

# An Overview of Socio-Cultural Factors on the Utilization of Antenatal Care Services in Bajonese Pomalaa, Southeast Sulawesi

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## Abstract

Maternal and infant mortality rate is one indicator of health status in one region. These can be seen from the low utilization of antenatal care (ANC) service which influenced by socio-cultural aspect. This study aims to obtain in-depth information about the influence of socio-cultural aspects on the utilization of antenatal care services in Bajonese Pomalaa.

This was a qualitative research with ethnographic approach. Six informants were interviewed. Data were obtained through observation, in-depth interviews and documentation.

Results shows that community are more prioritizing shaman to do their pregnancy check. They consider that shaman has certain rituals and more experienced than health workers. This causes a psychological impact where they feel more secure with their pregnancy after they were check by shaman.

The low coverage of ANC services is due to the fact that community is more entrusted their pregnancy check by shaman than health workers. It is suggested that health workers can develop partnership with shaman on assisting the community especially women during pregnancy and labor.

**Keywords:** *Antenatal Care, Shaman, social, culture, Bajonese.*

## Introduction

Maternal and Child Health is one indicators that can be used to measures health status and prosperity of a country. Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) and infant mortality (IMR) are two things that can be used as parameters to measure the success of health services in a region. Data from Health Ministry in 2015 shows that Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) is 305 per 100,000 live births, while for Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) in 2016 is 25,5 per 1,000 live births. This data is still far from the target of Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs) which is 70 per 100,000 live births for Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) and 12 per 1,000 live birth Infant Mortality (IMR) by 2030<sup>1,2</sup>.

The high level of MMR and IMR in Indonesia is caused by the low utilization of maternal health service facilities. Socio-cultural conditions in each region also contribute, where there are still many areas where people

still go to shamans to check their pregnancy and use shaman as a helper on delivering their child, especially in remote areas. This reality shows that there is linkages between socio-cultural and health aspect, where culture can form habits and responses toward health behavior and occurrence of disease in society<sup>3,4</sup>. This phenomenon also happens in the Bajo tribe in Coastal Area of Hakatutobu Village Pomalaa District Southeast Sulawesi.

Bajonese people still adheres to their culture and traditions due to maternal health seeking behavior, where society are tend to have more trust in shaman in doing their pregnancy check and giving help in delivering their child<sup>3</sup>. They believe that shaman has been possessed by their ancestral spirits which is called *MboJanggo*. Bajonese people assume that the shaman can solve their health problems through mantras which they believe can help smooth their pregnancy and delivery process<sup>5</sup>.

Based on this background, this research was conducted to find out how socio-cultural factors as a determinant factor in the utilization of maternal health services in Bajo Tribe, Pomalaa District. This research aims to obtain in-depth information related to socio-cultural aspects in the utilization of maternal health services in Bajo Tribe, Pomalaa District.

### **Materials and Method**

This research was conducted in Hakatutobu Village, Pomalaa District, South East Sulawesi. This was a qualitative research with ethnographic approach as a procedure to describe, analyze, and interpret elements of a cultural group such as behavioral pattern, belief, and language that develops from time to time.

Information was obtained through observation, in-depth interviews and documentation. Observations were made by observing and make some notes about how Bajonese people behave towards utilization of maternal health care services during pregnancy and childbirth. In-depth interviews were conducted to obtain in-depth information about socio-cultural aspects, traditions and beliefs of Bajonese people related to pregnancy and childbirth matters. Documentation was carried by collecting data, recording and reviewing every information that are considered to be important and associated with this research.

This research involves six informants which consist of four common informants, which are pregnant women, maternity women and postpartum mother, midwives as key informants and shaman as supporting informants.

### **Results and Discussion**

Based on the indepth-interviewed and observation, it shows that in Bajonese society shamans are society's first priority when they want to do health checks related to pregnancy and to handle their delivery process. Bajonese considered that shaman has more experience than health workers (midwife), they also feel more comfortable interacting with shaman because they think that shaman is more familiar and all ritual that performed is not conflicted with customs that they believe.

The ritual that performed by shamans for pregnant women is called "*mabbetang*" which intend to provide safety during pregnancy for mother and their child. Although this ritual is perform only by giving spells on the thread and then tied to the wrist of pregnant

woman, but it contains very deep meaning because they believe that it can protect them from evil spirit during their pregnancy. This ritual is performed by shaman at pregnant women's first visit. Bajonese people believe that this ritual can keep them away from the dangers and evil spirits that can harm their pregnancy. That is the reason why pregnant women will directly come to shaman as soon as they know that they are pregnant.

From all informant statements it can be concluded that socio-cultural factors have an enormous contribution to the low utilization of antenatal care services in Bajonese Pomalaa, Southeast Sulawesi where shaman have more dominant role than health workers (midwife). In this study, shaman is considered as the main health service provider. Although at the end there are some pregnant women who will go to midwife for pregnancy check, but they will prioritize their first pregnancy check by shaman, so does when they seek help for their delivery process. Society assume that shamans can provide spells for safety during pregnancy and delivery.

This results were similar with a study about Behavior of delivery assistance by shaman in Karawang regency which shows that almost all people believe in sahaman's ability in helping delivery process, because the shaman is considered to have a reliable spiritual power<sup>6</sup>. In rural areas, most pregnant women still believe in shaman to help their delivery.

Result of previous study stated that Maternal and Child Health problems related to socio-cultural community is becoming problems that require a more in-depth and specific study in each region and certain ethnicities<sup>7</sup>. This because one of the most dominant determinants that encourage mothers to choose shaman for pregnancy check and getting help for delivery process is due to cultural factor which has passed down through generations, where society still rely on shaman in giving health services including pregnancy service<sup>6,7</sup>.

The pattern of cultural behavior during pregnancy and childbirth which passed down through generations provides a conceptual framework for understanding the essence of all human behavior, including behavior on the selection of service providers for maternal and child health. So it can be understood that each cultural community has its own perspective and different behavior, that is why cultural factors should be getting attention from various related sectors to increase coverage of mother and child health services<sup>8</sup>.

The main health problem in Indonesia is low public health status, which can be seen from the high number of maternal and infant mortality rates and also there are still many indicators of maternal health services (KIA) that is still not ideal<sup>7,9</sup>. Maternal mortality and morbidity problems are not inseparable from socio-cultural and environmental factors in the society where they live<sup>10,11</sup>.

The low utility of existing health facilities in rural area is often caused by society's belief in their culture which is still preserved until now, resulting in the low coverage of health services in general and also maternal and child health<sup>12,13</sup>. Various factors that influence the utilization of health facilities for ANC (Antenatal Care) examination, have an impact on the low coverage of ANC (Antenatal Care). The utilization level of health facilities is different in every society, including in coastal communities which have a strong belief in local culture.

This statement can be proven from the results of research that has been carried, where most pregnant women prefer shaman than midwife on their health seeking behavior related to their pregnancy check and delivery help. This is caused by cultural factors and society's high belief in shaman's knowledge and experience. Selection of helper during pregnancy and delivery can also be seen from the observation conducted during the research, where there are 14 pregnant women, which nine of them doing pregnancy check on shaman with their average pregnancy age is above four months old, while the rest five pregnant women doing their pregnancy check to midwife.<sup>14-19</sup>

### Conclusion

1. Socio-cultural factors still play an important role in Bajonese community, where they still perform certain ritual when it comes to health seeking behavior.
2. The low coverage of ANC services is due to the fact that community is more entrusted their pregnancy check by shaman than health workers, although there are still some people who also go to health care facilities.

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**Conflict of Interest:** None

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