in this study. It used the qualitative research design to assess the cultural significance of Dagara traditional cloth. Multistage sampling techniques were used in selecting the participants which include; chiefs and other members of the various communities. It further investigated the factors inhibiting the current use of the traditional cloth during occasions.

Chapter Four deals with analysis and discussions of data that were collected from the field. It also presents the findings of the study as gathered from the participants.

Chapter Five finally presents summary of the research, conclusion and recommendations.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

Ghana is one of the countries where tradition or culture remains an important agent as it is the environment in which their dressing exists, though the indigenes are from different tribes with different cultural practices. These cultural values are either exhibited through their traditional cloth, traditional occasions or other cultural costumes. Every society in Ghana has a traditional cloth and this is used in displaying their cultural values, heritage and cultural norms. For example, *Adinkra* and *Kente* are traditional cloths produced by the Akan people of Ghana, and these are used for their ceremonial occasions either during funeral, marriage ceremonies, festivals, outdoorings, puberty rites and many more (Boateng, 2014). Though these cloths are produced by the Akan people, other tribes in the southern part of Ghana use the same cloth for their ceremonial occasions in order to portray their culture. People of the Northern region of Ghana, use a common traditional cloth but different in size of woven strips, designs and weight of the fabric. Among Dagara as part of the four Northern regions, their traditional cloth is used for both sad and happy occasions.

In Ghana, these traditional cloths are locally woven as well as in other parts of Africa either by hand or loom. Historically, the cloth was woven by hand. Once the cloth is woven, it then depends on the society how to use it. Nandom District in the Upper West region of Ghana for example uses their traditional cloth (*Lowegya*) to sew a smock (*Daga kparu*), *kurlan* (trousers), *slit* and *kaba* and a

piece of cover cloth (*lowɛgya gawn*) for women. Their traditional cloth is then exhibited through the clothes sewn and the fabric itself unlike Asante's who wrap around shoulders. Dagara traditional cloth has been passed onto them by their ancestors and it is still in use according to their culture. During ceremonial occasions, the men put on the '*Daga kparu*', '*kurlan*' and '*kpawoɔ*' whilst the women wear their *slit* and *kaba* (*kparu ani gawn kure*) and a piece of cover cloth (*lowɛgya gawn*). These clothes are worn for specific reasons which are further discussed.

This study made use of theoretical and conceptual framework to review literature on the topic understudied. Conceptual framework was self-constructed. It also reviewed literature on some concepts related to this study.

### **Theoretical Framework**

According to Harms (1938) we do not dress only for the purpose of modesty, adornment or protection but also for cultural, physiological and sociological purposes. Harms stressed that these three psychological theories are environments which we create for ourselves aside the natural environment. He then referred to his theories as environments created through our way of dressing. Twigg, (2010) in a way, supports Harms statements of considering clothes to be an environment. Twigg specified that, cloth is the closest environment one finds him or herself, the immediate physical surrounding of the person and as a communication tool. If a society uses a specific cloth to portray their culture, it is the environment which they themselves have created. Harms sees the theories of clothing to be referred as an environment more appropriate, than representing it

with the theories of modesty, adornment, and protection, which merely start out from the attitudes present in man's mental life. Although the purpose of clothing is primarily determined by environmental conditions, its form is determined by man's own characteristics, and especially by his mental traits.

### **The Physiological theory**

The physiological theory generally, explains clothing oneself to protect him or her from injury, from dangerous animals, hazards and so forth. Pedersen (as cited in Wang, Nagai, Fang, Qiao & Chen, 2018) commented that, the psychologist mostly consider the important reasons for clothing ourselves to be the physical theory. As Pedersen further argued, covering one's body is mostly seen as a way of protecting the human body from dangers, maintaining proper body temperature and from other health hazards. In this study, protection is using our traditional cloth to protect our history and cultural heritage which has been passed on to us by our ancestors. Continual usage of the '*Lowegya*' according to their history will protect the future of this cloth. An informant from the Nandom district explained that historically, '*Lowegya*' cloth was worn based on categories of people in the society. He further clarified that an ordinary person cannot dress in the same cloth as a chief. Identifying the type of fabric used by a person of high status and an ordinary person is dependent on the pattern of weave, colour of the fabric and style of the traditional costume.

In a manner, modesty can be achieved by physically covering one's body with clothes (Boulanouar, 2006) or dressing according to the norms of a society. With respect to this, Boulanouar thinks that using the '*lowegya*' cloth to cover

ourselves according to the norms and expectations of the society should be deemed modest. Several researchers such as Boulanouar (2006); Sobh, Belk and Gressell (2010) have considered covering one's body with clothes to be modest forgetting of those who barely go naked during their cultural celebrations and consider it to be modest.

To some people, physical theory corroborate with how modesty is achieved through our dressing. Clothe naturally is believed to be used to conceal the genital organs, from a sense of shame, modesty, and embarrassment. Most people always have the perception that covering ones nakedness is what is believed to be modesty but it goes beyond that. Using the right costume during an occasion as recommended by society is what is considered being modest (Thomas, 1899). But some people in the Nandom district have resorted to the use of the modified '*Lowegya*' cloth and consider it modest.

Gilligan (2010) spelled out that the physiological theory of clothing allows man to predict the environmental condition before designing the cloth for human survival. This theory portrays that man designs his cloth according to the environmental condition in which he finds himself. A freezing environment will demand the use of a warm fabric whilst hot environment will demand something which can repel the heat from the weather. Gilligan stresses that humans have very low biological defence against the environmental conditions (extreme cold or heat) in which they find themselves therefore need to cover his body in order to defend himself. For example, in the Upper West Region weather conditions during November to February are always extremely cold and very hot after this



period. Dagara therefore found a way of defending themselves by producing heavy '*Lowegya*' cloth (traditional cloth) with colours which can produce heat. The same goes for the hot season where dull colours of traditional cloth are also used during this season to keep them safe. Gilligan further explained that the physiological properties of cloth allow us to determine whether there should be improvement with our cloth production or maintained. This is consistent with the '*Lowegya*' cloth which has undergone some modifications in order to blend with the environmental condition and fashion trend. Some of the '*Lowegya*' cloths have been produced in low weight in order accommodate the heat level in the district.

Laver (1969) also dwelled on the physiological theory as a means of man covering himself to keep out the cold in which they find themselves. He compared man to animals which has fur for insulation and man who was naked and had nothing to cover himself. Laver further explained that animals were fortunate to have fur not only for protection from the cold but to camouflage itself from enemies. Human beings also realized that covering themselves will protect them from being hunted by animals.

### **The cultural theory**

In addition to the physical and sociological theories, Harms (1938) also added the cultural theory. Harms sees the use of cloth to be an environment created by man because man in nature was not dressed, he was naked but later he created fabric to hide his nakedness. He emphasized that this environment is the cultural world created by man as he considers his values, customs and cultural

practices before creating his cloth. He further explained that, when we consider the human being in this cultural world, we see that of all its multitudinous cultural forms of his dress is not only the one which is physically close to him but also that which most intimately expresses his relation to the culture. This theory stresses that man's cultural environment is expressed or communicated by the clothes he or she uses in portraying his cultural values. These cultural values could be his wealth or status, identity and history. The traditional cloth (*Lowegya* cloth) becomes the environment created by Dagara people which they use to cover themselves portraying their identity, cultural values, beliefs, history and customs.

Slepian, Ferber, Gold and Rutchick (2015) also explained that cloth is like an institution which people use to gain their status. They pointed out that people use cloth in a variety of occasions to obey the norms, values of a society and also gain respect from social institutions. '*Lowegya*' cloth is of different types and each is used according to status, gender and age category. From Slepian, Ferber, Gold, and Rutchick, '*Lowegya*' cloth differentiates the ordinary people from the traditional leaders specifying their status. Also, the respect a traditional leader will gain using his costume, will be different from that of the ordinary person.

Baecker (1997) also commented that culture regulates, and controls how to speak of issues, which issues to avoid and how to behave in society depending on the social context of the person. From Dirk statement, it can be deduced that the '*Lowegya*' cloth which Dagara people consider as their cultural cloth regulates how it should be used and also regulates how people are addressed in the society



based on their status. Among the Dagara people a child cannot dress in the 'gyiiwaa' costume sewn from the 'Lowεgya' cloth because it is for elderly people. The cloth as a traditional costume directs people how and when it should be used.

Traditional cloth (*Lowεgya*) as a cultural costume historically, is used according to levels (Okpokunu et al., 2005). In Nandom district for example, during a gathering it is the traditional cloth that they wear except a few who have recently started using other printed fabrics for occasions for personal reasons. This emphasizes that the culture of a particular society can change due to acculturation. In turn, acculturation can cause the loss of the cultural values of the traditional cloth. When this happens, restoring the cultural heritage of the cloth can be in jeopardy.

### **Sociological Theories**

The sociologist also proposed some theories that can be used to explain the concept of 'Lowεgya' as a traditional cloth. These include; the structural functionalism and symbolic interactionism.

#### **Structural functionalism**

The structural functionalism theory conceives society as a structure with interrelated parts designed to meet the biological and social needs of individuals who make up that society (Blunter, 1994). It is the oldest of the main theories of sociology. It grew out of the writings of English philosopher and biologist Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) who linked society to the human body. Structural functionalism focuses upon the relationship between structures that produce

functions facilitating the achievement of some goals (Fontes & Guardalabene, 1976).

In the writings of Thompson, Hickey and Thompson (2016), Durkheim as one of the founders of functionalism view society to be a complex system hence the need for its components to work together to maintain stability and regulation. He applied Spencer's analogy to explain the structure of societies and how they change and survive over time. Applying Durkheim's theory to the concept of traditional cloth believed that earlier, traditional cloths were held with more integrity in portraying their cultural values, identity and symbols. People of Nandom district used traditional cloth in a hierarchical manner in order to honour their tradition. Traditional cloth was used according to status in the Nandom district. A commoner cannot wear the same traditional cloth as chief or other traditional leaders. According to an informant, differentiating a prominent person from a commoner was depended on the type of '*Lowegyia*' cloth used. That is the quality and colour of the cloth communicates the status of the person in society.

Durkheim realized that society influences our human actions but that society is also something that exists beyond individuals. He felt that it is the responsibility of society's members, families and traditional leaders to teach children their culture. Knowledge cannot be obtained without a medium, but when channelled through the right source there will be stability in the society. In relation to Durkheim's analogy, traditional cloth should be studied and understood in correspondence with the cultural values, morals, customs and the social rules governing their lives (Stolley, 2005). This becomes a responsibility

for the elders to educate the younger ones on their cultural cloth both physically, culturally and psychologically. By so doing, they would be preserving their dress culture.

Doda (2005) also stresses that the effective aspect of the functionalism theory plays a role by each component part of the social system, whereas the structural perspective suggests an image of society where individuals are constrained by the social forces, social backgrounds and group memberships. Durkheim again explained that the cultural values, morals identity and status of the people are some of the important components of the traditional cloth (*Lowegyia*) which should be communicated to their observers properly so that they can get meaning out of the culture of the people.

The social aspect of our cloths deals with our identities in society. These identities are communicated through the cloth we put on, signifying our pride as indigenes of a particular society. Identities are communicated through our traditional cloth as it announces social positions of the wearer to the observers within a particular interaction situation (Roach-Higgins & Ellen, 1995). Mostly the chiefs and the wealthy people in society wear the most expensive traditional cloth to show that they are high in society. For example, historically to be seen as a matured man or woman who is ready to marry in the Nandom district one should have at least a traditional cloth. As soon as a man is seen wearing a smock he is communicating that he is grown and can marry because he will be able to clothe his family as long as he can afford the traditional cloth.

## Symbolic interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is a theory and a perspective in sociology that addresses how society is created and maintained through repeated interactions among individuals (Stolley, 2005). It is a theory which was proposed by George Herbert Mead but he was unable to publish it. After his death in 1931 Herbert Blumer, Mead's student, further developed and coined it and it was then called "Symbolic Interactionism" (LoConto & Jones-Pruett, 2006). Blumer also explains that with meads symbolic interactionism, humans look into situations and find solution or meaning to it. Symbolic interactionism examines the meanings emerging from the reciprocal interaction of individuals in social environment with other individuals and focuses on which symbols and meanings emerge from the interaction between them (Aksan, Kısac, Aydın & Demirbuken, 2009).

Symbolic interactionism, also denotes how we view symbols of objects and attach meaning to them as the basis of our traditional cloth (Doda, 2005). Culture is normally portrayed through the symbols we find on our traditional cloth and the information which the user communicates to us. These symbols can be communicated both verbally and non-verbally. Mead saw human being as an organism having a self. The self in this context becomes the traditional cloth (*Lowegya*) which becomes the actor for transferring its cultural components to the world through the wearers. This is manifested at the ceremonial occasions during which Dagara use their *Lowegya* cloth in portraying the culture to the unknown. Anyone seeing the cloth will know that it is associated with this tribe of people and therefore try to find out more about the cloth from the wearers.

Stolley (2005) also stated that social structures exist and are important in shaping our lives, they point out that society is actually created by people interacting together on a daily basis. Through interacting with one another, people get ideas and these are used in creating valuable materials cherished by the society. Our ancestors communicated with each other on the issue of their culture then found out that weaving a cloth will be something which they can use to portray their culture and also shape their way of life. This is supported by Bohn (2004) who stated that the traditional cloth becomes one of the communicative tool among people in a society.

Due to modernisation, social change occurs as people interact with other cultures. Stolley (2005) did not only tackle how our culture can be changed through interaction but felt that these interactions can turn to affect the dressing pattern of the people as well as the pattern of weaving the traditional cloth. In the case of the traditional cloth, a symbolic interactionist would be more interested in how individuals are able to change their cultural practices and adapt to their new style of dressing.

Blumer (as cited in LaRossa, & Reitzes, 2009) said that the development of symbolic interactionism theory was largely associated with how problems in society can be solved through constant communication among occupants of the society. To solve the problems concerning usage of the traditional cloth, it depends on the people of the society as to how they can continuously spread the knowledge of '*Lowεgya*' cloth to people to open and broaden their minds so that they can develop the interest in using it.

### Conceptual Framework

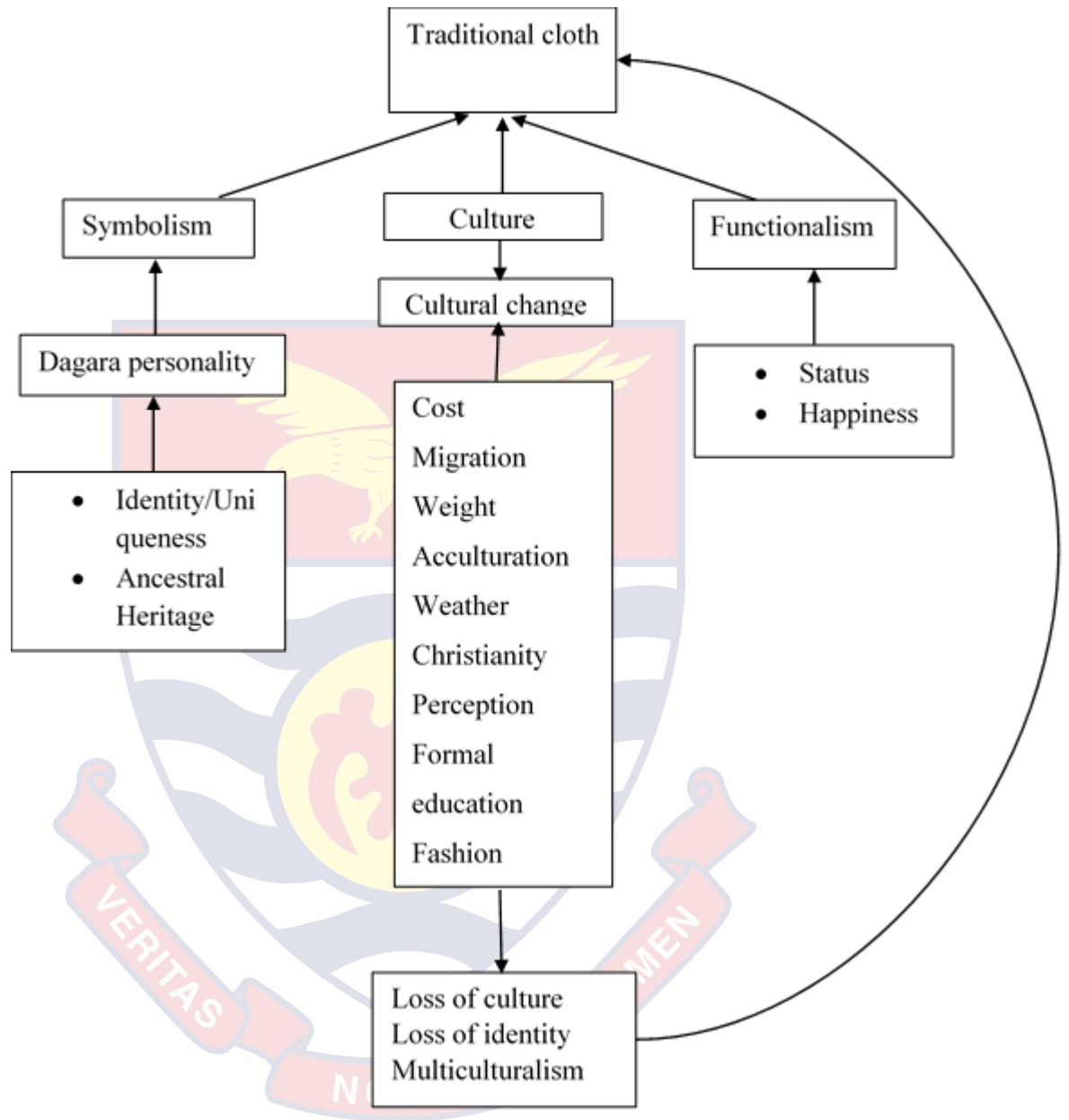


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework was self-constructed. Dagara traditional cloth in this case *Lowεgya* is one of the backbones of Dagara culture as it portrays their culture, gives them identity among others. As supported by Essel and Amissah (2015) use of traditional costume gives identity and also projects the culture of the people.



Culture is directly linked with traditional cloth. Culture is something that is created by our ancestors and this culture is manifested through the language they speak, food they eat and the cloth/clothes they use. The fibre which is used during production of Dagara traditional cloth also comes into play as history forms the basis of everything. According to Harms (1938), cloth is like an environment which we create for ourselves in order to clothe and identify ourselves. Man naturally was born naked but due to external and internal factors, he created something called cloth to cover himself and represent who he is with the resources available. Dagara as a group of people created “*Lowegya*” from kapok fibre to cover their nakedness and use it as a representative tool of their culture. Historically, Dagara used to clothe themselves with leaves, animal skin and bark of a tree but later tried using kapok fibre to weave a fabric and it became successful.

Culture shapes our thinking, understanding, practices and attitudes towards the future (Donkor, 2008). Culture might be held important to every society but do the people still perform the cultural practices that have been instituted by their ancestors? This question might be asked because people now in a haste might try to adopt other tribe’s cultural practices in order to adjust with the current trend of weaving and sewing of cultural costumes. Due to weight of the fabric, acculturation, weather condition, perception, Christianity, education, migration, cost of traditional cloth, and fashion among others, some people become interested in adopting other cultural practices in order to cope with the environment in which they find themselves. Mostly, it is the minority groups who

divert their cultural practices (Amaram, 2007) just to catch-up with the larger society.

**Symbolic Interactionism:** this is where the relationship between the traditional cloth and Dagara is examined. It tells how Dagara identity, culture, values, beliefs among others are communicated through “*Lowegya*” to other tribes. Through Symbolic interactionism, Dagara personality is communicated to their observers i.e. their relationship with one another as well as their traditional cloth, behaviour, use of traditional cloth (*Lowegya*) during their ceremonial occasions among others. Symbolic interaction is based on the meanings that emerge from the interaction between people and their traditional costumes (Aksan, Kısac, Aydın, & Demirbuken, 2009).

On the other hand, Dagara identity is also communicated through the use of their traditional cloth. Using a traditional cloth (*Lowegya*) historically, was the costume that helped people to identify Dagara people and their northern neighbours as they use a similar cloth but with different features. The original cloths produced by Dagara people in the society historically was the cloth that communicates the ceremony taking place in the society. As Keogan (2013) stated, “*Lowegya*” serves as a communicative tool as it helps identify those who belongs to Dagara culture and those who do not.

**Functionalism:** this also draws our attention to the functions of “*Lowegya*”. This concept assumes that social roles and cultural practices are meshed together to form the society and these are exhibited through the use of the traditional costume (Hier, 2005). This denotes that “*Lowegya*” in this context becomes the



main agent and Dagara people becomes the agents who display the cultural use, significance, beliefs and values of their traditional cloth. Sometimes people could be judged based on the clothe they wear. This mostly happen to people of high positions in society. For example, among Dagara people in the Upper West Region of Ghana, they have chiefs, queen mothers, chief priest, hunters, the rich among others in the society who have to use their traditional cloth to portray how worthy they are. As Taylor (2009) supported, using a particular costume during ceremonial occasions in a society comes from the earliest times as a means of clearly defining and enforcing the class divisions one belongs to. Traditional cloth (*Lowegyia*) provide an ideal vehicle for displaying wealth and social status.

Despite the contributions of these factors toward the successful outcome of traditional cloth (*Lowegyia*) in the Nandom District of Ghana, there are other outcomes that may emerge in the future concerning “*Lowegyia*”. The inability to control cultural change in the Nandom district can lead to loss of culture, loss of identity and multiculturalism. In order to preserve ones cultural heritage, it demands safeguarding both tangible and intangible depictions of culture (Roy, 2015). Change can be explained as conversion of one’s interest at a time. It is a step by step process and the change in cultural practices and values occur when the individuals in society continue to welcome the factors that may cause the change.

Loss of culture can be identified as one of the future outcomes of traditional cloth (*Lowegyia*) as the use of traditional costume for celebrations in the District will diminish from time to time if the factors such as migration, acculturation and

education among others are not taken care of. In the future, if people see other cultural practices to be more encouraging than theirs, they might fully adopt those cultural practices leaving theirs behind. This could be positive or negative. In the positive sense, modifications will be done to “*Lowεgya*” as it has already started and this cloth will get a new look to be like other tribes traditional cloth and those who love this new look will use it. On the other hand, in a negative way, Dagara might not use their traditional cloth at all but rather adopt other tribe’s cloth to be used during their ceremonial occasions and this means that their traditional cloth might be lost forever. Amaram (2007) confirms that with multiculturalism, the majority group mostly expect members of the minority culture to adopt their cultural practices. This is to say that the inability to deal with negative factors that influence our cultural practices might bring an end to our traditional cloth (*Lowεgya*).

### **Culture**

Culture according to Keesing (1974) is a system of socially transmitted pattern of behaviour that serves to relate human communities to their ecological settings. Culture has been a focal point for the anthropologist. They have been able to produce diverse literature on the concepts of culture. Culture is learned and experienced by individuals in the family, at school, and at the workplace. Culture differs from one society to another (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). The way a particular tribe will dress in their traditional costume differs from how another tribe dresses. In Africa, there are so many traditional ways of dressing and these artefacts were initiated by our ancestors. Bogucki (2008) Archaeologists have

excavated numerous artefacts which were used as part of African's dressing. These were glass, stone, and ceramic, including beads, earlobe plugs, and lip plugs. The stone beads, made from chlorite, come in a variety of shapes.

There is generally the belief in Africa that, the ancestors are those who generally start things that are considered traditional and they pass these practices to their sons and daughters (Asante, & Mazama, 2009). Traditional cloth for example is historical and needs to be learnt, in the case dressing, weaving and sewing the costume. Bogucki (2008) expanded that, to learn about our traditional cloth (*Lowegyā*), all we have to do is look around, travel, read, or watch a video about what our ancestors first started. Even if we cannot locate these cloths but finding out from the elders will be a good source of locating our heritage.

### **Culture diversity**

Beagan (2015) culture is not static but rather, changes from time to time, though often slowly. Amaram (2007) explained that cultural differences are often perceived in terms of ethnic and nationality constructs. Presently, cultural considerations include race, gender, sexual orientation, age and disability. These subgroups possess different work attitudes, perceptions, values and norms which, in turn, affect individual and group performances. If people are contempt with their beliefs, attitudes, dressing and behaviour, why do they allow other people's cultural practices to come in and replace their cultural practices? This was explained by Alvesson and Sveningsson (2015), they said that, contemporary ideas of change stress that societal members adheres to the changes in the environment in order to correspond with other cultures.

The likelihood that a given cultural feature will spread from one individual (or group) to another depends on how many other features the people may already have in common. Barbosa and Fontanari (2009) also explained that with cultural diversity, people tend to be more alike in their beliefs and attitudes. This happens as one agent modifies his or her trait to match that of his partner. Technology is also found to be of the factors behind the modification of traditional cloths (Ueda, 2003). Mazur (2010) also said, the ability to adapt to a new environment depends on effective interaction among people from diverse, beliefs, and backgrounds than ever before. Adopting other people cultural practices, enhances sustainable growth and economic development. People no longer live and work in their various societies, they travel to different parts of the world to seek better jobs and in so doing, request the change in their cultural dressing in order to adapt to the new environment in which he or she finds himself. In order to fit into the current state of the world is the ability to design new traditional cloths through modification and open to change. Mazur further said, cultural change enhances great productivity and the ability to compete with other cultures in the production sector.

Cultural diversity seemed to be made of two dimensions; primary and secondary. Primary dimensions of diversity, those exerting primary influences on our identities, are gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, age and mental or physical abilities and characteristics. The primary dimensions shape our basic self-image as well as our fundamental world views. Additionally, they have the most impact on groups in the workplace and society. Secondary dimensions of

diversity are less visible, exert a more variable influence on personal identity and add a more subtle richness to the primary dimensions of diversity. They include: educational background, geographic location, religion, first language, family status, work style, work experience, military experience, organizational role and level, income and communication style. The secondary dimensions impact our self-esteem and self-definition (Mazur, 2010; Holmgren, & Jonsson, 2013).

### **Dagara**

Dagara are often referred to as *Lodagaa*, *Dagaaba*, *Lowiili*, *Dagao* or *Lobis* but for consistency, the people of Nandom district are called Dagara (Kunbuor, 2002) and they speak the language Dagara. They are a group of people sited in the North-Western corner of Ghana in an area called Nandom which is a district in the Upper West Region. It is bounded to the East and South by the Lambussie and Lawra Districts respectively and to the North and West by the Republic of Burkina Faso. Dagara people form a community because they share common characteristics such as culture, language, food and religion. “The linguistic syntax of (Da) represents the literal translation of male or man among the three Dagara subgroups. The syllable “*gaa* or *gara*” means to go, to move, to walk or to roam. Hence the term “Dagara” for its subgroup has come to mean “man goes or man migrates” (Woma, 2012).

Some researchers Kunbuor (2002) and Lentz (2010) found out that, Dagara are the descendants of the Dagomba state who moved out of the Dagomba land due to slavery and wars. They migrated to parts of the Upper West Region whilst some families crossed over to stay in the Burkina Faso. Dagara and other tribes in

the Northern region speak different languages but with some similarities in their dialect (Kuubezelle & Akanlig-Pare, 2017). Due to migration, other ethnic groups have come to stay with Dagara people and the District is now made up of Moshi, Dagombas and Sisalas with Dagara being the majority. The district is made of Christians, Muslims and Traditional believers.

Another interesting fact of Dagara is the existence of their earth-shrine (*tengan*) a ritual parish and served by a custodian, the *tengan-sob* ('owner of the earth' or 'earth-priest') (Kuba, & Lentz, 2001). *Tengan Soc-sob* is the *Bagr-bugre* who consults the gods and ancestors, disseminates issues confronting the family or clan to the *tengan-sob* and the necessary actions are taken. *Tengan-sob* on the other hand is someone who first arrives in the town to settle in a particular area in the Nandom district during their time of migration. The *tengan-sob* with the help of the *soc-sob* performs all the rituals and prayers to the gods and ancestors on behalf of the clan where he is affiliated for purifications and protection of the land. Hence, he oversees the spiritual and land activities of the area. This is found to be practiced among all the clans in the Nandom district of Ghana.

As a major agricultural related activity, cotton is one major industrial crop whose production suits the ecological conditions of Northern Ghana (Naab, 2016). People of the Upper West Region of Ghana engage in cash crops cultivation which gains them some income. These crops include; groundnut, beans, cotton and livestock farming. Cotton fibre is obtained from the cotton cultivated in the society and is used to twist the threads in weaving '*Lowegy*' cloth. Kapok was the first fibre the people of Nandom district used to weave their



'*Lowεgya*' cloth but realized that it felt uncomfortable to the skin hence they switched to the use of cotton fibre. Kapok (*gon bolle*) trees can still be found in the Nandom district but due to the nature of the fibre it is now used to stuff pillows.

Dagara are predominantly small-scale farmers who engage in food crop cultivation and animal husbandry for consumption (Awedoba, 2015). They experience one rainy season every year. The most common food crops they cultivate include; millet, sorghum, maize, rice, legumes, yam. They also rear the following animals; poultry, goats, sheep, pigs, cattle. Due to education and seasonal changes, Dagara mostly migrate to other parts of the North and southern parts of Ghana (Anglaaere, 2017) in search for jobs and lands for cultivation since such places have two or more rainy seasons. Besides farming, Dagara naturally engage in some activities such as hunting, fishing, weaving, smock making, wood carving and processing of pito from malted guinea corn and Shea butter extraction. There are also some wild trees in the district used for economic purposes, these include; Shea tree; the seeds are used to make Shea butter and the fruits eaten. The leaves and seeds from baobab, kapok tree and dawadawa trees also provide green vegetables for soup preparation and oil extracted from their seeds and other nutritional products.

There are also several ceremonial occasions celebrated by the people of Nandom district. These are either celebrated in remembrance of their ancestors, display of their culture or in the honour of their identity. These occasions include, funeral, marriage ceremony, festival (*kakube* and *bagr*) and enskinement of a



chief. These are celebrated using the *Lowεgya* cloth which is considered as their traditional cloth. To use the *Lowεgya* cloth, they sew it into their traditional costumes. The men use *Kurlan*, *Gyiiwaa/Vaapew*, small smock (*Daga kparu*) either sleeveless or with sleeves and a *kpawoɔ* (hat). The women also go in their *sε kε lɔb* (using two pieces of cloths; they wrap one cloth around the waist and use a string to tie in the middle of the cloth then lower the upper part of the cloth and then wrap the other piece of the cloth) with a blouse. Recently due to modernization, the women sew their traditional cloth into slit and *kaba*.

Another thing which Dagara people cherish in the Upper West Region is family. Family is a group of people related by blood, marriage or adoption. It consists of the grandparents, couple, aunties' children, uncles, cousins and many more. People of the Nandom district practice both nuclear and extended family system. The male is often considered as the head of the family with the females being powerless. They practice the patrilineal family system. The head of the family takes major decisions in the family and although females can also contribute to decisions, these decisions are often negligible. Abdul-Korah (2008) in their findings also found out that the tradition of a male being the major decision maker in Nandom district is practiced in all the three Northern regions of Ghana.

### **Occasions in the Nandom District**

Every society has its ways of portraying its culture and as part of Dagara culture, some ceremonial occasions are celebrated using their traditional cloth in

order to portray their values, beliefs, history and culture. These occasions are discussed as follows.

### **Marriage (*kultaa*)**

Marriage is the union of two families, where partners study each other for a considerable period to know their strengths and weaknesses with the involvement of both families until they accept one another for the union of their wards. Marriage as defined by Girgis, George and Anderson (2011) is the union of a man and a woman who make a permanent and exclusive commitment to each other of the type that is naturally (inherently) fulfilled by bearing and rearing children together. In many Northern Ghanaian communities marriages are exogamous and are forbidden between relatives (Awedoba, 2015). To legalize a marriage in the Nandom district, bride price is key. This is practiced in every part of Africa (Mbaye & Wagner, 2017) and other countries but the items differ. The people of Nandom district use cattle, cash or cowries and fowls.

In the African countries, it is the men who pays the bride price whiles among the Asian countries, the women pays the dowry (Anderson, 2007). This shows a vast difference between African countries and the Asian countries. In the Nandom district of Ghana, a woman seeking divorce can only do so, if the bride-price is repaid to the husband's family. Dery (2015a) explained that in a situation where payments cannot be returned to the husband's family, the woman stays as a married woman though she might not be happy with the relationship.

The coming of the missionaries to Nandom district of Ghana, did not only bring the Christian religion but also the institute of wedding. During the wedding

celebration, couples either use traditional or non-traditional cloth to celebrate their wedding. Indeed, dressing was not part of Dagara traditional marriages. Traditional marriage was all about taking a lady home without her parent's consent then the next day information is disseminated to the family of the girl, acknowledging that a lady was stolen from their house.

During wedding ceremonies in the Nandom district, it is the man who buys the wedding dress but if he does not have money, the lady will have to help. With the things that will be taken along to her husband's house, her brothers, sisters and parents are also responsible in supporting her to buy those things.

Though some cultures still use traditional cloths during their wedding ceremonies, the cloth designs and pattern of weave might have changed. Considering the new technologies and fibres that have been evoked in the system, these might have become an issue in achieving the original cloths which the ancestors instituted. As Micklewright (1989) commented, in most cultures, the traditional costume is used until worn out and this makes it difficult to reconstruct the costume according to history in detail especially when attention is not paid to the original designs of the fabric by members of the society. For this reason, people resort to the use of wedding gowns and suits during wedding celebrations because they are considered modernised and easy to use. They consider the western clothes without considering their culture.

### **Chieftaincy**

At first in the Nandom district, there was no political leadership but the chief-priests (*tengan-dem*) were considered to be the leaders of various

communities (clans). It was during the presence of the Europeans in Ghana that changed the political structure of Ghana. They instituted the politics of paramount chief with his sub-chiefs who help in the smooth running of activities in every community. It is an ancestral based political leadership. Each chief has his territory and responsibilities to perform as a traditional leader (Cultural Division of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Accra, 1975). Chieftaincy first started with the people of the Southern part of Ghana. Each paramount chief is head of a definite area, does not owe allegiance to anyone within or without his territory, and all the lesser chiefs recognize him as their overlord. Cultural policy writers continued to say that a chief derives his power from his people who accept him as first among equals. He has to consult his people on any issue and work with them not on his own free will. Failure to obey the rules as a chief, he might be removed as a leader.

In the Nandom district, chiefs are being enskinned unlike other tribes which enstool their chiefs. The skin of an animal seems to be adorned by the people of Upper West region as an ancestral item. Dagara ancestors were using skin and the bark of trees as well as leaves to cover themselves. Though the skin was considered as a cloth, it was also used as a seat for them. Recently, there are chairs where they can sit to carry out their activities but during enskinment the chief has to sit on the skin of an animal.

Traditional leaders of Nandom district use '*Lowegy*' (traditional cloth) in all their ceremonial occasions to portray their status and rich culture. Figure 16 and 20 in Appendix B, shows the Paramount chief and his subordinates at a

program in their traditional clothes. This shows that the chiefs in the Upper West region of Ghana use the traditional cloth at all programs. It has been noticed that every chief during a gathering either in the district or outside Nandom district in Ghana is mandated to use the traditional cloth (*Lowegyia*) to attend the occasion failure to do so, you will be cautioned. Their dressing in the traditional cloth goes with a walking stick. It is believed that this walking stick is a symbol of leadership and the inability to attend a program with the walking stick comes with consequences.

In Ghana, every culture has traditional leaders and they oversee the activities and wellbeing of the community. Traditionally, there are activities organised by each tribe either in remembrance of their ancestors or honour of their culture but all these activities are performed using the traditional cloth. For example, the Asantihene attending a program or celebration will wrap his rich *kente* cloth around his shoulder in order to communicate his status to the observers (Akinbileje, 2014).

### **Festival**

Festival is a ceremonial occasion instituted by a particular cultural group of people and is celebrated with a particular aim or objective. There are several festivals celebrated by various tribes in Ghana, some of which include; the kobine, damba, fire, kakube, hogbetsotso, homowo festival and many more. These festivals are celebrated annually. Most of them are celebrated in memory of their ancestors. Cultural festivals are thus also sites of cultural innovation and arenas

where ethnic and local identities, national identity, popular culture, and culture staged by the state confront one another (Lentz 2001).

Kakube is an annual festival celebrated by the people of Nandom district in the Upper West region. It takes off on the 25th of November every year. The festival was introduced by the Nandom Naa Dr Puoure Puobe Chiir Imoro VII, in the year 1989 (Lentz & Wiggins, 2017). *Kakube* festival starts with pito (*dãã*) (local alcoholic beverage) which is used in pouring libation to pave way for the celebration. The significance of this ritual is that until the *Kakube dãã* is brewed and used in pouring libation to the ancestors, no farmer is allowed to sell new grain in the market (Kuuder, Adongo, & Abanga, 2012). During this celebration, most Dagara outside Nandom district of Ghana come home to celebrate with their families. People from other regions also make it a point to attend and celebrate with them. Lentz and Wiggings further explained that for the past years, *Kakube* festival has gained national recognition and is among the best festivals celebrated in Northern Ghana.

*Kakube* festival is celebrated to mark the end of the farming season each year and also show appreciation to the Almighty God for his guidance and protection during the farming season. It is also an occasion for the people of the Nandom traditional area to renew their relationships and also display their rich culture and tradition (*Kakube festival celebration*, 2018). During this festival cultural dancers and singers in their traditional attire emerge to display their talents in their traditional dance and songs. Some of the competitors sew their dancing costume using the 'Lowegya' cloth (traditional cloth) whilst some also



dress in an attire that suits them. With reference to Figure 15 in Appendix B, participants used the '*Lowεgya*' to sew their uniformly dance costume in order to identify themselves with the festival and their culture.

The traditional leaders of Nandom district and other dignitaries who travel from places to attend the festival wear the traditional cloth (*Lowεgya*) that is widespread in Northern Ghana. The village dance ensembles also present a colourful mixture of traditional costumes modified in imaginative ways, such as loincloths made out of strips of cotton or hide, goat or antelope skins tied together across the back, chains of shells and cowries on the arms and feet, feathers and cattle horns some with printed T-shirts using their labels (Lentz, 2001). With reference to Figure 12, 18 and 19 at the Kakube festival celebration, the traditional leaders as well as prominent people in the district were in rich woven *lowεgya* cloths.

### **Funeral (*kuor*) rites in the Nandom district**

Death is inevitable and can happen to anyone at any time. Dagara have the belief that, once a person dies there is the continuation of life in the after-world. In support of this, Gbal (2013) accords that Dagara strongly believe there is life after death and families get the chance to reunite with their ancestors. They consider the soul of the dead to linger around if he or she is not at ease and therefore should be purified. Until proper rites are performed, the spirit of the dead will continue to linger around (Dery, 2016b). They also consider the ancestors to be of great protection to the living. Dery further elaborated that, death does not alter or end the life or the personality of an individual, but only causes a



change in its conditions. This implies that a person can be dead but his actions do not end because he or she can continue to protect his family though they are dead.

Once a person dies, the body is taken to the bath to be washed and dressed before it is then seated for mourning to begin. Once the corpse is seated, the family head will be the first person to go out and pave way for mourning to begin. Nobody has the right to mourn until the family head does this among Dagara people. If a male dies the person will cry three times (*sawoi, sawoi sawoi*) and if female four times (*mawoi mawoi mawoi, mawoi*) before the mourners are allowed. When the dead body is seated, there are various attachments that are given to the dead to portray who he is in the society. Female corpses, for example, are given a calabash, a pot and a basket to signify that they are women and these are the things that a proper Dagara woman should possess. A cloth is also used to cover her legs as she is seated. A *pito* brewer will be given different types of calabashes and small clay pots to signify that she was once a *pito* brewer. A hunter is also given a bow and arrow plus a gun and the costume used for hunting to show how great he was when he was alive. At times, the skull of animals from his operations are hanged in order to communicate his identity non-verbally. The men in general are given a bow and arrow to show that he can fight to defend his people.

In Dagara culture, it is not everybody who is entitled to getting costume for the dead. Always it is the males in the family either a husband, the family head or a brother they are responsible to clothe the dead. Their social structure is patriarchal with ascribed gender roles (Woma, 2012). If a woman marries and

later separates from the husband without paying the dowry back to the husband and she dies the corpse will be taken to the husband's house for him to clothe her before funeral rites because she is still his responsibility. If the husband is not around the husband brothers will clothe her.

As they begin to cry, the males in the family are asked to go to various villages and inform people about their loss so that they will come to mourn with them. This is similar to the people of the Ashanti region (Aborampah, 1999). Mourning the dead in the Nandom district last for some days. Historically, they can mourn an old person for at least three or four days with the corpse seated. But younger people funeral lasted for two days. As such children were mourned for a day. Recently all these things have changed but few. They still go around to invite people to the funeral celebration but most people do their announcement on the radio stations, other people also prepare posters to paste on notice boards as a form of announcement. When an announcer goes to inform people about the funeral he needs to wear the traditional cloth hanging a bag made from the animal hide (*ko woc*). Anybody who sees a person in this knows that there is a funeral.

Traditional cloth worn by participants at funeral in the Nandom district of Ghana is often considered special to the occasion by the people. The clothes of both the deceased and participants frequently expresses value of identity and incorporation at the funeral ground. The mounted stage where the dead is normally seated for mourning (*paala*) is also decorated with the Dagara traditional cloth (Doggu, 2015). In the Nandom district of Ghana, during funeral celebrations, when the corpse is a woman, traditional cloths (*lowegyari*) are

displayed to show the gender and what she needs most in the after world. During burial, some of these cloths are added to the coffin to be buried with the dead body. When it is a male, some smocks are also displayed on the bier (*Paala*) and are buried with him.

### **Traditional Cloth**

As part of Dagara culture is their traditional cloth used for all their ceremonial occasions (Gbal, 2013) which is different from the traditional cloths used by other cultures. '*Lowegya*' is common in the three Northern regions but differs in the pattern of weaves, colour and weight of the fabric. Through this '*Lowegya*' cloth Dagara are able to communicate their cultural heritage and identity to people around them without expressing it verbally (Disele, Tyler & Power, 2011). Disele, et al. tried to link the culture of Botswana to other cultures where they consider the use of their traditional dress to be of priority. They further expressed that Botswana traditional dress is used to express their social and cultural identity. The Yoruba's for example have a traditional cloth called *Itokueta* used in burying the dead (Picton, 2009). This evident that traditional cloth is very important in every cultural settlement and is mostly historical as it originates from the ancestors.

Vrelli-Zaxou (as cited in Filippos, Ivonni, Christos and Maria, 2004) stated that traditional cloth is a cloth that is used in defining our identity and expressing the relationship between an individual and the society. According to an informant from the Nandom district, Dagara historically were using the skin of an animal, bark of trees and leaves to cover themselves. Later they realised that they could

use kapok fibre (*gon bolle*) to twist a yarn and weave a cloth out of it. Weaving their traditional cloth could be motivated by the accessibility to a fibre (Cook, 1984). Kapok fibre for example can be found in every part of Africa (Dauda and Kolawole, 2003).

Dagara first woven cloth was called '*lier/lien pen*' and this is used to cover the private parts of the dead. Naked we came to this world but we feel ashamed going out naked in the midst of people (Carrol & Wild, 2012) even burying the dead naked is also questionable and needs to be dressed in clothes (Michel & Lee, 2017). *Lier or lien pen* is sewn into what we call '*Bawlaga*' for the men whilst the women cut a piece of it to be wrapped around their private parts and call it '*Lier pen*'. Dagara name their traditional cloths using names of animals and their achievements. Other tribes name theirs using the dominating yarn colour in the pattern, the yarn colours and the end users (Seidu, Howard & Asinyo, 2017). Another informant also contested that during the presence of the Moshi people, they had so many '*Lowegya*' cloths and were weaving some whilst in Nandom, our ancestors then learnt the knowledge of using kapok or cotton fibre to weave a fabric.

Instead of wrapping the traditional cloth around their shoulders which is an easy way to dress they rather sew the traditional cloth into different styles of garment for both men and women. These styles of garment have undergone some modifications. According to sources, Dagara first used '*Lowegya*' to sew '*Bawlaga*', '*taparaje*' with a small smock, later they sew '*vaapew*' (a very big smock) with '*kurlan*' but recently they have now migrated from '*vaapew*' to

'gyiiwaa' which is not big as compared to 'vaapew' with a hat (*kpawoo*). The women were using two pieces of cloths with a blouse sewn from the traditional cloth. All these garments were not embroidered but due to modernisation, they presently have elaborated designs for all these garments. Colour of traditional cloths or clothes do not signify anything to Dagara people as compared to other tribes (Opoku, 2011). This form of costume is called 'Daga Kparu' (smock) with 'Kurlan' (trouser) among Dagara people. The trouser is sewn loose from the waist down below the knees and sewn fitting with designs to the ankles. The waist of the *Kurlan* is wide with a string to tie. The waist is gathered which makes the crotch bulky when worn. Both males and females use the same fabric of different colours. The Frafra's during the dia war dance also use the traditional cloth to sew their costumes and is worn during performance (Adjei & Osei-sarfo, 2016).

Though 'Lowegya' cloth is woven in all the three Northern regions, it differs from one tribe to the other (Frimpong & Asinyo, 2013). The difference lies in the design, strips and weight of the fabric. In almost all parts of the Northern region, they use 'Lowegya' cloth for their ceremonial occasions. It is widely used among the people of Nandom district. With the use of this cloth, there is one similarity which the people of the three Northern region shares, that is colour of a fabric. There are cultures which attach meaning to the colours of their traditional cloth used (Olaoye, 1989) but this is different from the culture of Dagara people as well as the three Northern regions, who have no meaning to the colour of fabrics they use. This implies that colour of traditional cloth is considered as a factor in some cultures and plays a significant role in celebrations. Colour of

fabric for an occasion is not of much concern to Dagara people, any colour of the cloth can be used for their occasions provided it is a '*Lowegyia*'.

Traditional cloths, for example, in the Ashanti region comprise a different category. There are cloths used for happy occasions and others for funeral service (Tetteh, 2006). Tetteh further explained that Adinkra is a funeral cloth among the Ashanti's which means goodbye, and originally the cloth was worn only by royalty and spiritual leaders for mourning during funeral service and important sacred ceremonies. This is similar to the Dagara culture as their *Lowegyia* is of different types and are used according to categories of people in the society. For example, *Kpognali* which is a type of *Lowegyia* cloth (traditional cloth) historically was used to cover the bier (*Paala*) where the dead is seated during funeral celebration. The Yoruba's in Nigeria also have a cloth called the sombre olowu dudu which is used for funeral celebrations depending on the status and age of the dead (Olaoye, 1989). This is similar to the culture of Dagara where *Begɔ*, a type of *Lowegyia* cloth used by very rich, old and traditional leaders during their funeral celebration. According to an informant, this cloth cannot be used anyhow except the person is of status.

In many African countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, and Mali among others, their traditional cloths are all woven from cotton and kapok fibre used in protecting their culture and history. Olaoye (1989) further explained the traditional cloth of the Nigeria people. In pre-colonial Nigeria for example, cotton fabrics such as '*Ell'u etu*', '*Sanyan*', '*Petuje*', '*Akwaete*', '*Kijipa*' represented a stage in the history and culture of the people. While the '*Akwaete*' cloth reflects



the cultural history of the Ibo, the ‘*Alari*’ and ‘*sanyan*’ cloths manifest the cultural history of the Yoruba. Yet, there is the ‘*Eparesi*’ which is identifiable with the ‘*Ebira*’ culture while the now-fashionable ‘*Adire*’ was formerly for humble folk.

### Summary of the Chapter

Traditional cloth was found out to be a very important costume which serves as a medium of communicating the cultural values, identity and pride of a particular group of people. This is either woven, printed or embroidered. If a traditional cloth is used properly thus, according to the norms of the society, it strengthens the culture or tradition of the society. Generally, traditional cloths have been found to be losing their values, due to acculturation as new knowledge and cultural practices have been adopted and applied to the manufacture of traditional cloths.

As the study of traditional cloth (*Lowegya*) is concerned, it was realized that there is significantly lack of literature concerning the traditional cloth of Dagara people. This then call for intensive research to be carried out on the ‘*Lowegya*’ cloth. It was observed that traditional cloths in the Northern Region, have similarities but differ in the pattern of weave, texture, colour and size of the strips of cloth woven. These are some of the variables used in identifying Dagara traditional cloth from other traditional cloths in Ghana. Though there are some modifications which have been done to the original traditional cloths of Dagara people, some still exist.

Traditional cloth happens to be the medium of communicating the culture of people. Their identity, pride, culture, values, norms and so forth. Through the



traditional cloth, identifying a particular group or society from others become easy. Using the traditional cloth during occasions also portrays the status of a person. This means that communication of the culture of a particular tribe to other people is made easy through the use of a traditional cloth.



## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODS

#### Introduction

This is a culturally based study on the significance of traditional cloth of the Nandom district in the Upper West Region. The study aimed at exploring the cultural significance of Dagara traditional cloth used during occasions in the Nandom district. In order to answer the objectives of this study, methods were developed to get solutions to solve the problem under study. The research posed questions on the Dagara traditional cloth, how the traditional cloth is used during the ceremonial occasions in Nandom district, symbolism and significance of the traditional cloth and factors influencing the choice and use of the traditional and non-traditional cloth as well as the effects of these factors on the recent use of the traditional cloth.

Researchers and other scholars have carried out various studies on the history and community of Dagara people but there seems to be limited literature on the cultural significance of their traditional cloth (*Lowegyia*) as well as clothes made from this fabric for both males and females. Researchers in other parts of the three Northern regions also touched on the significance of smock in their culture with the exception of Nandom district. Significantly, this chapter consists of the research design, the study area, population for the study, selection of participants, data sources, data collection instruments, data collection procedures and data processing and analysis.

## Research Design

This is a qualitative study which deals with finding out current issues of a phenomenon. Creswell (2009, p.4) defined qualitative research as a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. With a study of this sort quantitative or mixed methods will not be suitable because they deal with options provided by the researcher as their responses but qualitative study allows the participants to give varied views concerning the problem under study. Though mixed method involves both options and views yet it is not suitable for this study. Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.28) asserted that “qualitative researchers believe that to understand cultural values and social behaviour requires interviewing or intensive field observation, with these being the only methods of data collection sensitive enough to capture the nuances of human living”.

“Descriptive study is concerned with finding out and describing the characteristics of a particular individual, or of a group” (Kothari, 1990, p.37). This design was used in order to get an in-depth understanding of the use and significance of Dagara traditional cloth (*lowɛgya*) during ceremonial occasions. This design makes it easy to collect data and also it is relatively inexpensive and can be used in a short period.

## Study Area

The study was carried out in the Nandom District of Ghana in the Upper West Region. This is the district where majority of Dagara can be found. Dagara settled in the Nandom district in the Upper West Region during their time of

migration. It is one of the new Districts which were created in the year 2012. It was carved from the Lawra District in the Upper West Region. The District Assembly was established by Legislative Instrument 2102, with Nandom as the district capital. This constitutes about 3.1% of the Region's total land area (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). Though Dagara can be found in other districts but the researcher's interest only centred on those in the Nandom district. During the period of data collection only those who were present at the study area were interviewed.

Dagara are agriculturally oriented who basically cultivate food crops (groundnuts, maize, millet, sorghum) and cotton in the Upper West region and this is used to ply the yarns in weaving the traditional cloth (Abdulai, Mohammed, & Kwadwo., 2018; Awedoba, 2015). They use these fabrics to sew smocks (*daga kparu*), trousers (*kurlan*) and ladies wear for sale.

### **Population**

The target population for the study was Dagara people from the Nandom District whilst the accessible population was those who were present at the study area during the time of data collection. These people have the same cultural practices no matter the community in the Nandom district. Nandom District has a total population of 46,040 and this consists of a greater majority (39,142) of the people living in the rural area and just a few (6,898) in urban areas (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014).

## Sampling Procedure

Multistage method of sampling was used to carry out the study. Random sampling method (lottery method) was used to select the communities. Nandom District is made up of 88 communities. Using the Map of Nandom district (Fig. 13) of Ghana, names of communities under the district were written and folded into a box and shook to select four communities using the random selection method. Picking the communities was done without replacement. The communities selected were *Kogle, Taayaga, Pufiene* and *Burutu*.

Purposive sampling technique on the other hand was utilized in selecting participants from the selected communities for the study. This sampling technique is also known as the judgmental, selective or subjective sampling technique which deals with participants who are knowledgeable or experts in the problem under study. The chiefs and other participants who were considered as the gatekeepers in the various communities helped the researcher to identify the participants for the study. Gatekeepers are important personnel in the community who know much about individuals in the various communities. Based on the purpose of this study, I interviewed people who had some knowledge about Dagara culture in the district and these include, chiefs, members of the community and producers of traditional cloth/costume.

Convenience sampling technique was also used to select the final sample for the study. The final selection was based on participants who were available and willing to take part in the study. The gatekeepers such as; traditional leaders and other participants helped me to select those who are actual Dagara people. An

introductory letter was taken from the Department of Vocational and Technical Education to the participants to seek for their consent before conducting the study.

The total sampled population for the study was 20 participants but 22 was proposed as the total sample size. Twenty participants were interviewed due to the point of saturation (Bowen, 2008). Saturation point in a qualitative study occurs when participants in a study begin to give similar views or answers as their previous colleagues during the time of data collection. Fifteen males and five females were interviewed. The sample was made up of both Christians and Traditional worshippers. Males became the majority during the study because they still use the '*Lowegya*' (traditional cloth) during occasions more often than the females. Also, in the Nandom district when it comes to cultural practices the males are always actively involved leaving the females behind since they are often considered the head of the household. Therefore, getting information on the cultural practices of Dagara people was more geared toward the males than the females though some females might also know other aspects that can increase the diversity of the research.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

Three sets of interview guides (chiefs, public participants and producers) with open ended questions were developed and used to collect the data. This is a qualitative study and therefore requires the researcher to get an in-depth information from the participants therefore interview was the best instrument for this study. Interview guide was used so that respondents could give responses at their own convenience and also through this there were questions of importance



related to this study which popped up during the interview for further clarification. Before the interview began, the interviewer sought permission from the participants to know if she could record or write the responses. Fortunately, all the participants agreed and the researcher was able to record and write their responses. The researcher recorded using a tape recorder and a field notebook was used to write the responses.

The instrument (interview guide) was developed by the researcher after several rounds of corrections with the supervisors and guidance of other researchers. The main focus during development of the interview guide hinged on the ability to achieve the set objectives of this study. Invariably, the objectives of the study informed the development of the interview guide. The instrument was then structured into eight sections: Bio-data of respondents, Dagara traditional cloth (*lowɛgya*), non-traditional cloth and its influence, use of the traditional cloth during ceremonial occasions, symbolism of the traditional cloth, significance of the traditional cloth, factors affecting the use of traditional cloth and recommendations. To ensure reliability of the interview guide, it was pilot-tested in the Central Region (Cape Coast) using a small number of respondents with a sample size of eight. The target population for the pilot test was Dagara people in the Cape Coast Metropolis with knowledge on '*lowɛgya*'. The participants were purposefully selected with the guide of some Dagara leaders in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The test was conducted with Dagara traditional leaders in Cape Coast, producers of '*Lowɛgya*' and individual Dagara participants. At the end of the test the researcher run thematic analysis and found out that the findings answered the



research objectives for the study. Through the pilot test, instruments for the study were restructured to be more suitable for the final interview. Questions such as occasions requesting the use of '*Lowεgya*' cloth. They were asked to describe each occasion but after data collection, I realised that they were not given information about the traditional cloth but instead describing the various occasions. I therefore added specific questions under each occasion. Also, questions on significance and symbolism were put together under one heading but after analysis, I realised that they were not giving enough information under these headings so I decided to restructure it into two headings, symbolism and significance as separate headings. This shows that the material for the final data collection was reliable with the ability of achieving the objectives of the study.

#### **Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection started on Wednesday, the 26th of December, 2018 and ended on the 15th of January, 2019. Each interview started at 8:00am in the morning and ended at 2:00pm in the afternoon and each interview session lasted for at least 30mins. Data collection was done by me and with the assistance of one of the community members who helped in directing the audio recording instrument.

Introductory letters were given to the traditional leaders in the various communities who led the researcher to the other participants. Time was scheduled with the participants to ensure their convenience before meeting. Phone calls were made to check on participants before meeting to ensure they did not leave their busy schedules to attend to me. I met with the various participants at their homes

as it was considered the favourable place by the participants. The interview material included open-ended questions, follow-ups and some probing questions to enhance further clarifications. Permission was sought from participants before recording their voices. The interview involved the use of respondents local language to enhance their understanding.

Interviews were carried out until the point of saturation was reached. I carried out the data collection myself as I was born and bred in the study area and understands the language very well and therefore can interpret it to their understanding. As I moved from one participant to the other, I realized that majority of the participants were giving similar answers to the questions that were posed. Saturation point in a qualitative study occurs when participants in a study begin to give similar views or answers as their previous colleagues during the time of data collection (Bowen, 2008). At this point no new information comes from the respondents.

Some participants as well as the chiefs assisted in identifying other participants. Identification of participants by the gate keepers depended on their familiarity with the people in the various communities. Field Interview which is one-on-one or face-to-face interview was employed in this study. Every aspect of the data was transcribed by taking field notes, recordings and photos as permitted.

### **Data Processing and Analysis**

After several checks, recordings from the field were transcribed. At the end of each day of the field work recordings were transferred to the laptop and double checked then transcribed. Field notes from the field work were also read through

and compared with the recordings. Recordings were done in the local language and were then transcribed in English.

The thematic method of analysis was utilized to generate themes from the findings. I read and re-read the responses repeatedly, double-checking the codes for consistency and also to prevent researchers influence on the results. Themes are the repetitive key points that emerge from the findings. It is systematically identifying, organizing, and forming patterns (“themes”) across qualitative datasets (Braun, Clarke, Hayfield, & Terry, 2018). Analysis of the findings were based on the research objectives, while interpretation of the findings were then carried out according to the objectives of the study.

### **Chapter Summary**

The study made use of the multi-stage sampling technique where a number of sampling techniques are used at a hierarchical process. Sampling techniques which were used including, random sampling, purposive and convenience sampling with a sample size of 20 instead of 22 as proposed. This was due to the point of saturation. Each sampling technique was used accordingly. The simple random sampling was used to select the communities whilst the purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the participants. Convenience sampling on the other hand was used in locating participants at their communities.

Gatekeepers were employed with the use of the purposive sampling technique in identifying the participants. Gatekeepers were the elders in the communities and the chiefs. There was intensive explanation of the purpose of

this study to the participants to enhance their trust and willingness in taking part in the study.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

The art of weaving among the people of Nandom district has been decades. This cloth historically, is used during ceremonial occasions and still serves that purpose, though there has been a change in the taste of people in their traditional cloth 'Lowegyā'. 'Lowegyā' is common among the three Northern regions but with features which differentiate one tribe from the other.

The art of weaving of traditional cloth is also practiced in the other regions of Ghana like Ashanti, Volta, Northern, and Upper East (Frimpong & Asinyo, 2013). Each culture has a way of weaving its traditional cloth. An informant, Lawrence from one of the communities in the Nandom district asserted that among them (Dagara), historically, it was sticks that their ancestors used to weave the fabric and use thorns from plants to sew their costume. Presently, this technique is no more in use as modern technology has overcome this archaic way of weaving. People now use loom and sewing machines to weave and sew respectively. I tried to find out the cultural purpose of Dagara traditional cloth (lowegyā pɛn) woven by the people of Nandom district and also compare its recent use with the non-traditional cloth as well as the factors hindering its recent use.

#### Pseudonyms or Fictitious Names

I made use of pseudonyms to represent respondents for easy presentation of responses. Pseudonyms are false or alias names used by researchers to reinforce

and heighten their respondents identities (Phillips & Kim, 2009). These are not the actual names of respondents but names used to preserve their identities.

## Results and Discussion

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the use and cultural significance of Dagara traditional cloth (*Lowegya*), its symbolism and also find out the change that has occurred in the use of the traditional cloth in the Nandom District of Ghana.

Specifically, the research sought to;

1. Describe the background of Dagara traditional cloth of Ghana.
2. Investigate the use of the traditional cloth (*lowegya*) during occasions in the district.
3. Explore the symbolism of traditional cloth in the Nandom district.
4. Find out the significance of traditional cloth in the district.
5. Identify the factors influencing the choice of traditional/non-traditional cloth in the district.

This chapter sought to clarify the findings based on these objectives of the study.

## Thematic Analysis

### Knowledge of Origin and Uses of Different Traditional Cloth '*Lowegya*'

Weaving in every culture requires the use of a fibre which differs from one culture to the other. There are different kinds of fibres produced but the use of a particular fibre to weave a fabric depends on the accessibility of the fibre (Cook, 1984). This corresponds with the use of Kapok fibre (*gon bolle*) to twist a yarn

'fomiwr' in weaving 'Lowegyra' in the Nandom district but later moved to use cotton fibre. This happened before the Moshi people came with their assorted fabrics made of cotton fibres. Most of the respondents asserted that, when they were children their ancestors told them that, it was the bark of a tree called 'ponpon' they first used to cover themselves. A participant described their historical dressing:

*“Ponpon was beaten to become soft and worn plus the skin of a calf to cover the most prominent parts of our bodies”* (Dery, field study, 2019).

According to Dauda and Kolawole (2003), kapok fibres can be found in almost every part of Africa. It is a fibre used to produce fabrics. It feels harsh and produces a lot of heat. This makes it uncomfortable using kapok fibre to weave a fabric though it was the earliest fabric the people of Nandom district started with. Respondents reminded that kapok fibre was very important among Dagara people, it was the fibre their ancestors resorted to use in weaving a fabric when they realised that it can be used to produce a fabric to cover their nakedness. This was made possible through their wisdom and creativity. Kapok fibre is now used in stuffing pillows and dolls. According to one of the respondents, the cloths produced by their ancestors can be differentiated from the cloths produced by the Moshi people, it is very heavy and harsh due to the nature of kapok fibre:

*“It was the kapok fibres that our ancestors started using to twist the thread and weave our traditional cloth. The first cloth produced was grey as our ancestors did not know how to colour fabrics”* (John, field study, 2019).



Some researchers pointed out that, the Moshi people brought ‘*Lowεgya*’ cloth to Ghana and this was adopted as a traditional cloth in the North (Essel & Amissah, 2015). This seems to oppose the thoughts of the earlier respondents. Other respondents stated that, the Moshi people came to their town with their woven cloths and as they were weaving Dagara ancestors grabbed their ideas and used them to weave their traditional cloth. This insinuates that the Moshi people who came to stay with the people of Nandom district taught Dagara how to use the fibres to weave a cloth. Dagara were known in the use of skin of an animal and the bark of a tree. According to a participant:

*“Our traditional cloth was once called Moshi cloth (Moosiri pen) but later when our ancestors succeeded in weaving, they began to call ours ‘Lowεgya pen’”* (Rozarius, field study, 2019).

Dagara were once called ‘*Lobr*’ but cloth in Dagara is *wεgya* therefore they combined ‘*Lobr*’ with ‘*wεgya*’ and it became ‘*Lowεgya*’. One of the respondents revealed that, when their ancestors succeeded in weaving their traditional cloth, they used the cloth to sew ‘*Bawlaga*’ for men whilst the women wrapped theirs like a pant and wrap the rest in the form of a skirt plus leaves. This special pant has two extensions on both two sides and another on the middle end and these extensions are then tired at the back. John also added that, later their ancestors modified the ‘*bawlaga*’ into ‘*taparaje*’ and later elongated it into ‘*kurlan*’ (pantaloons):

“Bawlaga is a small piece of fabric sewn in the form of a pant using hands and is worn to cover the private parts of the men leaving their buttocks uncovered” (Ambrose, field study, 2019).

### **Names of Traditional Cloths**

Dagara traditional cloths are of different types, colours and each performs a unique function. Each cloth with its name and colour. This is similar to the Yoruba's, a tribe of Nigeria, they have a traditional cloth called ‘Aso oke’. It comes with three main designs; ‘etu’, which is a dark blue indigo dyed cloth, ‘sananyan’, a brown cloth woven from the beige silk of the Anaphe moth and alaari, which is woven from cotton fibres and used by the kings and nobles (Akinbileje, 2014).

Dagara for some reasons named some of their cloths using names of animals or parts such as ‘kaakublu’ (feather of a guinea fowl). Naming of the ‘Lowegyia’ cloths in the Nandom district historically, does not corroborate how the Frafras in the Upper East Region name their traditional cloths though they have similar traditional cloths. Naming of traditional cloths among the Frafra's is based on the “arrangement of patterns, the dominating yarn colour in the pattern, the yarn colours used and the end users of the cloth” (Seidu, Howard & Asinyo, 2017).

### ***Lien or lier pen***

Figure 2 illustrates ‘Lien/Lier pen’, is believed to be woven from kapok fibres but later resorted to the use of cotton fibres. Historically, this was the first cloth produced by the people of Nandom district. It was confirmed with the

participants as all of them said it is the cloth their ancestors first used. It is cream in colour. It gets its colour from the natural fibres of Kapok that has been used without any additives or refinery. It is used to cover the private parts of the dead before dressing. This stand was strongly defended with statements by some of the respondents such as:

*“No matter the status of the person, it is a must to put on this cloth before dressing. This is the cloth our ancestor was first buried in, so we must use it accordingly”* (Maalo, field study, 2019).

To use this cloth, the first of the dead person has to clothe him or her. The one used by males is called ‘*Bawlaga*’ whilst the females own remain ‘*Lier/Lien pen*’. If it is a man, the first son is recommended. On the other hand if it is a female her first daughter will have to do it. If he or she does not have a child his sister’s or brother’s child can do it. ‘*Lier pen*’ means ‘*wa lieri mæ*’ (meaning come and replace me). As the person presents the cloth to the dead, it means you are ready to replace him or her.



Figure 2: *Liɛn or Lier Pɛn*

### ***Kpognali***

Figure 3, depicts one of the traditional cloths woven by the ancestors of Dagara people. It is a cloth named after a cow with multiple colours. ‘*Paala*’ is a decorated stage mounted where the dead is seated during funeral celebration. Ambrose asserted that, ‘*Kpognali*’ is a very thick fabric woven by their ancestors using kapok fibres. It was mostly used by those who could afford because it was expensive. It was also confirmed that, the heaviness of this cloth plays some roles during the funeral celebration. It can be sewn into ‘*gyiiwaa*’, ‘*kpar nu-voru*’ (sleeveless smock), ‘*kpar nuru*’ (smock with sleeves) and ‘*kurlan*’ (pantaloons). A respondent attested that:

*“Kpognali is a woven cloth used by our ancestors to cover the stage mounted (paala) during funeral celebration. Historically, if you go to a funeral and you see the ‘paala’ (bier) covered with this cloth, it means the people are well to do. It is to prevent the hot sun rays from reaching the corpse. It is also worn by*

*the traditional leaders and those who are well-to-do” (Ambrose, field study, 2019).*



*Figure 3: Kpognali*

### ***Kaakublu pen***

This is another ‘*Lowegya*’ produced by Dagara as their traditional cloth and is used during special occasions. This cloth bears the name of guinea fowl feathers. As seen in Figure 4, this cloth can be used during funeral celebrations, marriage ceremony, festivals, chief enskinment and other ceremonies. This fabric is woven from both kapok and cotton fibres. It is blue black and pale white in colour. It is used by all age categories in the district. A respondent explained that:

*“Our ancestors wove this cloth with bright colours so that we can use it for happy occasions, at the same time when sad events occur” (Ziem, field study, 2019).*





Figure 4: *Kaakublu*

#### ***Kyinkyin pen***

Figure 5, *kyinkyin pen* is another traditional cloth woven by the people of Nandom district. *Kyinkyin* is a type of bird in the forest. Ancestors named this cloth after the bird. This is one of the prominent cloth's that was used in the district. Due to cultural diversity and introduction of technology, this cloth is getting extinct. Both producers testified that, when traditional leaders, chief priest, the rich and very old people die in the society, they have to be dressed in this cloth in order to show their status, provided the family can afford. It was very expensive to afford. It was only people who are well to do, they could afford this type of cloth. Its use according to status has not changed, it is still practiced in the Nandom district as corpses of high status are often seen on the bier in this fabric during funeral celebration. It is believed that if they dress a commoner in this cloth with the tail of an animal, the dead body will decay. Wrong use of this cloth

will lead to consequences because it is believed the person is not fit to dress in it.

A respondent stated:

*“Historically, this cloth is used by people of high status, very old people when they die and the rich in society”* (John, field study, 2019).



Figure 5: *Kyinkyin pen*

### ***Bεgɔ***

As Dagara use variety of woven cloths, ‘*Bεgɔ*’ is another ‘*lowεgya*’ cloth that was produced and used by the ancestors of Dagara people. This cloth bears the name of a snake mostly found in farms during the raining season. Figure 6, as it can be seen, was described by participants as a dark blue fabric used to dress the dead who are very old, traditional leaders or the rich in society. According to the respondents, this cloth can also be used by the living for important ceremonies. The chief priests, during their consultation with the gods dresses in this cloth,



with their attachments. The same applies to the hunters who sew their attachments to the costume and is used whenever they are to go to the bush for hunting. This cloth from the perspective of its uses can be described as a spiritual cloth used by prominent people in the society. One participant explained the use of this cloth:

*“It is recommended for men but women who have grown very old are also qualified to sit on the Paala in this cloth”* (Mary, field study, 2019).



Figure 6: *Begɔ*

### Colours

Respondents confirmed that Dagara, historically are not much concerned with colour of fabrics during ceremonial occasions. Any colour at all is acceptable, except red which cannot be used to bury the dead. When the participants were asked why they do not use red colour to bury the dead, their response was, their ancestors did not give them any reason but only told them it

cannot be used. The respondents again insinuated that, their use of colours do not have any meaning. This does not corroborate with the Akan's in the Ashanti region, as colours of traditional clothes are considered important and each use at an occasion communicates a meaning (Opoku, 2011). Opoku further explained that, colours such as; black, white, gold or yellow, and red for example; communicates the feelings of love, melancholy, victory, purity, anger or crisis during an occasion. This means the recent colourful traditional cloths which has been used by people in the Northern Region of Ghana is a recent phenomenon which could be due to modernization. Dagara ancestor's inability to associate meaning to colour of their cloths produced could also be due to their inability to produce varied colours as they started the traditional cloth production. All these triggered the adoption of colourful cloth production in the Nandom district.

Embroidering the traditional clothes as a form of design was also seen as a recent phenomenon. The producers supported this by stating that, their ancestors used not to design their traditional clothes but they have developed the recent interest of decorating their traditional clothes. It was asserted that there are also decorations on their traditional dresses but they are just there for fun with no meaning attached. As society grows new knowledge and ideas are adopted from other cultures. This is due to our encounter with people we meet in different societies. Culture on the other hand is dynamic and can change. Therefore, modification of the traditional cloth is to adjust to the recent use of cloths among people.

## Traditional Clothes

As the cloth was woven, their ancestors thought it wise to use this woven cloth to sew costumes which will be worn during their ceremonial occasions. It is woven in strips then a number of these strips are put together to form the cloth. A question was then asked, about the various costumes sewn and used by the people of Nandom district using the traditional cloth. The respondents asserted that Dagara have types of garments which they use their traditional cloth to sew. The various types of costumes sewn highlighted by the respondents, they have ‘gyiiwaa/Vaapew, kurlan, kpawoo, kpar nuru, kpar nu-voru’ and pieces of cloths wrapped by women around their waist and lowered to the ankles, with a blouse of any style.

Another participant clarified on the use of traditional clothes: “*these garments are worn according to ranks and statuses*” (John, field study, 2019).

### **Gyiiwaa/Vaapew**

As seen in Figure 7, respondents explained that historically, ‘Gyiiwaa or Vaapew’ is worn by the rich, chiefs and very old people. It was once called ‘Vaapew’ which is bigger than ‘Gyiiwaa’. This garment is worn at both happy and sad occasions. This is mostly worn by men. Whenever a chief goes to a program, this is what he wears in order to differentiate himself from the others. Overall, this type of traditional costume is used to show status among Dagara people. According to a participant:

*“If you see someone in this traditional clothe you should know that the persons family has a lot of cattle or money. When you go to a funeral and the*

*corpse is dressed in this type of cloth, it means the person is very important or the family is rich” (Peter, field study, 2019)*

Respondents further explained that ‘*Gyiiwaa*’ ‘reaches to the ankles whilst ‘*Vaapew*’ on the other hand reaches to the floor but now has been shortened to the ankles level and is now named ‘*Gyiiwaa*’. According to John, the name ‘*Gyiiwaa*’ is derived from the reaction of people toward the dress. “People found this type of attire to be very attractive and that is how the name was derived (*nye o na ti waar gyiiw lea*) “see how appealing he is”. ‘*Vaapew*’: on the other hand is to roll up the sleeves on the shoulders in order to walk comfortably. As John further explained, rolling up the sleeves is why they call it ‘*Vaapew*’.



*Figure 7: Gyiiwaa or Vaapew*

### ***Kpar nu-voru***

The study also revealed that Dagara have another costume called ‘*Kpar nu-voru*’ which is a smock without sleeves. Its major purpose according to the respondents is for happy occasions such as festivals (*tigri*) and wedding



celebrations. This is sewn without sleeves with godets inserted in the lower portion which creates room from the waist to the lower part of the smock. It is sewn into various sizes ranging from the smallest to largest. It can have pockets either at the sides or in the front of the smock according to individual taste. It is either hand or machine sewn. This type of smock is called ‘*Yensichi*’ among the Dagomba’s in the Northern region, but theirs do not have decorations (Acquaah, Amissah, & Yankson, 2017). Dagara in recent times, decorate theirs to make it look more attractive. A participant further explained those who can use this clothe:

*“This smock is worn by people of all categories and for all occasions, but cannot be worn by the dead. It can be used by the mourners to mourn the dead”*  
(Lawrence, field study, 2019)



*Figure 8: Kpar Nuvoru*

### *Kpar nuru*

Figure 9 shows another costume called *Kpar nuru* sewn from ‘*Lowegya*’ cloth (a smock with sleeves). It is used during both happy and sad occasions in the district (funeral, marriage and festival) just like the smock with sleeves. It is either hand sewn or machine sewn. It is sewn straight from top down to the middle portion where strips of the fabrics or godets are inserted to create fullness. There is no specific size for this smock but sewn according to the taste of the person. The nature of this smock makes it easy for the person to move in it. There is no restrictions in movement. This is in connection with Figure 16 in Appendix 2, where all the dancers are wearing ‘*Kpar nuru*’ to dance.

A respondent explained that this type of smock can be worn by everyone despite their status and age range:

*“This smock can be worn by children and grown-ups. The dead can be buried in this attire too”* (Rosarius, field study, 2019).



Figure 9: *Kpar Nuru*

### *Kurlan*

'*Kurlan*' (Figure 10) is another clothe sewn from Dagara traditional cloth. It is a bulky trouser-like costume worn by the people of Northern region of Ghana during ceremonial occasions. It is known as 'pantaloon' among the Dagombas in the Northern region of Ghana but the people of Nandom district call it '*Kurlan*'. All the respondents asserted this can be worn by everyone provided you have it. It has a very wide waistline, and is full but is straight and fitting below the knees and close to the lower part of the legs down to the ankle. When worn, the middle part of '*kurlan*' becomes bulky. John, a respondent said their ancestors first sewed '*Bawlaga*' for men, later '*taparaje*' which reaches to the knees, then gradually they lowered it to '*kurlan*':

*"Kurlan is also worn by females when they die but it is mostly used by males for their occasional activities"* (John, field study, 2019).



*Figure 10: Kurlan*



### *Kpawoɔ* (Hat)

Custom demands that when dressing, the hair should also be covered. Figure 11 presents ‘*Kpawoɔ*’ (hat) used by Dagara. Dagara uses their traditional cloth to sew a hat which is used as a covering for the hair. This is mostly worn by the men at their own convenience. Though the hat seems to be associated with men, it is also used by females when they die. A hat is called ‘*kpawoɔ*’ in the Dagara language. Ambrose, a producer of traditional clothes explained that, ‘the designs on *Kpawoɔ* (hat) goes with the designs on the legs of ‘*kurlan*’ (trousers). Due to the recent introduction of queen mothers in the Nandom district, they also adorn themselves in it during ceremonial occasions. A participant clarified that:

*“The hat on the dead woman’s head is later removed and replaced with a scarf. The hat used to be plain but recently we decorate it to give a different look. Our ancestors did not know anything about embroidering our traditional clothes. They were always sewn plain”* (Ambrose, field study, 2019).



Figure 11: *Kpawoɔ*

### *Wɛgyari ni kparu*

Gender becomes a factor in the use of ‘*Lowɛgya*’ cloth among Dagara people. As the men sew their costumes, women on the other hand sew their pieces of cloths together which they wrap around their waist, and goes with a blouse, or call it ‘*slit*’ and ‘*kaba*’. As the respondents explained the women used to wear a blouse with two pieces of cloths termed as “*sɛ kɛ lob*” (dress and lower the upper part of the cloth). Alice, a respondent reported that, women recently also embroider their garments according to their taste. The respondents also complained that their olden way of dressing no longer exist due to modernisation, it is now the use of *slit* and *kaba*. Culture is dynamic, which means it can change from time to time therefore women can either use ‘*sɛ kɛ lob*’ or *slit* and *kaba* in order to suit the situation in which one finds herself. A respondent explained how comfortable they feel in using *wɛgya*:

*“Sɛ kɛ lob” gives some weight at the waist even if you are not fat but it will make you look heavy”* (Angela, field study, 2019).

### **Reactions toward Traditional Cloth (*Lowɛgya*) by Respondents**

A person who actually develops the love for his or her culture, never changes. Though there is modernization or acculturation recently, Nandom people seemed to be happy about keeping their traditional cloth for the future. This was realized during my interaction with some of the respondents. This implies that traditional cloth among Dagara people of Ghana gives them identity, protection from dangers and also offer them the modesty function. During my interview with

the participants, a respondent summarised their feelings toward their traditional cloth:

*“We are happy that we have something of our own to cover ourselves. This is what makes us Dagara. It represents our culture and whenever I wear this, I become very happy. It shows our joy and hides our shame”* (Gertrude, field study, 2019).

Traditional cloth does not only protect or ensure modesty in the person but gives you the chance to be part of a group. She found being part of her friends to be an important part of her life. From her father’s point of view, it does not mean she is naked or has no clothe to wear but traditionally, she needs a traditional cloth to use so that she will be recognized by her friends. According to a participant:

*“When I was a child, my father one day told me that I need to put on clothes so that I could mingle with my friends. Then he said what I mean is wearing a traditional clothe. On that day he gave the clothes to me and I was happy. Whenever I think of my father I become motivated to use my traditional cloth”* (Gertrude, field study, 2019).

Mary also acclaimed that protecting ‘Lowegya’ should be a priority for them as it is their cultural item. She further gave a proverb to clarify her stand on the traditional cloth; *“tiro bε liebi ti ε ti yel kε zie lieba”* (trees have not turned upside down and we said there is modernization). Our ancestors started using this cloth for all their ceremonial and festive occasions but the present generation sees it not to be important due to acculturation and fashion taste. We humans are still

the same and now we are claiming that there is change, so we should also change our way of dressing.

Other respondents further stated that they use this cloth because of the joy, identity and protection they gain from it. It was also realised that as part of this cloth there is a spiritual aspect of it which some of them have experienced. This is one reason why they are proud of their culture. A participant narrated his ordeal in using this cloth as their traditional cloth by stating that he would not have been able to walk but the spiritual intervention of the 'Lowεgya' cloth is what made him to walk:

*"When I was a child, I was a cripple could not walk until I asked my father to sew a traditional costume for me, my father did as expected, the moment I put on the traditional cloth, I began to walk. This shows how strong and important our culture is"* (George, field study, 2019).

A participant also narrated his first time of going to Kumasi in the Ashanti Region. He went to Kumasi alone in the Ashanti region, when he got down from the car he did not know where to pass or who to ask for direction because he could not speak 'Twi'. Later he saw a man wearing their traditional cloth (*Lowεgya*) so he walked to him and greeted in Dagara and he responded. Through the stranger, this man found his way to where he was going. Due to the general use of the cloth among other tribes, this participant was contemplating, if this cloth can still perform its function as a media of communicating their identity.

## Occasions

Among every tribe there are ceremonial occasions which are culturally aligned and demand the use of their traditional cloth. These occasions are mostly in remembrance of their ancestors, display of their identity and cultural values and these are communicated through the use of their traditional cloth. In the Nandom district, there are some specific occasions mostly celebrated using their traditional cloth. These include; funeral, marriage, chieftaincy and festivals.

### Funeral

#### *Costume for the dead*

“Naked we come into the world but we feel ashamed going back naked” (Carroll & Wild, 2012). Clothing for burial is always special and is designed according to the customs of the society, they are either the deceased’s own clothing, or alternatively, specialty burial clothing made by members of the society (Michel & Lee, 2017). Societies in which the dead is buried often find a way to cover the dead before burial though the person came to earth without clothes. Nandom district of Ghana for example; uses costume made from the traditional cloth. In the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, respondents explained that it was difficult getting a fabric to clothe the dead until their ancestors took a decision of weaving a cloth to cover their nakedness as well as the dead. It was malted corn, skin of the animal and leaves that their ancestors considered as the best option of hiding the nakedness of the dead than leaving the corpse naked. There is always the need to improvise whenever the need arises. A respondents stated:



*“It was malted guinea corn our ancestors will grind, and mix with water to be consistent. This was used to smear the body of the dead as the cloth during funeral celebration. Whilst the private parts was covered using the skin of an animal as well as leaves”* (Rosarius, field study, 2019).

*Lier* or *lien pen* was found out to be the first cloth produced by Dagara ancestors of Ghana. Most of the respondents discussed that this *Lier pen* was then used to cover the privacy of the corpse whilst they still smeared the body with the malted corn mixture. Among the Yoruba’s, Itokueta was the clothing within which a person's corpse is clothe at his or her departure from the earth (Picton, 2009). As the production of ‘*Lowegyā*’ continued, Dagara thought of using the cloth to sew ‘*taparaje*’ (a pant like shorts) with a small smock. The respondents again said, the cloth was not in abundance, so a clan can have one pair of traditional clothe, and this will be used by all the corpse and removed during burial to be washed and kept for the next celebration. In washing the costume their ancestors opted for ways of keeping it clean though there was no soap available. The scientist might say that these cloths will be contaminated and should be washed with chemicals but the forefathers used cow dung or mud to wash their costumes after moving from one corpse to the other yet they were fine. As stated by one of the respondents:

*“Lien pen was the first fabric woven by our ancestors and therefore deemed it compulsory for everyone to get this cloth for burial. When our ancestors sew the clothe for the dead, after using on a corpse they normally soak it in cow dung*

*or in the mud for one or two days before washing to be kept clean afterwards and keep it clean for the next person that will die”* (John, field study, 2019).

The respondents again explained that, very old men or women and the rich corpse are qualified to sit on bier or *paala* with *Vaapew/Gyiwaa* and a hat. Not all corpses in the district can wear this. Many of the respondents clarified that this costume was very expensive and spiritual. Now that there is abundance of traditional cloths, the dead are now buried in the ‘*Lowegya*’ cloth costume and there is no need removing it to wash and keep for the next occasion. A respondent stated:

*“Our ancestors started using smock, ‘kurlan’ and a hat to dress the dead. A male corpse is qualified to sit with a hat on whilst a female cannot. It is just our culture”* (Lawrence, field study, 2019).

As custom demands it is also important that mourners at the funeral ground dress in the traditional cloth, especially the chief mourners. Men in their smocks and women in their slit and kaba or pieces of cloth. Due to change in society, the use of traditional cloth by mourners has run down especially among the women. Some respondents explained their joy of seeing *Dagara* in their traditional cloth meanwhile they might have been dressing in non-traditional clothes. A respondent narrated how she was overwhelmed at a funeral ground in one of the villages in Nandom district:

*“I went to a funeral and saw a group of women dressed in the traditional cloth uniformly, I was very excited to see them”* (Maalo, field study, 2019).



***Reasons why Dagara cannot use a non-traditional cloth to bury the dead***

Respondents seemed to be excited about the use of their traditional cloth in burying the dead. They strongly acclaimed the practice with no one speaking against its use for burying the dead. They felt that using their traditional cloth to bury the dead is a way of protecting their heritage and culture but using a non-traditional cloth to bury the dead will mean they are adopting other people's culture. *Lowegya*' was explained as the fabric used to cover their ancestors during the time of production, therefore protecting this cloth was found to be a priority. A respondent explained how he feels on loosening their traditional cloth:

*"I hope we never change our culture regarding the use of our traditional cloth to bury the dead. Every tribe has its traditional cloth and would not like to lose it based on its significance, so why should we abandon ours"* (Ambrose, field study, 2019).

A respondent gave a proverb pertaining the use of non-traditional cloth to bury the dead. *"If a woman gets married she is under the husband's control and needs to dress as he wants, you do not have to go against him"*. This implies that their ancestors are their leaders and changing their way of dressing the dead will be like challenging their ancestors. Respondents saw the traditional cloth to have some spiritual connectedness which in a way connects the dead to the living. Using the traditional cloth therefore was a form of reverence to the ancestors.

It was also realized that some respondents consider the dead to be alive in the after world and continue to see whatever the living do. As it was, the respondent affirmed that:

*“If our ancestors see one of his sons or daughters wearing a non-traditional cloth, he will be wondering why his children decided to adopt somebody’s culture. This can cause us harm therefore this costume must not change. Dagara people can change their way of lives but we will always revisit our traditional cloth”* (Maalo, field study, 2019).

Though culture is changing in most societies, the minds of the people of Nandom district seem to be static with the use of their traditional cloth as the costume for burial of the dead. They felt that changing their way of dressing the dead will be disrespectful to their ancestors. As many of the participants saw it to be a representative tool of their culture. This cloth is their pride and it makes Dagara feel proud of themselves.

### ***Paala***

Every tribe has a way of displaying the dead during funeral celebration. Some tribes lay the corpse in the casket wide open during vigil whiles Dagara seat the corpse on a bier (Paala) well mounted and decorated like a room with a chair inside, so that everyone can see the dead seated. As part of the discussion on Paala, a researcher stated; the corpse is seated in state for mourning in a prepared room where the corpse is exposed in a seated position so that anyone can have a momentary look (Doggu, 2015).

Nandom district of Ghana is an area where displaying traditional cloths during funeral becomes important. Displaying the cloths is based on gender and age of the corpse. Children corpse cannot be seated on *Paala* because they are not grown. Cloths are not displayed during their funeral either and last for a short

period of time. During the interview, a question was asked why Dagara put traditional cloths and smocks on stage during funeral celebration. This was revealed to have their meanings as part of the funeral. The respondents revealed that, when a man dies, his sister's children send a smock to be put on the dead but if they are unable to do so, they will have to hang it on the 'paala', and this will be buried with him. His brothers and other people also hang some of the smocks. As it was discussed, they also made it clear that smocks and traditional cloths are also hanged on 'paala' when a woman dies. The respondents elucidated that, the traditional cloths hanged on the bier "paala" of a woman are either hers, from her daughters or granddaughters.

The dead can also be messaged by the living as they consider them to be alive among them though they cannot see. People send messages through him or her to their relatives either material or in the form of a word. This happens between relatives. At a female's funeral, a smock hanged on 'paala' is either from her brothers, family or as a message from someone to be given to a person in the after world. A woman sister's child can message her to give cloths to their mother because they could not clothe her during her time of death. A dead male is also messaged to people he knows. A respondent stated:

*"One needs to give a smock to your uncle or a close relative to be given to your father if you have not done it during his time of death. Until they do this, they cannot clothe any dead body. If you are not able to clothe your father and you clothe someone else, it is believed that something bad will happen to you"* (Lawrence, field study, 2019).

At funerals in the Nandom district Ghana, the legs of the dead woman are often covered with a traditional cloth. This cloth is either hers or from her daughter. It is believed that she will need a cloth in the after world to cover herself. The undertakers either use it to cover her in the grave, or fold and place it under her head.

Among women there is always unity, and losing a loved one becomes a painful memory to them. According to some respondents, during a woman's funeral celebration, some cloths are hanged separate from the ones on the 'paala' and these belongs to her rivals (*Yentaabe*). These cloths are taken away right after the funeral by her rivals. Hanging their cloths at the funeral ground was found to be a way of communicating their unity and culture to the public.

As respondents explained the use of the traditional cloth. Its main functions at the funeral ground were also elaborated. These functions were found to be cultural, physical and social. Many of the respondents explained that the smocks and cloths are displayed at funeral ground to show their culture, to let the person feel the respect they have for him or her, to show that the person is either a man or woman, to also communicate the wealth of the person or the family and to ensure that the dead get cloths/clothes to use in the after world.

### **Marriage or Wedding (*Tigri*)**

Wedding in the Nandom district is the celebration of the union between a man and a woman after their traditional marriage. This takes place in the church after a number of announcements. Wedding, as it seems, was noticed as a new ceremony which is not a cultural celebration among Dagara.

During the interview, a question was asked how couples dress during traditional marriage, but it was realised that there is no special dressing for traditional marriages in the Nandom district. Many of the participants attributed that traditional marriage is just taking the lady to the husband's house. It can be their first day of meeting where the man will take her to his house then the next day the husband's friends will go to tell her family that they stole something from their house last night and if accepted then followed by payment of the bride price. Bride price was found to be the only way of legalizing marriage in the district.

Respondents felt that it was the missionaries who brought the idea of wedding in the church and therefore one needs to dress as it is considered as a special occasion. As they revealed, when the idea of celebration in the church came, the white people also brought clothes and because the traditional cloth was expensive, most of them used the non-traditional cloth to celebrate their wedding ceremonies. The women's dressing is termed as "se ke lob". This means that wedding ceremony is not something that is recognized culturally and therefore couples can use whatever clothes they get for the celebration. According to a respondent:

*"Those who could afford the traditional cloth were the only people who could celebrate their wedding in a traditional cloth. The men normally wear smock with his 'taparaje' or pantaloons (kurlan) with a hat and walking stick whilst the women wraps the cloth around their chest with beads on the ankles. Later the women sew a blouse of the traditional cloth and two pieces of traditional cloths"* (John, field study, 2019).

### *Traditional cloth as rite of passage*

A question was asked why a newly wedded lady in the Nandom district needs to take a traditional cloth with her to her husband's house. A lot of contributions aroused as the interviewer continued. This fabric was revealed to be an important material for people who are ready to marry. To be qualified as a woman, you need to have a Dagara traditional cloth with you, no matter your location or place of settlement. This shows that traditional cloth is a very important costume which Dagara women cannot do away with. This again shows that Dagara people believe in the spirituality of their traditional cloth. A respondent stated that: *“when the woman falls sick this will be used to cover her, and also when she dies they will use it to cover her”* (Mary, field study, 2019).

There was a follow-up question and the interviewer tried to find out if the woman can use a non-traditional cloth instead of the traditional cloth. A respondent replied that it is unacceptable because in every occasion it is believed that the woman will need this cloth:

*“When she dies they will use the traditional cloth to dress her before the ‘kurlan’ and smock. This is what our ancestors have been practicing and using a non-traditional cloth can cause disaster. As a Dagara lady or woman no matter where you are you need your traditional cloth”* (Alice, field study, 2019).

Respondents felt that nowadays couples do not prepare adequately before getting married. This is in the case of the traditional cloth, some couples, especially the women, do not have the traditional cloth but they jump into marriages:



*“Historically this is what qualifies you as a man or a woman who is at the stage of marriage, but recently it is just the matter of getting some clothes to wear and they do not consider the customs of marriage”* (Roger, field study, 2019)

As culture demands it is also necessary for a man to have a traditional cloth with him when he is intending to marry. This qualifies you as a man and now can have a family. The respondents clarified that, for a man in the family, when someone dies it is his responsibility to clothe him or her. Men are often considered as the head of the families in the Dagara society and they play major roles in the family. As a man starts a family his duties increase and he needs to attend to everything that comes his way. A respondent revealed that:

*“When you grow up as a man and you want to marry they will tell you that you need to be prepared as a man. This preparation is, buying of the traditional cloth to keep in case of emergencies. After my wedding I went and showed the money to my uncle and he asked me to use the money to buy a traditional cloth”* (Rozarius, field study, 2019)

From his experience, it shows that he is now at the stage of marriage and cannot start a family without having a traditional cloth. The uncle would have allowed him to use the money the way he wanted but the first thing was for him to use the wedding money to buy a traditional cloth because it shows he is now a man.

#### ***Why traditional cloth should be used during wedding***

As part of the study, a question was asked, why there is the need to use traditional cloth during wedding celebration in the Nandom district. All the

participants attested that this cloth denotes the identity and culture of the couple. Respondents felt that marriage celebration is a happy occasion therefore during this period; the couple should be able to portray their joy and happiness in their union. John also felt that the traditional cloth during wedding celebration hides them from shame. The cloth brings out the beauty of the couple no matter their looks, and also show their identity which might have been hidden. According to a respondent:

*“The traditional cloth communicates the partners union to people, it also informs them to be committed to each other and also showcases their joy and happiness”* (Ambrose, field study, 2019)

### **Chieftaincy**

#### ***Traditional cloth as a symbol of social status***

Traditional leaders are prominent people in Ghana and maintaining that status comes from their dressing and behaviour. They have authority over the affairs of the society and have to play their roles accordingly. Chiefs in the Northern region of Ghana are all entitled to the use of *Lowegyia* costume during and after enskinment. According to the chiefs in Nandom district of Ghana:

*“The use of ‘Lowegyia’ costume is compulsory for all the chiefs”* (Angela, field study, 2019).

A sub-chief can dress in a traditional and non-traditional cloth but it is unacceptable for the paramount chief.

The chiefs dressing becomes incomplete without a walking stick given to him during enskinment. It was made to realize that a chief attends an occasion in the Nandom district, in the 'Lowεgya' cloth costumes with a walking stick:

*“The walking stick is a symbol of chieftaincy, without this, you will be disqualified as a chief or charged because you have violated the rules”* (Roger, field study, 2019).

Among the Akans, a chief is enstooled after the death, abdication or destoolment of his predecessor. Body arts that are basically associated with clothing and adornment play a major role in the installation processes of chiefs (Dzramedo, 2009). Dzramedo further explained that the chief is out-doored mostly in white colour as a symbol of joy and victory.

Among Dagara people during enskinment, the chief dresses in a very expensive 'Lowεgya'. He uses the very big costume made from 'Lowεgya' either *Vaapew* or *Gyiiwaa*. The chiefs revealed that the complete costume one has to dress in during enskinment is the *kurlan* (trouser), smock (*gyiiwaa*) and hat. If one loses this walking stick it means you have terminated your authority as a leader. According to the chiefs:

*“After dressing you and performing all the rituals, they will then take you outside to the celebration ground, where you will be seated and a walking stick (da dibra) is given to you as a symbol of leadership. Wherever you go you need to keep this walking stick with you”* (John, field study, 2019).



*Figure 12: Chiefs and other People at an Enskinnment Ground.*

### **Status**

Chieftaincy comes with status and dressing in a traditional cloth in Ghana helps you differentiate yourself from others. The chiefs have a hierarchy among themselves and this is communicated through their dressing. One of the chiefs unveiled that the paramount chief makes sure that he dresses in a traditional cloth that will stand him out among the others, his walking stick is also different from what the sub-chiefs use. Dzramedo (2009) again said the way in which a chief dresses conveys a message to his observers.

### **Festival**

During festival celebration, which is Kakube in the Nandom district of Ghana, it is compulsory for the traditional leaders to dress in their traditional cloth 'Lowegyia'. They further indicated that the traditional leader's dresses in the traditional cloth, with a walking stick and an umbrella. John stated:

*“Ordinary people can also dress in the traditional cloth with a walking stick but cannot walk in the midst of the traditional leaders”* (Roger, field study, 2019).

They made it clear that when an ordinary person dresses in the same costume and walk in the midst of the traditional leaders, it means you are challenging them and may face consequences. They also clarified that those who are not traditional leaders can use a non-traditional cloth to attend the festival but a chief as a leader cannot do so.

According to Alice, historically the men used to wear either ‘*taparaje*’ or ‘*kurlan*’, with smock of any kind and a hat, to the festival ground but that is no more due to modernisation and education. Alice further stated that:

*“Now it is only the traditional leaders and few attendants who dress in the traditional cloth”* (Lawrence, field study, 2019).

This confirms the change in taste of fashion among the people of Nandom district. Though the people are trying to change, the traditional leaders are still trying their best to protect the culture. This does not mean that those who are not leaders do not use the traditional cloth, they do but its rate of use has reduced.





*Figure 13: The Paramount Chief of Nandom Traditional Area with his Subordinates and other Dignitaries at the Kakube Festival Ground.*

### ***Cultural significance of the traditional cloth during festivals***

Using *Lowegya* cloth at their festival occasions was realized to have some importance attached. The people of Nandom district do not use their traditional cloth at the festival ground for fun but to portray its cultural significance among others. Many of the respondents disclosed that the use of *Lowegya* at the festival ground is to display their rich culture, show their identity, to also display their joy and happiness of bumper harvest which they have gained through the hardship during the rainy season. People are also able to display their status, and to show their love for the festival.

Alexander and Maalo stated that, '*Lowegya*' cloth shows the beauty of Dagara people and also hides their sense of shame at the festival ground. Physically, they cover themselves to hide their nakedness from others and representing their culture with a traditional cloth also safes them from embarrassment. Clothes in general as we all know functions as a protection from



cold, heat, injuries, modesty among others. Traditional cloth on the other hand goes further to specify their significance specific to the tribe. '*Lowεgya*' for example seems to provide social, cultural, physical and psychological significance. Socially, traditional cloth for example gives the people status, culturally it shows their identity as Dagara people and also communicates their culture. Psychologically, visitors are able to witness their happiness, love and spiritual protection. Physically, participants felt that '*Lowεgya*' cloth also gives them identity and show their beauty to their observers.

### **Symbolism of the Traditional Cloth**

Every traditional cloth or costume has something which it stands for or symbolizes in the culture of the people. This is not different from the culture of Dagara people. They have a rich culture and their culture is portrayed through the traditional cloth '*Lowεgya*'. According to the respondents, their traditional cloth symbolizes their rich culture as Dagara. Respondents felt that their '*Lowεgya*' is not only a cloth for coverage but it symbolizes their culture.

Ambrose and Maalo revealed that, *Lowεgya* is their ancestral symbol and it stands as their saviour. Because the traditional cloth was being woven by their ancestors and they feel their ancestral being in it. Maalo again commented that the '*Lowεgya*' cloth stands as their saviour (a symbol of joy and problem solver). As a problem solver it can be spiritual, physical or financial. Those who produce the cloth and costume get profit from it, to solve their financial problems.

Some respondents also said, their traditional cloth (*Lowεgya pen*) stands for their life. As part of the traditional cloth symbolizing their lives, another

participant also contributed that the traditional cloth symbolizes their strength as Dagara. John supported that the traditional cloth stands for their happiness and sadness. Happiness and sadness is realized in their ceremonial occasions, during happy and sad times, this cloth is used as per their culture.

### **Significance of the Traditional Cloth**

Every material or object used by a specific group of people has its own reasons of use. The use of *Lowegya* does not only protect the people of Nandom district of Ghana but performs other significance which were pointed out by the respondents. All the respondents indicated that their traditional cloth is used to show their beauty, hide them from shame, show their identity, shows their culture, protection (covers the dead and living) and also safes them from trouble. Some respondents also felt that the use of the traditional cloth helps one gain respect from people and give you status. The social significance of *Lowegya* cloth are not ignored or overlooked as far as the study of *Lowegya* cloth is concerned that is status and respect.

As part of the significance of the traditional cloth, producers saw the significance to be beyond cultural and social aspect. On their part of weaving and sewing this cloth, producers testified that it helps them economically. The sale of *Lowegya* improves their financial status from the profit they gain from it. As their rate of production and purchasing increases, their standard of living becomes better.

A respondent also felt that:

*“The use of traditional cloth is to show that you are a human being”*  
(Angela, field study, 2019).

Culturally, Dagara people believe that, when you do things according to the culture, you are qualified as a good person. Humanity to them is not all about good behaviour toward people but also dressing in their traditional cloth qualifies you as a human being. Using *Lowεgya* in the Nandom district of Ghana, also help them display their joy, love and happiness. Due to the unity that the Nandom people have, whoever they see in their traditional cloth becomes their tribe mate and if the person is in trouble, they begin to show their love and care.

#### **Factors that Inhibit the Recent use of Dagara Traditional Cloth**

As it was revealed, most respondents felt that there are factors hindering the use of their traditional cloth recently. Due to acculturation that is borrowing other people cultural practices, people find it difficult to associate themselves with their own culture. New knowledge and technology have been initiated and societies need to upgrade themselves in order to cope with the recent trend ‘modernization’. Respondents commented that:

*“Some Dagara people do not see the use of their traditional cloth to be important”* (Gertrude, field study, 2019).

In a finding similar to this study in Japan, Ueda (2003) revealed that, communication technologies have become one of the factors behind cultural diversity of clothes. As the society grows, new knowledge and cultural activities are adopted from other societies as they interact with them and are then inculcated into their production.

Many respondents also felt that, the cost of the traditional cloth recently is too high for them to afford. They expressed that, they have the love for the cloth but how to get money to buy this cloth is their problem:

*“We always wish we could use this cloth to attend our celebrations but it is expensive and we cannot buy”* (Mary, field study, 2019).

In relation to Boateng (2014) study on Adinkra and Kente Cloth in History, Law, and Life in the Ashanti region, revealed that people seem to be using the imitated kente cloth as compared to the original kente, this could be due to the cost at which the original kente is being sold. If its price is high and the imitated kente is lower, people will resort to buying the cheap one which is the imitated cloth instead of the original kente. In comparison, *Lowegya* and kente seemed to be related in their recent use as modified *Lowegya* cloth seemed to be booming in the market nowadays than the original ones that are recognized culturally.

Some respondents also lamented that some Dagara know the meaning of their traditional cloth but do not want to use it because they do not like their culture. Others also said, due to pride, people want to hide the fact that they are Dagara, hence they do not want to associate themselves with the traditional cloth. This means that people voluntarily ignore the use of their traditional cloth just to have a taste in their own fashion and remain hidden. In contrast, nobody wants to abandon his or her culture for a different culture but the inability to use this cloth might be due to lack of education and cost of the fabric. Essel and Amissah (2015) argued that ‘*Lowegya*’ costume is a cloth that is cherished by every Northerner just like the Ashanti’s who hold ‘Kente’ in high esteem.

Most of the respondents also felt that ‘migration’, is one of the contributing factors to the use of the Dagara traditional cloth. Respondents acclaimed that as Dagara people of Ghana, travel to other places they begin to consider their culture to be archaic, they do not have the love for it anymore. As people get in touch with other cultural values it begins to conflict with their traditional way of living and these practices are either adopted or made away with. If one adopts the new cultural practices he begins to replace it with what he has been taught. Adaptation is always key when one finds himself in a different town and this does not call for only relation with the people but also their cultural practices.

A respondent felt that:

*“The young ones especially use it when they are going to church but this is not part of our culture. They consider our traditional cloth to be for the grown-ups”* (Beatrice, field study, 2019).

This is because the elders in the society always make sure that they use this cloth for their ceremonial occasions. The elders always feel that the weight of this cloth adds some weight to them when worn and this becomes a motivating factor for them to use the traditional cloth. Due to this, the youth always felt that they will be competing with elders’ based on their dressing. Christianity was found to be one of the root causes of some people not using the traditional cloth during their ceremonial occasions but instead to church services. Participants felt that Christianity is trying to overpower their culture.

Weight as a feature of fabrics was found to be one of the factors hindering the use of ‘Lowegya’ cloth in the Nandom district. Whenever one uses this cloth,

it needs to be washed because they sweat a lot and washing this fabric continuously will also make it peel due to the continuous friction between the fabric and the hands. The chemicals from the soap might also weaken the fibres. These scare some people from using their traditional cloth often. A respondent also felt that:

*“Lowεgya is too heavy to care for”* (Ziem, field study 2019).

### **How the factors identified may affect the use of the traditional cloth**

Most respondents feared that these factors militating against the use of their traditional cloth may cause them to lose their culture. We are gradually losing our culture due to the factors such as; cost, Christianity, migration, Education, acculturation and many more. The respondents stated that:

*“We hope our children in the future will revive it”* (Mary, field study 2019).

Loss of the culture will also lead to loss of their identity because there will be nothing to identify themselves with. Patrick also added that one day they will need this cloth but it would not be available. In support of this the cloth might be available but they fear that too much modifications might make this cloth to be forgotten as their traditional cloth.

Respondents also felt that losing their identity will make it difficult for them to be identified among their colleagues when in need. Respondents considered their traditional cloth to be the only source of media that can identify them among their tribe maids in case they need help. In support of this statement, Amissah and Essel (2015) outlined how ‘*Lowεgya*’ costume used by the former President of Ghana and his associates was recognised by people from other countries. It



showed our uniqueness as Ghanaians though the cloth is associated with a particular tribe in the country.

Some participants felt that those outside Nandom district without the traditional cloth, sometimes put cost on their families when they die. In relation to the respondent's statement, the cost incurred might mean those who contribute to purchase the burial costume for the dead demands for payment from the relatives of the dead. A participant revealed that:

*“This is because it is a must for every Dagara corpse to be buried in the traditional cloth and when the person dies without this cloth those around will have to contribute to buy the costume for the corpse, then go home for his or her family to refund what they spent on the dead”* (Jonathan, field study 2019).

#### **How to Sustain Interest in the use of Dagara Traditional Cloth.**

Education: many respondents felt that educating one another will be one of the best ways of dealing with the factors militating the use of their traditional cloth. It was suggested that, this can be done through the social media and social gatherings. Some respondents also felt that advice to one another on the use of the traditional cloth will also be an important agent in dealing with the issues concerning their traditional cloth. We should be advising one another in order to let our friends know why this cloth is important, so that we do not hide our true identity.

A respondent also attested that:

*“Publications should be done on the traditional cloth so that people's minds will be cleared on the significance of our traditional cloth. They can see the*

*publications but if they say they will not change, there is nothing we can do because the human mind is something that people can condition the way they want” (Alex, field study 2019).*

Education and advise are strong agents that can convince people to use *Lowegya* cloth but if the society in which the person now belongs to does not permit the use of this cloth how will he or she use it? At the work places nowadays, uniforms are prescribed for workers, which seems to oppose the ideas of the respondents. Gertrude also argued that it is not the environment in which the person finds him or herself but are difficult to be convinced.

Cost: the respondents also felt that lowering the price of ‘*Lowegya*’ (traditional cloth) will enable the less privileged to also use this cloth. The respondents lamented that the price of Dagara traditional cloth has become so high, making it difficult for some people to acquire. This turned to support the fact that some people resort to the use of non-traditional cloth because it is less expensive as compared to the traditional cloth. As it has been suggested earlier lowering the price of this cloth will be an advantage for the producers and the Dagara society as well.

Usage: some respondents also advised that continual usage of Dagara traditional cloth during occasions will be a very good plan in maintaining their cultural values. Due to fashion, weather condition, modernisation, Christianity and so forth as suggested by the respondents, seemed to be some of the factors militating the use of ‘*Lowegya*’ cloth. Reducing the quantity of fibres used to produce ‘*Lowegya*’ seemed to correspond to the weather condition of the area. If

people continuously use this cloth for their programs, it will become part of them and then enhance its usage.

## **Non-Traditional Cloth and its Influence**

### **Use of non-traditional cloths**

There are numerous cloths produced in Ghana recently aside the woven and some printed cloths that are considered traditional to various societies. Non-traditional cloth as discussed early is a cloth that is not culturally recognized by a particular society. In the Nandom district of Ghana, non-traditional cloths were found out to be used for church activities and also used for casual activities. Many respondents attested that they do not use non-traditional cloth during their ceremonial activities except for church service. Non-traditional cloth, though it is not part of their culture, due to some factors beyond their control, some people use it for their ceremonial activities sometimes.

Another respondent gave his reason of using non-traditional cloth during occasions in the district by stating that:

*“We Dagara nowadays, we do not check our dressing with the occasions we attend in our district. Our ancestors were very careful wearing our traditional cloth because it is the only cloth which could be used for occasions. I in person use the non-traditional cloth sometimes due to modernization and emergency”* (Ambrose, field study 2019).

He feels that sometimes using non-traditional cloth at an occasion is not their fault but due to emergencies. They are occasions you are unaware of, when it happens you have to rush to the program with whatever you are wearing.

According to another respondent:

*“I use traditional cloth for occasions well planned for but if I am out-side my home with a non-traditional cloth and the need arises for me to attend an occasion, I have to use what I am wearing because it is urgent”* (Mary, field study 2019).

The respondent further said though she uses a non-traditional cloth, she loves her traditional cloth because it gives her an identity.

As one may consider the use of non-traditional cloth to be uncultured, others considered it to be less expensive less heavy in weight. Mary uses the non-traditional cloth because it is less expensive and light in weight to use. The cost of a *Lowegya* cloth as compared to the non-traditional cloth is expensive that is why people recently resort to using the non-traditional cloth. Nandom district of Ghana is a temperate area and the traditional cloth too is heavy, therefore after each use, it needs to be washed, which can spoil the fibres of the fabric.

Most respondents felt that, associations are now the leading groups promoting the use of non-traditional cloth. In the group, we need to consider the needs of everyone, so that we will all be pleased. If majority cannot afford the traditional cloth, then it will be best to go in for the non-traditional cloth. With reference to Figure 15 in Appendix B, it can be seen that, it is not only associations who use non-traditional cloths in the district but families at a funeral ground, also dress in it, in order to identify themselves.

As for the traditional leaders, use of traditional cloth is very important and compulsory for them. Representing their culture and showing their identity as

well as status is a priority. A traditional leader cannot attend a program in the Nandom district of Ghana, dressed in a non-traditional cloth. You always have to be in the traditional cloth. No matter how urgent the program might be, you have to be in the traditional cloth or else you will be humiliated among your colleagues or punished. A traditional leader narrated his ordeal at a meeting with his colleagues:

*“One Sunday, I went to church in a non-traditional cloth and the paramount chief requested to see all the sub-chiefs for a meeting because it was urgent. I rushed to the scene in my non-traditional cloth, when I entered all the chiefs were in their traditional cloth and the paramount chief shouted “where do you think you are going in that dress? I had to call a friend to give me his smock to wear before I could participate in the meeting” (Sylvester, field study 2019).*

Culture is dynamic and can be changed or modified but this does not seem to corroborate with the respondents ordeal as the cultural costume for the chiefs seem to be static.

### **Traditional Versus Non-Traditional Cloth**

Traditional cloth is a cloth woven or manufactured by the people of a particular society and is believed to be historically originated and is used by the people to display their identity or cultural values. Agatha stated how she feels in using a traditional cloth:

*“I admire my traditional cloth because it is heavy enough to protect me from cold and other health hazards, it also represents my culture. Our traditional cloth is just like God to us” (Dakurah, field study 2019).*

Protection from cold is always considered as one of the functions of clothing. This does not mean some respondents do not admire the non-traditional cloth, they also expressed their views as it is not heavy to use but their traditional cloth is too heavy, produces heat and they find it difficult to walk in. Nandom is a temperate zone which produces a lot of heat therefore does not support the use of heavy clothes. With reference to the findings on the fibre used to twist and weave the fabric of 'Lowegya' cloth it was the pure cotton which repels heat but due to modification of the fabric its use has become a problem.

Another respondent again acclaimed:

*"I admire my traditional cloth especially when I am in a different community. It makes me stand out among the group. This is my cultural costume and I have great love for it. It is the cloth my ancestors were buried in and therefore should be protected"* (Maalo, field study 2019).

Other respondents also see their traditional cloth to be a problem solver in the Nandom district of Ghana. The respondents commented that they admire their traditional cloth as it solves all their problems spiritually. On the contrary, it was obvious that using a non-traditional cloth is only for decoration and does not benefit Dagara in any way.

Many respondents felt that the use of non-traditional cloth does not speak well of their culture and when they see their tribe maid in this, it makes them feel bad. Most of the participants explained their grief toward the use of this cloth as it has become part of some people in the district. Some people may not have any



problem using the traditional cloth but they opt to use the non-traditional cloth. A respondent lamented that:

*“When I see Dagara in a non-traditional cloth it feels I do not know the person because he or she is imitating other people’s culture”* (Lawrence, field study 2019).

We do not feel happy about how some indigenes dress to attend our occasions, but all we need to do is advice one another to see the way out. We really need to help one another in order to sustain our culture. Another respondent insinuated that one loses his identity because the person does not know what to do.

Respondents lamented on their traditional cloth losing its significance in the future. This was realized as they professed that at gatherings and ceremonial occasions which demand the use of traditional cloth, it has now been replaced with the use of non-traditional cloth mostly, and this does not speak well of their culture and identity. Most of the respondents testified that nowadays, when you go to funeral, you will see a lot of people wearing black and red cloths just like the Akans in the southern part of Ghana. Their culture seems to be adulterated.

It was also realized that the traditional cloth is a very important costume for the dead in the Upper West Region but respondents narrated their displeasure in how people dress their corpse in non-traditional cloth recently. A respondent expressed his feelings toward the use of non-traditional cloth on a corpse:

*“When I go to funeral and I see the corpse in a non-traditional cloth, I begin to lose interest in the occasion. I always feel bad”* (Ambrose, field study 2019).

He gave a proverb on how he feels toward people using non-traditional cloth at a well-planned and informed program. The proverb goes *“kanw be danw wa liebi noi”*. *“A kanw za kon toɔ liebie”*. In English it means *“a fowl never turns to be a hen”*. The proverb denotes that no matter what Dagara do, they will still be Dagara. It is not the dressing that will change them into a different tribe.

A question was asked about how respondents feel when they see a Dagara person in a non-traditional cloth during a ceremonial occasion? This question prompted a lot of contributions and these were both negative and positive. A respondent stated that:

*“I feel bad but do not blame the person because he or she may have his reasons for not using the traditional cloth, though it affects our culture”* (John, field study 2019).

If the person does not have money to purchase the fabric, it should not be a must for him or her to possess the fabric. The use of this fabric depends on accessibility and affordability. Sometimes people also make-up their minds not to use the traditional cloth, so no matter how you advise them it will not yield anything. Another respondent stated that:

*“Though I use the non-traditional cloth myself, I do not feel happy about it, I see myself to be lost. We are losing respect for our culture”* (Angela, field study 2019).

## **Understanding the Findings in Relation to the Theories and Research Objectives**

### **Culture**

Culture emerged as a main theme from the findings. As explained by Harms (1938), culture is an environment created by us through our dressing. Our dressing as culture becomes an environment because it is a fabric that has been created by the people and it forms part of their life. Culture then becomes a theory of traditional cloths as supported by Harms. All the participants reported that their traditional cloth is a problem solver, their strength and life. This shows that it is something they cannot do without. Even if they try to change their conscience will always remind them of their traditional cloth. As a problem solver, it happened as a participant testified that he could not walk as an infant until he forced his father to buy him a traditional cloth then he began to walk. This seems as a miracle, as the traditional cloth in this sense is seen to be having healing power on the people of Nandom district.

Culturally, cloths play a significant role in the lives of people. In Nandom district, for example, it was testified that they cannot bury the dead in any other cloth aside the traditional cloth. Meanwhile acquisition of this cloth is sometimes difficult due to its cost, but must be used when the need arises. This does not mean that acquisition of traditional cloth is being imposed on the people but because it is part of their lives. They see it necessary to acquire this cloth no matter the person's situation. For example there are some tribes who use paint to decorate their bodies during special occasions and that signifies their traditional

cloth. This does not mean, these people cannot afford to buy a cloth but it is a way of portraying their culture. The cultural theory of cloth speaks for who we are and what we can do through our dressing.

In contrast, respondents indicated that non-traditional cloth is less expensive. Aside its affordability, it is light in weight and they feel comfortable to walk in it. The participants attributed that whenever they wear the non-traditional cloth they do not feel the heat and heaviness of the fabric. This phenomenon does not differ from what Akinbileje (2014) found out that Yoruba traditional cloth in Nigeria is also expensive and due to that it is available to those who can afford but the less privilege opt to buy the non-traditional cloth for their ceremonial occasions. Though the non-traditional cloth may seem less expensive and comfortable to attract them, at least they may have one of the traditional cloth's to denote their culture.

Symbolic interactionism theory: this theory examines the meanings emerging from the reciprocal interaction of individuals in social environment with other individuals (Aksan, Kısac, Aydın, & Demirbukan, 2009). Portraying your culture through your traditional dress, gives you an identity. The symbolic interactionism theory deals with the interaction that occurs between the wearer and his observer and the meaning that the observer derives from his interaction. It communicates the values of the society to their observers. All the participants revealed that their traditional cloth helps them gain their identity among people. This finding is consistent with Bohn's (2004) who views traditional cloth to be medium of communicating the culture of people through their dressing to their

observers. The phenomenon of dressing communicates who we are. Traditional cloth as a medium of communication was highly commented as the participants felt that it is an easy medium of communicating their identity.

Through the traditional cloth, the structural functionalism theory of cloth was also teased out. Traditional leaders, chief priest and other prominent people get to gain their status and respect through their dressing. Many of the participants commented that their traditional cloth is what is used for their occasions and through this, people of high positions in the society are recognized. Those who also dress in this traditional cloth are respected by any Dagara person who sees them, because they consider this cloth to be a very important costume. The participants commented that this cloth symbolises their culture, therefore anyone seen in this attire is considered important in their culture. The traditional leaders especially in order to gain their honour have to always be in the traditional cloth and walking stick to show that they are the leaders of the community and culture should be protected through their traditional cloth. It is uncalled for to see a chief in public especially a paramount chief of the Nandom district in a non-traditional cloth (Dzramedo et al., 2013).

Psychologically, the uses of traditional cloth also have an impact on the people of Nandom district. This was found out from the findings as the participants attested that when a corpse is buried in a non-traditional cloth, the family begin to worry over being questioned by their ancestors why their son or daughter is not clothed in the traditional cloth. This corresponds with the statement of the participants as they see traditional cloth as a problem solver and

their strength. The ability to acquire a traditional cloth can enhance the psychological state of family members in case of funerals celebration because it brings stability to the family and ease their minds.

The inability to provide a traditional cloth for your dead father or mother also turns to be another phenomenon which significantly affects the victim. The respondents narrated that when a parent dies, it is a responsibility for the children to provide him or her with a traditional cloth before they can clothe someone's father or mother. This can only be cleared until you deliver a message through a close dead relative to your parents in the after world. Without paying heed to this debt, the chance of being punished continues to dwell in the mind of the person. Scientifically, it will appear to be irrelevant but that is their culture and as they believe it apparently manifests in their tradition.

Another theory that was confirmed from the findings was protection as a functional theory of clothing. One of the functions of clothing is protection (physical) and this has been proposed by some researchers as a theory. Traditional cloth, as it is, does not protect us only physically but also spiritually. The respondents testified that the use of this cloth protects them from the harmattan cold that happens every year. To obtain the heat needed, Gilligan (2010) proposed the thermal theory under protection. The cloth also protects them from direct contact with the sun rays, insect bites and other injuries. Olaoye (1989) explained that protection according to the Mohammedan countries is not all about physical protection but also the use of traditional cloth also protects human from evil eyes.



It was also found out that it is not only the living that need to be covered in the traditional cloth to gain protection. The dead need to be covered to prevent any sense of shame, and also repel the heat from getting in touch with the body. Funeral in the Nandom district takes some days to celebrate. The corpse is seated to show his or her beauty, and this can last for two or three days. The respondents confirmed that their ancestors used kapok or cotton fibre to weave their traditional cloth and these fibres do not absorb heat. This enables the corpse to sit for the number of days required without decomposing. Heat is believed to speed the rate of decomposition of the dead body. Spiritually, the *Lowegya* cloth also protects the corpse from decomposition. Participants also confirmed that the dead will feel ashamed being buried without clothes (traditional cloth). Which means his sense of shame must be protected.

The lifespan of the traditional cloth was also of concern and needs to be protected in order to prolong its use. Participants drew their consent to their fellow Dagara, to continue with the use of their traditional cloth in order to have a long lasting culture. They lamented that there have been a lot of changes to the patterns of their traditional cloth which poses challenges for cultural preservation. This was confirmed as it was difficult finding their original traditional cloths. They were scarce, and even some of the producers and indigenes did not know their original designs or patterns of weave.

### **Modernity**

Adopting new cultural practices became one of the themes from the findings. According to the respondents, most Dagara people are now addicted to

the western style of dressing because they find their traditional cloth to be uncomfortable especially during the hot season. Also, culture is changing among various societies therefore some Dagara also consider shifting from their cultural way of dressing to the modern style of dressing as appropriate. This was confirmed from the findings as participants mentioned modernity as one of the factors hindering the recent use of Dagara traditional cloth in the Nandom district.

The respondents declared that women are the major victims of modernity in the Nandom district. You hardly see a woman dressed in a traditional cloth to an occasion. Funeral which is a very important occasion for people to use the traditional cloth, men were found to be the people who still make an effort to use their traditional cloth but the women have been caught up with the recent trend of dressing. This happens as they have allowed acculturation to pervade every aspect of their lives. As the participants attested, acculturation is manifested in the way people wear black and red non-traditional cloths to funeral recently in the Nandom district just like the Akan's, Fante's and Ga's among others.

Pride as in the form of being modern was seen as one of the factors militating people from the use of the traditional cloth. Participants narrated that, sometimes people feel shy and embarrassed to be known as Dagara and due to that they try to hide their identity by not using the traditional cloth. Though these people may make themselves modern, one day their culture will definitely call them back. Being with other tribes have changed people taste in their way of dressing, therefore might feel being seen in the traditional cloth will hurt their pride of who they are. This does not connect with Essel and Amisshah (2015) who

explained that costumes made from Dagara traditional cloth became a symbol of class, a political dress since its purposeful public usage by Nkrumah and his fellows during the day of independence. This increased the patronage of the cloth among Ghanaians and some African Americans.

### **Cost**

Cost also arose as one of the themes from the findings. As the price of the traditional cloth increases, acquisition becomes problematic for the less privilege. Cost impact negatively on the rate of use of traditional cloth and also affects the productivity for producers. As a way of dealing with this issue, participants suggested for the reduction in price of Dagara traditional cloth so that everyone can have the chance to afford it. Cost was seen to have significantly affected the choice and use of traditional cloth in Nandom district negatively.

### **Advise**

Advice was another theme identified from the findings. To prevent a person from going wayward, the only solution is to draw the attention of the person to what he is running away from. As the participants emphasized, they will have to advise one another on their traditional cloth so that they do not lose their culture one day. This was a task the participants gave themselves as they found advice to be the only way of correcting their mistakes toward their traditional cloth. Advice to their colleagues can be done at their various meetings, organisations or ceremonial occasions.

## Education

Education as a strategy to cure the recent use of Dagara traditional cloth became another theme from the findings. The participants insisted on education as one of the effective strategies which can cure the recent use of the traditional cloth in the Nandom traditional area. Participants commented that, most Dagara especially their young ones do not know why their ancestors wove this traditional cloth and passed it onto them. Education can be both verbal and non-verbal. Verbal the people can be organised and the section delivered to them orally. It can also happen on radio stations or television shows. Non-verbally, there can be publications on the internet or books even notices pasted on buildings or billboards for those who can read to have a fair knowledge of the traditional cloth. This can help revive the use of the traditional cloth.

From the findings it was also realized that the participants insisted on educating their people who do not stay in the district. This is because they feel that they have adopted other cultural practices which are affecting their use of the traditional cloth. The participants attested that whenever people come home from their various destinations to attend a program which demands the use of traditional cloth, they rather use non-traditional cloth. Especially funeral, they normally wear black and red dresses which the participants see not to be part of their culture. Participants also urged on educational system to include cultural studies on traditional cloths so that the younger generation will get to learn the history and culture of their traditional cloth.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

'Lowεgya' cloth is a fabric woven by the people of Nandom District. This cloth comes in different categories and it is believed that it emanated from the ancestors of Dagara people with the use of Kapok fibre. It was woven on sticks and sewn together using thorns. Use of the cloth and clothes by the people is based on age and status. Not everyone can use all the cloths or clothes. The males sew 'kurlan' (trouser), 'daga kparu' (smock of different styles and sizes), 'kpawoo' (hat), 'bawлага' and 'taparaje'. The women on the other hand sew two pieces of cover cloths which they wrap around their waist during an occasion with a blouse but recently it is few of the women who still wrap the cover cloth instead they sew *kaba* and slit whilst others sew a straight dress.

This culturally rooted cloth of Dagara people in the Upper West Region was found to have major significance and symbolisms as far as its use is concerned. Dagara traditional cloths function as a medium of communication between the wearers and their observers. The moment a traditional cloth is used among people, it immediately communicates who the wearers are to various observers leading to easy identification. As part of communication, it communicates the culture of the people, their identity, status and many more. It also symbolises their rich culture and ancestral heritage.

It was found out that Dagara have ceremonial occasions during which Dagara traditional cloths are used in portraying its significance in the Nandom

district of Ghana and these include; marriage/wedding celebration, chieftaincy activities, festival celebration, funeral celebration and so forth. This cloth gives them joy and the strength to carry out diverse cultural activities.

As the world continues to grow, most cultural activities begin to disappear. The cultural activities or tradition is either modified or changed. Among Dagara recently, the use of *Lowεgya* (traditional cloth) was found out to become a problem among the youth and those who migrate to other towns outside Nandom district. They have opened doors for the western culture and other cultural dressing practices. Dressing to ceremonial occasions was considered highly cultural but this has changed drastically due to their adoption of new cultural practices.

Change in dressing among Dagara is highly manifested in the way the traditional cloth is being woven recently. It was found out that most of the cloths which their ancestors first instituted are getting extinct. This is due to the new weaving techniques which the weavers have learnt. Due to this most people are not even able to recognize their own traditional cloth because it is not known to them. Even sewing the costumes have been modified and makes it look different from what their ancestors first started with. Decorating the costume has currently become a priority to everyone but the question is does it depict their culture? The answer ultimately is no because most of the costumes worn by Dagara people do not depict anything about their culture. Most of them even reported that decorating traditional cloth is not part of their culture. It is only the pattern of weave and colour of the fabric which they use to identify their traditional cloth.



Change has really caught up with some tribes not just about the pattern of weave of their traditional cloths but colour has also become another factor. These are all manifested through the formal education and migration. Formal education and migration has really adulterated the culture of people. Choice of colour of fabric in the Northern region of Ghana historically did not matter to them. They did not attach meaning to their colour of fabrics but recently a person going to select a traditional cloth will have to choose the fabric that will suit the occasion. In the Nandom district, black and red is presently the required colour of *lowegya* fabric for mourning the dead. Not just the *lowegya* cloth but because they have migrated to the southern part of Ghana, Adinkra which is the cloth for mourning the dead in the Ashanti region have also been adopted by some people to be used during funeral celebration in the Nandom district. Bright colours are also used recently for happy occasions but with this they do not even use their traditional cloth but rather the western dresses and fabrics used by the Ashanti's.

Migration and education are not the only factors that prohibit people from using their traditional cloth, there are others aside these two. Due to the environmental conditions in some towns, using a traditional cloth becomes a problem. Those in the temperate zones are considered lucky and can use whatever fabric they want but not same to the very hot zones. Dagara people in the Upper West Region of Ghana consider their weather condition to be extremely hot and due to that using '*Lowegya*' cloth has become a problem. Especially to the youth and those who do not stay in the district, they have experienced fresh air and due to that whenever they get to the district they feels that the fabric is too heavy and

produces a lot of heat. Walking a distant is already a problem and using a heavy woven fabric also becomes a problem to some people. The weight '*Lowegya*' exerts on people makes them tired and that is why the use of '*Lowegya*' cloth is becoming a problem. Physical factors are not the only things that discourage people from using their traditional cloth but culture is considered to be dynamic and some people consider its dynamism to be an opportunity so that moving from their cultural costume to other cultural practices will not be a question for them to answer. There is the need for people to educate the youth on the use of '*Lowegya*' cloth so that they will not be misled. Culture is everything to all humans and without it tracing your identity or heritage becomes impossible.

Women are always the first people to change from using a traditional cloth. They are always considered as the fan of fashion, changing their dressing from time to time. Dagara women are uptight to change that their traditional cloth is currently associated with the males. All the factors of change were found to be associated with the women. Going to the Nandom district, majority of the men are always in their smock whilst the women will go in their western way of dressing. The first person a child will interact with is his or her mother but if the mother considers the use of a traditional cloth not to be important how will the child also use it?

With reference to the factors hindering the use of '*Lowegya*' (traditional cloth), the researcher compared the use of traditional and non-traditional cloth during occasions. It was found out that using non-traditional cloth is because it cost less, light in weight and produces less heat. Though the use of non-traditional

cloth prevailing over the years but people still have the love for their culture and some purchases the traditional cloth to keep in case of emergency. Dagara people have a very rich culture but recent activities are delineating this culture and therefore if attention is not paid, culture adulteration will overpower them which means the younger generation will not know their cultural heritage, identity and cultural values.

### Summary of Key Findings

In respect to the study, five research objectives were teased out for investigation. These objectives were the origin of the traditional cloth, its symbolism and significance, how the traditional cloth is used during occasions and the factors hindering the use of this traditional cloth in the District.

It was found out that the act of weaving by Dagara ancestors was really difficult until the Moshi people came with different ways of weaving the cloth and then they started varying the pattern of weaving '*Lowεgya*'. Kapok fibres and cotton were the fibres used by the ancestors to weave. Kapok fibres felt rough on the skin and therefore were eliminated. There are types of cloths woven by the ancestors during their innovation namely; *kpognali*, *lien pen*, *bεgɔ*, *kaakublu* and *kyinkyin pen*. All these fabrics are used according to age categories and status. Also, there are cloths that are sewn using this fabric; '*gyiiwaa/vaapew*, *kpar nuru*, *kpar nu-voru*, *kurlan*, *kpawoɔ*', women (blouse, pieces of cloths or slit).

Traditional cloth (*Lowεgya*) was found to symbolise their culture, life uniqueness and strength of Dagara people. Culture was found to be the main centre of this study. It was found out that this is a cultural costume and they need

to protect their traditional cloth in order to prolong the main purpose of ‘*Lowεgya*’ cloth. Spiritually, participants expressed that without the use of ‘*Lowεgya*’ cloth they become useless and cannot be proud of their culture.

As expected, the participants saw their traditional cloth (*Lowεgya*) to be a problem solver, display their rich culture, it shows their beauty and happiness. A traditional cloth was also found to be the one that shows their identity to other people. Sometimes these significances are displayed through their ceremonial occasions. These occasions included; kakube festival, funeral celebration, marriage or wedding celebration and chieftaincy occasions. Traditional cloth was found to be the recommended costume for all their celebrations. This cloth was also found out to symbolize Dagara culture, symbolizes their ancestors and also stands as their life.

Objective five also identified the factors hindering the recent use of traditional cloth in the Nandom district. There are always hindrances against the success of everything. According to the key findings; modernity, cost, pride to hide identity, migration, Christianity, heat and education were found to be the main causes of the recent change in the use of traditional cloth in the Nandom District of Ghana.

### **Conclusions**

This study aimed at verifying the cultural significance of Dagara traditional cloth ‘*lowεgya*’ among Dagara and also finding out the factors that militates the use of ‘*Lowεgya*’ cloth recently. Traditional cloth is a highly recognized costume in societies due to its symbolic meaning and cultural significance. ‘*Lowεgya*’

symbolizes the culture, pride, uniqueness and strength of Dagara people. It was also significant that this '*Lowεgya*' cloth gives Dagara people identity, heritage, moral values, pride and many more.

'*Lowεgya*' was found out to originate from the ancestors of Dagara people. Kapok was the first fibre used in weaving their traditional cloth by their ancestors until the arrival of the Moshi people in the Nandom District with their '*Lowεgya*' cloths made from cotton then their ancestors decided to adopt some of the ideas of weaving from the Moshi people.

Several factors were found out to be responsible for the change in pattern of weave and use of '*Lowεgya*' in the Nandom District. These factors include; cost of the fabric, heat, weight of the fabric, migration, education (formal), fashion, Christianity, preference and so forth. This has led to the disappearance of the original traditional cloths of Dagara people. There is an increase in modification of the cloths in order to capture the taste of people. These modifications come into play due to the commonest in the use of this cloth in the whole of Northern Region of Ghana. This therefore, calls for education, continual usage and advises among Dagara people in order to revive the use of their cultural cloth during ceremonial occasions in the Nandom District.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings from the field, some recommendations have been suggested by the researcher.

It was found out that the usage of *Lowεgya* cloth was a problem for some people in the Nandom district. It is recommended that the researcher/I can

organise educational fora in order to enlighten people on the knowledge of this cloth. This can encourage the use of this cloth in the society.

Dagara who do not stay in the district can keep this cloth with them wherever they go, so that their children will get to know of their traditional cloth.

Constant communication (advice) among Dagara people at social gatherings in the district can also revive the use of their traditional cloth. They can advise one another especially those who do not like the use of this traditional cloth to let them know how important it is to have a cultural cloth.

Additionally, Dagara should try to revisit their culture to let people know that they love who they are. It has been realised that most Dagara have presently adopted the use of other tribe's traditional cloth forgetting that their ancestors passed on a cloth to them.

It was also realised that the price of the traditional cloth became one of the factors hindering the affordability of the traditional cloth. The researcher recommends that prices of the traditional cloth could be lowered to enable everyone acquire the traditional cloth for use.

Associations formed in the district can also use Dagara traditional cloth to promote its usage and patronage among the people of Nandom district of Ghana and beyond. During their group gatherings, they can use this cloth in order to capture people interest.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

Due to the inability to cover every aspect of '*Lowegyia*' as a traditional cloth, suggestions are provided in this research for further research.



First, the sample size can be increased to compare fabrics woven from kapok and cotton fibres using the various features of a fabric.

Also, exploring the production industry of '*lowegya*' cloth and its economic impact in the Nandom district of the Upper West region of Ghana.

Bio-modification of kapok fibres to boost the quantity of fibres produced in Ghana.



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## APPENDICES



## Appendix A

### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TRADITIONAL LEADERS, CHIEFS AND PRODUCERS

#### AN INTERVIEW GUIDE TO SOLICIT INFORMATION ON THE TOPIC: INVESTIGATING DAGARA TRADITIONAL CLOTH (*LOWEGYA PEN*) AND ITS CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE IN THE

##### NANDOM DISTRICT

This research was conducted by the researcher to seek information on the cultural significance of Dagara traditional cloth. All information given will be held confidential and will be used only for academic purpose. Thank you for your time and kind contribution.

#### PART ONE: BIO DATA OF RESPONDENTS

1. Sex: .....
2. Community: .....
3. Religion: .....
4. Education: .....
5. Age a) 18 – 24 b) 24 – 30 c) 30 – 36 d) 36 – 42 e) 42 and above

#### PART TWO: DAGARA TRADITIONAL CLOTH (*LOWEGYA*)

6. Do you have an idea how Dagara came by their traditional cloth?
7. Are you happy that *lowegya* is your traditional cloth?
8. Describe the various types of traditional cloths woven in the district that you know?
9. What are the common colours used in designing the cloth and their meanings?

10. Elaborate on the embroidered designs on the (i) hat, (ii) smock, (iii) trousers as well as the (iv) female garment?

11. Discuss the varieties of clothes sewn from *lowegya* and used by the people of Nandom district?

12. As an indigene, what motivates you to use the traditional cloth?

### **PART THREE: NON-TRADITIONAL CLOTH AND ITS INFLUENCE**

13. Non-traditional cloth is a cloth which is not woven among the people of Nandom district approved culturally for occasions? True or false.

14. Do you use a non-traditional cloth to occasions in the Nandom district? If yes please explain why?

15. Which of the cloths do you admire during occasions, Traditional or non-traditional? Please explain your response

16. What message does the use of non-traditional cloth for special occasions send to you as an indigene?

### **PART FOUR: OCCASIONS**

#### **FUNERAL (KUOR)**

17. What do the people of Nandom district use to dress the dead?

18. What reason is there to explain the use of a specific costume for the dead?

19. Why do Dagara put traditional cloths and smocks on stage (*Paala*) during funeral celebrations?

#### **MARRIAGE (KULTAA)**

20. How do couples dress for traditional marriages in the district?

21. Why do couples dress in the traditional cloth during marriage ceremony?

22. Why does a newly wedded lady take “Lowegya ganw” with her to the husband’s house?

23. Why does an adult male also need to keep a traditional cloth with him?

24. What are the significance of the traditional cloth to both the bride and groom in marriage ceremonies in the district?

#### **CHIEFTAINCY (NAALU)**

25. As a traditional leader, how do you dress to occasions?

25. During enskinment how do you chiefs dress?

26. What are the significance of this cloth to the traditional leaders?

#### **FESTIVAL**

27. During festivals how do the indigenes including traditional leaders dress to the festival ground?

28. How important is the use of the traditional cloth to the Kakube festival?

#### **PART FIVE: SYMBOLISM OF THE TRADITIONAL CLOTH**

29. What does the traditional cloth symbolize or stand for or portray in Dagara culture?

#### **PART SIX- SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TRADITIONAL CLOTH**

30. Why do people of Nandom district use the traditional cloth?

#### **PART SEVEN–FACTORS INFLUENCING RECENT USE OF THE TRADITIONAL CLOTH**

31. What are the possible factors that are affecting the use of traditional cloth?

32. How do you think these factors may affect the culture of Dagara people?

33. What can be done to these factors?

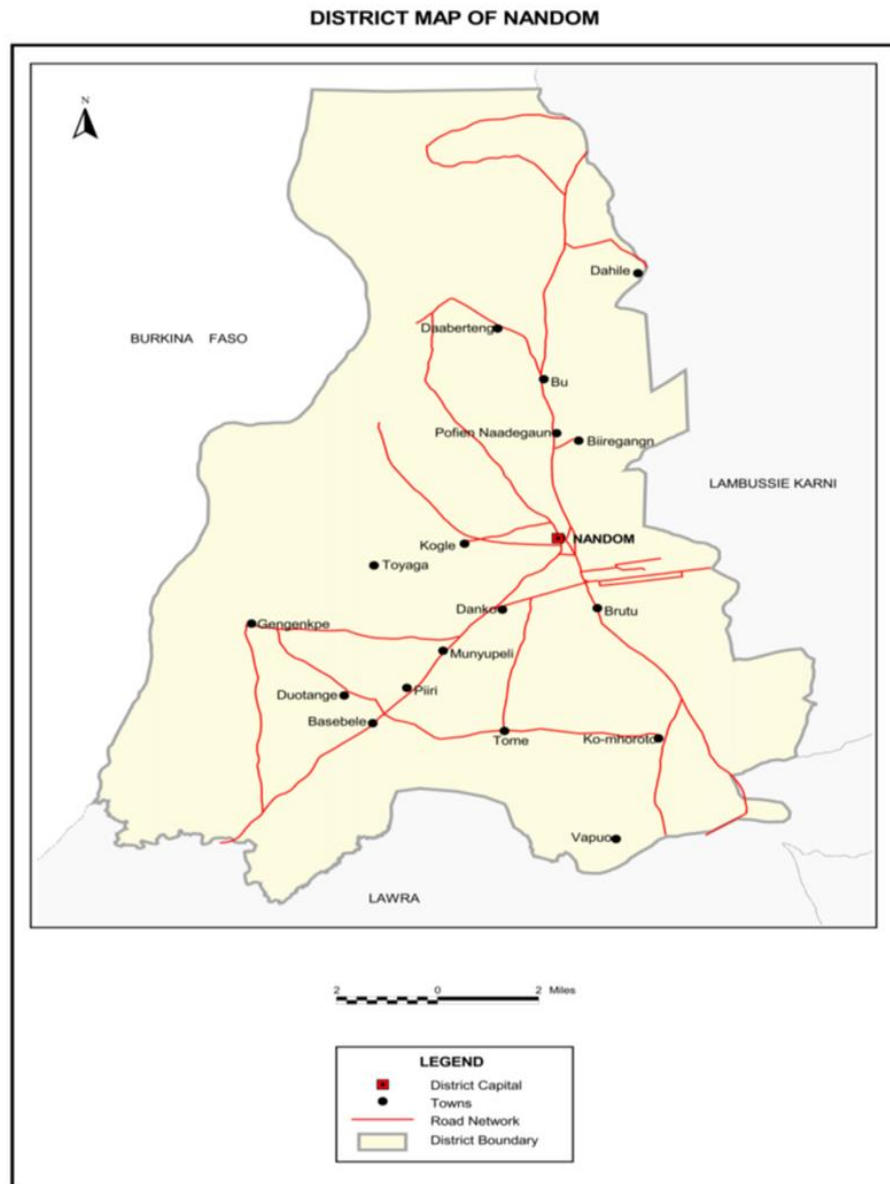
**PART EIGHT: RECOMMENDATION**

34. What strategies do you suggest to help prevent this cloth from going extinct?

35. Indicate any other concern you may have on the use of the traditional cloth?



## Appendix B



*Figure 14: Map of Nandom District*

Source: Ghana Statistical Service





*Figure 15: Late Paramount Chief of Nandom with his Subordinates at the Kakube Festival Ground.*



*Figure 16: Dancers at the Festival Ground in their Lowegya (Traditional Cloth) Costume.*



*Figure 17: Chiefs in their Gyiiwaa at a Program in the Nandom District.*



*Figure 18: Women in the Non-Traditional Cloth at a Funeral Occasion.*



*Figure 19: Men Wearing Kpar nuru Dancing Bine.*



*Figure 20: The Vice President Bawumia in Lowegya Kpar-nuru at Kakube Festival Ground.*





*Figure 21: Queen Mothers in their Traditional cloth 'Lowεgya' at the Kakube Festival Ground.*



*Figure 22: Carola Lentz in "Lowεgya" Cloth Receiving an Award from the Late Paramount Chief of Nandom District.*