

Traditional Socio-Cultural Beliefs and Practices related with Pregnancy and Childbirth among the Sumi Nagas, Nagaland

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Abstract:

The Sumi tribe is one of the major ethnic communities found in Nagaland. Pregnancy and birthing among this tribe is surrounded by their socio-cultural beliefs and practices. These social events are not only biological events but are socially and culturally constructed which represent their cultural values. The present study was carried out as an initiative to study the beliefs and practices that are associated with pregnancy and child birthing. An interview schedule method of data collection was employed to collect first hand information and the participants were recruited using purposive and snowball sampling methods. Secondary sources like books and articles were also consulted. The most important life cycle among the Sumi community starts with the birth of a new child which is followed by birth rites, rituals, ceremonies, and customary practices. This paper also focuses on the importance and role of traditional birth attendants (midwives) known as 'Apunu Kujumi' among the Sumi community.

Keywords: Pregnancy, Birthing, Rituals, Ceremonies, Traditional Birth Attendants

1. Introduction

“Pregnancy and childbirth are experienced within a socio-cultural context and the nature of the experience, especially for the mother, is shaped by the beliefs and practices of her culture” (Jordan, 1978). According to (Karahan, 2017) the human instinct to protect life led to the emergence of various beliefs and customs that concerned health and these beliefs and practices

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