

# *Bim'manga* (Smocks) for Dagomba Chiefs- Implications for Peace Promotion among Dagombas in Northern Ghana

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**Abstract**---The general purpose of this paper aims at educating modern producers and users of the Dagomba *Bim'mangli* (smock) that the *Bim'mangli* (smock) is the main material culture that identifies chiefs and differentiates them from the ordinary persons. It, therefore, tries to promote peace among chiefs and between chiefs and the ordinary persons since misappropriations in dressing in the *Bim'mangli* at social gatherings can trigger conflicts. This study used oral interviews among *Bim'mangli* sewers, weavers and traditional folk historians to bring to bear some typical examples of *Bim'manga* (smocks) that are worn by Dagomba chiefs for their identities. It was revealed that Dagomba chiefs have different ranks within the chiefdom and the chiefs are symbolically differentiated among themselves and from ordinary people in social gatherings by the type, colour, number and size of *Bim'manga* (smocks) worn. It also depicted that wearing *Bim'manga* according to one's personality promote peace since *Bim'manga* communicate the wearer's personalities to the general public. Lack of knowledge and understanding of the indigenous aesthetics of the Dagomba chiefs' *Bim'manga* may cause some socio-cultural problems that could lead to conflicts. It has, therefore, become imperative to discuss and document the indigenous aesthetics of Dagombachiefs' *Bim'manga* (smocks) and their implications for peace promotion in Dagbon.

**Keywords**---*Bim'mangli* (smock), *Bim'manga* (smocks), Dagombas, indigenous aesthetics, chiefdom smocks, peace promotion.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Dagomba *Bim'manga* (smocks) are indigenous Ghanaian traditional dresses made from cotton, wool and rayon [1]. They were originally hand woven and hand sewn but today, they are also sewn using machine. The *Bim'mangli* (smock) is woven, stitched, knitted, dyed and embroidered and these techniques greatly form part of the major components of Textile education in Ghana. The *Bim'mangli* is woven on a traditional loom with two heddle frames; it is a plain woven material. The traditional weavers go through all weaving processes-sizing, pooling, warping, heddlng, reeding and weaving to obtain the woven *Bim'mangli* cloth. The yarns are sometimes dyed with plant or synthetic colours but today, majority of weavers use synthetic dyes for dyeing the yarns than plant dyes. Immediately after weaving, the narrow strip

cloths are cut and sewn (hand-sewn, machine-sewn or the combination of hand and machine sewn techniques) into the type of *Bim'mangli* dress for use [2].

The *Bim'mangli* plays very crucial role in the lives of Dagombas in Northern Ghana [3]. It has spiritual, cultural, psychological, social, metaphysical, political and economic implications and their implications are justified based on the uses, functions, symbolisms and significance of the *Bim'mangli*. In the chieftaincy domain, the *Bim'mangli* is a major costume that identifies chiefs from ordinary people [4]. It also identifies different classes of chiefs on the skins among Dagombas. The paramount chiefs, queen mothers and chief warriors put on typical *Bim'manga* that project their positions in the Dagomba society [5].

Despite the power of the *Bim'mangli*, preliminary findings have shown that due to the scanty information about the *Bim'mangli* and modern fashion influences, the Dagombas produced and used the *Bim'mangli* inappropriately. One of the major ethics of wearing the Dagomba *Bim'mangli* that is traditionally neglected in this modern day is the Chiefdom *Bim'manga* (smocks worn by chiefs) and this can trigger conflicts in the form of socio-cultural violations [6].

The Dagombas have for the past decade, suffered in many aspects of life due to chieftaincy crisis [7]. The chieftaincy crises between the Abudus and Andanis royal gates in Dagbon date far back in history. The chieftaincy crisis between these two gates stretches between 1849 to 1953 when the rotation system started ([8]; [9]). It is, therefore, important to note that violating the ethics of wearing chiefdom *Bim'manga* can spark conflicts since conflicts in African traditional societies do occur as the result of little lapses in socio-cultural practices ([10]; [6]). This study, therefore, seeks to identify the categories of chiefs' *Bim'manga* (smocks) and their implications for peace promotion among Dagombas.

## II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Chanda (1991, cited in [11]) first of all tries to define what an African art is. She explained that Africa art refers to the arts that were and are being made for local

consumption and that still uphold the traditional values and functions. She summarized the definition by saying that African art is the art that expresses and conveys the beliefs, customs, norms and characteristics of Africa's past. Chanda, therefore, concluded that we cannot generalize African aesthetics and emphasized that African art is a contextual art for it is a clear manifestation to be understood only in the light of its cultural origin. Each ethnic society in Africa has art that is characterized by its own history and cultural practices.

This is obvious about the *Bim'mangli* culture among Dagombas in Northern Ghana since *Bim'mangli* is the common cultural attire among them [2]. The use of *Bim'mangli* indicates the cultural practices peculiar to them such as enskinment and festivalshence, the aesthetics of a particular *Bim'mangli* in the context of Dagombas' culture will not be the same to a non-Dagomba who is wearing the same type of *Bim'mangli* for the same occasion.

#### A Traditional Ghanaian Dresses

In Ghanaian culture, textiles are part of everyday life and have played a vibrant role in the everyday life of the Ghanaian people based on their wide use of symbolic imagery from the Ghanaian culture [12]. The wax print, adinkra and kente fabrics are usually stitched into 'kaba and slit' (long skirt and top) which is the traditional ensemble worn by Ghanaian women [13]. Today, the fabrics are used in the production of other modern garment designs which solely reflect western styles ([13]; [14]). They sometimes combined the fabrics with plain matching colours or made only from the kente, adinkra and the wax print. The kente and wax prints are of beautiful bright colours worn to church services, mosques for prayers, parties, festivals, graduation ceremonies and other joyous festivities.

The traditional Ghanaian dresses as outlined by the authors comprised wax prints, adinkra and kente. This is an oversight for not mentioning *Bim'mangli* as a traditional Ghanaian dress. The *Bim'mangli* is one of the indigenous Ghanaian traditional dresses and its origin is older than Ghana's independence. It existed long before the freedom fighters of the country portrayed themselves in *Bim'manga* on the declaration parade for Ghana's success for its own independence ([2]; [15]).

#### B Tradition and Dress Styles

The definition of tradition in most cases can be uncertain; for example, dress styles of *Bim'mangli* in the past centuries are not desired to be a choice today. In addition, Africa comprises variant ethnic societies with several different dress styles. The facet of fashion sees unprecedented dynamism in dress styles, that is, dress styles constantly are innovated and evolving. It is, however, indisputable fact that we can clearly establish clear-cut distinctions in forms, colours, patterns and cloths between traditional West African dress styles and global Westernized dress styles, from both physical and psychological perspectives [16].

In analyzing of Africans' affection to a traditional dress style is appropriate because dress is a strong expression of identity and empowers people to exhibit themselves in an observable way [14]. It is a visible, accessible and changing pointer of individual character, identity and status. Clothing again, is an announcer or advertiser of group identity, such that it can fortify ethnic, religious or political recognition and belonging for a better existence of peace, unity and harmony.

The *Bim'mangli* and its accessories are sources of advocating the tradition of the Dagombas. The manner of wearing them, the names given to them, and symbols stitched onto some *Bim'manga* are philosophical and bring out their indigenous implications for their lives. Wearing traditional dress may be an expression of national, regional, ethnic or religious identity. In this study, the *Bim'mangli* is considered as a national and ethnic identity. The *Bim'mangli* is one of the most valuable national wears in some institutions and specifically identifies people as northerners from the Northern part of Ghana. In turn, wearing global (Western) dress may symbolise a more modern or cosmopolitan style. Western style also may be allied with literacy, education, power and a global sense of culture or with a loss of identity, loss of control over the youth or women's loss of morality [17]. Similarly, an educated Dagomba youth is normally seen wearing *YansichiBim'mangli* (Singlet smock) over a long-sleeve shirt and this style has gone viral among many non Dagomba literates across the country.

Many Africans have adopted European or American fashion just because of acculturation [18]. These people are more desired in individual or group modification thereby adapting and borrowing traits of culture from another culture. The passion of consumers for clothing is linked to acculturation to global consumer culture (not to ethnic identity). Because of acculturation, Dagombas have adopted many foreign dresses which sometimes affect the often usage of the *Bim'mangli* in most of their occasions.

Reference [16] stated that:

Although prior research has suggested little integration of two cultures (Berry, 1997), in which case people would adopt both fashion styles, depending on the occasion or social context, observations in West Africa indicate that many consumers wear both Western and traditional dress (p. 2).

They further expounded that on certain occasions, African traditional dresses may stand to portray amicable cultural integration rather than cultural resistance, such that old and new cultures and structures exists cooperatively through mutual adaptations. Gusfield (1967, cited in [16]) posited a sequence of cultural misconceptions and debates that the old is not necessarily replaced by the new. Gusfield emphasizes that the fact that people welcome a new product, a new religion, a new mode of decision-making does not necessarily call for the disappearance of the older form.

Gusfield's finally stressed that 'new forms may only increase the range of alternatives. He elaborates further for saying that both magic and medicine can exist side by side, used alternatively by the same people.

Reference [16] therefore argument that newly adopted dresses are the range of alternatives but not a way of discarding the old dresses. Meanwhile, among Dagombas youth in particular, newly adopted westernized clothing is used more often than the traditional *Bim'manga* (Y Osman, personal communication, February 4, 2018). In this light, the new forms act as substitutes rather than being alternatives.

### C The Culture of Peace

Obeying one's culture is peace and this is much better referred to as the culture of peace. According to the definition propounded by [19], culture of peace;

Consists of values, attitudes and behaviours that reflect and inspire social interaction and sharing based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, all human rights, tolerance and solidarity, that reject violence and endeavour to prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation and that guarantee the full exercise of all rights and the means to participate fully in the development process of their society (p. 1)

In view of the above definition, Dagombas can promote peace among themselves through the endeavor to educate the youth in particular, on the uses, functions, symbolism or significance of the *Bim'mangli*. This is because there are values, attitudes and principles embedded in the *Bim'manga* that reflect and inspire social interventions among Dagombas.

### D Peace Promotion through Cultural Practices in African Societies

The absence of peace is conflict, so when conflict occurs there is the need to manage it to restore peace. Conflict in human life is unavoidable hence it is an integral component of African cultures (Dzuberovic 2011, cited in [20]). Traditional African societies have been involved in conflicts which have called for lots of external and internal interventions by different bodies and institutions in conflict management and restoration in the African societies [21]. It is however unfortunate that peace and developmental scholars globally have paid little attention to the roles of African cultures in conflict resolution.

In the past, African tradition was the sole responsibility in ensuring peace, justice and among others in societies through cultural practices [21]. According to [22], cultural practices are practices that exist within the African communities that foster members in the process of building peace among them and Ikimi (2001, cited in [20]), therefore, explained that village laws, customs and taboos are means of promoting peace, togetherness, love, unity, tolerance and

identification among members and non-members of the communities. Similarly, traditional norms or beliefs on the production and use of *Bim'mangli* among the Dagombas are excellent resources for peace promotion. A typical example is the belief in the past that the chief's *Bim'magna* (smocks) were not produced in an open space but, weavers or sewers were contracted to seat in the chief palaces to produce their *Bim'manga* (F. Mutaru, personal communication, August 11, 2017). The reason for this practice is to protect all ordinary persons from the spiritual harm that the chief's *Bim'mangli* could cause to those who watch it due to its high level of spiritual fortifications. On the other side of the coin, the practice seeks to protect the life and dignity of the chiefs.

In order to promote and maintain peace in Dagbon traditional society, sanctions or punishments were applied to those who failed to comply with the norms for wearing *Bim'manga*. This confirms [22] assertion that in some African societies, traditional sanctions are still applied by traditional leaders against people who violate its norms and regulations.

In another view of [22]), taboos and oath taking in African societies are fundamental traditional practices for peaceful existence of the societies. Taboos are all forbidden things or actions to do in society, hence taboos promulgate law and order in African societies. This view is equated with a taboo in *Bim'mangli* culture among Dagombas that 'an ordinary person should not wear the *Nam Kparigu* (Chiefdom *Bim'mangli*) unless a chief.' The implication for this taboo is to avoid the ordinary person camouflaging his personality as a chief in the chiefdom *Bim'mangli* which can trigger conflict, because conflicts in African traditional societies do occur as the result of the people's inability to cooperate with certain socio-cultural practices ([6]; [10]).

Oath taking is another cultural practice in African societies that is done to foster promise keeping. According to [22], oath is defined as;

Religious, moral and psychological enforcement of an act over an agreed situation, or a confirmation of the truth by naming something held sacred, a statement or promise confirm by an appeal to a higher being to enforce the attached sanction (p. 530).

Likewise, there is an oath that the Dagombas take by naming a particular *Bim'mangli* known as *Binpienli*. *Binpienli* is a grey bath cloth used as Chiefdom Smock and a shroud for important people. In the oath, the Dagombas refer to it as white because it is white or grey in colour. This colour is sacred and when an indigenous Dagomaba says, "I swear by my father/mother's *Binpienli* (white, referring to the shroud)", then the oath cannot be broken until the intention behind the oath is achieved or specific sacrifices are made before breaking the oath. This oath associated with the *Binpienli Bim'mangli* binds the people together for the practice of telling the truth or doing the right thing for the peaceful existence of the society.

In African societies, people wear traditional dresses for traditional occasions and because of the symbolism in African dress, it carries non-verbal messages for what culture is [23]. In other words, [24] explains that African's dressing style carries non-verbal messages which sometimes are linked to the wearer's personality traits. In line with *Bim'mangli* hat of Dagombas, when the wearer brushes the tip of the hat to the left it symbolizes peace [4] and the wearer is advocating for tolerant, calmness and love.

In African festivals, the cultural dresses are displayed making all celebrants look like one people as it is commonly said that birds of a feather flock together. When people see themselves in a common traditional practice such as the wearing of a uniform cultural dress for festivals, it inculcates the spirits of love, tolerance, togetherness, identity and understanding among the people [25]. Likewise, *Bim'mangli* as the cultural dress of Dagombas in Ghana is displayed during the Damba festival [2] and the people look uniformly dressed in their indigenous *Bim'manga* which bind them together. This is why [26] also opines that traditional festivals in Africa remain very essential platforms for bringing people together.

Reference [26] explains that African festivals create the avenues for the elders to pass on folk and tribal love to younger generations. And in Dagombas ethnic society, one way of passing folk and tribal love to younger generations during the Damba festival is that the young ones are given the opportunity to practice how to dance the Damba within the first ten days of the festival (T.Bawah, personal communication, November 11, 2018). During this period of practice, the young ones are given *Bim'manga* to wear so that they learn how to wear *Bim'manga* and also learn how to dance with the *Bim'manga*. This educates the young ones the ethics of wearing *Bim'manga* and their traditional values of uniting them as under one people.

#### *The Significance of Cloth and Dress in Traditional African Societies*

Traditional cloth and dress are identified to be the mirror of the culture of African traditional societies. Ghanaian royal costumes such as the Asanté Kente and the Dagomba *Bim'mangli* (smock), are traditionally worn by kings and chiefs to communicate their status within the traditional societies and other parts of Africa. Similarly, traditional societies in other African societies have traditional dresses for kings and chiefs. A typical example is the *asoke* woven cloth for Yoruba kings in south western Nigeria. *Asoke* was solely worn by kings and at a point in their history, the Olubadan of Ibadan (a prominent Yoruba king) banned his chiefs from wearing *asoke* [28].

The Dagomba *Bim'mangli* (smock) is also worn to portray one's position [4]. There are *Bim'manga* to identify warriors, newly enskinned chiefs, dancers, queen mothers and among others. In the same view, [28] opines that the Bambara (Bamanan) women and other ethnic groups produce the

*Bogolanfini* cloth for their important events. Akinbileje [28] further explains that it is used by hunters to improve their success in the hunting expeditions.

The *Gbago* (war *Bim'mangli*) among Dagombas in Northern part of Ghana is a symbol of protection and bravery [4]. The Dagomba war *Bim'mangli* is bathed in spiritual waters which gives it a brownish colour. Similarly, Dagomba chieftom *Bim'mangli* for newly enskinned chiefs is white or grey woven cloth which symbolizes new king, new responsibility and rank. Ajibade et al (2012, as cited in [28]) express that when the *ukara* cloth is hung in Ekpe lodges, it represents a demarcation of boundaries between the initiated and the uninitiated, that is concealing the source of the 'leopard voice'.

As a social value, the Dagomba *Bim'mangli* is worn to announce the paramountcy of the chief in durbar grounds. The *YabliBim'mangli* (Broad or big smock) in the past was only worn by chiefs to showcase their supremacy over sub-chiefs and the ordinary persons (A. Fusheitu, personal communication, January 10, 2019). The *YabliBim'mangli*, therefore, remains the family cloth of kings. Likewise, traditional cloth or dress within African societies is highly valued and the Dogon people of Mali, for instance, believes that the value of the family and the value of the family cloth are inseparable, hence, selling the value of the family cloth is as though selling the value of the family [28].

### III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is largely anchored on qualitative approach in which descriptive, content analysis and ethnography methods were used. These methods enabled the researcher to identify and describe the indigenous aesthetics of different *Bim'manga* for Dagomba chiefs and their indigenous ethics of wearing them. The participants for this study comprised master weavers, master sewers and traditional folk historians of the Dagomba *Bim'mangli*. Due to the heterogeneous nature of the population, proportionate quota sampling technique was used to maintain the proportions of weavers, sewers and traditional folk historians as they exist in the population.

The sample consisted 30 weavers, 18 sewers and 12 traditional folk historians. Semi structured and unstructured interviews together with participant observation were used for data collection among weavers, sewers and traditional folk historians. These research instruments were used because majority of the respondents were illiterates and the chiefs opted for face-to-face interviews than fill in because certain initiations were carried out before they could answer questions. It, therefore, disadvantaged the use of questionnaires. Data collected through interview and observation were transcribed and analysed in descriptive and narrative forms.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The forms and indigenous aesthetics of *Bim'manga* for Dagomba chiefs are presented and discussed below:

##### A. Chiefdom *Bim'mangli* (Nam-Kparugu/Bulla)

Chiefdom *Bim'mangli* (Nam-Kparugu/Bulla), as seen in Plate 1 and Plate 2, is purely a ceremonial gown sewn using white (greybath) woven cloths. It indigenously and

culturally does not have any pleats at all. It does not also have pockets. According to 16(88.7%) respondents of sewers, the Chiefdom *Bim'mangli* is just a long gown without decorations or embroidery and has wide sleeves. It can be used for both men and women for enskinment. The researcher discovered that the only men who wear the Chiefdom *Bim'mangli* (Nam Kparigu/Bulla) in the form of a cloth wrapped round the body with the ends tied onto the shoulders are chief warriors (Sapashin-Naa).



paramount chief of Dagombas,  
YaNaaMahamaAbubakari II in Chiefdom  
*Bim'mangli* (Nam Kparugu/Bulla)



**Plate 2:** The length of Chiefdom *Bim'mangli* (Nam Kparugu/Bulla)

For both men and women, the *Nam Kparugu* (Chiefdom *Bim'mangli*) serves cultural purposes for wearing them. Firstly, it elevates the ordinary or the prince into the *Nam* (Chiefdom). Therefore, as soon as this *Nam Kparugu* is put on a person, he is quickly declared a chief through the traditional way where a traditional announcer verbally announces it and the beating of the drum also goes accordingly. Secondly, it signifies responsibility that the newly enskinned chief has taken up the mantle to perform cultural duties in the land or community to preserve and sustain the culture of the people.

##### B. Ordinary *Kparugu*/Batakari

According to 17(94.4%) respondents of sewers, the ordinary *Kparugu* on the other hand has embroidery around the neck, front pockets and at the back where the style of design (embroidery) is determined by the wearer's choice. It is the most traditionally appropriate *Bim'mangli* that chiefs wear over a number of smaller *Bim'manga* (smocks) for occasions as seen in Plate 3 and Plate 4.



**Plate 3:** Dagbon regent, Kampakuya Naa, in Ordinary *Kparugu*/Batakari, 2018



**Plate 4:** Dagbon regent, Bolin Naa, in Ordinary *Kparugu*/Batakari, 2018

*C Yabli/Yebli*

*Yabli* was traditionally worn by chiefs in the past but today, [15] indicates that it is worn by many ordinary persons based on affordability. *Yabli* literally means big or broad. It comes from a Dagbani phrase as ‘di kuyemyem mi’ which literally

means a *Bim’ mangli* which is big or broad. According to BanvumLunNaa Ibrahim (personal communication, July 4, 2017) and LunTahiru in Karaga (personal communication, August 8, 2017), the name suggests it’s being the biggest dress manufactured in the *Bim’ mangli* industry.



**Plate 5:** *Yabli* (Broad/Big)



**Plate 6:** Two chiefs (seated in front) wearing *Yabli*. All the ordinary men are in smaller *Bim’ mangna*.

They added that Dagombas aesthetically assigned names as *Zahayebinli*(Big) or *Zahayelinli*(Broad) to *Yabli* due to its bigger size in breadth. Therefore, the name *Yabli* is coined from Dagbani terminologies referring to big in size (as shown in Plates 5 & 6). The researcher was told that the *YabliBim’ mangli* appeared during the reign of NaaZangina (YaaNaa), paramount chief of Dagombas, who reigned from 1648 to 1677. It was the same NaaZangina who brought it from the Hausa land in Nigeria and when he wore it in front of his subjects they amazingly screamed, “NyemNaaniyemyemshem”, meaning, see how the chief is expanded in breadth by the dress.

*D Molfie*

This refers to the *Bim’ mangli* hat worn for enskinment. The pure white hat worn in upwards posture indicates that the wearer is a newly enskinned chief. It symbolizes power, responsibility and mightiness. This is only worn by chiefs and in the past, a commoner could not attempt to do so; the tradition will hunt such a person spiritually and in some cases the chiefs sanctioned those people for violating the tradition. The youth and some middle age men are seen wearing hats in this posture today for entertainment and beauty purposes.



**Plate 7:** Newly enskinned chief with erected Molfie hat. But the sub-chiefs bend or press down their hats in front of a superior chief of Savulugu, 2019



**Plate 8:** Newly enskinned chief with erected Molfie hat (Extracted from Acquah, Amisah&Yankson, 2017)

*E Alichab-ba*

This *Bim'mangli*(see Plates 9A & 9B) is a traditional wrapper cloth worn over all other *Bim'manga*. It is worn by prominent chiefs whose enskinment has no more progression to another skin. That is why it is always worn by the

YaaNaa(paramount chief of Dagombas) for his position as the overlord of Dagbon. Some of the other chiefs who wear them include chief of Zabzugu, Kuga Naa (The leader of kingmakers), chief of Gusheigu, chief of Gukpegu, chief of Diyeli and among others.



**Plate 9A:**YaaNaaMahamaAbubakari II in Alichab-ba at his inauguration ceremony in Yendi, 2019



**Plate 9B:**YaaNaaMahamaAbubakari II in Alichab-ba with president Nana AkufoAddo of the republic of Ghana at the YaaNaa's inauguration ceremony in Yendi, 2019

*F Mulfu hat*

It is reddish in colour and was originally made in woven cloth dyed in red colour using plant dyes (see Plate 10). It is sometimes made today by using red materials sold on

the market. It is worn by chiefs who will not proceed further onto any other skin again; these chiefs (including women such as chief of Gundogu, Yendi) are described as 'NaaYaba' (the paramount chief's grandfathers) and 'NaaPriba'(sisters of the paramount chief's mothers or fathers).



**Plate 10:** *Mulfu* hat (reddish in colour)

*G Implications of the identification of Dagomba Chiefs' Bim'manga (smocks) for peace promotion in Dagbon*

The intent of objective two is to resolve the issue of ordinary persons not stepping on the toes of chiefs for dressing like chiefs in the Dagomba society. Preliminary studies indicated that the Dagomba youth together with some disobedient elders are wearing *Bim'manga* that are supposed to be worn by chiefs and according to TahiduBawa (personal communication, September 11, 2018), that camouflaging one's personality as a chief through the wearing of Chiefdom *Bim'manga*(smocks for chiefs) can trigger conflicts.

According to 10(83.3%) traditional folk historians, the chiefs' *Bim'mangli*(Nam Kparugu/Bulla), the *Molfie* hat, the Reddish *Mulfu* hat and the *Alichab-ba* are strictly worn by chiefs in different capacities without any compromises. Chiefs are identified by their cultural *Bim'manga* and the Dagomba society honours any person wearing one of the chiefs' *Bim'manga* at any place the person is met. The honours take the form of appellations, lowering one's height for the chief to pass, escorting the chief to his residence, keeping silent for the chief to pass, and many more. The respondents further stated that when these honours are done on one who has pretended to be a chief through one's dressing, it can lead to misunderstanding or conflicts. This view confirms [10] insertion that conflicts in African societies do occur as a result of little lapses in socio-cultural practices.

In the view of 11(91.7%) respondents of traditional folk historians, there is even law and order among chiefs when they come together by their dressing capacities let alone chiefs versus the ordinary people. In order to promote peace within the chiefdom arena, some chiefs have prescribed *Bim'manga* and they are identified by these *Bim'manga* at durbar grounds. The *Mulfu* hat and *Alichab-ba* are traditionally worn by chiefs who have no chance again to move to any other skin. Therefore, the respondents indicate that the *Mulfu* hat and the *Alichab-ba* are major chiefs' *Bim'mangli* that project good socio-cultural practices of Dagombas. This agrees with [22] definition of cultural practices as practices that exist within the African communities that foster members in the process of building peace among them.

It is highly an offensive practice on the Dagomba land for a commoner to wear *Bim'manga* designated for Dagomba chiefs. Also, it is culturally and traditionally unacceptable that a commoner wear good or heavy *Bim'manga* than the chief in gatherings like festivals. In a similar scenario narrated by Alhaji Munkaila, a renowned historian in *Bim'manga* at Kpatinga under the Gusheigu district indicated that:

I witnessed when we were young at a durbar ground that the late Kpatingalaa Ziblim (chief of Kpatinga) left the festival ground in disappointment after spotting a commoner wore *Bim'manga* like a chief. The chief upon reaching the palace, removed his

*Bim'manga* that he wore and authorized his sub-chiefs to add them to the possession of the commoner who dressed like him. This was a sign of disappointment and the beginning of grudge between the chief and the commoner. The grudge existed unabated till the chief died (personal communication, August 8, 2017).

This clearly indicates that chiefs are traditional leaders who ensure that the potency of the rich socio-cultural practices of Dagombas are practiced and sustained. In the view of 11(91.7%) respondents of traditional folk historians, ordinary people were punished in the past for dressing like chiefs. The punishment took the form of verbal rebukes, lashing, giving out money as recompense, and sometimes severe punishments such as killing the person through spiritual means were carried out. The respondents, however, lament that chieftaincy divisions among Dagombas in this modern era will make the implementation difficult, unlike another scenario narrated by Alhaji Adam, a renowned historian in *Bim'mangli* weaving at Kpatinga, that:

KarNaaMahama (late chief of Karaga in the Northern part of Ghana) spotted a commoner who wore heavy *Bim'manga*(smocks) and his appearance seemed to overshadow him. The chief sacked him from the grounds to go and change his *Bim'manga* as a commoner (personal communication, August 4, 2017).

This also confirms Musah's [29] indication that chiefs in traditional societies in Ghana have the mandate to carry out sanctions and appropriate punishment to ensure that socio-cultural practices are carried out smoothly. It, therefore, promulgates law and order in traditional African societies and gives soul to long existence of peace in societies.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The study identified major forms of *Bim'manga* that are associated with the chiefs in Dagbon in Northern Ghana. Some of the *Bim'manga* are only worn at the time of enskinment and others are worn only by some specific chiefs. The Chiefdom *Bim'mangli* is worn at enskinment and it symbolizes new chief, new responsibility and elevation. The Chiefdom hats (Nam zupils) that are worn with the Chiefdom *Bim'mangli* are purely white for chiefs who still have chances of progression onto higher skins and the purely red colour is worn by chiefs who have reached their climax on the ladder of enskinment among the Dagombas.

Also, all the forms of Chiefs' *Bim'manga* are symbolic and communicate to ordinary persons to avoid wearing them for the promotion of law and order in the chieftaincy Diaspora in Dagbon. This will then promote peace since the society's ability to wear *Bim'manga* by individual status is a great adventure into the promotion of good socio-cultural practices among Dagombas.



Scenarios given concerning how some Dagomba chiefs objected the dressing mood of commoners who wore *Bim'manga* chiefs imply that chiefs are very important in the Dagomba traditional societies and they have some prescribed styles of dressing as part of venerating chiefs' personalities. It also gives a signal to the commoners not to compete with chiefs through the culture of wearing the *Bim'manga* since the recognition and value of Dagomba chiefs are in many instances attached to their dressing moods.

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