



## POST NATAL BELIEFS AND PRACTISES AMONG THE ZELIANGRONG MOTHERS OF MANIPUR

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### ABSTRACT

The present study is confined only to "Post natal beliefs and practices among the Zeliangrong mothers of Manipur". **Objectives:** In the present study an attempt has been made to identify the beliefs and practices adopted by the Zeliangrong mothers during post natal period of Manipur and to know the impact on beliefs and practices adopted by the Zeliangrong mothers during post natal period. **Method:** In order to make an in-depth study of the present research work, the investigator has been adopted a normative survey method. The sample comprised of 300 adult learners from Tamenglong District of Manipur through the purposive sampling so as to enable us to elicit as much information as practicable. **Results:** It can be concluded that Zeliangrong tribe mother appears to be superstitious and that a child seems to be reared up in the midst of numerous believes and practices. The attention of the planners and policy makers is highly called for.

### KEYWORDS

Post natal, Belief, Practices, Zeliangrong

### Introduction

In the Indian context, pregnancy taboo is one of the areas of study on child rearing practices. Among Oraon tribal Bihar, pregnancy taboo with regard to sex, food and movement were observed; cohabitation was not permissible after four months of pregnancy (Sarker, et al., 1955). Among certain primitives tribes the crabbings of a pregnant mother must be fulfilled (Swaroop, 1963). Sinha (1984) reported about pregnancy taboos of Bhilala tribe of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan that crossing a broom-stick and tying ropes of horse, Ass and mare were forbidden. Eating of ginger root by a pregnant woman was not permitted for fear of deformity of limbs (Ruud, 1960). Similarly, eating twin things was prohibited in the Meitei society (Gunadhor, 1983) and also among the Kabui tribe mothers of Manipur (Rashitombi, 1996) for fear of a child being born with double finger or toe. In this way, a number of believes are generally observed in many societies during and after pregnancy.

The present study was to examine the post natal believes and practices adopted by the Zeliangrong mothers. Racially, the Zeliangrong belong to Mongoloid stock and speak Tibeto-Burman language. Their population is found inhabited in three states of Assam, Manipur and Nagaland. According to local legend, the Zeliangrong originated from a cave known as Mahautaoabei, somewhere in the north district of Manipur. From such a study we can ascertain how far such practices influence the life of this tribal community. The findings of the study may be of practical value to the planners and policy makers in the efforts to remove superstitions and dogmas- a stumbling block to bring out modernization.

### Objectives of the study:

1. To identify the beliefs and practices adopted by the Zeliangrong mothers during post natal period of Manipur.
2. To know the impact on beliefs and practices adopted by the Zeliangrong mothers during post natal period.

### Method:

In order to make an in-depth study of the present research work, the investigator has been adopted a normative survey method. The data was collected with the help of the tool developed by the investigator. The present study is based on primary and secondary data collected from various publications. The sample comprised of 300 adult learners from Tamenglong District through the purposive sampling so as to enable us to elicit as much information as practicable.

### Data analysis:

The investigator came across a number of beliefs and practices observed by the mothers. And those beliefs and practices observed by the mothers were analyzed and interpreted along with the social significance of the practices.

### Procedure:

To establish rapport the nature and purpose of the study were explain to the respondent mothers. The researcher was, however, in a very difficult position to meet an interview the respondents at any time as most of them were busy. The most convenient time for data collection in the case of some mothers was 7 to 8 in the morning and in some cases from around 4 to 6 in the evening during which the data were collected through unstructured interviews held in a very free, informal, homely and face to face situations in which question were asked to the mothers about the believes and practices which were practices by them after birth.

### Result and discussion:

#### Ritual to expedite a birth:

Generally, a birth takes place at home. Birth is always believed to be an important social event round which gather many traditional practices and often associated with religion. The Zeliangrong women normally bear children without great difficulty and pain. When the pregnant women start feel labour pain arrangements for birth are made as quickly as possible. And a local mid wife or in absence of mid wife, and old women attends her to accomplish the process of birth. If the labour pain goes on for a long time without any result or if there seems to be trouble while delivering the child, Changkham Gaatmei is performed by sacrificing a chicken and a little blood of the victim is drop on the forehead of the women to expedite delivery. Changkham Gaatmei means to remove/ open the road-block; chang means road, kham means block and gaatmei means to remove or open. Then, some water is given to the women to drink to get more strength in labour. There is a belief that a popular charm or incantation against difficult labour is the opening of all doors and cupboards, the untying of all knots, the loosening of garments.

#### Calling of the soul:

Soon after birth of a child, Buh kaomei, Calling of the soul is observe by pronouncing: "please come on the soul of long life, eternal soul of Tuk Trou, come on," thus repeats thrice. It is perform by the mid wife/ priestess who attend the woman.

#### Cutting of the umbilical cord:

The priestess or mid wife after tying the umbilical cord at a suitable place with a black thread and cuts the cord with a Nuhbang, a bamboo blade which obtained from the bamboo post of the house. This is called Kalaleng rommei in Rongmei dialect. This act symbolizes the separation of the child from its mother. The Zeliangrong share the general avoidance of using a metal object for cutting the Umbilical cord. The Zeliangrong mother lays a few drop of her breast milk on the wound of the navel to dry it quickly. The rite of an individual starts from the cutting of the Umbilical cord and it disconnects the child from his mother and from the land of the dead. Because, the umbilical cord that attached to the mother is cut, the child is no longer depending on his mother and independent life begins.

#### **Bathing of the child:**

The child is bathed with luke warm water for healthy and long life. According to Arnold Van Gennep, the first bath of the baby is only for hygienic purpose and it is also a rite of separation from his mother. Universally, water is used as purifying agent. This is called duiloumei. Then, the child is put in its mouth a little chewed rice which indicates the baby is being claimed as a human being since human food is given. This is also alleged to be for the healthy and long life of the child. This ritual is locally known as Nap mumloumei.

#### **Protection of the child:**

The child is fastened around with a black thread called khim at the neck, wrists and ankles telling to the evil forces (rasi-rarou) that the baby who comes from the other world is locked up in the human world so no damage should be given to the baby. It is also believed that the evil forces are afraid of black thread. This is called Laangmumei taloumei.

#### **Burial of the placenta:**

Like the Poumai Naga, the Zeliangrong also bury the placenta inside the house, which is near the mother's bed close to the wall and never outside the house. Why they bury inside the house is mainly of the idea that the child will sense itself endlessly drawn to its parent's house even after it has grown up.

#### **Diet of the mother:**

Normally, after birth, the mother is advised to take only plain foods without curry such as cooked rice, dry fish or meat along with salt for certain days or months. It is observed for about three months incase of first born and in other cases only five days. Like his wife the husband also is supposed to take only plain food for five days for the well being of his offspring. But nowadays, the process is made easy that the father takes only five lumps of cooked rice instead of taking for five days.

#### **Conclusion:**

It has been discuss above some of the beliefs and practices adopted by the Zeliangrong mothers during post natal period. It is found that every mother used to observe certain traditional rites and ritual after the birth of a child. The most common rites and ritual such as ritual to expedite birth, calling of the soul, cutting the umbilical cord, bathing of the child, protection of the child etc are observed. From the results, it may be inferred that Zeliangrong tribe mother appears to be superstitious and that a child seems to be reared up in the midst of numerous believes and practices. The attention of the planners and policy makers is highly called for.

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