

Use of Pottery in Family Rituals among the Paibona Community of Northern Uganda

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Abstract

Whereas pottery was a common practice worldwide, its use continues to diminish in contemporary societies due to changes in modern life. Pottery products were used as functional products and had rooted meanings, enabling societies to function. Presently, modern ways of living have threatened the use of pottery and its rooted meaning in many communities unless an intervention is put in place. One such community whose pottery practices were threatened is the Acholi community in northern Uganda. The Acholi community had a rich history of pottery, some of which was used in rituals. The coming of modernity did not promote the ritual practices in which pots were used, even though the community continued to use the pots secretly, and that threatened pottery with extinction. The present study set out to document the use of pottery in family rituals of the Acholi communities in Payuta village in Paibona sub county, Acwa county, Gulu district. The study was qualitative and employed an ethnographic research design. The study involved eight respondents who were purposely selected. Data was collected through observation, voice recording, in-depth interviews, and photography. Findings revealed several pots that were used in family rituals, including twin pots (*Agulu Kirubi*) with multiple openings, umbilical cords (*lawum pen and atabo pen*), burial pots (*Agulu lyel*), and serving bowls (*Atabo lobo*). Although some pots were specifically designed for rituals, others were sourced from domestic pots, while others were multipurpose, serving both domestic and ritual purposes. Furthermore, the findings also revealed various factors influencing pottery existence today, including religious perceptions, level of education, the need to improve family finances, and love for culture.

Keywords: *Acholi, rituals, documentation, pottery, cultural norms.*

INTRODUCTION

Pots are a very important part of material culture and are significant to those who use and believe in them. It was evident that pottery ware existed thousands of years ago. Besides supporting the daily house chores, pottery was a common ritualistic material artefact. According to Sebillaud (2020), pottery is the oldest practice in the world, with the oldest pottery traces found in south and North China, the Russian Far East, Japan, and Korea. The earliest trace of pottery was in Eastern Europe among the communities of hunters and in North and Central Europe during the Bronze Age Period. Although it was true that pottery could have originated from all these places, different parts of the world, including along the Nile River, where early man settled, had

evidence of pottery but little or no clear evidence of recording. During that time, evidence of deposits of pottery fragments and vessels existed in most of those areas of the settlement, a sign that ceramic wares were for daily use and public ceremonial practice (Mazurkevich, 2015; Baron, 2012).

Despite its reduced production due to modernity, pottery is still useful to communities. Panda, et al (2019) argues that modernization has caused a setback in pottery production in India with the use of plastic, aluminum, iron, and ore products for household chores. Nortey and Asiamoaso (2019, p. 43) reported a similar setback in Ghana, where the increase in affordable industrially made plastic and ceramic plates, bowls, and cups from Asia affected the demand for pots, yet it was very important for potters to maintain and preserve humankind's culture and livelihood. Literature reveals that pottery was equally important in several communities around the world. West (2019) explained the use of ceramic jars when serving beer during the ancient Egyptian funeral and burial ceremonies known as Tekunu ritual ceremonies. Thebe (2016, p. 345) posits that in Botswana, pottery production has sustained many families with a steady income that has enabled them to construct decent houses. They produced pots for local markets and other purposes such as wedding presents, house decoration, flower vessels, storage, and ritual ceremonies. Pottery items were found to be part of rituals the world over. Rituals are associated with the use of so many material artefacts, such as pots, masks, body paintings, sculptures, drums, calabashes, baskets, and costumes, accompanied by dancing, drinking, and feasting or eating, among others. Aalberts (2020, p. 243) observes that rituals involved specific images of the where and when of the rituals, connecting through sense-making rather than language, and those images and re-imaginings were crucial for the sacred, mystical atmospheric characteristic of rituals".

Mteti (2016) claims that because clay sites and ceramic artefacts were connected to the creation and preparation of human imagination, they were revered in Tanzania. Rituals were performed at clay sites to mediate and settle social disputes because of the numerous myths and taboos connected to clay sites, preparation, manufacture, and pottery objects. Their life revolved around the usage and creation of ceramics for spiritual and artistic purposes.

Among other rituals, the Jopadhola tribe in Tororo, Uganda, used a variety of pots for initiations, marriages, and twin ceremonies (Owor, 2016, pp. 70–71,). Pots played a significant role in the

empako-naming, introduction, and burial rites performed by the Batoro and Banyoro tribes. The most frequent ceremony was eating from the same traditional dish, known as the pot, even if there were other ceremonies involved in the naming, marriage, and death. When the family's male head was buried, all of the surviving children shared a pot of smoked beef as a symbol of their unity and their wishes for a long life for their ancestors (Basiime, 2015). Similar to this, the Jopadhola village brewed and served millet beer in pots throughout.

Cultural policy is in favor of the preservation of customs such as the usage of ritual pots. In order to improve the integration of culture into development, the National Culture Policy addresses the issue of conserving indigenous material culture artefacts. These strategies include promoting culture, guaranteeing capacity building, guaranteeing research, documenting, and encouraging collaboration with stakeholders (MGLSD, 2006). Despite the significant obstacles posed by Western ideology, the Ministry of Culture and Community Development was established to guarantee the promotion, preservation, and strengthening of Ugandan culture. However, certain groups, like the Acholi community, continue to place significance on their cultural items.

The United States Department of State (2010) granted almost 650 projects in more than 120 poor nations through the U.S. Ambassador's Fund for culture preservation for the current and future generations, demonstrating the value of cultural heritage. It was also an opportunity to show respect for other nations' cultural legacies and to view transportable, tangible artefacts that, because of their immense worth to people all across the world, symbolize humanity's creative genius. The United States Department provided an explanation of how projects falling under this category tackled issues including the urgent need for conservation treatment, the goal of conservation, safe storage practices, caretaker education, and the preservation of collections and cultural artefacts.

Nsibambi (2018) highlights the importance of documentation in a similar manner. He notes that while a large number of community museums had been established to preserve cultural history, there was not enough documentation available for these artefacts. He contends that, whether or not it is disputed, our history and cultural legacy should be impartially recorded and presented for the benefit of the next generation, allowing them to build on the great aspects of our past and culture while learning from the "bad" history. Any museum piece gains value when its history,

including any connected controversies, is recorded and made available to visitors via written works, photo exhibits, or live narration (Nsibambi, 2018, p. 32).

International and regional conventions encourage preservation efforts. Aspiration 5 of African Agenda 2063, as proposed by the African Union Commission (2015), intends to enhance and promote Africans who possess a strong sense of cultural identity, ethics, and values. In a similar vein, Sustainable Development Goal 12 seeks to transform society's organisational structures as well as daily behaviours. It addresses resource extraction to enable natural ecosystems to flourish and endlessly support human life (UN, 2015). These crucial international agreements outline the importance of culture and tangible cultural artefacts for continuity and sustainability in modern society. Iddrisu (2018) said in his advice that it was critical to research pots that were in danger of being extinct, comprehend and record their uses, context, and potential restoration.

Western cultures have had a significant impact on people's lifestyles, customs, perspectives, and views about the world around them. For the Acholi people, pottery had deep cultural and domestic significance, supporting ceremonies and other practices with deep-rooted meanings. Given the nature of the people in the Acholi community, including people from different cultural backgrounds, economic statuses, and religious faiths, pottery items used in rituals were associated with witchcraft. These perceptions have reduced the value of pots and affected their use, yet these were the oldest traditional material culture item, which is as old as man's existence, that needed to have been protected for future use. The use and survival of ceremonial pots have been endangered by the stigma associated with them. Because Acholi traditional pottery has great historical significance and is valuable to future generations of scholars and educators, it was necessary to undertake some interventions to preserve it.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is part of the ongoing PhD research project *Ritual Pottery among the Acholi of northern Uganda and its Relevance to Contemporary Social Space Design*, whose second objective is to explore the use of pots in the rituals of the Acholi community. The study used a qualitative research approach in a natural setting to help understand and interpret social interaction, focusing on a wider perspective within the pottery environment. The study used

ethnography design to get first-hand descriptive and in-depth views of culture and human behaviour (Mullick, Sen, Das, & Mukherjee, 2013). The study identified the pots produced today and analysed the use of selected ritual pots to document them for future reference. The study was carried out among the Acholi community in Payuta village, Paibona sub-county, Aswa County, Gulu District. The Acholi community lives in the districts of Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, Agago, Lamwo, Omoro, and Nwoya. Eight (8) respondents were purposefully selected based on their perceived knowledge and experience of pottery production and use, including three (3) producers, one (1) cultural leader, two (2) informed elders, and two (2) users of pots as seen in table 1. The producers provided information on the different kinds of pots produced; cultural leader, informed elders' and users of pots explained the historical use of pots in family rituals. Ethical considerations were observed by giving pseudo-names to protect the identity of the respondents. Data collection tools included observation guide, in-depth interview guide, and photography. Phone calls were made to make follow-ups and sought clarity on unclear matters. Data was collected using unstructured questions guide. Through these open-ended questions, participants freely expressed their, experiences and knowledge about pottery use. The study used descriptive method of analysis to interpret the data gathered. Given that they were aware of the pots used in rituals, the discussion concentrated on pots which were used in the most common family rituals, with visual evidence of the pots and factors influencing continued existence of pots in the community.

Table 1.*Categories and numbers of respondents*

SN	RESPONDENTS	PSEUDO-NAMES	Number of respondents
1	Producers of pots	Pd	03
2	Cultural leaders	Akena	01
3	Informed elders	Onono and Anena	02
4	Users of pots	Okot and Lalam	02

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Pottery production today

The Acholi were socialized in homesteads maintained through cultural practices under the clan system where customs, values, and cultural norms (*tekwaro*) were highly respected. Although modernization has greatly affected the social structure, some customs, values and norms continue to be respected. It is in this regard that the present study set out to document ritual pots. Potters in Payuta Village explained the kind of pots currently in production. We took notes, made recordings, and took pictures of the pots and the activities. We observed several kinds of pots in the compound and in their huts including; cooking pots, water pots, storage pots, and serving bowls. The pots showed the various common types of pots and one could tell that the production of the pots was determined by the demands of the community.

Pd 2 a 52-year-old woman explained that;

I am the sole provider for my family, I produce pots to help me raise finances to support my family's needs. I always ensure that whatever I produce should be sold. Sometimes I receive special orders from my clients but most times, I produce water pots, cooking pots serving bowls, and beer pots.

She lived near Pd 1's home and they shared so many things in common. Pd 1 was a 79-year-old woman who had been in pottery production since she was a young girl. She learned pottery from her family and also taught all her children how to make pots. In her home, different kinds of pots were observed. Some were in good condition while others were slightly broken or not in use and scattered all over the compound, a sign that she has been in production for a long time. While some broken pots were placed under the granary, next to the granary, and under the tree as seen in (*Figure 1*), others were used for storing clay and serving water to the chicken (*Figure 2*). She also had several cooking pots, some of which had been fired the day before I visited her (*Figure 3*).



Figure 1. Pots scattered all over; under the granary, next to the granary and under a tree, photo by researcher



Figure 2. A broken pot for storing clay, a broken bowl used for serving water to chicken, and a broken water pot, photo by researcher



Figure 3. Newly fired cooking pots, water pots, wine pots, and bowls, photo by researcher

Pd 1 gave an impressive narrative of her life in pottery production. She trained many potters in her village most of whom have relocated to other places. In her home, she produced many types of pots including water pots, storage pots, brewing and serving pots, bowls, and *kirubi* (two-mouth pots) and she always gave out pots for burial and marriage purposes. She also made pots based on the need and purpose usually on request. She explained that;

I usually make kirubi on request because they do not sell so much. The only time I make many of them is when my customer who sells in Gulu town places her orders. I also receive people who buy burial pots and given that pots for burial are not unique in any way, I always pick them from the available water or cooking pots as long as the size is appropriate to what they want. About two weeks ago, I sold a small water pot for the burial of a twin baby of about three months.

Pd 1 explained why pots that got damaged during molding or firing were not discarded. They served other purposes not necessarily holding liquids. Given her age, she produced pots but sold them from home and in fact, some people bought from her and took them to the market. She was amazed at how people from different occupational backgrounds looked for her in the village to buy pots. She was conversant with what her customers wanted and so she would always strive to produce the best. Much as she produced pots for rituals, she showed a lack of interest in ritual practices. She explained how her family stopped carrying out rituals many years ago when they returned from the camps. She said; these rituals are still being done in the community although many people do not do them in the open. I have evidence of this because I sometimes produce for them the pots. Others may not say exactly what they are going to do with the pots they are taking but the fact that they are asking for that specific kind of pot makes me understand what they are going to do with them and I produce them. I am not against rituals but I don't participate in them.

She admitted observing the rituals of her extended family and in the neighborhood. Given that she is blessed with the creative skills of molding, she utilized them to the fullest. She wished her daughter was alive, she would carry her legacy. Pd 1 had passion and love for molding. She explained how molding kept her mind away from worldly thoughts. She expressed appreciation for her good health and strength and prayed that the almighty God continue to protect her. She

explained how pottery skills were traditionally passed on within the family households and the community informally. While potters worked together with their family members and other members of the community during production, others learnt through practice by supporting the production. She observed that today so much has changed; families of potters have turned to other activities that bring quick financial returns to their families. Young members of the family are introduced to the formal education system at an early age, as early as two years depriving them a chance to participate in pottery production.

On the other hand, Pd 1, Pd 3 explained how her religion did not support traditional practices of ritual performance. She expressed her disappointment whenever someone asked her to mold a ritual pot. She said;

I cannot produce a pot that I know will be used for rituals. That will mean, I am glorifying the devil. I produce pots but I do not want to produce a pot that will be used during rituals. When I receive customers who want pots for rituals, I politely turn them away. In fact, in my village here, many people are already aware that I am “born again” so I don’t make pots for rituals.

Pots used during spiritual rituals

To understand the importance of the pots in rituals, it was important to identify the pots and find out how they were used. Akena, a cultural leader explained that ritual pots were supposed to be limited to those pots designed for rituals however, pots not necessarily ritual pots are repurposed to serve as ritual pots. He observed that only *Lutino jok* (godly babies) required these rituals. He observed that the godly babies included twins who were named Apiyo or Opiyo if they were the first to come out and Achen or Ochen if they were the second. They were either female or male, or both. The breech babies were named Adoch or Odoch if they were a girl or a boy, and babies born with body defects or abnormalities were named Ajok or Ojok if they were female or male. Although he acknowledged that Ajok or Ojok were said to be godly babies, they were not accorded special rituals like those of twins and breech birth. These family rituals were conducted by family elders and relatives who were in most cases parent’s grandparents, great-grandparents or extended relatives.

Ritual pots (Agulu jok)

The understanding of *Agulu jok* was elaborated by the informants, Onono and Anena as a name that generalized ritual pots. They identified *Agulu jok* and explained their use during godly rituals. Like the cultural leaders, the informants acknowledged the two-mouth, three-mouth and four-mouth pots although they also admitted to having mostly seen the two mouth and sometimes three-mouth pots during rituals and hardly saw four-mouth pots. While Pd 1 and Pd 2 were so specific on the kind of pots produced, they could not give an elaborate understanding of how the pots were used during rituals. Akena discussed the various kinds of pots used by the Acholi people during twins and breech babies' rituals; *Agulu pen/otaku*, small pots with covers or broken shaped pots for burying the umbilical cords and or placenta for godly babies at birth; *Agulu Lyel* were usually pots that were used in the burial process of godly persons. He explained why these pots were so significant during the rituals. The godly babies were constantly celebrated right from birth to death to get good health, protection and safety among others. Other pots included those that were used for serving food, drinks, cooking and the repurposed pots.

Burial pot (Agulu lyel)

Burial pot was used for burying godly babies both infants and adults. Whenever the family needed a pot for burying a godly child, a new pot was obtained from the potters or the market. These pots were originally designed for storing water or cooking food as observed in Figure 4. Okot explained how godly children; the breech and twins were buried using pots.

He observed that;

During the baby's burial, the appropriate size of pot was obtained and two holes were made slightly below the neck of the pot. The two holes symbolized the eyes of the dead. It meant that the dead was alive and was seeing everything that happened through the holes. They placed the body in a pot, without clothes and covered it with sheep skin and bomo (a climbing plant used in spiritual ritual ceremonies for twins and breech babies). A big piece of broken pot was shaped and used for covering the ritual pot. After fitting, black clay from the water wells was used for sealing the pot. The pot was then buried at Wang kac. The pot was surrounded with sticks from Okango a plant used during godly burial.

The plant was properly tied with strings and bomo was wrapped around it. All these burial rituals were conducted in the morning before the sun gets hot.

However, for the godly adult burial, a burial was conducted in the usual normal way but also without clothes. The body was placed in the grave and wrapped with sheep skin and *bomo*. Like other family burials in Acholi culture, a burial grave was always dug within the homestead. In the second burial of godly babies, the remains were exhumed and placed in a pot to be taken for a second burial. What should be noted was the fact that godly burials were conducted twice; at the time of death and after some years when the spirit of the dead appeared to family members through dreams. The body would be exhumed and relocated for a second burial. The second burial was conducted whether it was a miscarried baby or normal birth. Within the village, we visited a home where the remains of a male adult had been exhumed a few days back. We interacted with Lalam, an aunty to the deceased who explained how her nephew died about nine years ago, and given that he was a godly child, the family carried out the death rite and conducted the second burial although the process would be complete when the pot containing the remains were taken away from home, Lalam shared her encounter with second burial;

When my nephew was exhumed, we prepared a pot and all his bones were collected and placed in the pot. We have placed his remains tentatively here to rest a bit. He will come again to the family through dreams for his remains to be shifted to his final resting place, a cool place near the water wells or under a big tree away from home and that is another ritual altogether.

Lalam's narrative confirmed what the informants and cultural leaders explained. Figure 5, shows the remains of Lalam's nephew kept in the family shrine as it awaits to be shifted for the second burial.



Figure 4. Water pots and cooking pots repurposed for the burial of spiritual babies, photo by researcher



Figure 5. A pot containing the remains awaiting a second burial as observed from a distance and close range, photo by researcher

Twin pots (Kirubi)

Twin pot was the most outstanding ritual pot used for serving beer during the twin rituals. The cultural leader, Akena explained how people plainly, refer to *Agulu kirubi* as *Agulu jok* (ritual pots). That to him was more general because it did not specifically refer to twin pots. He explained how twin pots could be called *Agulu rut* or more precisely *Agulu kirubi*. *Agulu kirubi* had two, three or four openings however, kirubi with two openings was the most common type.

He explained that the pots served the same purpose. The pots were used during the naming, birth and death rituals, and for serving traditional beer. *Kirubi* was always small in size with either smooth or rough design in repeated zigzag design patterns all over but with a smooth mouth ring. What also stood out on some *kirubi* pots was the fact that the two openings varied in size, one side was smaller and the other bigger. While the variation meant the position of the first and second birth of the twins, others believed it didn't carry any meaning. They understood it as the potter's craftsmanship without any significant meaning.



Figure 6. *Kirubi la-doge aryo ki adek* (Two-mouth and three-mouth pots for twin ritual).

Umbilical cord pots (Lawum Pen/ Atabo Pen)

Lawum pen was shaped pieces of a broken pot that was prepared for burying the placenta/ umbilical cord while *Atabo pen* was a molded pot prepared early for burying the umbilical cord and sometimes placenta of spiritual babies. Lalam, a pot user explained that;

Lawum means to cover, broken pot is picked and two pieces are shaped to properly fit so that one can be used for covering. Once the placenta/ umbilical cord is placed inside, it is properly covered and sealed with clay soil from the well water. Meanwhile, Atabo pen is a molded pot, usually very small in size with a properly fitting cover. The pot is buried within the family shrine however, not completely, it was buried halfway and the top part was left out.

This ritual was done the same day the godly babies were born and after the naming ritual. While the first ritual was for the placenta, the second was for the fallen umbilical cord which was added to the placenta. Although most families do not bury the placenta given the fact that they gave birth from the hospital, they waited for the umbilical cord for the burial ritual. *Atabo pen* was simple and easy to prepare and did not require the help of a potter to produce it. Akena described how an elderly person, usually the grandmother or an Aunty molded *Atabo pen* for the ritual. In one of the shrines within the community, a *lawum pen* was observed by the family shrine as seen in Figure 7.



Figure 7. *Lawum Pen* surrounded by *Okango* and *Bomo* within a family shrine.

Serving bowl (Atabo Lobo)

Atabo lobo was a clay bowl that served several purposes ranging from the basic utilitarian purpose of serving food in the homes to serving food during rituals. The cultural leader and elders explained how *Atabo lobo* was used for serving special meals such as *otwo* (smoked meat), and *dek ngo* (pigeon peas), especially to the family heads. While enjoying family meals, members sat around the served meal with children in the front circle followed by women behind while the head of the family, sons and brothers sat in their separate space, away from the women and children. The importance of *Atabo lobo* was that it kept food warm for a very long time when properly covered. Besides that, families used the bowl for storing items such as oil, honey,

and groundnut paste in a macramé away from insects hanging in the sealing of the hut. Some people simply used them for decoration while placed in macramé.

Meanwhile, for ritual purposes, *atabo lobo* served the chicken, sheep and goat meat after it had been slaughtered during the various rituals. In most cases, the meals served during the ritual were cooked without salt. *Atabo lobo* was designed in the same way with a rough texture on the neck and a smooth texture on the lower part. The only difference was in the use which was either for ritual or domestic use.



Figure 8. *Atabo lobo* placed in macramé

Discussion

The findings revealed several pots were used in family ritual proceedings in the Acholi community including twin pots (*Agulu Kirubi*), with multiple openings, umbilical cord (*lawum pen/ atabo pen*) burial pots (*Agulu lyel*), and serving bowl (*Atabo lobo*). The study observed that while some of these pots were designed specifically for rituals, others were sourced from pots used for domestic purposes. The most common pots designed specifically for rituals included twin pots, umbilical cord pots, while those which were sourced for rituals included burial pots.

Serving bowls were used interchangeably for serving meals during rituals and during the normal family gatherings. While most of the pots designed specifically for ritual proceedings were becoming extinct, potters confirmed how people in the community still demanded for them although secretly to avoid people's opinions towards their beliefs and practices.

The study also revealed various factors influencing pottery existence including religious perceptions, education level, the need to improve family finances, and love for culture.

Religious perception; many families in Acholi and generally Uganda as a whole embraced Western religion. Western religions came with their own doctrines which could not recognize African religions. Many people in Acholi adopted both Christianity and Islam and the teachings of religion especially Christianity regarded everything indigenous as ungodly. The study found that there is a mindset issue that needs to be interrogated for Africans to develop a sense of nationalism. The mindset issues concern the conflicting beliefs, and practices between the Acholi traditional cultures and western cultures. While the western culture sidelined Acholi pottery, especially pots used in rituals, the traditional Acholi cultures cherished and protected these artefacts.

Education level; traditionally, learning was by practice, and the more the children observed and interacted with clay, the better the experience and craftsmanship. Children at that level had the opportunity to explore with clay and other craft materials from their environment and people close to them. With the introduction of the education system, a lot has changed. Today's generation has been deprived of the opportunity to learn pottery among other crafts at an early stage within the home setting. Besides joining the school as early as two years or less, they had limited opportunities to interact with their families and the environment around them. The situation was worsened by the current curriculum that focus more on developing cognitive and affection domains rather than psychomotor development at that early stage. To date, pottery as a traditional art and craft has not been considered in the primary curriculum limiting the potential creative skills of young potters which should have been developed and promoted at an early stage for future vocational skills which could support their lives.

The need to improve family finances; the few exiting potters in the community earned some income through the sale of pots. The potters were aware of the need for ritual pots and the

charges which were usually slightly higher because of scarcity and demands. The situation enabled potters to raise household income for their families through production and sale of such pots. The buyers who purchased the pots in bulk came from far however, most final users were from within the community. The finances raised from pottery production supported the family in many ways including paying for education, buying food, seedlings, creating strong family bond.

Love for culture; Love, culture and practices were one reason why the ritual pots were flourishing despite the influence of religion and education. Some potters expressed love for pottery production because it kept them productive and useful to their families and community, while others believed that pottery production allowed them to exhibit their God given creative skills. It was also observed that potters who subscribed to the western faith had not abandoned pottery production but limited their production to what seems well with their consent a sign that Acholi people still cherish their ritual practices despite practicing religion or living a modern life. The Acholi people had continued to protect their culture and customs, and the continued production of ritual pots albeit secretly is a manifestation that modernity cannot take away their traditions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The demand for pots still exists despite 25years LRA war interrupted which altered the social, political, and economic life of the people affecting them physically, psychologically, and emotionally altering their normal homestead settlements with all its cultural norms, practices, values, and beliefs (Atim, 2018, p. 6). Given that today people live in a mixed community where certain practices were adopted from other cultures, some people view other cultural practices and artefacts with reservations. With that in place, many people have become conscious and more careful with activities that go on around them which has affected the production and use of Acholi ritual pots. The fact that many people today have abandoned rituals and adopted other ways of life such as new religions, there is need to protect the traditional pottery of the Acholi to enable them to coexist within today's society. For example, repurposing pots to serve other purposes would help remove the fear of associating with pots used in rituals, save their extinction,

promote continued sustainable production, educate the future generation, and conserve the material artefact. As advocated by Nsibambi (2018) there is a need for conserving cultural artefacts through documentation and the establishment of community museums for future purposes.

The present study observed that the Acholi community attached a lot of importance to ritual pots as well as other pots and therefore, such pots need to be documented and conserve them. The study identified the kind of pots produced today, and analyzed their use. While the study observed how some pots were designed specifically for rituals and others were sourced from pots used for utilitarian purposes, it also acknowledged how most of the pots produced today were for utilitarian purposes such as pots for storage of water, food, cooking, and boiling liquid. They observed that while ritual pots and pots designed for rituals were also produced mostly on request, they were not produced in the open but rather secretly. They observed how the market demand determined the kind of pots to be produced. They explained how various factors influenced the existence of pottery today including religious perceptions, education level, the need to improve family finances, and love for culture.

Recommendations

The Acholi people have rich traditional pots which are used during ritual proceedings and are being threatened to extinction. They include; twin pots (*Agulu Kirubi*), with multiple openings, umbilical cord (*lawum pen/ atabo pen*) burial pots (*Agulu lyel*, and serving bowl (*Atabo lobo*). It was important to document these pots through written evidence to educate the future generation and use as references for scholarly writing. These pots can also be conserved in locally established museum within Acholi region.

The fact that many people today have abandoned rituals and adopted other ways of life such as new religions, there is need to protect the pots used in ritual for Acholi to enable them coexist within today's society through repurposing. Repurposing was needed to promote continued sustainable production, and save extinction.

Given the importance of pottery as a material culture items, it was important to encourage the young people in field of innovation to use the ritual pots as inspirations for design concept which

can compete with other products in the market. These traditional ideas can be incorporated in both private and contemporary spaces design.

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