

**BELIEF SYSTEM AND PRACTICING BEHAVIOUR OF
PREGNANCY: A CASE STUDY OF SHAN VILLAGES,
HMAWBI TOWNSHIP, YANGON REGION**

PhD DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the effects of belief systems and practicing behaviours relating to pregnancy. This thesis is viewed from a medical anthropological stand point. The qualitative methods were used to obtain data concerning beliefs and practices relating to pregnancy by using self-administered qualitative questions. It was conducted with the objective of determining traditional beliefs and practices in relation to pregnancy among Shan nationals residing in five Shan villages of Pein-ne-kone, Zaw-ti-kone, Nyawang-kone, Tha-pye-kone and Chaw-kone villages in Hmawbi Township, Yangon Region. A total of 316 Shans were involved in interviews. They were women who were pregnant at the time of data collecting and women who having at least one child of less than five years old and their husbands, some menopausal women, all infertile couples and some man and woman who have been living through both past and present event in each village were selected for interviews. In this study, traditional beliefs influence some extent on pregnant women. Only a few young women took care in western health service centres. Health seeking care was usually engaged when problems arises. Almost all mothers delivered their babies at their homes by the assistance of a traditional birth attendant, a trained traditional birth attendant, or an auxiliary midwife. No mother delivered without any assistance. Many traditional beliefs influence to a great extent on delivery process and during puerperium. It was found that some improper behaviour such as bathing a newborn, keeping a newborn in a dark smoky birth room together with its mother, giving a litter water and honey to a newborn. But feeding colostrums, a good practice for newborn was also found. All women use contraceptive methods. Most women use both western contraceptive methods and traditional contraceptive methods simultaneously. No aborted women used western health care centre and western medicine. There was no death of aborted women during study. It was found that traditional methods totally influenced on seeking care to infertility and menopausal illness. Although the study area is not much far from the town of Hmawbi and the city of Yangon, many traditional beliefs and practices influence on every case of relating pregnancy. To sum up, this study highlighted not only pregnancy cares and delivery practices but also maternal cares and newborn cares which were still needed to improve.

Key words - beliefs, practices, sexual intercourse, pregnancy, delivery, puerperium, contraception, infertility, abortion, menstruation, menopause,