



Research Article

REALITY OF CULTURAL CHANGES IN JARAI ETHNIC COMMUNITY IN DUC CO DISTRICT, GIA LAI PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

This paper focused on clarifying the cultural changes of the Jarai ethnic community in Duc Co district, Gia Lai province through the field trip survey of some basic components of the culture, including the practice of daily life and customs, religious and worship practices, artistic and festival activities of Jarai people. A total of 200 participants, aged from 16 to 65 years, joined the study. The results indicated that there were significant cultural changes in the Jarai community. Particularly, the changes emerged more in the age groups of under 50. Based on the findings of the study, the causes of the cultural change were discussed and analysed, and some initial solutions for preserving the cultural identity of the Jarai people were proposed.

Keywords: culture; cultural identity; culture change; ethnic community; Jarai people

1. Introduction

Vietnam is a multi-ethnic country with 54 cultural colours. Each ethnic group has its characteristics, creating unique cultural features. This has formed a diverse culture in the whole country, significantly contributing to the development and diversity of ethnic communities in many cultural and social fields. However, the socio-economic development makes the culture of ethnic minority communities in Vietnam face the risk of oblivion. This can lead to gradually losing traditional cultural identity (Tran, 2006; Nguyen & Truong, 1996). The current trend of globalisation has also had negative impacts on the cultural space of ethnic minority communities. The inevitable trend is a natural cultural assimilation. Additionally, socio-economic development in parts of the country has led to culture change due to the impact of socio-economic factors (Tran, 2006; Chu, 1993). The influence can result in the changes and even the disappearance of traditional cultures of ethnic minorities.

Culture is a significant aspect of social life. It manifests the organisational forms of human life and activities through the two manifestations: material and spiritual culture. It is based on the material and spiritual values created and accumulated by humans through

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practical activities in social life and nature (N. T. Tran, 2006). Culture is passed down from generation to generation through social development in many different ways. This contributes to creating human values and maintaining sustainability and social order.

Material culture includes society's productive forces and everything linked with them, created by humans (N. T. Tran, 2006), such as styles of food, clothing, architecture, utensils of daily life, and productive tools. Material culture results from creative activities, turning objects and materials in nature into valuable things and aesthetic values to serve human life (Nguyen & Truong, 1996; Le, 1990; Hoang, 1997). It satisfies the everyday demands of humans as "material needs." Conversely, Tran Ngoc Them (2006) suggested that spiritual culture is the products related to human spiritual activities, including ideas, beliefs - religion, art, festivals, customs, ethics, language, and literature. These meet specific human "spiritual needs." However, the existence of material and spiritual cultures depends significantly on the awareness and behaviour of the individuals in a community where culture is produced (N. T. Tran, 2006). They themselves are the factors that determine whether their cultural values are preserved or transformed to satisfy the demands of cultural enjoyment within their community.

Although the distinction between material and spiritual culture does not coincide with the distinction between material and spiritual on the philosophical level, it can be declared that material culture and spiritual culture are linked together to create a value system to identify a community and a nation (N. T. Tran, 2006). It is a well-known fact that all cultures change through time. No matter how conservative and traditional, culture is always subject to change in any society and culture. Cultural change is understood that the basic characteristics, values, and roles of customary laws and customs in the daily life of a community are no longer intact (Ngo, 2001). On the one hand, culture change is due to the specific impacts and the changes in social circumstances. On the other hand, the people in the community eliminate those intentionally or unintentionally because they are considered backward and not progressive.

Many studies show that cultural change derives from three major reasons: discovery and technological innovation, contact with other cultures, and environmental changes (Tran, 2006; Nguyen & Truong, 1996; N. T. Tran, 2006; Ngo, 2001). Accordingly, the impacts of the market economy, economic integration, the 4.0 industrial revolution and the trend of digital transformation, the living environment, and notably the transition from the structure of traditional society to the modern one, making cultural changes. Such impacts can cause inevitable consequences to cultures, such as changes in production, costume culture, architectural culture, etc. The change of such cultural elements trends towards modernization and innovation due to the process of cultural exchange and acculturation (Bui, 1999; Nguyen & Truong, 1996; Le, 1990; Ngo, 2001). On the other hand, applying scientific and technological progress in production and life alters customs and habits in the communities

(Ngo, 2001). Furthermore, people control nature and technology, which makes their daily living habits, including the changes in their religious and festival practices (Bui, 1999; Nguyen & Truong, 1996; Le, 1990; Ngo, 2001).

Thus, culture change is a social phenomenon that occurs during socio-economic development because culture itself is a form of social consciousness. The impacts of socio-economic development and the current scientific and technological revolution lead to cultural changes in ethnic communities towards modernity. In other words, the alterations are moving to modernisation as well as eliminating outdated customs and complicated rituals. Consequently, some beautiful cultural features of ethnic minority communities can also be changed and even lost due to such impacts.

With the brief overview presented above, the objective of this paper focused on clarifying some elements relating to cultural changes in the Jarai ethnic community in the Duc Co district, Gia Lai province. The current study sought the answers to the questions: (1) examining the extent to which some essential elements constituting the cultural identity of Jarai people have been changed through the perspectives and understandings of participants, (2) comparing the perspectives and understandings of different age groups regarding the issues, (3) analysing the causes of cultural variation and proposing some initial solutions to preserve the cultural identity of Jarai people.

2. Methodology

The research was conducted through a field survey approach in 4 Jarai villages in Duc Co district, Gia Lai province, including three communes and 01 towns, with the volunteer participation of 200 Jarai people. Of 200 participants, 97 men accounted for 48.5% and 103 women accounted for 51.5%. The age of the participants ranged from 16 to 65 years. The participants were divided into the four age groups, the vast majority, of which 32.5% were 19-30 years old. The remaining participants were included in the following groups: 31-50 years old - 28.5% of the respondents; 16-18 years old – 23.5% of the respondents; and over 50 years old – 15.5% of the respondents.

The survey instrument was designed basing on the culture theory of Le Ngoc Thang (1990), Tran Ngoc Them (2006), Ngo Duc Thinh (2001), and Nguyen Duy Thieu (1989)—the 16 specific questions in the questionnaire relating to the culture, which constituted Jarai cultural identity. The questions focused on some aspects of material and spiritual culture, including daily life and customs, religious and worship practices, and artistic and festival activities. Based on the objective of the study and the basic elements of culture, closed-ended questions were designed with explicit options for the respondents to seek their perspectives and understandings about the relevant contents of the study by using “yes” and “no” answers; “Kinh” people, “Jarai” people, and a combination of “both” Kinh and Jarai people; “know”, “don’t know” and know “little”.

SPSS software (version 20.0) was employed to analyse the collected data from the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics was conducted to determine the frequency and the percentage of the demographic profile and the data.

3. Results and discussions

3.1. The practice of daily living in the Jarai community

The results presented in Table 1 showed that 18% of the respondents spoke Vietnamese/Kinh language in the village daily while 42% spoke Jarai. The respondents speaking both languages in their village accounted for 40%. The findings also revealed that 57.5% of the respondents used the Kinh language to communicate daily, whereas those speaking both languages accounted for 19%. This result suggests that maintaining the Jarai language in the family and in the community environment is still relatively common. Conversely, the number of respondents speaking the Jarai language outside their village tended to decrease. This can be explained by the fact that Jarai people are compelled to speak Vietnamese at workplaces, in daily activities, and trading outside their community because Vietnamese is the universal language is a major means of communication in mainstream society. In other words, when exchanging and trading in mainstream society, Jarai people must use Vietnamese to communicate.

Table 1. The practice of daily living habits

| Contents of asking | Kinh | | Jarai | | Both | |
|---|------|------|-------|------|------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Languages to communicate everyday in the village | 36 | 18.0 | 84 | 42.0 | 80 | 40.0 |
| Languages spoken in the working place | 115 | 57.5 | 47 | 23.5 | 38 | 19.0 |
| Styles of your costumes or your casual clothes | 73 | 36.5 | 50 | 25.0 | 77 | 38.5 |
| Ways of eating and drinking (daily dishes and drinks) | 71 | 35.5 | 50 | 25.0 | 79 | 39.5 |

As indicated in Table 2, 25% of the respondents said they followed the Jarai tradition of dressing and eating habits. The respondents dressing and eating like Kinh's styles were over 35.5%, while the respondents combining both were counted over 38.5%. This result suggests that there are changes in the dressing and cuisine in the Jarai community.

As shown in Table 2, when comparing the different age groups' perspectives, the tendency to speak Vietnamese in daily activities and at work increased among the young in the age groups under 30 (over 23.1%). On the contrary, the respondents over 30 spoke Jarai at high rates (over 43.9% or over 25.8%). Interestingly, the respondents over 50 tended to speak their native language more in daily activities (61.3%). This implies that the daily language spoken by Jarai people changes among the age groups. The age groups most

receptive to Vietnamese are those under 30 years old. This issue may need attention to promote the mother tongue in the Jarai community so that the language can be preserved.

As asked about the costumes and cuisine, the results showed that the majority of the young under 30 tended to be Kinh cultural styles. For example, 47.7% of the respondents reported to have the dressing styles like Kinh, 59.6% answered to have the same way of eating as Kinh while 43.1% answering that they combined both. By contrast, only 22.8% of the respondents over 30 years old reported that they ate and dressed traditionally as Jarai. Notably, the age groups over 50 still maintained their traditional ways of eating and dressing at 54.8% (see Table 2).

Table 2. *The differences in daily living habits between age groups*

| Contents of asking | | <18 years | | 19-30 years | | 31-50 years | | >50 years | |
|---|-------|-----------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-----------|------|
| | | N (47) | % | N (65) | % | N (57) | % | N (31) | % |
| Languages to communicate everyday in the village | Kinh | 11 | 23.4 | 15 | 23.1 | 6 | 10.5 | 4 | 12.9 |
| | Jarai | 19 | 40.4 | 21 | 32.3 | 25 | 43.9 | 19 | 61.3 |
| | Both | 17 | 36.2 | 29 | 44.6 | 26 | 45.6 | 8 | 25.8 |
| Languages spoken in the working place | Kinh | 34 | 72.3 | 37 | 56.9 | 28 | 49.1 | 16 | 51.6 |
| | Jarai | 9 | 19.2 | 13 | 20.0 | 16 | 28.1 | 9 | 29.0 |
| | Both | 4 | 8.5 | 15 | 23.1 | 13 | 22.8 | 6 | 19.4 |
| Styles of your costume or your casual clothes | Kinh | 21 | 44.7 | 25 | 38.5 | 19 | 33.3 | 8 | 25.8 |
| | Jarai | 5 | 10.6 | 12 | 18.4 | 16 | 28.1 | 17 | 54.8 |
| | Both | 21 | 44.7 | 28 | 43.1 | 22 | 38.6 | 6 | 19.4 |
| Ways of eating and drinking (daily dishes and drinks) | Kinh | 28 | 59.6 | 30 | 46.2 | 9 | 15.8 | 4 | 12.9 |
| | Jarai | 6 | 12.7 | 10 | 15.3 | 13 | 22.8 | 21 | 67.7 |
| | Both | 13 | 27.7 | 25 | 38.5 | 35 | 61.4 | 6 | 19.4 |

The findings reveal that the styles of cuisine and costumes of Jarai people in the survey area have changed. Such changes seem to resemble Kinh styles or combine both, which become popular and occur in almost all ages. This can confirm that the cultural changes in clothing and eating patterns have signals of change and mixture.

3.2. Customs in daily activities in the Jarai community

The results presented in Table 3 showed that the type of housing and its indoor layout changed considerably. 21% of the respondents said that the house they lived in belonged to the Jarai people, and 32.5% reported their house’s layout was similar to that of the Jarai people. On the contrary, the mixture between the architecture of Kinh and Jarai was reported

over 41% (layout) and 49.5% (housing), whereas 29.5% of participants said their house’s architecture was similar to Kinh’s.

As can be seen from Table 3, 30% of the respondents said the wedding customs were similar to Kinh, and 47% reported they combined both, while only 23% of the respondents selected Jarai customs. The wedding customs of the Jarai people have changed significantly. They seem to follow those of Kinh or combine both, while the proportion of Jarai people maintaining their traditional wedding customs tends to decrease. In contrast, the funeral customs were more likely to be maintained as Jarai traditional customs. 45% of the respondents reported they carried out Jarai’s funeral customs. The findings suggest that the wedding and funeral customs in the Jarai community have changed; in particular, the wedding customs have altered significantly.

Table 3. Customs in daily activities

| Contents of asking | Kinh | | Jarai | | Both | |
|--|------|------|-------|------|------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Architecture of the house you live in belongs to | 59 | 29.5 | 42 | 21.0 | 99 | 49.5 |
| Layout of your house is like | 53 | 26.5 | 65 | 32.5 | 82 | 41.0 |
| Wedding customs | 60 | 30.0 | 46 | 23.0 | 94 | 47.0 |
| Funeral customs | 42 | 21.0 | 90 | 45.0 | 68 | 34.0 |

When comparing the age groups (see Table 4), the results showed a significant variation among the generations. For example, the age groups under 19 and 30 responded that their houses were designed similarly to Kinh’s at 33.8% and 42.6%, respectively. In contrast, the older groups indicated a level of low variation from 17.5% to 22.6%, and indoor layouts from 29.2% and 34.0%. The results also showed that the proportion of combination between Kinh and Jarai regarding housing and home decoration also increased significantly in the age groups under 50 (see Table 4). This proves that the architecture of housing and Jarai people's home decoration are altered or combined.

In terms of the wedding and funeral customs, the findings showed that only about 21% of the respondents under 50 reported following the Jarai wedding customs, whereas 61.3% over 50 said they followed their Jarai wedding customs. Similar results were found when asked about the funeral customs. The proportion between the age groups under and over 50 reported that they chose Jarai funeral customs at 45.6% and 77.4%, respectively. This result suggests that the changes in the traditional wedding and funeral customs in the Jarai community are gradually altered to the trend of Kinh’s or combining both, especially among the age groups of the middle-aged and the young.

As presented results, it can be stated that the changes in terms of the housing architecture and layouts in the Jarai community are significant. Additionally, traditional wedding and funeral customs tend to change enormously and markedly among the younger

generation. This can explain why the backward cultural features of the Jarai people may be eliminated based on the respondents’ perspectives. However, their unique cultural features can also disappear if there is no urgent solution for conserving Jarai culture.

Table 4. Differences in customs in daily activities between age groups

| Contents of asking | | < 18 years | | 19-30 years | | 31-50 years | | >50 years | |
|--|-------|------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-----------|------|
| | | N (47) | % | N (65) | % | N (57) | % | N (31) | % |
| Architecture of the house you live in belongs to | Kinh | 20 | 42.6 | 22 | 33.8 | 10 | 17.5 | 7 | 22.6 |
| | Jarai | 8 | 17.0 | 9 | 13.9 | 11 | 19.3 | 14 | 45.1 |
| | Both | 19 | 40.4 | 34 | 52.3 | 36 | 63.2 | 10 | 32.3 |
| Layout of your house is like | Kinh | 16 | 34.0 | 19 | 29.2 | 9 | 15.8 | 9 | 28.9 |
| | Jarai | 9 | 19.2 | 17 | 26.2 | 18 | 31.6 | 21 | 67.8 |
| | Both | 22 | 46.8 | 29 | 44.6 | 30 | 52.6 | 1 | 3.3 |
| Wedding customs | Kinh | 16 | 34.0 | 19 | 29.2 | 18 | 31.6 | 7 | 22.6 |
| | Jarai | 6 | 12.8 | 9 | 13.9 | 12 | 21.0 | 19 | 61.3 |
| | Both | 25 | 53.2 | 37 | 56.9 | 27 | 47.4 | 5 | 16.1 |
| Funeral customs | Kinh | 12 | 25.5 | 15 | 23.1 | 13 | 22.8 | 2 | 6.5 |
| | Jarai | 18 | 38.3 | 22 | 33.8 | 26 | 45.6 | 24 | 77.4 |
| | Both | 17 | 36.2 | 28 | 43.1 | 18 | 31.6 | 5 | 16.1 |

3.3. Understandings of Jarai folklore and arts

The results in Table 5 indicated that only 17.5% of the respondents said they knew “how to read and write” Jarai language, while the respondents knew “little” and “don’t know” were too high at 45.5% and 37%, respectively. The rate of people who could sing Jarai songs and knew their folk tales was also quite low at 29.5% and 19.5%, respectively. Remarkably, 35.5% of the respondents could not know their Jarai songs and traditional music, whereas 52% could not know their folk tales.

Similarly, the findings also revealed few Jarai people could perform Jarai dances and play gongs. 27% of the respondents said they knew how to play gongs, while the participants could perform Jarai dances at 31.5% (see Table 5). This result suggests that the literate ability in the mother tongue and the proficient competence in the folk culture and art of the Jarai people are declining significantly. These issues need to have solutions to promote Jarai’s cultural values.

Table 5. Understandings of Jarai folklore and arts

| Contents of asking | Yes | | No | | Little | |
|---|-----|------|-----|------|--------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Are you literate in Jarai language? | 35 | 17.5 | 91 | 45.5 | 74 | 37.0 |
| Can you sing Jarai songs or know any Jarai musical instruments? | 59 | 29.5 | 71 | 35.5 | 70 | 35.0 |
| Do you know Jarai folk tales? | 39 | 19.5 | 104 | 52.0 | 57 | 28.5 |
| Can you perform Jarai dances? | 63 | 31.5 | 69 | 34.5 | 68 | 34.0 |
| Can you play gongs or how are gongs played? | 54 | 27.0 | 87 | 43.5 | 59 | 29.5 |

Table 6. Comparison of understandings of Jarai folklore and arts between age groups

| Contents of asking | | < 18 years | | 19-30 years | | 31-50 years | | >50 years | |
|---|--------|------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-----------|------|
| | | N (47) | % | N (65) | % | N (57) | % | N (31) | % |
| Are you literate in Jarai language? | Yes | 6 | 12.8 | 7 | 10.8 | 10 | 17.5 | 12 | 38.7 |
| | No | 34 | 72.3 | 26 | 40.0 | 18 | 31.6 | 13 | 41.9 |
| | Little | 7 | 14.9 | 32 | 49.2 | 29 | 50.9 | 6 | 19.4 |
| Can you sing Jarai songs or know any Jarai musical instruments? | Yes | 9 | 19.2 | 11 | 16.9 | 19 | 33.3 | 20 | 64.5 |
| | No | 27 | 57.4 | 23 | 35.4 | 18 | 31.6 | 3 | 9.7 |
| | Little | 11 | 23.4 | 31 | 47.7 | 20 | 35.1 | 8 | 25.8 |
| Do you know Jarai folk tales? | Yes | 6 | 12.8 | 9 | 13.8 | 11 | 19.3 | 13 | 41.9 |
| | No | 37 | 78.7 | 31 | 47.7 | 28 | 49.1 | 8 | 25.8 |
| | Little | 4 | 8.5 | 25 | 38.5 | 18 | 31.6 | 10 | 32.3 |
| Can you perform Jarai dances? | Yes | 10 | 21.3 | 14 | 21.5 | 18 | 31.6 | 21 | 67.8 |
| | No | 29 | 61.7 | 20 | 30.8 | 15 | 26.3 | 5 | 16.1 |
| | Little | 8 | 17.0 | 31 | 47.7 | 24 | 42.1 | 5 | 16.1 |
| Can you play gongs or how are gongs played? | Yes | 8 | 17.0 | 12 | 18.5 | 17 | 29.9 | 17 | 54.8 |
| | No | 31 | 66.0 | 27 | 41.5 | 21 | 36.8 | 8 | 25.8 |
| | Little | 8 | 17.0 | 26 | 40.0 | 19 | 33.3 | 6 | 19.4 |

As shown in Table 6, when comparing the age groups, the results indicated that the majority (from 31.6% to 70%) of the respondents under 50 did not know how to read or write in their mother tongue. Similar results were found for the items that were asked. For instance, 31.6% and 57.4% of the respondents could not “play gongs”, and the respondents

in the age groups under 50 could not sing Jarai songs and perform Jarai dances at around 54.8% and 67.8%, respectively. Typically, there was a significant difference between the age groups under 50 and over 50. Most respondents over 50 knew about “Jarai folk tales” at over 41.9%, while the age groups under 50 knew those at no more than 19.3%.

The findings imply that Jarai culture in the survey area may face gradual disappearance risk. Some urgent solutions should be considered to preserve the folk tales, songs and beautiful cultural features of the Jarai people.

3.4. Understandings of religious practices

When the participants were asked about the practice of festivals and customs, the results showed that few respondents were knowing about their customs and traditional festivals. For example, 63 participants (31.5%) reported that they knew “how and what to organise festivals” in the community, whereas 78 participants (39%) answered that they knew “little”, for those who did not know practice of festivals were reported by 59 participants (29.5%). This suggests that the number of people having knowledge about the ways and contents of organising festivals is gradually declining.

Table 7. Understanding of religious practices

| Contents of asking | Yes | | No | | Little | |
|---|-----|------|----|------|--------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Do you know how and what contents to organise festivals? | 63 | 31.5 | 59 | 29.5 | 78 | 39.0 |
| Do you know customs of worshipping ancestors? | 63 | 31.5 | 32 | 16.0 | 105 | 52.5 |
| Do you know customs of worshipping gods in the home and in the village? | 67 | 33.5 | 15 | 7.5 | 118 | 59.0 |

Again, the similar results were also found across customs of worshipping ancestors in their homes and gods in the village. Some 31.5% and 33.5% of the participants reported that they knew about these traditional customs, while 52.5% and 59% stated that they knew “little” (see Table 7). This shows that the rate of people knowing about Jarai worship customs is few, whereas those knowing little are too high. This may be a signal of decline and may lead to the disappearance of Jarai worship culture.

As seen from Table 8, when the age groups were compared, the results revealed that the age groups over 50 knew more about the ways and contents of traditional festivals of the Jarai people than those in the age groups under 50. For example, 67.7% of the respondents over 50 claimed they knew about “the ways and contents of traditional festivals”, whereas responses of the younger groups (under 50) were no more than 23.4%. Similarly, when asked about the practices of ancestor and spirit worship, the majority of the age groups under 50 reported that they knew “little”. The findings indicated that the age groups with “little or no knowledge” about ancestor and spirit worship converged on the age groups under 50 (see

Table 8). At the same time, the elders (over 50) still maintained the worship practices, but only at 58.1%. From the above results, it may be affirmed that there is a tendency for the gradual loss of festival culture and worship practices in the Jarai community. This may also result from cultural change in the daily life of the Jarai people due to the negative impacts. To avoid the unique culture and customs of the Jarai people, some solutions should be made to conserve this culture.

Table 8. Comparison of understanding of religious practices between age groups

| Contents of asking | | < 18 years | | 19-30 years | | 31-50 years | | >50 years | |
|---|--------|------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-----------|------|
| | | N (47) | % | N (65) | % | N (57) | % | N (31) | % |
| Do you know how and what contents to organise festivals? | Yes | 11 | 23.4 | 15 | 23.1 | 16 | 28.2 | 21 | 67.7 |
| | No | 21 | 44.7 | 19 | 29.2 | 15 | 26.3 | 4 | 12.9 |
| | Little | 15 | 31.9 | 31 | 47.7 | 26 | 45.6 | 6 | 19.4 |
| Do you know customs of worshipping ancestors? | Yes | 12 | 25.5 | 16 | 24.6 | 17 | 29.8 | 18 | 58.1 |
| | No | 14 | 29.8 | 10 | 15.4 | 5 | 8.8 | 3 | 9.7 |
| | Little | 21 | 44.7 | 39 | 60.0 | 35 | 61.4 | 10 | 32.2 |
| Do you know customs of worshipping gods in the home and in the village? | Yes | 14 | 29.8 | 18 | 27.7 | 19 | 33.3 | 16 | 51.6 |
| | No | 6 | 12.8 | 3 | 4.6 | 2 | 3.5 | 4 | 12.9 |
| | Little | 27 | 57.4 | 44 | 67.7 | 36 | 63.2 | 11 | 35.5 |

3.5. *Discussing and analysing the causes of the current situation*

This study was conducted in the context of the Jarai community in the Duc Co district of Gia Lai province, and it aimed to discover cultural changes through some cultural components. Overall, the findings indicate that despite significantly changing the Jarai community in Duc Co, many cultural values of the Jarai people are still maintained in their daily life, particularly in the older generation. This may be attributed to the socio-economic development policies. The policies of the government and Duc Co District Party Committee since 1991 have targeted economic development in mountainous areas, challenging areas and ethnic minority areas. For example, programs of hunger eradication and poverty reduction, infrastructure development, and programs 134, 135, etc. Such programs have significantly impacted the Jarai people's daily lives. The changes in the infrastructure have supported the exchange and trade activities for the people in the district. This may be one of the causes influencing the culture changes, as pointed out by Tran Van Binh (2006) and Ngo Duc Thinh (2001).

Moreover, the low level of education is also the main reason for the cultural changes. Most Jarai people have a low educational level (Le, 1990). This may be a cause of the culturalization of festivals and cultural activities of Jarai people, because they need more

awareness of the importance of their cultural identity values. This is consistent with Nguyen Hong Son & Truong Minh Duc (1996) and Hoang Van Tru (1997).

Furthermore, the widespread application of science and technology advances in production and life has changed the living conditions, environment, and farming practices (Bui, 1999; Tran, 2006). This may eliminate the practices of low-productivity production and make changes in daily living practices and customs. Therefore, it makes antiquated customs change towards modernisation (Ngo, 2001; Tran, 2006). The impacts of such applications not only lead Jarai people to better living conditions but also cause their material and spiritual cultural life to change fundamentally, typically in the young age groups. The groups are attributed to get access science and technology quickly.

Economic integration is a trend and an opportunity for rapidly effective development, but it also poses challenges in all areas of social life, including culture (Tran, 2006). Accordingly, the intrusion of other cultures, cultural hybridity, and pragmatic lifestyles are negative aspects of the market economy and have affected traditional cultural values and the sustainable development of culture (Tran, 2006). This is a challenge to preserve and promote the traditional identities of the Jarai people. In the context of the Duc Co district, many different ethnic groups around the country are attracted to the trade. In these circumstances, those ethnic groups meet and exchange not only goods but also their own culture. This may be one of the consequences that are attributed to changes in production practices, beliefs, and festivals. This is also the reason why Jarai people are increasingly eliminating conservative and outdated elements in their culture. Also, new components are added to make it modern. This can be seen in changing daily living habits, practices of religion and festivals, funerals, and weddings, as indicated in the findings.

3.6. Some initial solutions for preserving and promoting the traditional cultural values of the Jarai community

Based on the findings and discussions presented, three groups of initial solutions for preserving and promoting Jarai cultural identity in Duc Co district are recommended as the following suggestions.

3.6.1. Socio-economic solutions

The State and the local authority need to make policies to ensure equality and certain priorities for the Jarai people in the allocation of development resources, such as access to capital sources and investment. Investment in socio-economic development should be promoted mainly in areas where Jarai people live.

It is essential to implement programs to train state officials, public employees, and business owners in cultural knowledge relating to ethnic minorities so that they can be aware of the cultural values of ethnic groups. Meanwhile, training programs for Jarai people should be carried out to help them understand deeply their own cultural values and Vietnamese history and culture through educational and cultural activities.

Promoting communication activities to raise Jarai people's awareness in all aspects, including their own culture, is necessary. Handicrafts (such as brocade weaving, wickerwork, etc) are the traditional occupation of the Jarai people. Therefore, projects in traditional handicraft villages and consumption networks should be promoted to create jobs and income for the Jarai people.

An essential factor that the authorities should consider is to keep investing in development infrastructure, such as inter-commune and inter-village roads. This will help promote the trade and exchange between Jarai people and other ethnic groups more conveniently. Additionally, strengthening facilities and equipment for cultural activities and information in the Jarai community must be taken into account, as well as developing a team of officials working in culture, information and propaganda, predominantly ethnic minority officials.

3.6.2. Solutions for belief and religion

In the history of the development of the Jarai people, there is only one type of belief, the polytheistic belief (called Yang). In addition to polytheistic beliefs, Catholicism and Protestantism were introduced by the French and Americans. These days, some of the Jarai people are Catholics and Protestants. This manifests their dream and belief in an excellent future society and promotes the development of Jarai people's passiveness in all fields of social life. Therefore, appropriate solutions to religious issues are needed to build a new lifestyle that suits Jarai culture and eliminate the superstitions and rituals with counter-cultural elements.

An indispensable issue to belief and religious solutions should be paid attention to is maintaining and promoting the typical Jarai humanistic rituals such as festivals, such as the New House celebration, New Rice celebration, and Health celebration. At the same time, the training programs about knowledge of culture and religion for civil servants in ethnic minority areas should be considered so that the management of cultural and religious activities is better.

3.6.3. Specific solutions for culture

The programs to practice Jarai culture must be conducted to make Jarai people aware of the importance of preserving and promoting their cultural identity. Accordingly, festivals, performances or competitions relating to Jarai culture should be organised frequently to dignify their cultural values. By doing that, Jarai people feel proud of their culture, which can be preserved and handed down in real life.

Establishing some public organisations or clubs to preserve Jarai's traditional culture should be considered. For example, "The Association for Preserving and Promoting Cultural Heritage", "Composition and Performance Club", and "The Jarai Cultural Award Fund" should be set up to encourage and maintain Jarai culture. Members of such organisations or clubs are not only artisans, artists, village elders and village leaders who are Jarai people but

also include individuals, organisations, agencies, and businesses who love Jarai culture. This is one of the best ways to preserve and promote the traditional cultural values of the Jarai people. Such ways are also good opportunities for the Jarai young generation to maintain and practise their culture.

4. Conclusion

Through the results of this study, it can be concluded that along with socio-economic development, Jarai culture has changed, and there are signals of a gradual loss of traditional identity. Remarkably, the changes have appeared in the age groups under 50. The changes in Jarai's cultural values are influenced by many reasons, the major ones being the impact of socio-economic development policies, the application of science and technology advances, and economic integration. This has helped improve the material and spiritual lives of the Jarai people. However, they indirectly change the traditional cultural values of the Jarai people, which happens in both positive and negative aspects.

On the one hand, Jarai culture absorbs the unique features of other cultures, especially the Kinh people, to enrich their traditional cultural identity while eliminating outdated customs and practices. On the other hand, negative aspects are pushing the unique cultural features of the Jarai people to gradual loss. Though the changes are gradually fading the traditional culture of the Jarai people, this research has ended. Many issues related to Jarai culture will need to be studied more deeply, using the different approaches and methods to promote and preserve the cultural characteristics of the Jarai people in Gia Lai province.

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THỰC TRẠNG BIẾN ĐỔI VĂN HÓA TRONG CỘNG ĐỒNG DÂN TỘC JARAI TẠI HUYỆN ĐỨC CƠ TỈNH GIA LAI

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TÓM TẮT

Nghiên cứu này làm rõ sự biến đổi văn hóa của cộng đồng dân tộc Jarai ở huyện Đức Cơ tỉnh Gia Lai bằng phương pháp điều tra thực địa một số thành tố cơ bản bao gồm tập quán sinh hoạt hàng ngày, một số tập tục, văn hóa nghệ thuật, tập quán tín ngưỡng, thờ cúng và các hoạt động lễ hội của người Jarai. Với sự tham gia tình nguyện của 200 người, độ tuổi từ 16 đến 65. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy có sự biến đổi văn hóa đáng kể trong cộng đồng người Jarai. Đặc biệt sự biến đổi diễn ra nhiều tập trung vào nhóm tuổi dưới 50. Dựa trên kết quả tìm được, các nguyên nhân của sự biến đổi văn hóa đã được thảo luận và phân tích, từ đó đề xuất một số giải pháp ban đầu về bảo tồn bản sắc văn hóa của người Jarai.

Từ khóa: văn hóa; bản sắc văn hóa; biến đổi văn hóa; cộng đồng dân tộc; người Jarai