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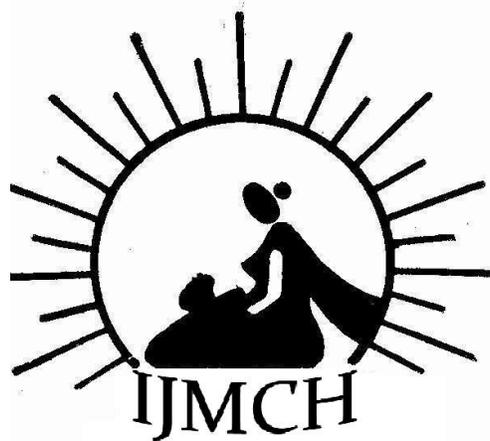
**Tribal Newborn Culture: An Observation**

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Traditional cultural norms are an emerging factor for newborn morbidities among *Baiga*.

## Case Reports

### Tribal Newborn Culture: An Observation

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#### Abstract

Traditional cultural norms are an emerging factor for newborn morbidities among *Baiga*. The mythologies of ceremonies and culture just after birth evident create a barrier to avail modern health facility. Elderly women perception support to conduct delivery at home for entangle in newborn ceremonies. The tribal holistic newborn cultural ceremonies emphasized the barriers on optimal utilization of neonatal health care services.

**Key words:** *Traditional ceremonies, culture, squeezing first breast milk, Newborn care*

#### Introduction

The Baiga tribe inhabits in dense hilly forest area and tattooing is an integral part of their lifestyle of women<sup>1</sup>. Traditional culture defined "The learned, shared and transmitted values, beliefs, norms and life ways of a particular group that guides their thinking decisions, actions in patterned ways".<sup>2</sup> The authors discuss about the culture of historical Baiga tribe of Dindori District of Madhya Pradesh. These Baiga tribes are highly entangled in traditional cultural practices henceforth they usually ignore modern neonatal health care services. Neonatal health care is concerned with the condition of the newborn from birth to four weeks (28 days) of age and the maternal factors contribute neonatal mortality have their origin before the baby born<sup>3</sup>. A newborn care is profoundly affected by the intervention of traditional newborn ceremonies performed. Normally, expressing the cultural identity through their custom, tradition, festivals, dress and ornaments.<sup>4</sup> A fetishistic custom and cultural mythology is also affecting newborn health.

#### Case-1:

A 67 years elder Baiga woman was reported to our research team during the fieldwork of village Tarachh, Bajag block, District Dindori in Madhya Pradesh in the month of March, in 2015. She (respondent) reported traditional cultural feelings on newborn care, when we asked a question that "Why you did not approached hospital for treatment? Curiosity the team gets detail information regarding her traditional views, celebrations.

**Observation-1:** A domestic flat vessel made from bamboo sticks (Supa: see figure-1) is filled with some coarse grain like Kodo, cover the surface of vessel with cotton cloth and newborn baby is to be laid down on that holistic vessel. The myth behind this traditional ceremony is that Baiga tribe welcoming a new sprit in their own world. In this regard a religious culture “bamboo” is one of the holistic trees of tribal community and the intention of using sanctified tray made from bamboo sticks in traditional newborn ceremony is to receive the compassion of divinity presented in nature. The most vulnerable scenario is that the period of this ceremony is not transitory; it has been celebrated about more than one hour. This custom are profoundly influence the infant health offspring the factor of infectious neonatal morbidities. This historical tribes generally adopted cultural ceremonies consisted by tribal culture, as inseparable part of the way of life of tribals.<sup>4</sup> Due to this ceremony the vulnerable culture losing basic medical needs which are available in their area.



**Figure-1: Photograph of Supa (Flat vessel made from Bamboo Sticks)**

**Observation-2:** She also share the information of first mother milk, they often squeeze out the first milk of mother in the yields of supernatural entity or the shrine of fetish agency in the respect of strong traditional culture. This culture affected to the health of newborn in terms of survival and malnutrition. Moreover the literature on malnutrition which is widespread not only in the India but also in all developing countries to give first milk (colostrums) .The fetishistic culture, squeezing out first milk of mother deprives the newborn baby to access valuable milk cherished by first breastfeed. This traditional culture developed late initiation of breastfeed may be the cause of malnutrition.

**Case-2:**

A face to face interview was conducted with elderly untrained village Dai of age about 72 years old in village-Tarachh on describe the home delivery practices. On observation she reported that before cutting the cord they firstly encircled the cord on a piece of “Khapra” to create a base, hereafter the cord is to be cut with the help of a blade. According to the informants the use of khapra rather than other

natural substances in the cord cutting practices associated with their own traditional norms may be responsible to infection, decease. In the incidence of bleeding from the cutting point of cord or stump they put the powder of khapra on the tip of cord to prevent bleeding may cause of infection. After these unique traditional observations, we discuss with some of elderly women, untrained Dai, mother-in- laws in this concern, in other villages Ajagar and Pouri in the area and found similar situation as traditional custom.

#### **Discussion:**

The finding of observation from case reports revealed that the traditional culture and ceremonies are the strong risk factors of newborn care. A birth of child is the time of joy and celebration, but traditional newborn ceremony performed by Baiga tribe generally has negative consequences on health need care. A traditional newborn ceremony may be the replica of neonatal morbidities like as infectious deceases, tetanus. Tribal norms and culture are also responsible for malnutrition of children. Malnutrition is widespread not only in the India but also in all developing countries<sup>5, 6</sup>. The first milk of mother is potentially neutrality and essential to newborn, but due to their strong and believe culture a child missed getting the opportunity. Majority of women bound to deliver at home assisted by untrained Dai or Mother-in-law due to culture and situations. These circumstances and their traditional cultural norms using “Khapra” for cutting the cord is to harmful. The traditional cultural activities can be limited with increasing health awareness skills. A dynamic and affirmative health program mainly concentrates on the adverse effect of traditional cultural practices could become faithful.

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