



# Ethnographic Study: The Choice of Place and Birth Attendants from the Socio-Cultural Perspective in the Tunjung Benuaq Dayak Tribe

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*The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends Skill Birth Attendants (SBA) for all births. Around 50 million mothers in developing countries give birth at home without the help of medical personnel. The trust in traditional birth attendants (TBA), meaning that social and cultural influences still strongest. Objective: to analyze the choice of place and birth attendants in the Tunjung Benuaq Dayak Tribe through a socio-cultural perspective in the working area of the Barong Tongkok Community Health Center. Methodology: Qualitative Design with Ethnographic study using the Rapid Ethnographic Assessment Procedure (REAP) method. Purposive sampling is used to take samples. In-depth interviews were conducted with 12 informants. Data analysis uses Thematic analysis. Results: The Tunjung Benuaq Dayak tribe upholds the values of balance and harmonization regarding human relationships with God, human and the environment. They developed local cultures based on complementary belief systems. There is a positive acceptance of science. The local wisdom of Santaap, eating a small portion of the food served, illustrates that they can accept little of knowledge. Customs are still maintained in the birthing process which is carried out by village shamans who are highly trusted by the community. They make the rituals, belief in myths (tempuunt), the existence of spirits who guard and interfere with the birthing process. Conclusion: Socio-cultural values such as trust, knowledge, and customs are very strong guidelines for the Tunjung Benuaq Dayak tribe in choosing a place and birth attendant. Suggestion: preservation of culture and customs that are still considered good in childbirth practices is highly desirable.*

**Keywords :** Dayak, Tunjung Benuaq, Social Culture, Childbirth Assistant

## INTRODUCTION

*The World Health Organization* (WHO) wants to create a world where all pregnant women and newborns have access to quality services during pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period. One of the goals of *the Global Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) is to reduce the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) to 70 per 100,000 by 2030. The global MMR in 2020 is estimated to reach 223 per 100,000 live births (WHO, 2023). According to Bapennas (2022), socio-economic factors such as poverty, cultural practices and beliefs that endanger women's health prevent women from receiving adequate health services. Around 50 million mothers in developing countries still give birth at home without the help of medical personnel. Demographic and Health Surveys conducted in 48 developing countries between 2003 and 2011 revealed that more than 70% of births in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia occurred at home. In Ethiopia, only 10% of births are attended by medical personnel, while the rest are carried out at home. Only 10% of births in Ethiopia are attended by medical staff, and the remainder are performed at home. The majority of births in Bangladesh (2015) are still carried out at home (62%), and more than 56% are carried out by traditional birth attendants (Dektar et al., 2023).

Several studies show that factors related to the use of health services are socio-cultural, affordability and physical access, socio-cultural, needs and perceived benefits of health facilities. A study conducted in 2018 in the Muara Kaman Health Center working area, Kutai Kartanegara Regency, found that pregnant women whose choices were decided by their husbands, parents or dukun, all gave birth at home without the assistance of medical personnel (Nurrachmawati et al., 2018). The cultural factor that influences the health of mothers and children in Cibitung is that kiyai become role models for the community in dealing with life problems ranging from political decisions to decisions about accessing health services. Therefore, women do not have the power to make decisions regarding health services, especially during pregnancy and childbirth (Faizah & Prasetyo, 2022.).

Geographically, Barong Tongkok District is located in the center of West Kutai Regency, East Kalimantan Province with the majority of the population being indigenous people consisting of various tribes, languages, customs and cultures. The ethnic group that dominates the population is the indigenous population, namely the Dayak tribe, especially the Tunjung-Benuaq 44.1% (Wikipedia, 2022). Even though it is categorized as an urban sub-district, the life of the Dayak traditional community is still very strong, especially the Tunjung-Benuaq residents. Based on the 2022 Puskesmas Performance Assessment Report, the coverage of deliveries by health workers was 412 births, 6 births by non-fasyakes, and 2 births by traditional workers. In this region, there is still the practice of village shamans who are trusted to provide services to pregnant and birthing women.

Researchers as part of the population have worked as midwives at the Barong Tongkok Community

Health Center who have experience with births carried out by village shamans and collaborate with local culture in childbirth practices. Such a strong cultural influence cannot shift people's decisions in choosing a place and birth attendant. It is very important to analyze the social and cultural factors that influence decisions about place of delivery and assistance. Based on this background, researchers are interested in analyzing more deeply the socio-cultural perspective on the choice of place and birth attendants among the Dayak Tunjung Continental tribe in the working area of the Barong Tongkok Health Center, West Kutai Regency, East Kalimantan Province.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Rapid Ethnographic Assessment Procedure (REAP) research approach which is oriented towards a quick response and is carried out in a relatively short period of time in the culture of the Dayak Tunjung Continental tribe. With the involvement of researchers themselves in the field, it will further encourage the achievement of more in-depth data (Sugiyono, 2020). This research was conducted in the working area of the Barong Tongkok Community Health Center, West Kutai Regency, East Kalimantan. Purposive sampling is taken until saturation is reached. The informants in this research consisted of 5 main informants, namely the mother who had given birth in 2023, 5 informants, namely providers as key informants and 2 supporting informants, namely traditional leaders and cultural leaders (Heryana, 2018). All informants have agreed to be interviewed. In-depth interview techniques directly use interview guides that have been tested. Interviews lasted 30 to 60 minutes and were conducted at the informant's home to obtain more in-depth information using audio recordings. After conducting the interview, the researcher authenticated membership by presenting the results of data collection to the data provider and asking them to sign the interview guide to further increase credibility. Data analysis was carried out by the main researcher using (Braun, 2022.) Thematic analysis which was carried out manually by the researcher through six stages of understanding the data, compiling codes, looking for themes, reviewing potential themes, naming themes and producing a report (Kualitatif Heriyanto, 2018). This research has been approved by the Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Medicine, Airlangga University No. 12/EC/KEPK/FKUA/2023.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Informant Characteristics**

In this study, the main informant sample was 5 mothers who had given birth in 2023 as well as samples from several cultural structures who had information related to the selection of place and birth attendants in the Tunjung Benuaq tribe, namely 1 traditional head, 1 cultural official as a supporting informant and 5 the village shaman and the Head of the Community Health Center (provider) as key

informants.

Table 1 General description of the main research informants

Informant Code	Age (year)	Ethnic group	Religion	Education	Work	parity	Birthing place
I1	32	Benuaq	Christian	Junior High School	House wife	5	House
I2	19	Tunjung	Christian	Junior High School	House wife	2	House
I3	23	Benuaq	Christian	Senior High School	House wife	2	House
I4	37	Tunjung	Christian	Elementary School	House wife	6	ST Hospital. Familia
I5	33	Benuaq	Catholic	Junior High School	House wife	2	HIS Hospital

The main informants in this study were on average multiparous with more than 2 children, with an age range that was classified as reproductive age. All of them are housewives with a medium level of education, only one informant has a low level of education.

Table 2 General description of Key informants (Providers)

Informant Code	Age (year)	Ethnic group	Religion	Education	Occupation
I6	60	Benuaq	Christian	No school	Village Shaman Craftsman
I7	52	Benuaq	Catholic	Didn't graduate from elementary school	Village Shaman Craftsman
I8	51	Tunjung	Catholic	Junior High School	Village Shaman
I9	92	Benuaq	Catholic	Package C	Village Shaman
I10	80	Tunjung	Christian	ST	Village Shaman
I11	48	Tunjung	Catholic	S1	Civil servants

The key informant here is that *the providers* who provide birth assistance are mostly village birth attendants who are pre-elderly to elderly with a low level of education. The provider of health workers is a senior midwife who also serves as the Head of the Community Health Center. Key informants here can provide information about social culture in childbirth and understand the key informants.

Table 3 General description of research supporting informants

Infor mant	Age (year)	Ethnic group	Religion	Educatio n	Occupation
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Code					
I12	69	Benuaq	Catholic	Package C	Traditional Head
I13	53	Benuaq	Catholic	S2	Cultural Minister

The supporting informant who provided additional information regarding the Dayak Tunjung Continental tribe in this research was the traditional head in Mencimai Village who occupies the highest position in the social structure of the local community. Even though he has a secondary level of education, this traditional head is highly trusted by the local community and has also published several books about the Tunjung Benuaq Dayak Tribe. Another supporting informant is the Cultural Official at the West Kutai Regency Education Office with a high level of education and has published many books about the Tunjung Benuaq Dayak tribe.

**Thematic analysis**

Table 4 Coding, determining themes and sub themes

CODE	THEME	SUB THEME
Religion: Christian, Catholic, Belief	Harmony of Trust Values	
Trust		
Religion and culture are balanced		
Need and complement each other		
Comparison of religion and culture: balance		
Pregnancy check-up at Health Facilities	Knowledge and attitude	Health Awareness
The best place to give birth		
Preparation for childbirth		
Comfort		Reasons for choosing a place and birth attendant
Normal Delivery		
Afraid		Fear of health facilities
Afraid of injections		
Fear of action		

Don't trust health workers		
Residence	Kinship that influences the choice of place and birth attendant	Kinship relationships in supporting the process of pregnancy and childbirth
Family support		
Childbirth companion		
discussion		The decision-making process in selecting a place and birth attendant
Mutual cooperation		
Personal Decision Maker		
Kinship with the Village Shaman		
Logical	Customs	Pregnancy and Childbirth in Cultural Perspective
Natural science		
Urgent		
Rituals		Cultural Practices in Pregnancy and Childbirth
Myth		
Abstinence		
Requirements for the ritual		
<i>Mengkalang</i>		
Not mandatory		Preserving Tunjung Benuaq culture amidst the progress of the times
Culture eroded by time		
The village shaman is already elderly		
Fading culture		
The myth is no longer believed		
Limitations of village shamans		
Cultural practices have positive effects		
Customary practices have conditions that cannot be wrong		

### 1. Harmony of Trust Values

All informants said that they believed in the religion of Almighty God but also still held traditional beliefs.

*"Christians, hehehehehe, there aren't any, there are just a lot of them, but whether you believe*

*it or not, whether you believe it or not, between the two, it's still like buying it" (I3)*

*"The official ones are the majority Christians, but behind that there are other beliefs like the ones I mentioned earlier which are considered sacred. For me, Miss, I prefer the term traditional beliefs" (I12)*

Harmonization between religion and traditional beliefs is very good, there are no prohibitions from religions on carrying out cultural rituals related to traditional beliefs.

*" Christianity, whatever it is called, there is actually a balanced culture" (I2)*

*"Cooperation just requires each other... that's why you said that religion or cooperation should not be done like this or not like that" (I7)*

The new religion that emerged in the Dayak tribe community did not simply eliminate traditional beliefs that were considered to have existed for a long time, so that the Tunjung Benuaq Dayak tribe community practiced religion and traditional beliefs in a balanced manner.

## 2. Knowledge and Attitude

### Health awareness

Most pregnant women already have a high awareness of the importance of prenatal check-ups at health facilities.

*"When I'm pregnant, my child is all diligent, I start to rarely go to the Posyandu once the vaccine has been completed for more than two years" (I1)*

*"At the Melak Community Health Center, at the Posyandu, if you go to the Melak Community Health Center, just go for a control and check the gestational age" (I2)*

Knowledge of childbirth preparation is also quite good, including selecting a place and birth attendant.

*"Equipment for mothers and babies, there are also things like giving birth to the fifth child. The documents were already prepared yesterday, including the car too." (I1)*

### Reasons for choosing a place and birth attendant

Some informants chose a place to give birth at home because they were used to it, felt comfortable, and because they trusted the village dukun. However, most of them had planned to give birth in a health facility and were assisted by health workers because they had several complications during pregnancy and awareness of their own health and the safety of their babies had emerged.

*"Yes, if you're at home, you can hahahahahaha, because when it's sudden, when it's sudden, it hurts straight away, so it's called pain, it doesn't last any longer, you have to go back to HIS, so it's good that Grandma's there..... " (I3)*

*"For me, yes, because I feel at home, I'm at home. (I1)*

Informant 2 initially chose to give birth in the hospital, but because the hospital regulations were complicated and the staff were less than informative, they advised the informant to go home, so the informant chose to give birth at home.

*"We had already gone to HIS, so they told me to go home, they said not yet, even though at home it had already come out. If there was a sign, there was a sign, yes it really hurt, that's the stomach, but when they checked it said not yet, so when we came home to the house, not even a few minutes, what is it called, straight away, this and that. Yes, he was born straight away. .... "* (I2)

Informant 4 chose to give birth in hospital because it was a high risk, after previously giving birth at home with the help of a village dukun.

*"Because I'm already the sixth child, I'm afraid there will be difficulties, so I'll just go to the hospital" (I4)*

### **Fear of health facilities**

Health workers who are less skilled and even words from health workers that seem intimidating cause doubts for mothers.

*"But I'm sorry to say that it looks like they're the ones who practice because they're new, they're young and their midwives live in front of it. "There was a fat midwife who said that if you want a cesarean, I'll tell you where I want a cesarean while I asked if that's normal, right?" (I2)*

Health facilities that always implement certain measures in handling childbirth make informants afraid to choose a health facility as a place of delivery.

*" Hahahahaha I'm afraid, I'm afraid of getting an IV, it just smells like a hospital, hehehehehe I don't know either hahahahahaha yesterday my child was given the injection, and I was the one who was afraid of shaking." (I3)*

*"No, I'm just thinking that I'm afraid it'll be difficult again. What's most afraid is if there's something to do, hehehehe, because the first thing is that it's stitched at home, it's stitched again, it's not injected again." (I4)*

## **3. Kinship**

### **Kinship Relations**

The close relationship means that Tunjung Benuaq Dayak families usually live with their parents even when they have their own family.

*"We live with them, Mamak, Mamak owns the house" (I2).*

*"Grandfather's house since he got married, he has lived here" (I5)*



Family support during pregnancy and childbirth is quite good, the family supports and helps during the pregnancy process.

*"It's good if they suggest it, just because none of the people who bring it are busy, everyone is busy doing their own work, so sometimes it's almost like that's all." (I4)*

*"The whole family supports everyone" (I5)*

### **Decision making process**

During the birthing process, mothers really want to be accompanied by their biological mother and husband, some people even feel calm when accompanied by several people in their family.

*"Mommy has a cousin and a husband too." (I3)*

*"If possible, be with your husband" (I5)*

Overall, the decision-making process is carried out by deliberation for major cases within the family.

*"What is the meaning of a decision, Mamak, but it must be discussed together before it has to be decided, it's different for each person, which one is the best to take" (I3)*

*"The person who decides that is our elder or that person too" (I7)*

Meanwhile, the choice of place and birth attendant is completely determined by the mother and husband.

*"If they suit my own personality, I make the decision." (I1)*

*"I hehehehe Yes, if they depend on us, it's up to us where we want to go " (I4)*

## **4. Customs**

### **Pregnancy and Childbirth from a Cultural Perspective**

The Tunjung Benuaq Dayak tribe believes in spirits and traditional beliefs relate pregnancy and childbirth as a gift or blessing from these spirits.

*"Yes, it's like Belian is required to start being pregnant until our child is born, but that's for the child, like if she's brought to a religion like thanksgiving like Islam, she goes on a swing and prays for it culturally." (I1)*

*"Yes, actually, what's the point of getting married? It's like planting, we hope that the plants we plant will produce a harvest" (I12)*

*".....She was able to get pregnant because she was given that spirit. So, because the spirit that is given comes from the Almighty, yes..." (I12)*

### **Cultural Practices in the Childbirth Process**

Belief in the existence of invisible spirits has been ingrained from generation to generation through

myths and taboos circulating in society.

*"Husbands can't cut live wood before the child reaches 40 days, during pregnancy you can't cut your hair, and you can't cut nails when you're about to give birth. It's like the night we want to give birth. If you do it during the day, it can delay delivery. (I1)*

*"Basically, it's like a hair tie or a ring like that, who knows, maybe it will take a long time or be difficult to give birth, I usually think maybe oh because of this, I'll take it off, whatever it is" (I3)*

The use of objects to ward off evil spirits or summon good spirits is even done through reciting prayers in water or through certain oils with the aim of facilitating the birthing process.

*"Before I gave birth, if I said, oh my auntie, I'm really tired, I can't stand it anymore, she was reading in the water, she gave me something to drink, and it didn't take long for her child to be born." (I1)*

*"For example, if it's difficult to give birth, how do we create a debt with someone we don't see? So, for example, if you're born later and everything is finished, then you can pay it off again using what is called custom again, if we say it's Gathering" (I2)*

*"When it's time to give birth, we can eat it and then spit it into the mother's stomach. There is also something that is burnt, sompunt can also be taken with it, it's an antidote for disturbances if our belief is that people of Continentalq are Jerangau lah, Sompunt lah, all kinds of things. " (I5)*

After giving birth, there are conditions that must be paid or fed to these spirits. Each object has its own meaning as an antidote or calmer for spirits or as a helper in childbirth.

*"Money, plates, bowls, and if we have a spear, if we don't have one, we can use a knife. It's like there's wet powder put in there, wet powder if we say Jomit Burai" (I1)*

*"If I say it's just pay, he's there for custom, just pay rice and money and chicks for the conditions." (I2)*

### **Preserving the culture of the Tunjung Benuaq Tribe amidst modernization**

Local tribes really care for and want to continue to preserve the cultures that have existed for a long time so that they can maintain traditions as much as possible in the era of modernization and the influence of immigrant tribes.

*"In my opinion, it has to be maintained, right, because we don't know whether the hospital can do it on its own, for example, there are complaints of all kinds, right? Sometimes the hospital doesn't understand the culture, it also must be a village, right? So, if possible, that's both ways to make it more stable" (I5)*

*"But as time goes by. Now it's no longer there, it's like it's faded away, it's gone because the new*

*generation of children no longer believe as much as they did in the past..... for this culture, it's actually very good if we can preserve this because where are the traditions of this culture actually? provide a sense of comfort for pregnant women and then a sense of comfort for their families" (I11)*

## DISCUSSION

### 1. Harmony of Trust Values

The people in Barong Tongkok all adhere to religions recognized by the government and practice religious teachings in their daily lives, the majority of whom adhere to Christian and Catholic religions. However, when they experience important events in their lives such as pregnancy, birth, pain, death, happiness, sadness, they participate and show their identity as Dayak people who are still steeped in cultural rituals. This fact always causes debate among several religions that have just entered the lives of Dayak people, traditional religions that have existed for a long time (Madrah & Dalmasius, 1997). Humans and culture are an inseparable bond. As God's most perfect work, humans create culture from things related to reason and reason, from daily activities and also natural events. In other words, humans are cultural subjects, while culture is its object (Lammarisi, 2022). Likewise, the Dayak culture of the Tunjung Benuaq tribe developed a local tradition based on this belief system. Therefore, culture and belief systems have a reciprocal and complementary relationship. So some experts say that Dayak people adhere to a *polytheistic religious system*, there is also stated that Dayak people adhere to an animist religious system (Johansen, 2014).

### 2. Knowledge and Attitude

#### Health awareness

Pregnant women from this tribe already have quite good awareness of health, as evidenced by the information obtained from informants that they routinely check themselves at Posyandu, Community Health Centers and Hospitals. Informants with secondary education levels diligently check their pregnancies at health facilities. Meanwhile, informants with low levels of education never had their pregnancy checked at a health facility. According to (Sada et al., 2019) Educated people have a better understanding of themselves and other people, education also produces cultured and wise people.

Apart from the positive attitude of acceptance by the Tunjung Benuaq Dayak tribe, there are still some pregnant women with low levels of education who think that health checks during pregnancy are not mandatory. This is also caused by the low economic level so that mothers prefer to go to *nores* (rubber gardening). Instead of checking yourself at the Posyandu or other health facility. In accordance with Notoadmojo's opinion in (Alfianto et al., 2022) that attitude is a collection of symptoms in response to a stimulus or object, which involves thoughts, feelings and other psychological symptoms. Culture has

a big influence in forming attitudes where as a society that upholds traditions, the Dayak Tunjung and Dayak Benuaq tribes have local wisdom, namely *santaap* (Tonyooi) and *sintap* (Benuaq), namely eating a small part of the food served by other people (Fitryarini et al., 2016).

### **Reasons for choosing a place and birth attendant**

To face childbirth, preparation is required, called P4K, which focuses on planning childbirth and preventing complications in pregnant, giving birth and postpartum women. P4K was launched by the government in 2007 as a breakthrough effort to accelerate MMR through activities to increase access and quality of services (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2018). Women desire a positive birth experience that meets or exceeds their previous personal and sociocultural beliefs and expectations. Most women desire physiological labor and birth, and to have a sense of personal accomplishment and control through involvement in decision making, even when medical intervention is necessary or desired (*Intrapartum Care for a Positive Childbirth Experience WHO Recommendations*, 2018).

The informant chose the hospital as a place to give birth because a high- risk pregnancy had been detected. The informant interviewed had planned to give birth at a health facility from an early age, but several conditions caused the birth to occur at home and with the help of a village birth attendant. The birthing process was too fast and easy, causing several informants to choose to give birth at home by calling the village dukun to help with the birthing process. The question that always arises is why when a sudden birth occurs at home the village midwife is always called first? This phenomenon indicates that the cultural influence that always prioritizes village shamans is still very large.

The informant decided from the start to choose a place to give birth at home and was helped by the village dukun because he was familiar with the history of giving birth to his first child at home. The informant felt that her delivery was normal, easy and fast so she felt comfortable and calm when giving birth at home with the help of the village shaman. Apart from that, the quality of service is also measured by whether the service meets the expectations of the mother giving birth (Fitri et al., 2023). Women giving birth in remote communities often seek the services of traditional birth attendants, who are trusted and provide culturally appropriate prenatal care and in line with traditional expectations of women and communities (Gurara et al., 2020).

### **Fear of health facilities**

Informants who chose to give birth at home expressed the perception that the birth was normal, easy and fast. Apart from that, they also have a fear that if they give birth in a health facility it will be full of scary medical procedures. The perception is that normal childbirth is considered short, easy and done at home. When giving birth at home, the mother is free to choose who she is accompanied by,

moves freely in the house and can choose whatever position she is in when giving birth. If you give birth at home normally, there is no need for intervention or medical procedures that make the mother afraid (Bedford et al., 2013).

### 3. Kinship

#### **Kinship Relations in choice of place and birth attendant**

The essence of the social kinship system in the Tunjung Benuaq tribe is said to be that several families live in long houses or *luuq* or often called Lamin. In a longhouse inhabited by several families, the longhouse will show that the family ties are very close. Nowadays the whole family lives in a private house called *Dapeeq* (House). The Tunjung Benuaq Tribal Community recognizes two main things that are important assessments in kinship relationships, namely *purus* and *batak*. *Purus* is used to see kinship relations, especially blood relations, and *Batak* is used to look at kinship relations that arise due to marriage (Johansen, 2014).

A girl's relationship with her parents tends to be very close so that during childbirth she always wants to be accompanied by her mother, apart from this, she also really wants to be accompanied by her husband. Birth companions can have a positive influence on the mother's experience of the birth process, as well as providing physical and emotional support (Feeley, 2023).

The local community's habit of always working together is still felt today, as well as in terms of making decisions regarding a condition or problem, they adhere to the *Berinuq culture*. *Berinuq* is a term in the Benuaq and Tunjung languages for traditional community deliberations that have a spirit of togetherness (*sempekat*) to reach an agreement (*sempawat*). The revitalization of *Berinuq* culture as part of the self-determination process is the key to the success of the participatory indigenous community identification process.

In terms of decision making regarding the place and birth attendant, several informants said that the decision was taken together with the extended family but prioritized the mother's decision so that the mother had full autonomy in deciding where and with whom she would give birth.

#### **Pregnancy and Childbirth from a Cultural Perspective**

For the Dayak Tunjung people, marriage is not only a natural tradition, which is usually carried out by all humans on earth to carry out offspring, but more than that, marriage for them has a special purpose both personally, familially and in social relations. The purpose of marriage in the Dayak Tunjung tribe in general is to obtain offspring and also to obtain additional energy/power for farming work (Trisio et al., 2020).

Birth in the Tunjung Benuaq community is an extraordinary gift for a husband and wife who have long been waiting for the arrival of their child. This is reflected in the various efforts taken to ensure the

birth goes smoothly. One of them is *Ngerasik Ngeradak*, looking around, and carrying out regular checks. *Ngesak ngeradak* includes activities to maintain the health and safety of the mother and fetus. This tradition is something that cannot be ignored, although if you don't carry it out, you won't be subject to customary sanctions. *Ngeliant* is a tradition of abstinence carried out by husband and wife during pregnancy (Madrah, 2013).

### **Cultural Practices in the Childbirth Process**

Various traditional and ritual activities are carried out to live in harmony with nature. This harmony aims to realize the community's belief system. Madrah & Karaangk in (Putri et al., 2023) said that the Benuaq and Tunjung Dayak people view myth or *Tempuutn* as the essence of the philosophy of life of the people of the two tribes, including all the most basic concepts and beliefs, as well as maintaining cultural continuity. Myths have an important meaning because they not only tell how something happened but also explain why certain customs survive and must be obeyed. The supporting community believes that some sacred rituals and stories are divine truth (Saikia, 2018). Rituals are the embodiment of myth (Gasarov, 2021). Implementing rituals, myths and taboos during pregnancy and childbirth is believed by the Dayak Tunjung Benuaq tribe to be a form of preserving culture that is passed down from generation to generation. This is what is called *Tempuunt* which tells supernatural things from primitive ideas and forms culture and ritual practices.

Apart from the taboos, there are also the use of objects to ward off evil spirits, such as jerangau, *tumar wood*, *Sompunt*, and the reading of mantras (Penggagalangk) is always done regularly during the birthing process. It is believed that these woods are feared by evil spirits and call upon good spirits to help.

### **Preserving the culture of the Tunjung Benuaq Tribe amidst modernization**

It cannot be denied that everything will experience changes, whether intentional or unintentional. These changes are recognized as dynamics in society, especially social and cultural changes. Social change is not merely about progress, it can also mean setbacks, the same goes for culture, there is no society and its culture that does not experience change.

Lahajir in Johansen (2014) said that Dayak culture in East Kalimantan does not have "resistance" to foreign influences so it tends to change more easily when it comes into contact with other cultures.

Cultural experts try to maintain existing customs by continuing to carry out cultural rituals in every session of community life. However, it cannot be denied that the myths that were once highly believed have begun to fade over time. Likewise, the existence of the Village Shaman has almost no successors. Advances in science in the health sector, the use of modern tools, fast and precise medical treatment, advances in technology and communication midwives as well as increasing levels of education in the

Dayak Tunjung Benuaq tribal community are little by little eroding the existence of village shamans and their cultural practices.

## CONCLUSION

The Tunjung Benuaq Dayak tribe maintains balance with nature, humans and the ruling spirits of nature through harmonization between religion and culture. Their firm belief and strong belief in local culture is always applied in all phases of their lives. The culture that has been passed down from generation to generation in the social order of Dayak community life has taken root from small kinship circles to the social structure of society. For the Dayak people of Tunjung Benuaq, pregnancy and childbirth are sacred things that must be protected. Therefore, many cultural rituals are still carried out which are believed to maintain pregnancy and childbirth. So that in deciding the place and birth attendant, cultural values are firmly held as fundamental beliefs.

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Culture and customs that have existed for a long time should be maintained in all aspects of life and continue to be passed down from generation to generation as a symbol of the strength of the Dayak Tunjung Benuaq tribe, including cultural rituals that are considered good to practice during the birthing process.

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